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Dangerous fishing

Black Canyon to experience high water flows

BY JASON WHEELER
DAILY PRESS STAFF WRITER

Fair warning to all Black Canyon anglers, Crystal Dam is expecting high water releases to occur from late May into June.

The Bureau of Reclamation states that Crystal Reservoir usually has about 14,000 acre-feet of water storage and releases about 850 cubic feet of water per second. However, runoff from the upstream Gunnison River has significantly increased the amount of water.

Erik Knight, of the Bureau of Reclamation, noted the runoff season is about halfway through, with snow on lower elevations already melted away. The rest of the season should see runoff from snow on higher elevations.

Since mid-April, the runoff has increased the releases to more than 1,000 feet of cubic water per second, with a steady discharge of 500 cubic feet of water per second below the Gunnison River Tunnel. However the Curecanti National Recreation Area said the expected water flow during the high water release will reach 8,000 cubic feet of water per second. The flows are expected to be irregular, causing daily fluctuations to occur in the river's depth and velocity.

Sandra Snell-Dobert, Chief of interpretation, education and technology for the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Curecanti National Recreation Area, said

SEE FLOW, PAGE A3



DREW SETTERHOLM/DAILY PRESS

Jim Renfrow and wife, Carol, have found new roles and responsibilities as Carol fights ovarian cancer, with Jim serving as her primary caregiver.

Caregiver copes with change

BY DREW SETTERHOLM | DAILY PRESS STAFF WRITER

There will be more than 1.6 million new cancer cases diagnosed this year in the U.S. alone, the American Cancer Society estimates, and for every one of those cases, more than one life will likely be reshaped.

When Montrose residents Jim Renfrow and wife Carol Renfrow found out Carol had ovarian cancer, stage 3C, both knew changes were on the way

This is the second in a four-part series of profiles of people who have experienced cancer in some fashion. The Montrose Press plans to run one profile each Sunday through June 1 as a lead off to the Montrose Relay for Life event scheduled for 6 p.m. June 7 at the Montrose High School track.

— in their daily lives, their relationships and their futures.

As Carol's primary caregiver, Jim has changed his work schedule and his skill set around the house to cope

with the effects the past three years of chemotherapy have had on his wife.

"The amount of work that was being

SEE CHANGE, PAGE A3



NATE WICK/DAILY PRESS

A labor of love

Three women walk up the road on their way to the rim of the canyon as they participate in the Black Canyon Ascent on Saturday. Elena Stoilova, center, is pregnant and was due to have her baby last Thursday. Funds raised from the walk/run went to the Montrose Community Foundation.

Montrose growing a commercial kitchen

DDA granted funds for food hub study

BY DREW SETTERHOLM
DAILY PRESS STAFF WRITER

Could a local food hub and commercial kitchen help strengthen the economy and get fresh foods into the hands of Montrose consumers?

The Montrose Downtown Development Authority, in cooperation with Valley Food Partnership and a dozen other organizations, plans to find out within the next year.

The Colorado Department of Agriculture awarded the Montrose Downtown Development Authority a grant of \$11,380 to conduct a feasibility study for a food hub, certified commercial kitchen and business incubator.

Wade Nichols, executive director of the development authority, announced the grant May 7 and said he and partners are excited to get underway with the

study. A food hub in Montrose, Nichols said, is wanted and needed.

Montrose is listed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a "food desert," an area where a significant portion of the population lacks ready access to healthy food.

"We've got a pretty strong feeling that a food hub is called for, because while it may seem strange to a lot of people, this is designated on a federal basis as a food desert, and we really need to get a lot more locally produced food into the market and into people's hands," Nichols said.

The grant funding will be used to hire an experienced contractor who will facilitate surveys, interviews and focus groups with local agriculture producers and value-added food businesses to establish

what would be needed in a food hub.

The second step of the study would be to explore business models for the food hub, serving as a commercial kitchen and business incubator, to keep it sustainable.

"We hope to walk away from this study with an idea of the viability and sustainability of the space, as well as a good business model for the food hub," Carol Parker, president of the Valley Food Partnership, said.

Nichols estimated the USDA would issue a contract within two months, after which time the development authority would have one year to complete its study. Nichols said his organization plans to move more quickly than that, and hopes to have a recommended business plan and vision for the food hub in hand in

SEE FOOD, PAGE A3



Published for the Uncompahgre Valley and Jim Meabon of Montrose

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Sports:

Olathe track team finishes strong
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TODAY'S WEATHER

Except for a few afternoon clouds, mainly sunny. Warm. High 83F. Winds SSW at 15 to 25 mph. See details, A15



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FLOW: High flows should only affect some hikers

FROM PAGE 1

the releases will mainly affect Gunnison River fishermen. The increased flow rate through the canyon will cause the river to be faster, colder, deeper and cloudy, making practice of the sport very difficult.

"The water will be high, swift and off-color," Snell-Dobert said. "Fishing will be difficult to do with the high water"

She noted that most fishing done on the river is fly fishing, which requires wading into the river. The speed of the high flows will make doing so extremely hazardous. Wading in to the river safely during these high flows would be nearly impossible.

However, while the projected flows of the river are expected to be high, the campsites of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park are not expected to be affected. However, Snell-Dobert said the high flows might affect a few hikers in the area looking to stay in the canyon overnight and only limited movement will be possible upstream and downstream from river accesses.

Those planning a trip into the canyon should check with the rangers at the visitor's center.

For more information, call Sandra Snell-Dobert at 970-641-2337 ext. 227 or Erik Knight at 970-248-0629.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SANDRA SNELL-DOBERT

Hundreds of cubic feet of water per second pours out of Crystal Dam a few years ago.

