**X-Stream Fishing**

**Pop in to the Little Popo Agie**

Like most of the great rivers of Wyoming, people have been drawn to the Little Popo Agie for centuries in large part because of the diversity and abundance of plants and animals found along its banks. Elk, deer, antelope and bighorn sheep commonly course the expansive slopes of the Wind River Mountains flanking the river today. Fossil hunters from 10 millennia ago pursued woolly mammoths, giant bison and maybe even anagorg a few native Yellowstone cutthroat trout on much the same stage. Today, the Little Popo Agie Valley is as colorful and pastoral a setting as any place in the state and offers much the same level of solitude and sustenance to visitors as it has throughout time.

**The Fishery**

The in-stream flow segment is located entirely within a public fishing area (PFA) that was bought by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Brown trout make up over 95 percent of the trout within this stretch of stream, though mountain whitefish are also common. Recent surveys showed the stream held over 1,300 trout per mile. Like most stream fisheries, the majority of trout are less than 12 inches long, but there are plenty of bigger fish—over 16 inches to hold your interest. All the fish found in the segment are naturally spawned in the river, as the department does not stock any trout here. This section of the stream is quite popular with local anglers for early season angling and also for some late fall fishing, but it’s also a convenient spot for tourists to try their luck when they don’t have time for a long drive and hike in the mountains.

The Little Popo Agie offers great fishing early in the spring, late in the fall, or any time you want to get in some fishing but don’t have time to hike deep into the backcountry. Photo by Tom Annear

**How to get there**

From Lander, go about 10 miles south of town on Highway 28 and turn right on a gravel road that’s about one mile south of the junction of Highway 28 and 287. There’s a public parking area within just over a mile of this highway that services the lower end of the segment. There’s also a public parking area at the upper end of the segment that can be used by continuing on the main gravel road about another mile and a half.

**Clearing the Air on Water Values, economics and water use are changing**

It’s been almost 40 years since the first effort was made to change Wyoming’s water law to accommodate a use of water called in-stream flow. The first in-stream flow filing on the Green River in 1969 failed, and it took another 17 years before a law was passed in 1986. We’ve lived with that law in another 20 years now. To some this step was a monumental one. To others it was a mere baby step to legally recognize what the majority of citizens felt was a legitimate use of water all along. However you view the situation, it really was a sort of experiment to see if the state could accommodate this “new” use of water without upsetting the apple cart of traditional uses.

**The Instream Flow Permit Number:** 43 L.F. 
**Priority Date:** October 8, 1993 
**Status of the filing:** A public hearing was held in Lander on April 15, 1993. The Board of Control approved the water right on January 17, 2006. The Board of Control has not adjudicated the water right. 
**Location and Length:** The instream flow segment is 1.4 miles long and is located about 10 miles south of Lander.

**Landownership:** The Game and Fish Commission has purchased a public fishing easement along both sides of the entire segment. Signs along the highway identify parking areas and other signs along the creek identify the beginning and ending of the public fishing area.

**Rationale:** The primary purpose of the filing was to protect the investment the commission made in the public fishing area, and the fishing it provides, by ensuring that water would be available at all times of year, when it was available in priority. The different quantities of flow that were recommended will maintain adequate winter habitat for adult and juvenile trout, protect the existing level of productivity for adult and juvenile trout in the summer and sustain adequate water for fall brown trout spawning.

To get more information about instream flow, visit the Wyoming Game and Fish Department’s Web site at http://gf.state.wy.us/fish/instreamflow

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