

Reconnaissance Field Investigation of
**SURFACE-WATER
SPECIFIC CONDUCTANCE**
in the Snowmass–Glenwood Springs Area,
West-Central Colorado



By Robert M. Kirkham,
Jonathan M. Zook,
and Matthew A. Sares

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Introduction

This report contains the results of a reconnaissance-level field investigation of surface-water quality in the Snowmass-Glenwood Springs area of west-central Colorado. Included in the report are maps and tables that describe the test locations and associated field measurements within the study area (Figure 1). The report is essentially a basic-data report and contains only limited interpretations and conclusions.

Salinity problems in the Colorado River have been well documented during the past several years through numerous investigations by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum, and U.S. Geological Survey-Water Resources Division. Significant salt loadings to the Colorado River and its tributaries occur in west-central Colorado in the vicinity of the towns of Eagle, Glenwood Springs, and Carbondale. These salt loadings have been associated with dissolution of halite and gypsum within the Pennsylvanian Eagle Valley Evaporite (URS Corporation, 1981; Warner and others, 1985; Eisenhauer, 1986).

In 1993 the Colorado Geological Survey (CGS) initiated a 1:24,000-scale geologic mapping program in the vicinity of Glenwood Springs in west-central Colorado. By the spring of 1995, it was obvious from this geologic mapping that a large part of the area had structurally collapsed during the late Cenozoic Era. In the fall of 1995 the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) began a geologic mapping program along the Interstate Highway 70 corridor adjacent to areas being mapped by the CGS. Through cooperative work by the CGS and USGS in their respective field areas, the general characteristics and lateral and vertical extent of these actively collapsing areas has been fairly well defined (Kirkham and Widmann, 1997; Kirkham, 1997; Kirkham and others, 1998; Scott and others, 1998). The regional collapse occurring in west-central Colorado is

believed to result from dissolution and flowage of evaporitic rocks in the Pennsylvanian Eagle Valley Evaporite.

The initial, large salt loadings to the Colorado River system coincide with the active, regional collapse centers that have been recently discovered by the CGS and USGS. Much of the salt load directly enters the Colorado River via Glenwood and Dotsero Hot Springs (Eisenhauer, 1986). Although no saline hot springs occur along the Roaring Fork River, salinity of the river increases as it crosses the Carbondale collapse center (see Figure 1 for location). Based upon data collected during December 1977, Warner and others (1985) concluded that the base-flow salt load in the Roaring Fork River increased from about 32,700 tons/year at Woody Creek to about 183,000 tons/year at the confluence with the Colorado River. In the same reach, base-flow discharge increased from 105 cubic feet per second (ft³/s) near Woody Creek to 370 ft³/s at the confluence with the Colorado River. They attributed the increased salt load in part to tributary inflow, but mostly to direct ground-water discharge into the river. This notable increase in salt load in the Roaring Fork River occurs as the river crosses the Carbondale collapse center.

The CGS undertook this reconnaissance-level investigation for several reasons. The CGS is interested in water quality throughout the state, because geology has an important influence on both surface-water and ground-water quality. The geographic coincidence of the Carbondale collapse center with the marked increase in salinity of streams suggested that dissolution of evaporitic rocks was contributing to or causing both the collapse and salt loading. Geologic studies indicate that the rate and structural style of collapse vary spatially and temporally. By inference, the dissolution rates also vary with location and time. Recognition of saline ground-water and

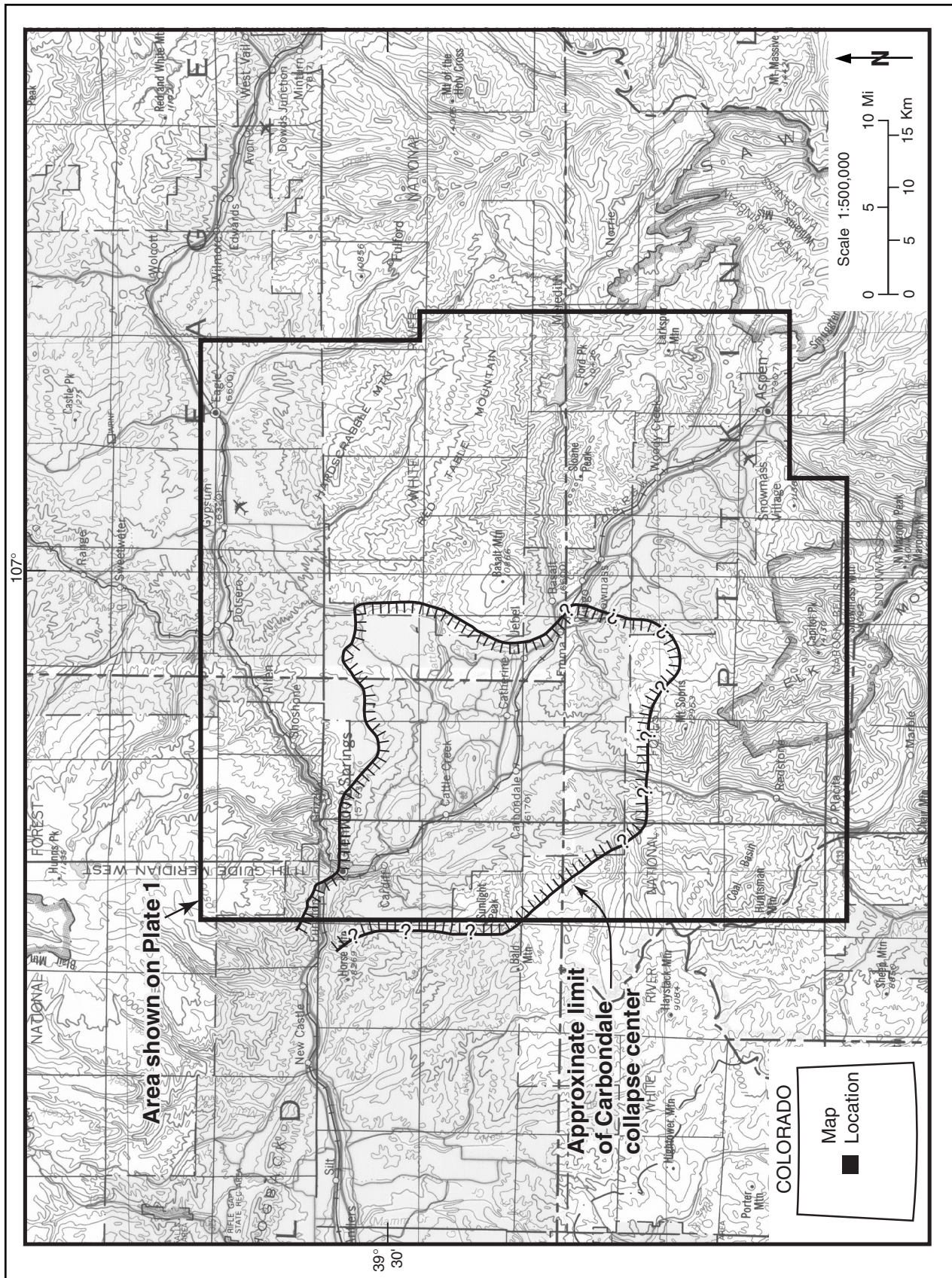


Figure 1. Location map of study area and approximate limits of the Carbondale Collapse Center.

surface-water sources could aid efforts to identify where active dissolution is occurring and to model saline ground-water flow paths. The results of the reconnaissance study could also focus any future, more comprehensive work on these salinity issues.

