

March 11, 2008

River Running Hazard

Sheep Creek Bridge Down

The Sheep Creek Trail Bridge over the Piedra River within the San Juan National Forest has collapsed. The downed footbridge remains well anchored at each end. It spans the entire river and will likely accumulate considerable amounts of debris as water levels rise. The bridge is below the First Box Canyon and about 3.5 river miles downstream of the First Fork put-in. The location is roughly nineteen air miles west of Pagosa Springs and five miles north of US Highway 160 where it crosses the Piedra River.

This is a potentially life-threatening situation for river runners. Those who choose to run this section will have to portage around the bridge and any log jams which accumulate. Steep banks and the absence of beaches and eddies above the bridge could make take-out extremely difficult to hazardous.

There are certainly other hazards for river runners along the Piedra River which require careful river-reading, scouting, and assessment of one's river running skills. The Forest Service will not remove the bridge until after the high water season due to safety and access reasons. For more information, contact the Pagosa Public Lands office of the San Juan Public lands at 970 264-2268.



Pagosa Ranger District
San Juan Public Lands

