

Water releases from Fontenelle increased

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Green River residents have probably noticed that the river has come up a bit in the last few days.

This rise is due to increased releases from Fontenelle Reservoir, according to Dr. Katrina Grantz, a hydraulic engineer with the Bureau of Reclamation.

The increases began Saturday morning with an additional 50 cubic feet per second being released Monday morning and another 50 cfs on Monday night. The same increases were seen on Sunday and Sunday evening, then on Monday, that was increased to 100 for a total of 1,150 cfs.

"We thought it would remain at 1,150 cfs for a while but the forecast is for inflows to stay close to 4,000 cfs for three or four more days before they begin to taper off, so it's necessary to increase releases to maintain a cushion of storage in the reservoir," she said.

Yesterday the release was increased to 1,250 cfs and will be increased by another 150 cfs through today and tomorrow.

According to Grantz, it takes four to 12 hours for the increase to be noticeable in the river flow.

"I'm watching the inflows really closely, because we really don't have a good measure of how much snow is left to come down," Grantz said.

If reservoir inflows do not begin to taper off in the next few days as forecasted, Grantz said releases will be increased to 2,500 cfs or 3,000 cfs.

"That's what our typical release is in April, and it's nowhere near what was coming down last year," she said.

Grantz said it's difficult to be sure of how much snow is left to come down because the snow measuring stations, called snotels, are all below the 10,000-foot elevation.

"We don't know how much is above there," she said.

However, even though the river is not as high as last year, it is still dangerous, according to Mike Kennedy, Green River fire chief.

Kennedy said the fire department recently conducted river rescue training and a very large dog was caught in an undertow on the river.

"It's still dangerous," he said.