The primary goal of this investigation was to develop a better understanding of the sources of salinity in the Roaring Fork River and its tributaries in the vicinity of the Carbondale collapse center. To accomplish this goal, the specific conductance, salinity, pH, and temperature of surface water and springs in the area were measured in the field. Field measurements were also collected for the Colorado River in several locations, for several hot springs along the Colorado River,

and for a cold spring in Mitchell Creek northwest of Glenwood Springs. Test locations are shown on Plate 1, along with specific conductance data for each site. This information may be used to qualitatively assess the potential significance of individual springs and tributaries to the salinity of the Roaring Fork River, particularly springs that discharge from evaporitic rocks and tributaries that drain basins underlain by evaporitic rocks at or near the surface.

The scope of this reconnaissance surface-water investigation was limited to field measurements. No water samples were collected for laboratory analysis, and discharge rates were not determined for the tested waters.



Data Collection and Methodology

Field measurements of specific conductance, salinity, temperature, and pH were obtained on random point samples at 112 test locations between October 6 and October 16, 1997. Most of the sites and test locations were situated along the Roaring Fork River and its principal tributaries, but several tests were also run on the Colorado River and its tributaries in the vicinity of Glenwood Springs. Both hot and cold springs in the area were tested. Specific conductance, salinity, and temperature were measured using a YSI Incorporated Model 30 instrument. A Myron L Company Model DCH4 instrument was utilized to measure pH. Test locations were plotted

on 1:24,000-scale topographic maps while in the field and later digitized in the office.

The identification number for each test location consists of a series of letters followed by a number. The letters refer to the water source being tested (Table 1). For example, "RFR" indicates test locations on the Roaring Fork River. The individual test locations on each water source were assigned a sequential numeric value. Test location number RFR-3 describes the third location at which water was tested on the Roaring Fork River. The test location numbers were assigned chronologically during the investigation, not in an upstream to downstream sequence.

Results and Interpretations

Overview

The following description of the results and interpretations of this field investigation is organized by geographic location. The discussion progresses from upstream to downstream along the Roaring Fork River. Tributaries and springs are discussed based on where their discharge enters the Roaring Fork River. This section concludes with a description of the tests performed on surface waters outside of the Roaring Fork River drainage basin.

Table 1 explains the test location abbreviations for the various water sources investigated. Measured field parameters for each test and a brief description of the test location are given in Table 2 (at the end of this chapter). Figure 2, which follows Table 2, is a graphical representation of the specific conductance at test locations in the Roaring Fork River. It relates the specific conductance of point samples in the river to geographic position. Point samples are susceptible to local variations in the stream and may or may not accurately reflect the character of the entire river at that location.

Roaring Fork River Drainage Basin from Snowmass Creek to the Crystal River

A specific conductance of 399 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (micro-Siemens per centimeter) was measured in the Roaring Fork River immediately above its confluence with Snowmass Creek (test location RFR-5). Snowmass Creek, which had a specific conductance of 407 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ at test location SMC-1, had little effect on the Roaring Fork River. Specific conductance of the Roaring Fork River apparently remains fairly constant to the confluence with the Fryingpan River (see RFR-6 and RFR-1 through 3). The Fryingpan River had a specific conductance of 157 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ at the gaging station

Table 1. Explanation of test location abbreviations.

| Test Location | Drainage Name |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| BC..... | Blue Creek |
| BG..... | Barber's Gulch |
| CBL..... | Cedar Brook Lake |
| CC..... | Cattle Creek |
| CLC..... | Coal Creek |
| COC..... | Coulter Creek |
| COR..... | Colorado River |
| CPC..... | Cottonwood Creek |
| CR..... | Crystal River |
| CRHS..... | Colorado River Hot Springs |
| CS..... | Crystal Spring |
| CSC..... | Crystal Spring Creek |
| DG..... | Dolan Gulch |
| EC..... | East Creek |
| ECC..... | East Coulter Creek |
| EJS..... | El Jebel Spring |
| ESC..... | East Sopris Creek |
| FC..... | Fisher Creek |
| FMC..... | Four Mile Creek |
| FPR..... | Fryingpan River |
| HHS..... | Hobo Hot Springs |
| ID..... | Irrigation Ditch |
| IHS..... | Iron Hot Springs |
| MC..... | Mitchell Creek |
| MCS..... | Mitchell Creek Spring |
| NC..... | Nettle Creek |
| NN..... | No Name Creek |
| RC..... | Red Canyon Creek |
| RFR..... | Roaring Fork River |
| SC..... | Sopris Creek |
| SD..... | Shippee's Draw |
| SDS..... | Shippee's Draw Spring |
| SMC..... | Snowmass Creek |
| SV..... | Spring Valley Creek |
| SVS..... | Spring Valley Spring |
| TMC..... | Three Mile Creek |
| US..... | Unnamed Spring |
| VC..... | Vapor Caves |

below Reudi Reservoir (FPR-2), and it increased only to 200 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ at its mouth (FPR-1). The Fryingpan River may contribute to a lower dissolved solid concentration in the Roaring Fork River, as a point sample well below the inflow from the Fryingpan River had a specific conductance of 320 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (RFR-4).

Water discharging from Cedar Brook Lake, a spring-fed lake located in landslide deposits derived from Mancos Shale and late Tertiary basalt (Kirkham and others, 1998), had a specific conductance of 213 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (CBL-1). About one mile downstream of the Cedar Brook Lake discharge, a test location in the Roaring Fork River above Sopris Creek had a specific conductance of 310 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (RFR-7).

At the confluence of Sopris Creek and the Roaring Fork River, the specific conductance of Sopris Creek was 403 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (SC-1), which is noticeably lower than values recorded farther upstream on this creek. At the confluence of East and West Sopris Creeks, the specific conductance of East Sopris Creek was 472 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (ESC-1), West Sopris Creek was 550 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (WSC-1), and Sopris Creek below the confluence was 492 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (SC-2). Part, and perhaps much, of the dissolved solids load in Sopris Creek has probably been leached from the extensive outcrops of Mancos Shale that lie within its drainage basin. In spite of the higher specific conductance of Sopris Creek, point samples near the northeast bank of the Roaring Fork River appear to have about the same concentration of dissolved solids above Sopris Creek (310 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$, RFR-7) as below Sopris Creek (311 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$, RFR-8).

The boundaries of the Carbondale collapse center are poorly constrained in this area. The Roaring Fork River probably enters the Carbondale collapse center somewhere near its confluence with Sopris Creek (Figure 1 and Plate 1), and part of the Sopris Creek drainage basin may lie within the collapse center. The collapse center coincides with the area in which evaporite has dissolved or plastically flowed during the late Cenozoic Era, a process continuing to the present. The salt load in the Roaring Fork River generally increases within the collapse center boundaries.

Near Mulford, at the first test location within the Carbondale collapse center (RFR-38), a point sample in the Roaring Fork River had a specific

conductance of 363 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$. A spring adjacent to Upper Cattle Creek Road, about 0.75 miles above El Jebel, discharges directly from a bed of gypsum near a prominent, large sinkhole developed in gypsum. Surprisingly, the specific conductance of the spring was only 1,134 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (EJS-1). It was thought that a spring discharging from a gypsum bed near a sinkhole caused by dissolution would exhibit significantly higher conductivity. Nearby, Blue Creek had a specific conductance of 341 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ where it crosses Upper Cattle Creek Road (BC-1). These surface-water sources of salinity could be partly responsible for the moderate increase in specific conductivity in the Roaring Fork River between Sopris Creek (RFR-8) and Mulford (RFR-38).

Crystal Spring (CS-1) discharges from surficial deposits that overlie basalt and evaporitic rocks. It had a specific conductance of 612 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$. Crystal Spring Creek, at the farthest downstream test location (CSC-2), had a specific conductance of 852 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$. A test location in the Roaring Fork River (RFR-39), which had a specific conductance of 384 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ above the confluence with the Crystal River, perhaps partly reflects the inflow of water from Crystal Spring Creek.

