Ideal Rafting Below McPhee

With the April runoff forecast for the Dolores River expected to reach 131 percent of normal, river runners can expect near ideal conditions below McPhee Dam into early June 1984, the Bureau of Reclamation's Upper Colorado Regional Director Clifford Barrett announced today.

"Reclamation plans to conduct the initial filling of the reservoir to extend the rafting period to the fullest extent possible," he said.

Peak inflows at Dolores, Colo., are projected to be between 3,000 and 4,100 cubic feet per second (cfs) by the third week of May. At this rate, assuming normal weather conditions during the next few weeks, Reclamation predicts releases below the dam will range from 1,400 and 2,400 cfs from now until the second week of June.

According to Hank Hotze of Gunnison River Expeditions, "Flows in the range of 1,400 to 1,700 cfs are excellent for rafting."

Those seeking specific daily flow or reservoir information are asked to call the Bureau of Land Management at (303) 247-4082 or the Bureau of Reclamation at (801) 524-5573, or toll free, 1-800-624-5099.

On April 19, 1984, the inflow to McPhee Reservoir, of Reclamation's Dolores Project, was 3,640 cfs, releases were 3,140 cfs, and the water surface elevation was 6,764.3 feet. Reclamation plans to fill the reservoir to approximately the 6,790-foot level during the spring runoff. McPhee Dam is scheduled to be dedicated in August of this year.

The Dolores Project is designed to provide water for irrigation to about 61,000 acres in southwestern Colorado, as well as providing municipal and industrial water to four Colorado communities.