

# Muddy Waters

by Steve Eginore



"She is a dirty devil," Major John Wesley Powell said during his famous 1869 Colorado River expedition. He was speaking, of course, about the sludge-laden waters emptying into the mighty Colorado from a large tributary canyon veering in from the north. Too thick to drink and too thin to plow, the Dirty Devil River got its name. Originating near Hanksville, Utah, this wild river cuts deeply into the melee of sedimentary layers for 80-some river miles before meandering into present day Lake Powell, bringing much of the desert along with it. Here's a look at a recent exploration to this remote country via packrafts, hiking boots and willingness to get a little sand in the hair.



Approaching the Dirty D from points high above the river.



Finding a way into the canyon from the top can sometimes prove a bit tricky.



Jonathan Hagman explores the narrows of one of the many spectacular Dirty Devil side canyons.



Ben Phillips ponders bizarrely eroded canyon walls.



Nearing Lake Powell and the former Glen Canyon confluence.



A serene section of the Dirty Devil River.