

# Pinedale Region Angler Newsletter

2016 Edition  
Volume 12



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## Angling Access in the Pinedale Region

Thanks for reading the 2016 version of Pinedale Region Angler Newsletter. This newsletter is intended for everyone interested in the aquatic resources in the Pinedale area. The resources we manage belong to all of us.

The Pinedale Region encompasses the Upper Green River Drainage (upstream of Fontenelle Reservoir) and parts of the Bear River drainage near Cokeville (see map).

Additional information regarding the Pinedale Region and the areas fisheries can be obtained by contacting the Pinedale Regional Office at (307) 367-4353.

Most anglers who have spent time in the Pinedale Region realize that there are hundreds of options for fishing on public land. You may also know that the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) improves access to many sites on federally-managed lands. For example, we improve roads and provide boat ramps, docks, and rest rooms at many lakes and streams around Pinedale. However, even folks that spend most of their time in this area may not know about all of additional opportunities that the Department provides. The WGFD manages many properties that are great places to catch fish, but are not well known by the public. In addition, the Department has also obtained access easements on several miles of stream located on private property scattered throughout the region. The properties managed by the WGFD, and those with access agreements are shown in Table 1.

Fishing is allowed on all of the properties listed, but other activities may or may not be allowed. In addition, many areas are closed for part of the year. Maps of each access area, along with the rules associated with the area can be found on the internet at <https://>

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**Pinedale Region Fisheries Staff:**

**Fisheries Management**

Hilda Sexauer Fisheries Supervisor  
Pete Cavalli Fisheries Biologist  
Darren Rhea Fisheries Biologist

**Aquatic Habitat**

Floyd Roadifer Habitat Biologist

**Spawning**

Peter J. Feck Asst. Spawning Coord.

**Boulder Rearing Station**

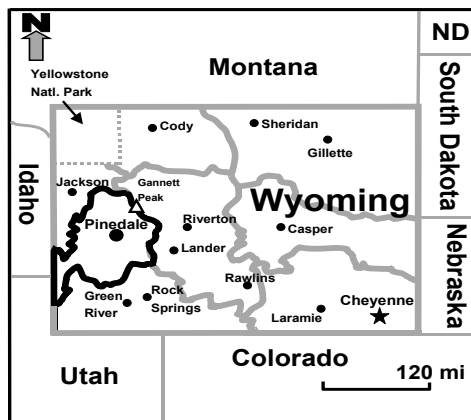
Chip Moller Superintendent  
Joe Gillis Senior Fish Culturist  
Matt Joki Fish Culturist

**Daniel Fish Hatchery**

Tim Kurtz Superintendent  
Greg Anderson Senior Fish Culturist  
Kris Holmes Fish Culturist

**Aquatic Invasive Species**

Chris Wright AIS Crew Leader



*Pinedale Region Map*

## Access Areas

(Continued from page 1)

[wgfd.wyo.gov/public-access](http://wgfd.wyo.gov/public-access). Walk-in fishing areas are listed under “Private Lands Public Wildlife”, while Wildlife Habitat Management Areas, Public Access Areas, and Fish Hatcheries are listed under “Access to Wyoming’s Wildlife”. Since the weather is starting to warm up, you should get your fishing gear ready and go try your luck on one or more of the access areas the WGFD has provided for anglers in the Pinedale Region.

- Pete Cavalli

Table 1. Access areas in the Pinedale Region that are provided by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and can be used by anglers. The codes used are WHMA: Wildlife Habitat Management Area; PAA: Public Access Area; FH: Fish Hatchery or Rearing Station; WI: Walk-in Fishing Area; P: Parking Area; RR: Rest Room; BR: Boat Ramp; C: Camping allowed.

Area Name	Fishing Location	Facilities	Property Type
Boulder Rearing Station	East Fork River and ponds	P, RR	FH
East Fork River-Richie's	East Fork River	P	PAA
Fall Creek	Fall Creek	P	PAA
Muddy Creek	Muddy Creek	none	PAA
New Fork River-Boulder Bridge	New Fork River	P, BR, RR	PAA
Walk-in Area 1	Thomas Fork	P	WI
Daniel Hatchery	Forty Rod Creek	P	FH
Green River-Daniel	Green River	P, BR, RR, C	PAA
Green River-Warren Bridge	Green River	P, BR, RR, C	PAA
Green River-Fear	Green River	P, BR, RR, C	PAA
New Fork River-Remmick	New Fork River	P, BR, RR, C	PAA
Duck Creek	Duck Creek	P	PAA
Half Moon	Pole Creek	P, C	WHMA
Green River-Huston	Green River	P, BR, RR	PAA
Green River-Sommers-Grindstone	Green River	P, BR, RR	PAA
New Fork River-Airport	New Fork River	P, BR, RR	PAA
New Fork River-Mesa Bridge	New Fork River	P, BR	PAA
Soda Lake	Soda Lake	P, BR, RR, C	WHMA
Walk-in Area 2	Pine Creek	P, RR	WI