Crystal River Drainage Basin

The Crystal River is a major tributary to the Roaring Fork River. Its drainage basin (361 square miles) comprises about 25 percent of the total area of the Roaring Fork River drainage basin (1,451 square miles).

The Crystal River had a specific conductance of 274 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ above Redstone at the farthest upstream test location on this river (CR-2). Inflows from East Creek and Coal Creek near Redstone had a specific conductance of 243 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (EC-1) and 430 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (CLC-1), respectively. Much of the Coal Creek drainage basin is underlain by the Mancos Shale. This basin also contains several coal mines that drain water (Brown, 1990; SeaCrest Group, 1995). These factors may account for the relatively higher conductivity readings at the mouth of Coal Creek.

Of the several hot springs at Penny Hot Springs, one on the west side of the river, had a specific conductance of 3,266 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (US-2). The specific conductance at a test location in the Crystal River below Penny Hot Springs was 471

$\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (CR-3). Further downstream, at a location below the confluence with Avalanche Creek (CR-4), it was $366 \mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$. Since only point sampling was done during this investigation, test location CR-3 could be affected by relatively unmixed saline waters from Penny Hot Springs. Undoubtedly, though, the discharge of high conductivity water from Penny Hot Springs has an effect on the Crystal River.

The specific conductivity of the Crystal River decreased to $328 \mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ below Nettle Creek, which, with a specific conductance of only $107 \mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (NC-1) was the least saline water tested during this study. Above its confluence with the Roaring Fork River the specific conductance of the Crystal River increased to $360 \mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (CR-1), perhaps in part a result of the inflow from Barbers Gulch, which had a specific conductance of $766 \mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (BG-1).

Roaring Fork River Drainage Basin from the Crystal River to the Colorado River

In a series of nine closely spaced tests performed on the Roaring Fork River on the inside (north-east bank) of a meander just below the confluence with the Crystal River, the specific conductance consistently ranged from 375 to $387 \mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (RFR-21 through 27), except for one test with a specific conductance of $406 \mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (RFR-20). A second series of four fairly closely spaced tests was conducted on the Roaring Fork River about 2.5 miles downstream (RFR-28 through 31). Again, these tests were very consistent, with a specific conductance ranging from 394 to $396 \mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$. These closely spaced tests were conducted to observe the range of local variation in the specific conductivity along the stream and were not related to any particular hydrologic or geologic attribute. The variation observed is generally within the precision of field instrumentation, but elevated specific conductance at RFR-20 may be due to other factors.

Cattle Creek has a large drainage basin in which bold outcrops of evaporitic rocks are common. The Shannon Oil Company Rose #1 well, a 3,060-foot-deep oil test drilled in 1960 in the Roaring Fork valley near the mouth of Cattle Creek, penetrated 60 feet of alluvial gravel, 2,035 feet of gypsum, anhydrite, and clastic and car-

bonate rocks, and 935 feet of predominantly halite (unpublished lithologic log by American Stratigraphic Company). Drilling stopped in halite, therefore the total thickness of neither the halite or the entire evaporite sequence is known, but the well demonstrates that a thick sequence of evaporitic rock underlies this area. In spite of the widespread and thick deposits of evaporitic rocks in the drainage basin of Cattle Creek, the stream has a specific conductance of only $492 \mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ at its mouth (CC-1). This value is only 25 percent higher than the specific conductance of the Roaring Fork River above Cattle Creek (see tests RFR-28 through 31). It was hypothesized that specific conductivity values in Cattle Creek would be higher than observed because of the relatively soluble evaporite terrain underlying most of the drainage basin. At the first test site in the Roaring Fork River below Cattle Creek a specific conductance of $404 \mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ was measured (RFR-19). Approximately 1.2 miles further downstream a point sample had specific conductance of $395 \mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (RFR-12), which is identical to the series of tests run on the river above Cattle Creek. There are no significant tributaries to the Roaring Fork between Cattle Creek and test location RFR-12.

The upper reaches of Cattle Creek had conductivity values around $330 \mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (CC-2, CC-3). A spring in Shippes Draw, a tributary to Cattle Creek, discharges from surficial deposits that overlie evaporitic rocks in a prominent synclinal sag within Shippes Bowl (Kirkham and others, 1998). This spring had a specific conductance of only $383 \mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (SDS-1). The relatively low specific conductance of the spring water probably indicates this water had little residence time in contact with evaporitic rocks or that halite, if formerly present in these rocks, had been removed by earlier dissolution. Near its confluence with Cattle Creek, Shippes Draw had a specific conductance of $513 \mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (SD-1). The drainage basin of Coulter Creek is within the Carbondale collapse center, but evaporitic rocks are not exposed in this drainage basin. At its confluence with Cattle Creek, Coulter Creek had a specific conductance of $271 \mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (COC-1). Coulter Creek apparently had a diluting effect on Cattle Creek, as the specific conductance of Cattle Creek dropped from $397 \mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ above the confluence with Coulter Creek (CC-5) to $291 \mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$

below it (CC-4). Below Fisher Creek, which had a specific conductance of 421 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (FC-1), the specific conductance of Cattle Creek increased to 382 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$. Cattle Creek apparently gains dissolved solids between Fisher Creek and the Roaring Fork River, as specific conductance was 430 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ at the next downstream test location (CC-7) and 492 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ above the Roaring Fork River (CC-1). This reach of Cattle Creek contains prominent outcrops of gypsum.

Fourmile Creek had a specific conductance of 262 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ near the Sunlight ski area (FMC-1). After flowing through a strike valley eroded into the Mancos Shale, its specific conductance increased to 486 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (FMC-2). Above the confluence with the Roaring Fork River, a specific conductance of 517 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ was measured in Fourmile Creek. Specific conductance tests along the east bank of the Roaring Fork River indicated 395 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ above Fourmile Creek at the bridge near West Bank development (RFR-12) and 429 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ below Fourmile Creek (RFR-17).

Spring Valley, southeast of Glenwood Springs, is a prominent topographic depression thought to be a collapse feature related to dissolution or flowage of underlying evaporitic rocks (Kirkham, 1997; Kirkham and Widmann, 1997). Two springs along the southeastern margin of Spring Valley that issue from landslide deposits had specific conductance values of 401 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (SVS-1) and 491 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (SVS-2). The surface flow out the northern end of Spring Valley had a specific conductance of 635 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (SV-1). After flowing out of Red Canyon, which is eroded into red beds of the Maroon Formation, this stream had a specific conductance of 596 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ at its confluence with the Roaring Fork River (RC-1). Specific conductance tests on the east side of the Roaring Fork River were 429 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ above this inflow (RFR-17) and 434 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ below it (RFR-18).

A short distance below the confluence of the Roaring Fork River with the stream draining Spring Valley, a point sample collected from the west bank of the river below the Glenwood Springs airport had a specific conductance of 860 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (RFR-16). No known tributaries or springs appear to be associated with this abrupt increase in specific conductance within the Roaring Fork River. This increase was probably due to saline ground water directly discharging into the river

at or near this location. Additional studies are needed to better characterize the water quality of this reach of the river.

Another prominent increase in the specific conductance of point samples collected from the southwest bank of the Roaring Fork River was noted near the mouth of Threemile Creek. Immediately upstream of the confluence with Threemile Creek the specific conductance was 595 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (RFR-37), but downstream of the confluence specific conductance ranged from 735 to 1,550 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (RFR-11 and RFR-32 through 36). Threemile Creek had a specific conductance of only 255 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ at its mouth (TMC-1), so it apparently was not the source of the saline water. A nearby irrigation ditch (Atkinson Canal), which at the time of this testing was diverted back to the Roaring Fork River immediately above the confluence with Threemile Creek, carried water with a specific conductance of 1,389 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (ID-1). At first glance it appears that the irrigation ditch is the source of the increased salinity in the river. However, this ditch carried water diverted from the Roaring Fork River only a few hundred feet upstream of its outflow back to the river. Also, one of the tests immediately downstream on the river (RFR-36) had higher specific conductance than the irrigation ditch. Perhaps both the irrigation ditch and river are affected by discharge of saline ground water or by anthropogenic sources related to a nearby subdivision (David Merritt, written commun., 1998). Additional studies will be required to understand the hydrology of this area.

