

Your land

Hunting and fishing destinations

Extreme Wind River warning

Instream flow segments of the Wind offer great opportunities

For centuries, Shoshone, Crow and Blackfoot traveled and hunted along the upper Wind River, though their interactions were not always amicable. Later, the area was a major route for trappers headed to Jackson Hole. Astorians on their way to Oregon also followed the river before branching off over Union Pass. The first permanent Euro-American settlers reached the area around 1866, and by the early 1900s, the river was a key contributor to the local economy. Between 1914 and 1946, Swedish and Scandinavian loggers, or tie hacks, floated more than 10 million hand-hewn railroad ties some 100 miles down the Wind River to Riverton in massive weeks-long drives. Evidence of this era remains today. Large sections of the wooden flume that was built to carry the ties from the mountains to the river are still visible today. The river itself still shows scars of the tie drives that scoured and straightened the channel.

The Fishery

Though the river yields more rainbow than brown trout to anglers, this is definitely a brown trout stream. There are a few cutthroat trout here too, but their numbers are very limited. Recent fish surveys show the river supports about 2,000 trout per mile— more than 75 percent of which are browns. The average size of trout here is about 11 inches, but browns commonly reach nearly 20 inches, and rainbows grow to over 17 inches. The river contains very few fry or young trout, mostly due

to the fact that there is relatively little spawning gravel in the main channel. Small tributaries like the Jakeys Fork generate most of the recruitment. The department stocks a small number of catchable-size rainbow trout in the upper end of the segment.

In early summer, high water velocity and muddy water can make fishing difficult—and catching even harder. As flows drop in July, woolly buggers and hopper patterns work well for browns. As fishing conditions improve, some locals use a variation of the prince nymph called the Dumas.

Tracking this fly down can be hard, but rumor has it that at least one pattern is being offered via the Internet. A variety of dry flies work well in late summer and fall, but the pattern of choice often varies daily. Statewide regulations apply that allow anglers to keep six fish a day, only one of which may be over 20 inches long. Not too surprisingly, surveys show that over 90 percent of all fish caught here are voluntarily released.

How to Get There

From Dubois, go about five miles east on Wyoming Highway 26/287. The road parallels the river, and there are numerous signs along the highway directing you to public parking areas. You can almost always find at least one parking lot with no one there, so when you've found the place you want to fish, just turn in, slip on your waders, rig up your rod, and get ready for some fast action!

The Instream Flow

Permit Number: 10 I.F.

Priority Date: March 10, 1989

Status of the filing: A public hearing was held in the Dubois town hall on December 15, 1992. The state engineer approved the water right on June 22, 1997. The Board of Control has not adjudicated the water right.

Quantity: 110 cubic feet per second (cfs) from August 1 to September 30; 102 cfs from October 1 to July 31. The state engineer reduced the water right for July from the recommended flow of 110 cfs to 102 cfs.

Location and length: The segment is located right along Wyoming Hwy. 26/287 about 5 miles east of Dubois. The approximately 5.2 mile-long reach extends downstream from the middle of section 23, range 106 west, township 41 north to section 5, range 105 west, township 40 north.

Landownership: With the exception of about one-quarter mile of stream in the northwest corner of section 30, range 106 west, township 41 north, the Game and Fish Department has purchased a public fishing easement along at least one side of the entire segment. Signs along the highway identify several parking areas and other signs along the creek identify the beginning and ending of the public fishing area.

Rationale: The primary purposes of the filing were to maintain adequate winter habitat for adult and juvenile trout and provide enough water in the summer to maintain existing level of productivity for adult and juvenile trout. Most of the trout spawning occurs in upstream tributaries so flows to protect spawning habitat were not developed. Detailed studies done by the department in 1988 documented the need for 110 cfs from July 1 through September 30 to maintain existing rates of trout production in the summer. Those studies also showed a need for 102 cfs to maintain trout survival in the winter.



Your creel from the Wind River may be dominated by rainbows, but the river actually houses more brown trout.