## Central Bear River Fish Passage Inventory

The Central Bear River Watershed is located in Lincoln County, Wyoming, and includes the town of Cokeville. Land ownership in the basin is a mix of U. S. Forest Service, State of Wyoming, private, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands. The 357,046 acre watershed is recognized as an aquatic conservation area in the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) and it is likewise recognized as a priority under the Wyoming Game and Fish Department’s Strategic Habitat Plan (SHP).



*A diversion structure on the Smiths Fork River that is seasonally impassable by some species and sizes of fish*

The Central Bear River watershed was selected for a fish passage inventory of all the existing water diversion structures and barriers to fish movement. Fish passage refers to the ability of fish, including all species and life-stages known to inhabit a water, to successfully navigate instream obstacles. Any constructed or manmade structure can limit the movement of fish within a stream and are evaluated on their potential to be improved.

At the start of the inventory in 2015, 31 known points of diversion were identified within the watershed. Measurements were taken at 25 of these sites to determine whether any of the diversion structures were barriers to fish movements. This information is used to prioritize projects that may be completed to improve fish passage. Such data is helpful in allocating funding toward efforts that most improve fish passage and prevent fish entrainment.

In 2015, access permission was obtained to visit all but six points of diversion on private property within the Bear

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## Rainbow Trout Struggling in Dollar Lake

Dollar Lake is a 30 acre lake located adjacent to the Green River, between Kendall Bridge and Lower Green River Lake. This popular lake attracts thousands of anglers every year due to its close proximity to the Upper Green River Road (FS 650) and its abundant rainbow trout population.

Dollar Lake is specifically managed to produce high catch rates of rainbow trout, to encourage angling participation and attract anglers of all skill level. Rainbow trout are stocked in the lake every year after they have reached approximately 8 inches in the hatchery. This size is used to generate a fishery that is readily available to anglers, while allowing room for some growth. Many fish are caught and harvested within the first year of being introduced, while a small number remain in the lake to grow larger.

In 2007, Fisheries Biologists made a startling discovery when the first nonnative white sucker was captured during routine monitoring of the fish population in the lake. Since then, white sucker numbers have grown exponentially and today account for 99% of the fish population in the lake (not including minnows and dace). Given their popularity among anglers as a live baitfish in other parts of the state, it is suspected that white sucker may have been introduced into Dollar Lake by illegal bait fisherman.

Though white suckers are not predators of other fish, they can out-compete them for food and other resources, making it difficult for other species to grow. In Dollar Lake, the introduction of white sucker has had the most profound effect on the rainbow trout population. Since the establishment of white suckers, the average length of rainbow trout has declined to less than 12 inches from a historic average of between 14-15 inches. Also, the proportion of rainbow trout greater than 15 inches has declined from around 20% to zero.

To help combat the growing white sucker population, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department reduced the

number of rainbow trout stocked in Dollar Lake to try to improve growth rates. Even so, little has changed in the rainbow trout population and the white sucker population continues to grow. Overall, catch rates for rainbow trout by anglers remain relatively high, around 1.0 fish per hour. However, many anglers have communicated their desire to catch larger trout and have expressed some concern over the poor body condition of harvested fish.



*White suckers introduced into Dollar Lake have had a dramatic affect on the rainbow trout population*

The best means of dealing with sucker populations like the one inhabiting Dollar Lake is to completely eradicate them. In most instances, eradication of a fish species involves the application of a fish toxicant that will remove all of the fish in a water body. In Wyoming, the fish toxicant rotenone has been successfully applied to remove undesirable fish species, including white suckers. Though preliminary at this point, the

Wyoming Game and Fish Department is considering a plan to eradicate white suckers from Dollar Lake sometime in the near future. Once the white sucker population has been removed, the lake can be restocked with rainbow trout that will likely flourish again in the competitor-free environment. Tiger trout, a brown trout – brook trout hybrid, may also be introduced into the lake in small numbers following the removal effort. Tiger trout are an effective predator of other fish and will be used to prevent the future establishment of another white sucker population. Rainbow trout that are stocked in Dollar Lake are too large for most tiger trout to eat and won't serve as their diet. Other species of fish native to the lake, such as speckled dace and mountain sucker, will also be introduced to rebuild the original fish community.

