



Christine Clark of Evergreen paddles through Rodeo Hole at Golden's Clear Creek Whitewater Park. With a flow of 750 to 800 cubic feet a second, the water gave the 22-year-old a good wave ride. *Lyn Alweis, The Denver Post*

# Surf's up this summer

With whitewater parks, hitting waves no longer mean lots of shuttling

Typically, a good summer of whitewater paddling means lots of driving and shuttling. But with the proliferation of whitewater playparks, park-and-play kayaking in Colorado has never been better. Another advantage: These controlled environments are safer than wild rivers for practicing technique. Pick a town, park the rig and spend a day spinning in a few foamy holes. *Jason Blevins*



**GLENWOOD SPRINGS**  
[glenwoodwhitewaterpark.org](http://glenwoodwhitewaterpark.org)  
 Off I-70 on Exit 114 in West Glenwood and just upstream of the Midland Avenue Bridge

Glenwood Springs' new whitewater park — really just a single feature so far on the Colorado River in West Glenwood — is arguably the best in the state's history. Built this March, the Glenwood wave has quickly become the must-surf wave this season.

**VAIL**  
 Start paddling at the Covered Bridge and surf to Willow Bridge Road.

Once known as an awesome venue with a lousy wave, a new system of adjustable, computerized bladders put this stretch of Gore Creek among Colorado's most consistently surfable spots. Worthy of play even when the runoff flow slows down.



**GOLDEN**  
[ci.golden.co.us/Page.asp?NavID=203](http://ci.golden.co.us/Page.asp?NavID=203)  
 Put-in at Lions Park at 10th and Maple streets, Golden; facility rental information at 303-384-8133

Ten-year-old Clear Creek White Water Park offers a quarter-mile of drops, pools and eddies for boaters testing themselves on the course hosting the Open Canoe Championships, the Junior Olympic Championships and the Eddie Bauer Invitational. No fee for drop-in usage.

**STEAMBOAT SPRINGS**  
 Parallel to Lincoln Avenue, between Fifth and 13th avenues, in Steamboat Springs

Steamboat's 28-year-old whitewater park is a rowdy roller coaster of sculpted but gentle waves now, though late summer tames it into a lazy float with fun waves.

The park's famed C-hole, behind the library, is adjacent to a hot spring perfect for warming frozen knuckles.



Denver Post file photo

**SALIDA**  
 Upstream and downstream of Salida's North F Street Bridge

Big enough for tricks, but rarely scary, Salida's hole, centerpiece of the FIBArk festival, ranks high among top kayakers on the annual freestyle tour. The gentle pool behind the hole is forgiving of beginner and intermediate boaters. Downstream, a gently sloping wave is perfect for first-timers and even board-riding surfers.



**BUENA VISTA**  
[coloradokayak.com/Buena\\_Vista\\_Playpark.html](http://coloradokayak.com/Buena_Vista_Playpark.html)  
 The park begins just upstream of the Midland Trail Bridge at the terminus of East Main Street in Buena Vista.

The four spots along Buena Vista's share of the Arkansas River are the centerpiece of the new urbanism-styled South Main project, designed and created by pro kayaking siblings Jed and Katie Selby, above. The pros play at Uptown Hole. Downstream's Midtown welcomes all levels. The newest feature is perfect training for the Arkansas River's eddyleless surfholes. Farthest downstream, the Downtown Hole (opposite South Main's town square) presents a steep foam pile for aerial maneuvers.

**ENGLEWOOD**  
 Off West Union Avenue between South Federal Boulevard and South Santa Fe Drive in Englewood

Not beginner-friendly unless the South Platte River's cubic-feet-per-second count is below 500, Union's seven drops can stomp at high flows. Great surfing, from the perfect Hawaii Five-O wave to the smooth sit-and-spin dam drop to the often-punishing Hollywood Hole, and exceptional ferrying and eddy-catching training.



Bryan Kelsen, Special to The Denver Post

**PUEBLO**  
[pueblopaddlers.com](http://pueblopaddlers.com)  
 Between the Fourth Street Bridge and the Union Bridge at Corona Street in Pueblo

The spark for a downtown revival along Pueblo's historically industrial Arkansas is coming from spinning kayakers. Couched in concrete levees, Pueblo's seven drops offer surf at trickling to flooding flows, making it a nearly year-round surf spot, even when other parks are drying up.