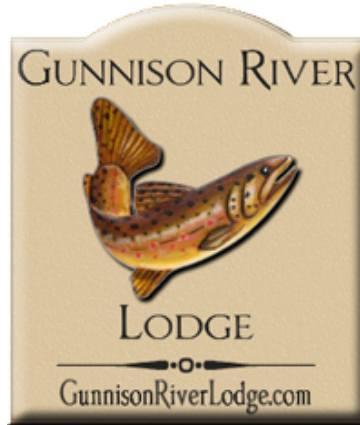


GUNNISON AREA RIVERS, LAKES AND FISHING RECOMMENDATIONS

by Jeff Turner

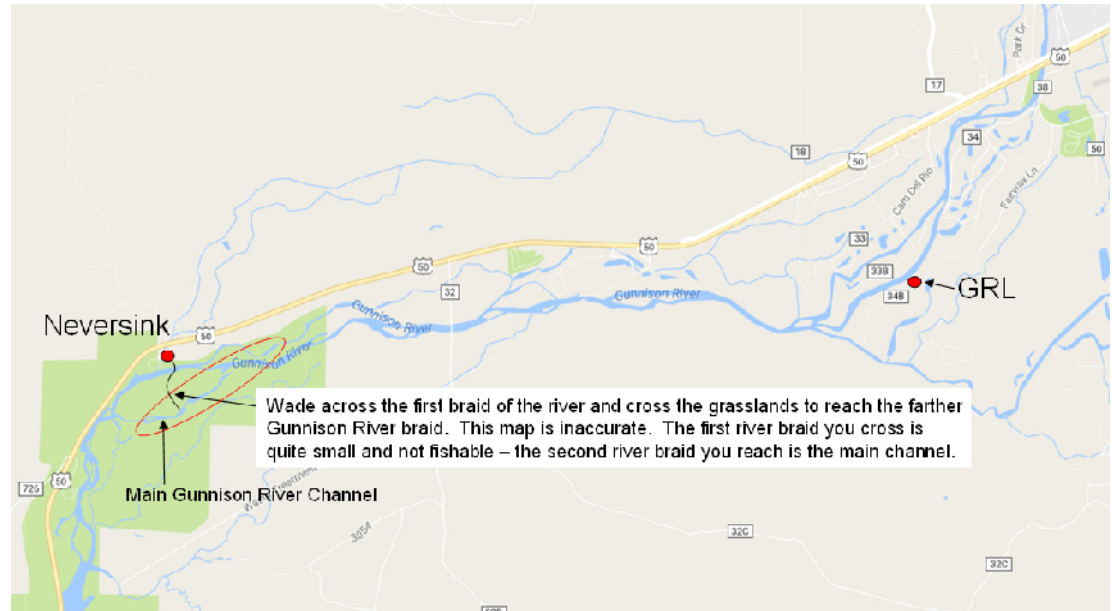


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GUNNISON RIVER - NEVERSINK

There are three (3) very good places to access the Gunnison River a few miles south of the house (GRL). These are phenomenal stretches of the Gunnison River that is all public access and offers great wade fishing opportunities for both fly fishing and spin fishing. They are called “Neversink”; “Cooper Ranch”; and “Cooper Ranch West”

- **DIRECTIONS:** (Navigate to Neversink Trail, Gunnison, CO 81230)
 - From the house, drive out to US 50, turn left and drive 4.1 miles. Turn left into the Neversink parking area.
 - Park and walk southeast through the secondary streams and open land for about 500 yards until you come to the main branch of the Gunnison.



- **RECOMMENDATION:** Opportunities in this stretch abound. Mostly browns, but you will catch an occasional cutbow or rainbow. Fish are everywhere – fast water, slow water, ripples, runs, etc. Good nymphing will catch great fish. I love pink or white trout magnets drifted below a float. Mid day in the summer use Hopper/Dropper rigs. Talk to any of the experts in the Gunnison fly shops for the best flies to use. These waters fish spinners well too. I recommend **“Vibrax Blue Fox #3 Gold”** lures sold at Taylor’s Sporting Goods in Gunnison. Please cut one of the barbs off of the treble hook with a pair of wire cutters.

GUNNISON RIVER - COOPER RANCH

- **DIRECTIONS:** (GPS to Cooper Ranch Trail, Gunnison, CO 81230)
 - From the house, drive out to US 50, turn left and drive 4.7 miles. Turn left into the Cooper Ranch parking area.
 - Park and walk east through the secondary streams and open land for 500 yards until you come to the main branch of the Gunnison.