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department will soon develop plans for the eradication of white suckers in Dollar Lake and reestablishment of rainbow trout. Public meetings and commenting periods will be used to gauge the public's interest and support for managing Dollar Lake. If you have any comments or concerns regarding the situation in Dollar Lake or any other local fishery, please feel free to contact the Regional Office for more information.

- Darren Rhea



## *The Easterner: Brook Trout Fishing Opportunities in the Pinedale Region*

Brook trout are plentiful in the western U.S. Many of the first introductions of brook trout were by settlers who wanted to bring part of their heritage from the east coast of the United States. Brook trout have dark olive-colored skin speckled with orange dots, blue halos and yellowish-colored squiggly lines (called vermiculations) on their backs. Their fins are typically orange with white and black stripes on the leading edge. Brook trout, along with many other nonnative fish, add diversity to the fishing opportunities in the Pinedale area, and are often found in large numbers. Because brook trout can easily overpopulate and stop growing, regulations for their harvest are very liberal. Except for a few waters, the brook trout limit is 16 fish with no size restrictions.



*Brook trout are popular among anglers of all ages due to their willingness to take almost any presentation*

Brook trout were introduced to many of the Pinedale area waters during the early and mid 1900's. These fish were stocked by local fisherman and outfitters, Federal

Agencies, and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Brook trout are well adapted for many environments, but they are particularly well suited for small to medium-sized tributary streams and cool, clear lakes. Brook trout can be found throughout the Green River drainage and a handful of places in the Bear River drainage. However, anglers looking to target them might focus their efforts on one these especially productive areas.



*Liberal harvest limits throughout much of the Region are meant to keep brook populations in check*

The Wyoming Range provides excellent opportunities to catch brook trout. The Cottonwood streams (South and North Cottonwood creeks and their tributaries) have medium-sized brook trout for a small stream, and the Piney Creeks (North, Middle and South) are also known for providing excellent brook trout fishing. Due to the Fontenelle Fire, the South Piney Creek population has declined but brook trout are still present and will soon rebound as conditions improve. Surveys completed by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department have determined that brook trout in most of these streams are abundant, with an average size near 9 inches, and some growing as large as 14 inches. Roaring Fork Lakes (North Piney drainage), Fontenelle Lakes, and Soda Cottonwood Pond (North Cottonwood drainage) are lake options in the Wyoming Range. North Cottonwood, South Cottonwood and North Piney drainages all have tackle restrictions (artificial flies and lures only), while Middle Piney, South Piney (excluding Fish Creek), and Fontenelle creeks have no tackle restrictions. Streams in the Upper Green River area to the north also support

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## Brook Trout (cont.)

*(Continued from page 4)*

dense populations of brook trout. Anglers seeking them in this area should head to North Beaver, Twin, Jim, Gypsum, Tepee, and Tosi creeks.



*Brook trout are easily identified by the black and white stripes on the leading edge of their fins*

For lake fishing opportunities there are three main lakes near Union Pass: Mosquito Lake, Rock Crib Lake and Wagon Creek Lake. Rock Crib and Wagon Creek lakes are known to provide bigger brook trout, and therefore, the limit is only six (6) to help protect larger fish. Soda Lake, just outside Pinedale, is also known for its large brook trout and the limit here is one per day.

The Wind River Mountain Range provides ample lake opportunities for brook trout. You might have to hike or horsepack a few miles, but every drainage contains at least one lake with brook trout. A few of the shorter hikes include Miller Lake (Elkhart Park trailhead), Ruff Lake (Boulder Lake trailhead), Belford and Black lakes (Meadow Lake trailhead), and Boulder Lake or Big Sandy Lake (Big Sandy trailhead). These hikes range from 2 to 6 miles and offer reasonable day-trips for brook trout. The size of brook trout varies among the lakes. For the more adventurous or those that have more time available, Halls Lake area provides beautiful scenery and excellent fishing. In the New Fork River drainage you can fish Palmer, Dean, and Round lakes to name a few.

Tommy, Peter, Don and others in the Pole Creek drainage support healthy brook trout populations as well. Overall, it isn't hard to find a brook trout in the Wind River Mountain Range.

Brook trout provide a diverse angling opportunity to those fishing in the Pinedale area. Not all of the waters produce "trophy" size brook trout, but they do provide an enjoyable fishing experience without the crowds of people. Brook trout make for some fast action for kids and adults due to their eager tendency to strike anything. They are fun to catch and make a tasty meal, so take advantage of this abundant sport fish. For additional information on where and when to fish for brook trout or any other sport-fish in the region, feel free to call the Regional Office at 307-367-4353, or stop in anytime.