Tests were run on both banks of the Roaring Fork River at the Sunlight bridge, which is located about 0.9 miles downstream of the Threemile Creek area described above. On the west bank of the river, the specific conductance was 503 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (RFR-13W), while on the east bank it was 481 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (RFR-13E). At the next downstream test location on the Roaring Fork River (about 0.25 miles below RFR-13W and RFR-13E locations), the specific conductance on the west bank was 496 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (RFR-10). Measurements were again collected on both sides of the Roaring Fork River at the 7th Street bridge. On the west bank the specific conductance was 482 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (RFR-15); on the east bank it was 474 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (RFR-14). This series of tests may reflect the mixing of water in the Roaring Fork River with the above

described saline inflows from near the mouth of Threemile Creek. The trend of decreasing specific conductance in this reach may also reflect ground-water inflows of better quality water.

Outside the Roaring Fork River Basin

Several thermal springs along the Colorado River, thought to issue from the Leadville Limestone (Barrett and Pearl, 1978), were tested during this study (YHS-1 and 2; VC-1; CRHS 1, 2, and 3; HHS-1; IHS-1). The specific conductance of these thermal springs ranged from 28,075 to 34,050 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$. These measurements support the interpretations of many prior investigations that have concluded the thermal springs at Glenwood Springs and Dotsero are major sources of salinity to the Colorado River. Thermal springs were the only waters tested in this study that were below pH 7 (slightly acidic).

At a test location in the Colorado River upstream from the thermal springs near Glenwood Springs, the specific conductance of the river was 572 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ on the northwest bank (COR-4) and 585 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ on the southeast bank (COR-3). At a test location on the Colorado River at the Devereux bridge, the specific conductance of the Colorado River was 1,655 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ on the northeast bank (COR-5), but only 520 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ on the southwest bank (COR-6). The vastly different measurements are due to the lack of thorough mixing of the saline thermal spring waters with the river water. This disparate relationship was less noticeable at the Funston rest area on

Interstate Highway 70, where on the north bank the specific conductance was 911 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (COR-8) and on the south bank of the Colorado River it was 665 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (COR-2). At the bridge over the Colorado River at the Midland Avenue by-pass, the water was somewhat better mixed than upstream at the Funston rest area: on the north bank the Colorado River had specific conductance of 879 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (COR-7) and on the south bank it was 740 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (COR-1).

Warm ground water was intercepted in foundation excavations several years ago in a subdivision in west Glenwood Springs on Stoneridge Court. The excavations were made into a prominent ledge of tufa that was dry at the ground surface. The water encountered by these excavations is collected and conveyed by a plastic pipe and discharged to the surface near the middle school. This water had a specific conductance of 3,281 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (US-3).

A cold spring on Mitchell Creek had a specific conductance of 442 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (MCS-1). The specific conductance of Mitchell Creek above the spring was 352 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (MC-2) and 382 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ above Dolan Gulch (MC-1). Dolan Gulch, which drains an area largely underlain by evaporitic rocks, had a specific conductance of 542 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (DG-1) at its confluence with Mitchell Creek.

A single test was obtained on Cottonwood Creek, an upstream tributary to the Colorado River at the eastern end of Glenwood Canyon. Evaporitic rocks underlie most of this drainage basin. The creek had a specific conductance of 1,032 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (CPC-1) where it is crossed by Cottonwood Pass road.

Table 2. Field measurements and test descriptions.

| Test No. | Drainage | Cond (µS/cm) | Salinity (ppt) | Temp (°C) | pH | Test Location | UTM (X) | UTM (Y) |
|----------|------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------|------|--|---------|---------|
| BC-1 | Blue Creek | 341 | 0.2 | 12.9 | 8.81 | Blue Creek where it crosses Upper Cattle Creek Road | 320091 | 4363228 |
| BG-1 | Barbers Gulch | 766 | 0.4 | 7.5 | 8.84 | Barber's Gulch above confluence with Crystal River | 308298 | 4363080 |
| CBL-1 | Cedar Brook Lake | 213 | 0.1 | 13.3 | 7.96 | Outflow from Cedar Brook Lake at old Hwy 82 | 323832 | 4359512 |
| CC-1 | Cattle Creek | 492 | 0.2 | 12.4 | 7.97 | Cattle Creek at Hwy 82 | 305429 | 4369688 |
| CC-2 | Cattle Creek | 332 | 0.2 | 5.4 | 7.74 | Cattle Creek near old gaging station below Bowers Gulch | 323496 | 4370331 |
| CC-3 | Cattle Creek | 333 | 0.2 | 7.0 | 7.92 | Cattle Creek at Upper Cattle Creek Road | 319646 | 4369817 |
| CC-4 | Cattle Creek | 291 | 0.1 | 11.3 | 8.34 | Cattle Creek below confluence with Coulter Creek | 315883 | 4370290 |
| CC-5 | Cattle Creek | 397 | 0.2 | 10.8 | 8.45 | Cattle Creek above confluence with Coulter Creek | 315926 | 4370347 |
| CC-6 | Cattle Creek | 382 | 0.2 | 10.6 | 8.40 | Cattle Creek below confluence with Fisher Creek | 310420 | 4369835 |
| CC-7 | Cattle Creek | 430 | 0.2 | 10.4 | 8.33 | Cattle Creek approx. 2.5 miles below confluence with Fisher Creek | 306953 | 4368991 |
| CLC-1 | Coal Creek | 430 | 0.2 | 6.1 | 8.73 | Coal Creek above confluence with Crystal River | 306643 | 4339254 |
| COC-1 | Coulter Creek | 271 | 0.1 | 11.5 | 8.43 | Coulter Creek above confluence with Cattle Creek | 315880 | 4370354 |
| COR-1 | Colorado River | 740 | 0.4 | 8.0 | 7.93 | South bank of Colorado River at Midland Ave. by-pass (opposite COR-7) | 297204 | 4381278 |
| COR-2 | Colorado River | 665 | 0.3 | 8.3 | 7.94 | South bank of Colorado River opposite Funston rest area (opposite COR-8) | 298300 | 4381292 |
| COR-3 | Colorado River | 585 | 0.3 | 7.2 | 8.24 | Southeast bank of Colorado River below west end of railroad tunnel | 301288 | 4380955 |
| COR-4 | Colorado River | 572 | 0.3 | 7.2 | 8.21 | Northwest bank of Colorado River across from COR-3 | 301218 | 4380923 |
| COR-5 | Colorado River | 1,655 | 0.8 | 9.2 | | North bank of Colorado River at Devereaux bridge | 299330 | 4380482 |
| COR-6 | Colorado River | 520 | 0.3 | 8.9 | | South bank of Colorado River at Devereaux bridge | 299269 | 4380422 |
| COR-7 | Colorado River | 879 | 0.4 | 9.1 | | North bank of Colorado River on Midland Ave. by-pass (opposite COR-1) | 297169 | 4381353 |
| COR-8 | Colorado River | 911 | 0.4 | 9.6 | | North bank of Colorado River below Funston rest area (opposite COR-2) | 298296 | 4381333 |
| COR-9 | Colorado River | 550 | 0.3 | 8.5 | | Colorado River below confluence with No Name Creek | 302423 | 4381299 |
| CPC-1 | Cottonwood Creek | 1,032 | 0.5 | 4.3 | 8.04 | Cottonwood Creek at Cottonwood Pass Road | 325126 | 4381338 |
| CR-1 | Crystal River | 360 | 0.2 | 8.0 | 8.59 | East bank Crystal River above confluence with Edgerton Creek at bridge (County Road 108) | 308088 | 4364204 |
| CR-2 | Crystal River | 274 | 0.1 | 4.8 | 8.07 | Crystal River above confluence with East Creek | 306382 | 4338565 |

Cond = specific conductance; **µS/cm** = microSiemens per centimeter at 25 deg. C; **ppt** = parts per thousand; **C** = degrees Celsius; **UTM** = Universal Transverse Mercator coordinate.