CHANGE: Rediscovery and laughter at center of cancer battle

FROM PAGE 1

done, I did not appreciate," said Jim, who had previously been accustomed to spending long hours with his job and counting on Carol to manage their home.

For her part, Carol has had to accept that her schedule and her tasks would change, as well. Her medical team warned of the fatigue that would come with chemotherapy.

"I've been fatigued. I've done yard work, garden work and I've been tired. I've climbed a 'fourteener', and I thought that was true fatigue," Carol said. "I didn't know the word fatigue until I had chemo."

The Renfrows made adjustments to their day-to-day lives as necessary. After a first attempt at mowing the lawn turned into a running joke — Jim had forgotten to lower the mower blades — and finding out how where all the pots and pans were kept, how to run the laundry machines and other tasks were accomplished, Jim and Carol began to find a balance.

"It's like any change, we've had to re-adjust. We've had to find the balance," Jim said.

A balance, both said, is crucial to maintaining satisfying and productive lifestyles.

"Having Jim help me, it's wonderful. And he still leaves some things for me to do, and that makes me feel like I'm participating," Carol said.

There are some obstacles that come with an incurable cancer that cannot be cleared, by balance or otherwise, and both Jim and Carol have had to accept certain things.

"I have an engineering background and I'm a male; I'm a fixer," Jim said. "I make things happen, I can fix things. I can't fix this. It bothers me, but I finally realized I can't do anything about it."

A vital part of accepting Carol's cancer and their forever changed lives has been finding moments of joy in each day. Without joy, the fight would be all but finished.

Carol finds joy in peaceful moments — a hummingbird at the feeder on the deck, or a sunrise over the mountains.

"It truly makes you appreciate life more ... it's incredible," Carol said. "It has absolutely magnified my appreciation of the simplest things. God has given me a peace."

Jim has his moments of joy, as well, and they are a shield against darker thoughts that can visit when he is away from his wife, or after Carol has gone to sleep.

"Sometimes ... I wake up, and it grabs me. I don't want to be alone," Jim said.

"But if I let that go too far, it takes out the joy. So I block it and say, OK, I've got the joy."

Joy has also come in taking on the tasks that the Renfrows had put off. Looking through old family photo albums and finally playing all of the 8mm film they had recorded, for example. Even a small walk for the former hiking enthusiasts is enough.

"We used to do 10 or 15 miles a weekend," Jim said. "Carol has done 35 of the 'fourteeners.' Now, to just drive over to the cemetery and take a walk; that's a joy."

Jim calls himself a "facilitator," and describes his primary role as caregiver as presenting every available option for medical treatment and daily activities to his wife. As Carol faces her eighth regime of chemotherapy, the couple's discussions have taken on even more gravity.

"I think it boils down to the quality of life, and I can see that as Carol winds down, at what level am I so selfish that I want her here, but she's not having any fun?" Jim asked. "If I can get her to laugh, to take a walk ... but at some point in time I think we're going to have to make the decision where the quality is."

Shared prayer has become a lattice-work for discussion to continue, but both know hard times are ahead.

"She's my best hunting partner, my best hiking partner, my best fishing partner, my best friend," Jim said. "So part of the fear is not her dying, part of the fear is not me dying — it's being left alone. That's the fear."

Fear is best combatted by humor; Jim and Carol have found. The couple has held on to small jokes shared here and there, quips about "chemo brain" forgetfulness and some new hairstyles both have tried on.

"You need to laugh at life," Carol said.

"If you don't smile and laugh at it," Jim added, "you could drive yourself crazy."

Changes have come, and more are certainly on the way. In April, Carol lived past the date doctors had given her.

For now, the Renfrows are pushing ahead, holding on to one another's strength, their faith and the small joys and beauties they share during each unpredictable day.

"At first I yearned for hiking and being up in the mountains and the lifestyle I had," Carol said. "But you learn that there's beauty in each day, in each moment, and you just draw strength from that and from the good lord. And you get through that day, and you go on to the next. And yeah, I'm not doing fourteeners, but golly, I'm here."

FOOD: Support for local ag, local economy

FROM PAGE 1

eight or nine months.

Pending the results of the study and finding a funding and implementation model, Parker and Nichols see a food hub adding value to the local economy and agriculture businesses.

"We're envisioning that the space would serve a variety of purposes for a variety of entities, whether they're organizations or businesses," Parker said.

Local produce growers, Parker said, could rent the food hub space to turn a portion of their crop into a value-added product, such as a canned good, salsa or any other consumer-ready product.

"We know that there are already several young and beginning farmers in the area who are looking for a space where they can rent that space and use that space to diversify their offerings," Parker said.

Nichols is excited for the potential boost to downtown businesses and start-ups.

"One thing in particular we're hop-

ing to see is that it would serve as an incubator for new food-based businesses," Nichols said.

The space could be used to test recipes for a planned restaurant, to provide hot and fresh foods for downtown events or to stimulate cooking classes for culinary professionals, Nichols explained.

The Downtown Development Authority's partners already include the Valley Food Partnership, the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, Livewell Montrose-Olathe and several others, and as the feasibility study gets under way, more partners could join. Nichols said gathering as many viewpoints as possible is important to growing the food hub into a sustainable operation.

"I think we'll see, hopefully, many varied and diverse community needs met through this space," Parker added.

The Montrose Downtown Development Authority was selected as one of four recipients of the Colorado Department of Agriculture funding from a pool of 41 applicants.

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