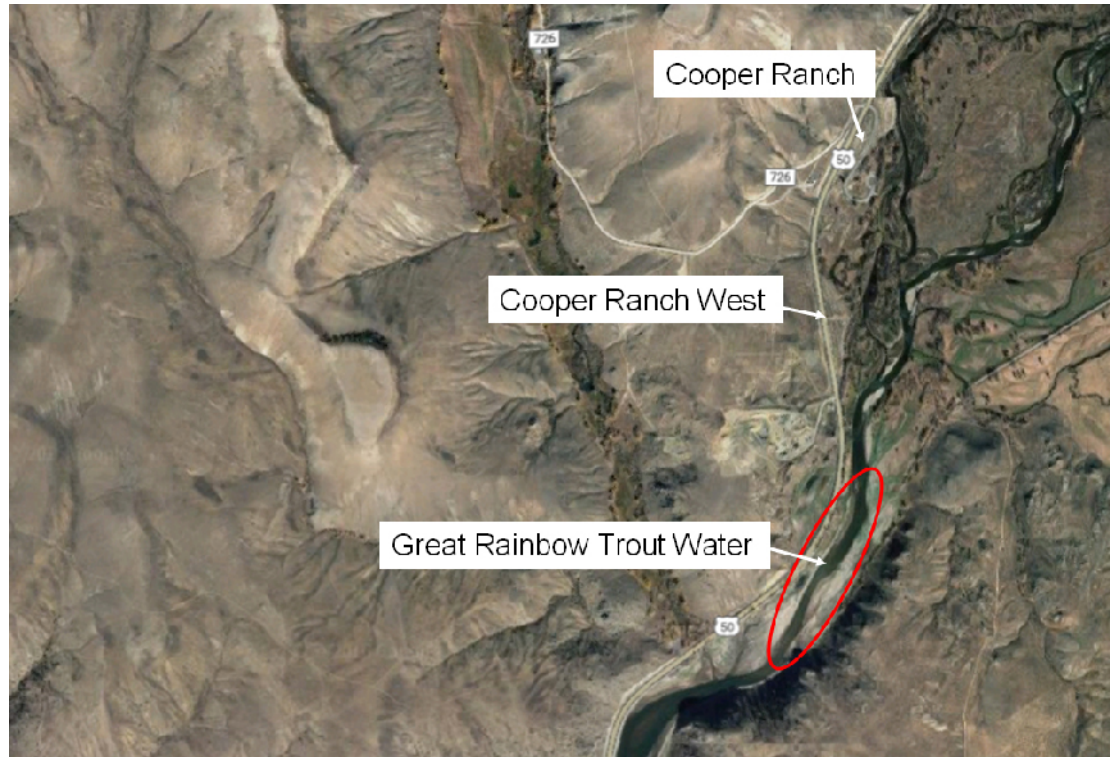


- **RECOMMENDATION:** Opportunities in this stretch abound. Mostly browns, but you will catch an occasional cutbow or rainbow. Fish are everywhere – fast water, slow water, ripples, runs, etc. Good nymphing will catch great fish. Pink or white trout magnets drifted below a float work great. Mid day in the summer use Hopper/Dropper rigs. Talk to any of the experts in the Gunnison fly shops for the best flies to use. These waters fish spinners well too. I recommend ***“Vibrax Blue Fox #3 Gold”*** lures sold at Taylor’s Sporting Goods in Gunnison. Please cut one of the barbs off of the treble hook with a pair of wire cutters.

GUNNISON RIVER - COOPER RANCH WEST

- **DIRECTIONS:**

- From the house, drive out to US 50, turn left and drive 5.1 miles. Turn left into the Coopers West Ranch parking area.
- Park and walk southeast through the secondary streams and open land for 200 yards until you come to the main branch of the Gunnison. Start here and make your way downstream.



- **RECOMMENDATION:** This is great rainbow trout waters. The water is wide, about 18-24" deep on average and ripply for about a half mile. You can fish very long drifts in this area because you'll have plenty of back cast with little to no obstructions. Nymphing classic flies such as Copper Johns, Pheasant Tails, Prince Nymphs work great. Pink and white trout magnets below a float are insane here.

GUNNISON RIVER - THE CLIFFS

A great wade fishing area with 2 miles of public access.

- **DIRECTIONS:** (Navigate to 260 Tincup Dr, Gunnison, CO 81230)
 - Use your Navigation system and drive to 260 Tincup Drive, Gunnison, CO 81230. This is Charmar Park about a half mile from Wal-Mart – where you will find a parking area for the fisherman on the far side of the park as you are looking toward the “CLIFFS”
 - Park here and follow the marked trail 1/2 mile directly toward the cliffs which is where the Gunnison River flows by.