*- Hilda Sexauer*



*A large brook trout from the Wind River Mountains*



## Boulder Rearing Station Operations

The Boulder Fish Rearing Station, located three miles south of the town of Boulder, is staffed by three full-time personnel; Superintendent Chip Moller, Senior Fish Culturist Joe Gillis and Fish Culturist Matt Joki. Primary duties for these folks include the care and annual spawning of the largest captive broodstock in the state, the Fall rainbow trout. This fall-spawning rainbow has become the mainstay of the rainbow trout stocking program in Wyoming, because of its high genetic variability, uniform growth, disease resistance and its environmental adaptability. This broodstock provides 3 million eggs per year that are shipped to various Wyoming hatcheries where they are hatched out, raised to various sizes and stocked to Wyoming waters.

Boulder personnel also culture and stock around 300,000 fish on an annual basis. This equates to 35,000 pounds of fish that are readily available to the anglers of Wyoming. Species raised at Boulder include rainbow, brown and Colorado River cutthroat trout, as well as over 100,000 kokanee salmon. Many of these fish are stocked to Pinedale-area waters including the Pinedale Kids Pond, CCC Pond, the Green River, the Wyoming Range creeks and ponds, Boulder and Pine creeks, and many lakes including Dollar, Green River, New Fork, Halfmoon, Little Halfmoon and Fremont. Fish reared at Boulder are also stocked in streams, lakes and ponds in the Lander, Green River, Laramie and Cody regions.



*Superintendent Chip Moller with a fall rainbow trout*

In addition to raising trout, we have been experimenting with the culture of three of Wyoming's rarest native species: the bluehead and flannelmouth sucker, and the roundtail chub. A small, native fish facility was devel-

oped in 2012 in preparation for an upcoming native species restoration project in the Big Sandy River drainage. The facility was named the East Fork Hatchery and is located .5 miles east of the Boulder Rearing Station. Fish will be held at this facility throughout this project and returned to their original wild habitat upon completion. This is the first time any of the three species has been held and raised in captivity in Wyoming.



*A bluehead sucker currently being held in captivity at the East Fork Hatchery*

The Boulder Rearing Station is open to the public and welcomes scheduled group and walk-in tours of the facility. Visiting hours are from 8am to 5pm daily. We are located 15 miles south of Pinedale on Hwy 191, then 1.5 miles east on Boulder Rearing Station Road. Public access for fishing is also available near the rearing station where anglers can try their luck in either of two small fishing ponds, or a one mile stretch of the East Fork River.

*- Chip Moller*



*A roundtail chub moved to captivity from the wild*

## Amphibian Sampling Continues in 2016

Did you know that the Wyoming Game and Fish Department is responsible for the management of all wildlife in Wyoming, including moose and frogs, and everything in-between! Amphibians and reptiles are often overlooked because of their small size and secretive habits, but they are among some of the most vulnerable species managed by the Department. Keeping track of the distribution of amphibian species is more important than ever because of the threats facing these populations. Chytrid fungus, a malady that infects the skin of frogs and toads, is causing worldwide declines and even extinctions of some amphibians. Human development is also a threat; as wetlands are drained, amphibians lose vital habitat, contributing to their decline.



*One of several wetlands surveyed in 2015*

Last summer, the Pinedale Fisheries Management Crew completed four amphibian surveys throughout the Bridger-Teton National Forest. These surveys were focused on large wetland areas that had been randomly selected by the Rocky Mountain Amphibian Project. These four sites were located within the Green River, North Horse Creek, Big Sandy River and Hoback River drainages. All four sites were sampled twice in June and July, 2015.

The sampling technique utilized includes walking through the wetland in a zigzag pattern with a dip net. The net serves as a multi-functional tool. It is used to sweep away grass or poke under willows in search of adult amphibians and dipped in open water for tadpoles and egg masses. When an amphibian is discovered, it is (hopefully) caught in the net to be identified and processed. Data collected from an individual includes the species, its life stage (tadpole, juvenile, or adult) and

what kind of habitat it is found in. A genetic sample may also be collected from some toads by clipping the tip of their smallest toe, or for tadpoles by clipping the tail, and preserving the tissue in alcohol. Listening for frogs and toads is also a form of data collection since the individual is known to be present in the site even if you cannot see it. Amphibians have distinct calls that are unique to each species. This was often the case with boreal chorus frogs, a small frog that is difficult to see in tall grass or willows. Measurements such as water temperature and water quality are also recorded, as well as, observations of weather, evidence of cattle grazing and other animals and plants present in the wetland.