Table 2. (Continued)

| Test No. | Drainage | Cond (µS/cm) | Salinity (ppt) | Temp (°C) | pH | Test Location | UTM (X) | UTM (Y) |
|----------|----------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------|------|---|---------|---------|
| CR-3 | Crystal River | 471 | 0.2 | 10.4 | 7.54 | Crystal River below Penny Hot Spring | 307800 | 4344683 |
| CR-4 | Crystal River | 366 | 0.1 | 8.8 | 8.12 | West bank of Crystal River below confluence with Avalanche Creek | 307249 | 4347079 |
| CR-5 | Crystal River | 328 | 0.2 | 8.3 | 8.08 | Crystal River below confluence with Nettle Creek | 309118 | 4352045 |
| CRHS-1 | Hot Spring | 33,860 | 21.1 | 36.9 | 6.47 | Hot spring on south bank of Colorado River east of Glenwood Springs | 301143 | 4380619 |
| CRHS-2 | Hot Spring | 29,330 | 17.7 | 49.9 | 6.59 | Hot spring on south bank of Colorado River east of Glenwood Springs | 300913 | 4380299 |
| CRHS-3 | Hot Spring | 29,440 | 17.8 | 49.2 | 6.56 | Hot spring on south bank of Colorado River east of Glenwood Springs | 300825 | 4380245 |
| CS-1 | Crystal Spring | 612 | 0.3 | 11.2 | 7.41 | Discharge from Crystal Spring | 312745 | 4366508 |
| CSC-1 | Crystal Spring Creek | 566 | 0.3 | 10.9 | 8.22 | Crystal Spring Creek 100 ft below Crystal Spring | 312712 | 4366554 |
| CSC-2 | Crystal Spring Creek | 852 | 0.4 | 12.4 | 7.68 | Crystal Spring Creek 2000 ft above confluence with Roaring Fork River | 310407 | 4364980 |
| CSC-3 | Crystal Spring Creek | 584 | 0.3 | 9.5 | 8.44 | Crystal Spring Creek 30 ft above Hwy 82 | 311626 | 4364713 |
| DG-1 | Dolan Gulch | 542 | 0.3 | 9.4 | 8.42 | Dolan Gulch above confluence with Mitchell Creek | 296379 | 4383062 |
| EC-1 | East Creek | 243 | 0.1 | 2.6 | 8.23 | East Creek above confluence with Crystal River | 306585 | 4338922 |
| ECC-1 | East Coulter Creek | 275 | 0.1 | 5.4 | 8.04 | East Coulter Creek above Van Springs Reservoir | 321697 | 4377181 |
| ECC-2 | East Coulter Creek | 321 | 0.2 | 9.3 | 7.62 | East Coulter Creek below Van Springs Reservoir | 320028 | 4375126 |
| EJS-1 | El Jebel Spring | 1,134 | 0.6 | 14.0 | 7.43 | Spring issuing from evaporite on Upper Cattle Creek Road above El Jebel | 319890 | 4363650 |
| ESC-1 | East Sopris Creek | 472 | 0.2 | 6.9 | 8.72 | East Sopris Creek above confluence with West Sopris Creek | 322522 | 4357054 |
| FC-1 | Fisher Creek | 472 | 0.2 | 11.4 | 8.14 | Fisher Creek above confluence with Cattle Creek | 310834 | 4370023 |
| FMC-1 | Four Mile Creek | 262 | 0.1 | 1.7 | 8.93 | Four Mile Creek at Sunlight Ski Area | 298516 | 4363770 |
| FMC-2 | Four Mile Creek | 486 | 0.2 | 3.9 | 9.18 | Four Mile Creek at Dakota watergap | 300056 | 4370469 |
| FMC-3 | Four Mile Creek | 517 | 0.2 | 8.1 | | Four Mile Creek 3500 ft above confluence with Roaring Fork River | 300867 | 4373174 |
| FPR-1 | Fryingpan River | 200 | 0.1 | 12.2 | 7.74 | Southeast bank of the Frying Pan River above confluence with Roaring Fork River | 324851 | 4359214 |
| FPR-2 | Fryingpan River | 157 | 0.1 | 9.5 | 7.50 | Fryingpan River at gaging station below Reudi dam | 342701 | 4358686 |
| HHS-1 | Hobo Hot Spring | 28,750 | 17.4 | 38.3 | 6.38 | Hobo Hot Spring | 299260 | 4380955 |

Cond = specific conductance; **µS/cm** = microSiemens per centimeter at 25 deg. C; **ppt** = parts per thousand; **C** = degrees Celsius; **UTM** = Universal Transverse Mercator coordinate.

Table 2. (Continued)

| Test No. | Drainage | Cond (µS/cm) | Salinity (ppt) | Temp (°C) | pH | Test Location | UTM (X) | UTM (Y) |
|----------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------|------|--|---------|---------|
| ID-1 | Irrigation Ditch | 1,389 | 0.7 | 6.5 | | Irrigation ditch (Atkinson Canal) southeast of Three Mile Creek | 300822 | 4376243 |
| IHS-1 | Iron Hot Spring | 34,050 | 21.0 | 41.3 | 6.30 | Iron Hot Spring | 299308 | 4380661 |
| MC-1 | Mitchell Creek | 382 | 0.2 | 6.2 | 8.18 | Mitchell Creek above confluence with Dolan Gulch | 296414 | 4383035 |
| MC-2 | Mitchell Creek | 352 | 0.2 | 5.1 | | Mitchell Creek 30 ft above spring (MCS-1) | 296932 | 4384104 |
| MCS-1 | Mitchell Creek Spring | 442 | 0.2 | 9.2 | | Spring on east bank of Mitchell Creek | 296901 | 4384068 |
| NC-1 | Nettle Creek | 107 | 0.1 | 6.4 | 7.78 | Nettle Creek above confluence with Crystal River | 309137 | 4351979 |
| NN-1 | No Name Creek | 264 | 0.1 | 5.9 | | No Name Creek above confluence with Colorado River | 302444 | 4381259 |
| RC-1 | Red Creek | 596 | 0.3 | 8.2 | | Red Creek above confluence with Roaring Fork River | 301901 | 4374939 |
| RFR-1 | Roaring Fork River | 405 | 0.2 | 12.6 | 7.81 | East bank of Roaring Fork River behind 7-11 store in Basalt | 324867 | 4359144 |
| RFR-2 | Roaring Fork River | 404 | 0.2 | 12.3 | | East bank of Roaring Fork River 100 ft upstream of RFR-1 | 324867 | 4359144 |
| RFR-3 | Roaring Fork River | 405 | 0.2 | 11.9 | 8.00 | West bank of the Roaring Fork River southeast of bridge in Basalt | 324849 | 4359120 |
| RFR-4 | Roaring Fork River | 320 | 0.2 | 12.2 | 7.95 | North bank Roaring Fork River 3,000 ft below confluence with Fryingpan River | 324010 | 4359457 |
| RFR-5 | Roaring Fork River | 399 | 0.2 | 8.2 | 7.82 | Southwest bank Roaring Fork River approx. 50 ft above confluence with Snowmass Creek | 328929 | 4355249 |
| RFR-6 | Roaring Fork River | 390 | 0.2 | 8.4 | 7.88 | Southwest bank Roaring Fork River 1,500 ft below confluence with Snowmass Creek | 328314 | 4355596 |
| RFR-7 | Roaring Fork River | 310 | 0.1 | 11.2 | 8.23 | Northeast bank of Roaring Fork River above confluence with Sopris Creek | 322425 | 4359277 |
| RFR-8 | Roaring Fork River | 311 | 0.1 | 11.2 | 8.19 | Northeast bank of Roaring Fork River 600 ft below confluence with Sopris Creek | 321901 | 4359513 |
| RFR-9 | Roaring Fork River | 375 | 0.2 | 9.9 | 8.90 | East bank Roaring Fork River near Aspen Glen below confluence with Crystal River | 306531 | 4366111 |
| RFR-10 | Roaring Fork River | 496 | 0.2 | 7.9 | 8.63 | West bank of Roaring Fork River at City Park | 299913 | 4379411 |
| RFR-11 | Roaring Fork River | 1,029 | 0.5 | 5.9 | 8.85 | Southwest bank Roaring Fork River 15 ft below confluence with Threemile Creek | 300765 | 4376286 |
| RFR-12 | Roaring Fork River | 395 | 0.2 | 7.7 | 8.98 | East bank of Roaring Fork River 250 ft above County Road 109 bridge | 303391 | 4372260 |
| RFR-13E | Roaring Fork River | 481 | 0.2 | 7.3 | | East bank of Roaring Fork River at Sunlight bridge | 300187 | 4377463 |

