



The 20th Anniversary of the Gunnison River Festival Kicks Off Summer with a Splash!

The 20th Anniversary of the Gunnison River Festival saw the numbers of participants and spectators back to the pre-Covid numbers the festival has historically attracted. “Saturday was particularly hot,” said Joellen Fonken, director of the Gunnison River Festival, “so spectators and participants were looking for shade and cool waters at the Gunnison Whitewater Park.”

The Festival kicked off on Friday, June 10th, with a “Wings Over Water” bird watching float. Later on Friday, the Upper Taylor River was the setting for the Taylor Raft and Kayak races. Kayak winners were Nate Ober, first place, Rob Dickinson, second place and Sam Reaman, third place in the men’s division, while Kestrel Kunz took first place, Sydney Dickinson took second place and Lorraine Bruteig took third place in the women’s division. Winners in the rafting division were Three River Resort, first place, Meghan Robertson and company took second place and “RapsofNM” took third place. Winners were awarded their prizes at the Wailers concert which took place at the I Bar Ranch later that night.

On Saturday, the fun moved to the Whitewater Park down in Gunnison with a full slate of activities featuring everything from educational clinics to a kayak competition and even an inflatable rodeo where rafters attempted to surf the waves.

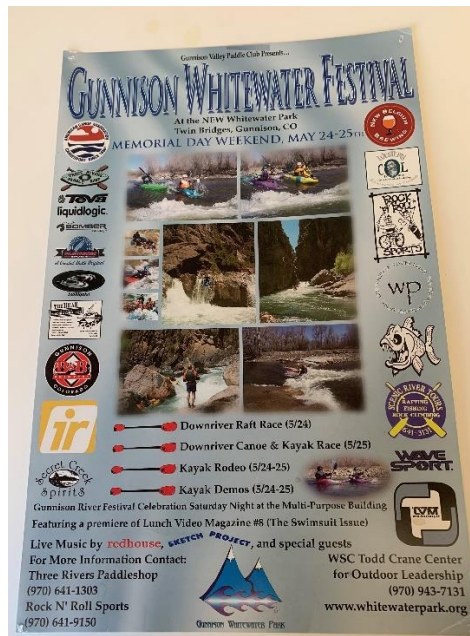
The festival wrapped on Sunday, June 12th with activities again at the Whitewater Park, as well as Yoga on the Lake on stand-up paddleboards and other festivities at Lake San Cristobal in Lake City. Sunday’s highlights at the Whitewater Park included “Surf Jam” where men, women and kids alike attempted to hang ten in the whitewater feature on the Gunnison River. Winners of the Surf Jam were selected based on style and tricks. Logan Boscaro took the “Best Surfing” title; Heath Talbert was named “Crowd

Favorite” and Moses Write, Dylan Boscaro and Makai won for “Best Tricks,” “Most Flow” and “Best Style” respectively.

Fonken said that with the river chugging along at nearly 2000 cfs, hot sunny weather and a renewed spirit by river enthusiasts who missed the full-on festival the past two years due to Covid, she was delighted with the 20th Anniversary Celebration. “Our rivers were celebrated, newbies learned new skills, pros shared their expertise and smiles were everywhere,” said Fonken.



Joellen noted the Gunnison River Festival would not be possible without the generosity and efforts of the sponsors and volunteers and she wanted to thank all volunteers and the sponsors, including Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District, title sponsor; McLaughlin Whitewater; American Whiteware; Spallone Construction; Gunnison County; City of Gunnison; Sign Guys and Gal; Wester Colorado University; IBar Ranch; Bureau of Land Management; Leave No Trace; Jackson Kayak; B&B Printers; Gunnison Waves; mario’s Pizza; 4 Corners Riversports; Alpine Express; Island Acres Resort; lake Fork Valley Conservancy; Gunnison Kayak Program; Wheelies and Waves; Rare Earth Science; Crested Butte Land Trust; Wanderlust Hostel; Adaptive Sport Center; KBUT Radio; GSI Outdoors; Alpine Surf Company; The Dive and Jermaine’s.



First River Festival Poster