In addition to the National Forest sites, over 15 surveys were conducted on Bureau of Land Management and State of Wyoming land within the region. These surveys largely focused on manmade impoundments like stock ponds. Most of the ponds sampled were in the Jonah Field south of Pinedale, the Cottonwood Creek drainage, and along the Green River. The same sampling protocol was used to ensure the highest probability of finding amphibians.



*An adult boreal toad captured during an amphibian survey*

After many miles of driving and hiking to sites and wading through muck and beaver ponds, the crew was rewarded with many exciting finds. The Green River sites were the most productive, yielding boreal chorus frogs, tiger salamanders and boreal toads. Many of the stock ponds were excellent breeding sites for boreal chorus frogs with tadpoles and juveniles observed in large numbers. These surveys will continue this summer, ensuring the continued monitoring of these tiny but very important animals.

*- Cynthia Nau, Fisheries Technician*



# Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Pinedale Regional Office  
432 East Mill  
Pinedale, WY 82941

Phone: 307-367-4353  
Fax: 307-367-4403  
Email: [Darren.Rhea@nyo.gov](mailto:Darren.Rhea@nyo.gov)

WE'RE ON THE WEB  
<http://wfgd.wyo.gov>

YOU CAN ALSO FIND US ON FACEBOOK AND YOUTUBE!

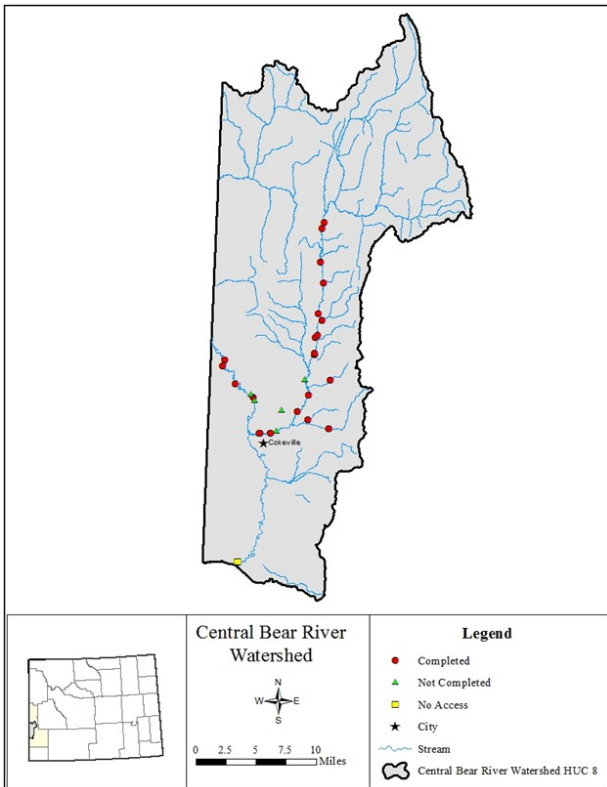


## Fish Passage (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

and Smith's Fork drainages. Overall, most diversion structures in the basin appear to provide sufficient fish passage. A few instream diversions were identified that could be replaced, and will be given priority for grant funding to make fish passage improvements. Fish entrainment, or the loss of fish into diversion canals, was identified as a concern at some sites within the drainage and will be the subject of further investigation.

- Erin Sobel, Statewide Fish Passage Biologist



## 2016 Calendar of Events

### Fishing Regulation Public Meeting: May 18 6:00 pm, Pinedale Regional Office

Proposed changes to the fishing regulations and other topics of interest will be discussed.

### May 20: Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination Training 9:00am - 4:00pm, Jackson Regional Office

Become a certified Aquatic Invasive Species Inspector. The training is free and open to anyone. Contact [beth.bear@wyo.gov](mailto:beth.bear@wyo.gov) for more information.

### June 4: Kid's Fishing Day 10:00 am - 3:00 pm, CCC Ponds, Pinedale

All kids ages 13 and under are encouraged to attend the annual "Get Hooked on Fishing" event hosted by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, U.S. Forest Service, and Trout Unlimited. There will be a series of short educational activities, free lunch, and the opportunity to catch a variety of trout in CCC Ponds. Youngsters will have the opportunity to learn basic ecology and fish I.D., fishing skills, and gear applications. Some fishing gear and bait is provided, and the event is free to the public.



Children learn valuable angling skills at the annual "Get Hooked on Fishing" event during Kid's Fishing Day at the CCC Ponds

### June 4: Wyoming Free Fishing Day

No license or conservation stamp is required to fish during Wyoming's Free Fishing Day. All other rules and regulations apply.