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Table 2. (Continued)

| Test No. | Drainage | Cond (μS/cm) | Salinity (ppt) | Temp (°C) | pH | Test Location | UTM (X) | UTM (Y) |
|----------|--------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------|----|---|---------|---------|
| RFR-13W | Roaring Fork River | 503 | 0.2 | 8.0 | | West bank of Roaring Fork River at Sunlight bridge | 300142 | 4377440 |
| RFR-14 | Roaring Fork River | 474 | 0.2 | 8.4 | | East bank of Roaring Fork River at 7th St. bridge | 299846 | 4379853 |
| RFR-15 | Roaring Fork River | 482 | 0.2 | 7.5 | | West bank of Roaring Fork River at 7th St. bridge | 299783 | 4379858 |
| RFR-16 | Roaring Fork River | 860 | 0.4 | 8.4 | | West Bank of Roaring Fork River near airport. | 301784 | 4375242 |
| RFR-17 | Roaring Fork River | 429 | 0.2 | 9.7 | | East bank of Roaring Fork River above confluence with Red Canyon Creek | 301871 | 4374876 |
| RFR-18 | Roaring Fork River | 434 | 0.2 | 9.2 | | East bank of Roaring Fork River below confluence with Red Canyon Creek | 301855 | 4374949 |
| RFR-19 | Roaring Fork River | 404 | 0.2 | 10.1 | | East bank of Roaring Fork River below Cattle Creek | 304309 | 4371117 |
| RFR-20 | Roaring Fork River | 406 | 0.2 | 5.8 | | North bank of Roaring Fork River below bend near Kiggin | 306585 | 4365903 |
| RFR-21 | Roaring Fork River | 387 | 0.2 | 5.5 | | North bank of Roaring Fork River 100 ft above RFR-20 near Kiggin | 306591 | 4365868 |
| RFR-22 | Roaring Fork River | 385 | 0.2 | 5.5 | | North bank of Roaring Fork River 100 ft above RFR-21 near Kiggin | 306618 | 4365836 |
| RFR-23 | Roaring Fork River | 381 | 0.2 | 5.5 | | North bank of Roaring Fork River 100 ft above RFR-22 near Kiggin | 306659 | 4365824 |
| RFR-24 | Roaring Fork River | 383 | 0.2 | 5.8 | | North bank of Roaring Fork River 100 ft above RFR-23 near Kiggin | 306700 | 4365822 |
| RFR-25 | Roaring Fork River | 384 | 0.2 | 5.7 | | North bank of Roaring Fork River 100 ft above RFR-24 near Kiggin | 306736 | 4365833 |
| RFR-26 | Roaring Fork River | 383 | 0.2 | 5.7 | | North bank of Roaring Fork River 100 ft above RFR-25 near Kiggin | 306770 | 4365857 |
| RFR-27 | Roaring Fork River | 384 | 0.2 | 5.7 | | North bank of Roaring Fork River 100 ft above RFR-26 at start of river bend near Kiggin | 306799 | 4365894 |
| RFR-28 | Roaring Fork River | 395 | 0.2 | 6.0 | | West bank of Roaring Fork River, below bend at Asphalt Plant | 305108 | 4368934 |
| RFR-29 | Roaring Fork River | 396 | 0.2 | 6.2 | | West bank of Roaring Fork River 100 ft above RFR-28 | 305156 | 4368893 |
| RFR-30 | Roaring Fork River | 394 | 0.2 | 6.0 | | West bank of Roaring Fork River 100 ft above RFR-29 | 305219 | 4368857 |
| RFR-31 | Roaring Fork River | 394 | 0.2 | 6.1 | | West bank of Roaring Fork River 100 ft above RFR-30 | 305274 | 4368830 |
| RFR-32 | Roaring Fork River | 735 | 0.4 | 6.3 | | Southwest bank of Roaring Fork River below confluence with Threemile Creek | 300721 | 4376297 |
| RFR-33 | Roaring Fork River | 816 | 0.4 | 6.2 | | Southwest bank of Roaring Fork River 100 ft below confluence with Threemile Creek | 300684 | 4376288 |
| RFR-34 | Roaring Fork River | 1,090 | 0.5 | 5.9 | | Southwest bank of Roaring Fork River 100 ft below RFR-33 | 300625 | 4376298 |
| RFR-35 | Roaring Fork River | 968 | 0.5 | 6.5 | | Southwest bank of Roaring Fork River 100 ft below RFR-34 | 300588 | 4376310 |

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Table 2. (continued).

| Test No. | Drainage | Cond (µS/cm) | Salinity (ppt) | Temp (°C) | pH | Test Location | UTM (X) | UTM (Y) |
|----------|----------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------|------|--|---------|---------|
| RFR-36 | Roaring Fork River | 1,550 | 0.8 | 6.9 | | Southwest bank of Roaring Fork River above confluence with Threemile Creek | 300793 | 4376281 |
| RFR-37 | Roaring Fork River | 595 | 0.3 | 6.7 | | Southwest bank of Roaring Fork River 100 ft above RFR-36 | 300832 | 4376276 |
| RFR-38 | Roaring Fork River | 363 | 0.2 | 8.5 | 8.69 | North bank of Roaring Fork River at bridge near Mulford | 314563 | 4363157 |
| RFR-39 | Roaring Fork River | 384 | 0.2 | 9.9 | 8.83 | North bank Roaring Fork River above confluence with Crystal River, below Sutank bridge | 308004 | 4365229 |
| SC-1 | Sopris Creek | 403 | 0.2 | 11.0 | 8.19 | Sopris Creek above confluence with Roaring Fork River | 322064 | 4359280 |
| SC-2 | Sopris Creek | 492 | 0.2 | 7.0 | 8.60 | Sopris Creek below confluence of East and West Sopris Creeks | 322602 | 4357498 |
| SD-1 | Shippees Draw | 513 | 0.2 | 8.0 | 8.06 | Shippees Draw at Upper Cattle Creek Road | 317279 | 4371112 |
| SDS-1 | Shippees Draw Spring | 383 | 0.2 | 11.8 | 8.03 | Below spring in Shippees Bowl | 318975 | 4372791 |
| SMC-1 | Snowmass Creek | 407 | 0.2 | 7.4 | 8.01 | Snowmass Creek at Hwy 82 bridge, 50 ft above confluence with Roaring Fork River | 328847 | 4355213 |
| SV-1 | Spring Valley | 635 | 0.3 | 8.2 | 6.54 | [Spring Valley] Creek at NW end of Spring Valley | 304862 | 4376130 |
| SVS-1 | Spring Valley Spring | 401 | 0.2 | 11.9 | 6.48 | Mouth of spring above unnamed reservoir | 308684 | 4372672 |
| SVS-2 | Spring Valley Spring | 491 | 0.2 | 10.6 | 6.58 | Mouth of spring near house below unnamed reservoir | 308462 | 4372561 |
| TMC-1 | Three Mile Creek | 255 | 0.1 | 3.6 | 8.96 | Threemile Creek above subdivision near Cardiff | 300715 | 4375679 |
| TMC-2 | Three Mile Creek | 269 | 0.1 | 4.3 | 8.93 | Threemile Creek 20 ft above confluence with Roaring Fork River | 300774 | 4376252 |
| US-1 | Unnamed Spring | 726 | 0.4 | 9.2 | 8.63 | Unnamed spring southeast of Carbondale | 313580 | 4360403 |
| US-2 | Unnamed Spring | 3,266 | 16.0 | 55.1 | 6.19 | One of the Penny Hot Springs; on west side of Crystal River | 307808 | 4344648 |
| US-3 | Unnamed Spring | 3,281 | 1.7 | 3.0 | | Pipe discharge of water from subdivision spring on Stoneridge Court | 297633 | 4381774 |
| VC-1 | Vapor Caves | 30,360 | 18.3 | 50.3 | 6.84 | In Vapor Cave; in moat around cave walls | 300696 | 4380262 |
| WSC-1 | West Sopris Creek | 550 | 0.3 | 6.9 | 8.81 | West Sopris Creek above confluence with East Sopris Creek | 322385 | 4357297 |
| YHS-1 | Yampah Hot Spring | 31,060 | 19.5 | 50.0 | 6.81 | Drinking spring east of main Glenwood Springs pool | 300524 | 4380180 |
| YHS-2 | Yampah Hot Spring | 31,850 | 19.4 | 49.6 | | Main spring next to Glenwood Springs pool | 300551 | 4380177 |

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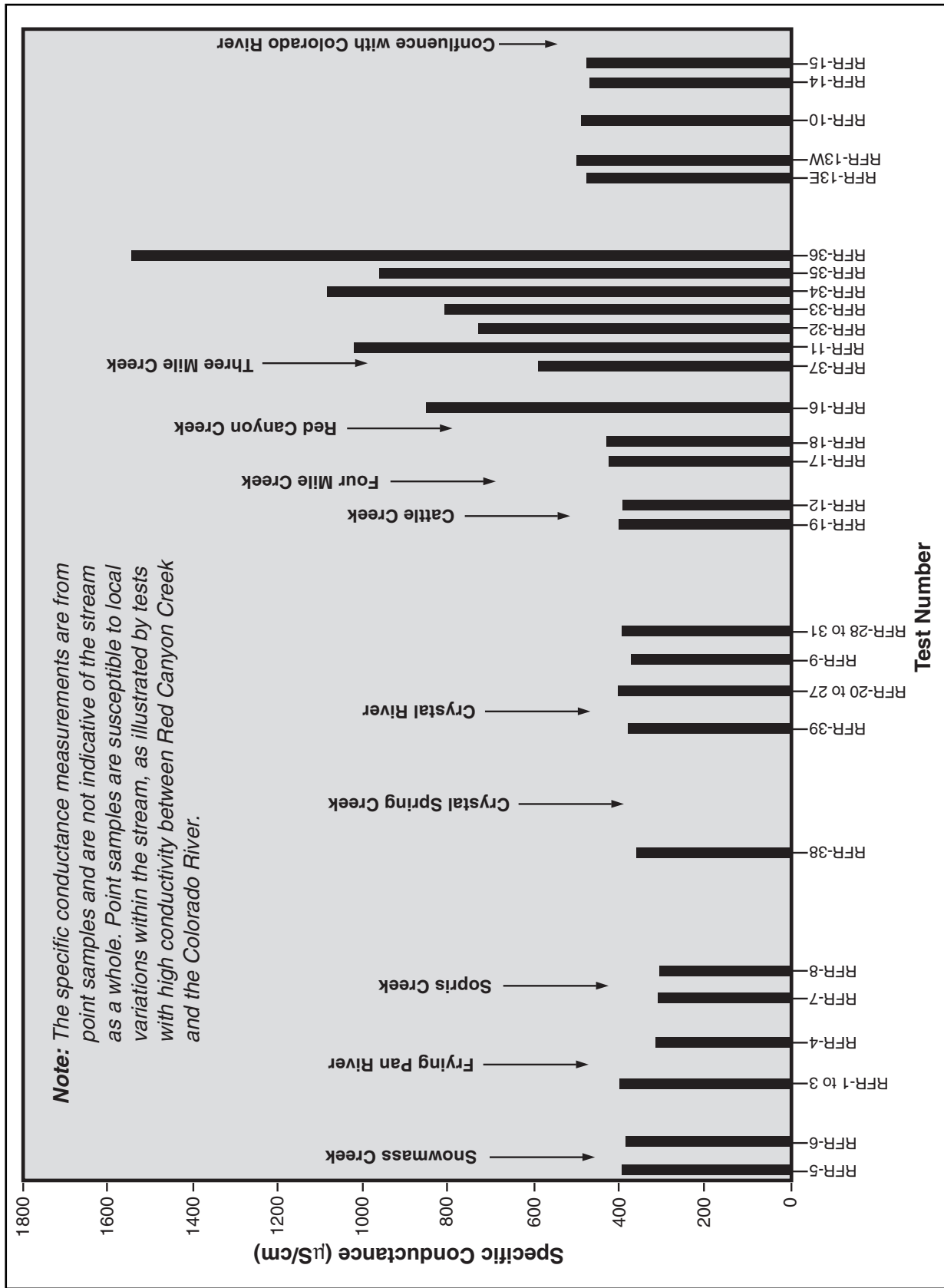


Figure 2. Graph showing specific conductance at test locations in the Roaring Fork River between Snowmass and Glenwood Springs (arrows indicate where various tributaries join the river).



Summary

Specific conductance in the Roaring Fork River was around 400 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ at the confluence with Snowmass Creek at the furthest upstream test site of this study. Downstream of inflows from the Fryingpan River and Cedar Brook Lake, which had specific conductance of about 200 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ each, tests of specific conductance in the Roaring Fork River dropped to around 310 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$. Between Sopris Creek and Fourmile Creek, near the southern edge of Glenwood Springs, specific conductance tests in the Roaring Fork River gradually increased to about 400 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$. From Fourmile Creek to the confluence with the Colorado River, specific conductance of the stream increased to around 480 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$. In this lower portion of the Roaring Fork River, a reach extending from the Glenwood Springs airport downstream past the mouth of Threemile Creek had significantly elevated specific conductance values along the southwestern bank of the river. Specific conductance at test locations in this reach ranged up to 1,550 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$.

The specific conductance data collected during this study indicated that cold springs discharging from evaporite or from surficial deposits overlying evaporite within the Carbondale collapse center had only moderately elevated specific conductance values that ranged from 383 to 1,134 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$. These springs contributed to the salinity loads in surface water in the area, but were probably only minor sources. Streams that drained areas extensively underlain by evaporitic rocks also had moderately elevated specific conductance values that ranged from 492 to 1,032 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$. Streams draining areas underlain by Cretaceous marine shales had somewhat lower specific conductance readings ranging from 255 to 550 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$.

The test locations exhibiting elevated specific conductance in Roaring Fork River near the Glenwood Springs airport and the mouth of

Threemile Creek are interpreted to result from the direct discharge of saline ground water to the surface water at discrete locations. This agrees with Warner and others (1985), who suggested a significant part of the increase in the base-flow salt load in the Roaring Fork River between Woody Creek (32,700 tons/year) and Glenwood Springs (183,000 tons/year) was due to saline ground-water discharge to the river. It must be noted that the test locations near Threemile Creek were only from the southwest bank of the Roaring Fork River. These conductivity measurements are not representative of the river as a whole, especially given their departure from test results upstream and downstream of this reach. They are indicative of saline ground water discharging along the southwest bank of the Roaring Fork in this area. The salinity of this ground water is inferred to be from natural processes, but may be influenced by anthropogenic sources.

The substantially lower conductivity values obtained in the Roaring Fork River downstream of the Threemile Creek area could be a result of more thorough mixing of water in the river or dilution effects from less saline ground-water inflows. Nevertheless, conductivity in the Roaring Fork River below Threemile Creek is maintained above 470 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$.

Thermal springs in and near Glenwood Springs had very high specific conductance that was over an order of magnitude higher than any value measured for cold springs or tributary streams in the area. This observation supports the numerous previous investigations that have concluded the thermal springs near Glenwood Springs and Dotsero are major sources of salt loading in this reach of the Colorado River.

A comprehensive investigation is needed to characterize and quantify the significance of the elevated specific conductance detected in the

Roaring Fork River in the vicinity of the Glenwood Springs airport and mouth of Threemile Creek. This investigation should employ discharge measurements, cross-section sampling techniques, and full-suite laboratory analysis of water samples. Laboratory analysis could help in differentiating natural or anthropogenic sources of salt loading to the Roaring Fork River by identifying

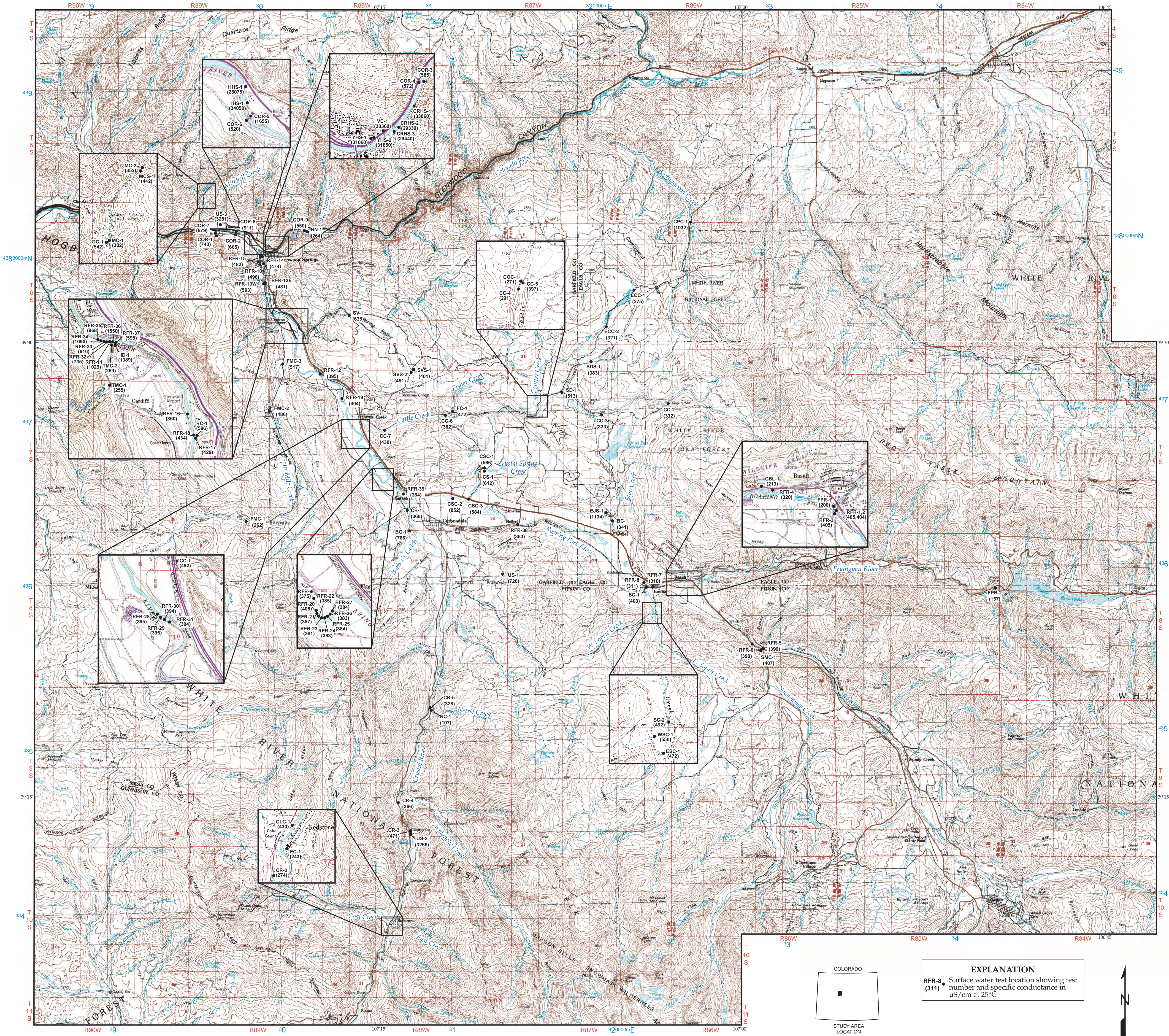
geochemical signatures of the sources. Oxygen and hydrogen isotope studies would aid in determining the source and relative age of influent saline ground water.

Additional studies are warranted in the Eagle collapse center to evaluate whether cold springs, tributaries, and ground-water discharge play similar roles in that area.

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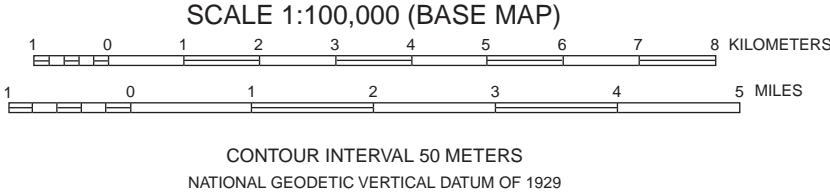
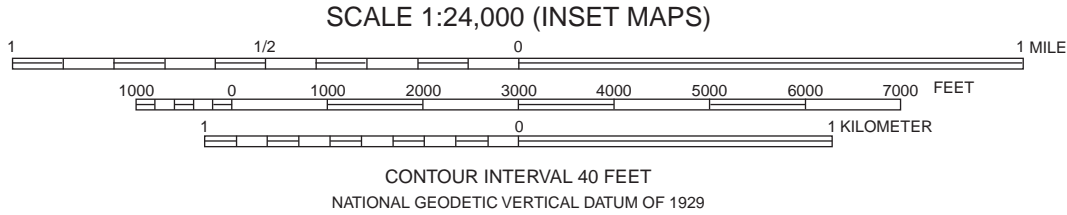
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MAP SHOWING TEST LOCATIONS WITH SPECIFIC CONDUCTANCE VALUES,
SNOWMASS–GLENWOOD SPRINGS AREA, WEST-CENTRAL COLORADO
Compiled by Jonathan M. Zook



Base composited from U.S. Geological Survey 1:100,000 scale topographic maps: Glenwood Springs (1981), Carbondale (1982), Vail (1980), and Leadville (1993).

Insets from U.S. Geological Survey 1:24,000 scale topographic maps: Basalt (rev. 1987), Carbondale (rev. 1987), Cattle Creek (rev. 1987), Glenwood Springs (rev. 1987), Leon (rev. 1987), and Redstone (rev. 1987).



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