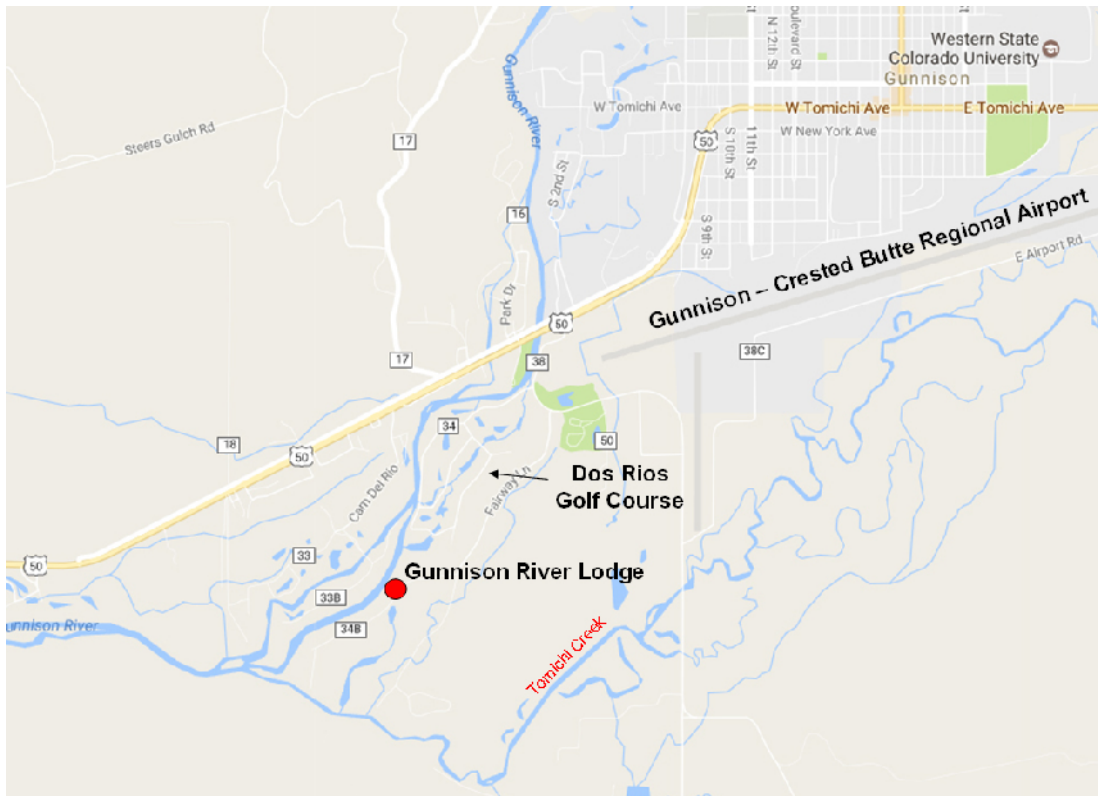
- **RECOMMENDATION:** Take a Wading Staff – or find a good stick – you’ll be glad to have it as you’ll want to cross over to the opposite side in some areas. When you reach the river walk upstream about 150 yards. You’ll see a small falls area – this is a great place to start as the water here is loaded with browns and rainbows. The evening hatch just above the falls is prolific. I typically use small BWOs or go to something bigger such as Sarah’s Bug (sold at Taylors Sporting Good). Mid day in the summer use Hopper/Dropper rigs. When the insects aren’t hatching you’ll be nymphing at about 2 feet. Classic patterns work well (Copper Johns, and Prince Nymphs in bright purple or bright green) are my go-to nymphs). You can continue walking upstream almost 2 miles. For spin fishing try “Orange Panther Martins” or “Vibrax Blue Fox #3 Gold” lures sold at Taylor’s Sporting Goods in Gunnison. Please cut one of the barbs off of the treble hook with a pair of wire cutters.

GUNNISON RIVER - THE HOUSE

Some of the nicest trout you'll catch will be right at the house. A few years ago I arrived at the house with a friend who was excited as he had never been to Colorado. As I started to grab my suitcase he asked if I minded if he grabbed his rod and went straight to the water. On his first cast he caught a 19" rainbow – his biggest trout of his life.

- **DIRECTIONS:**

- From the kitchen, walk through the dining room, exit through the back sliding glass door on the deck, walk down the stairs, make a hard right, walk 50 feet – and stop before you fall in the water.



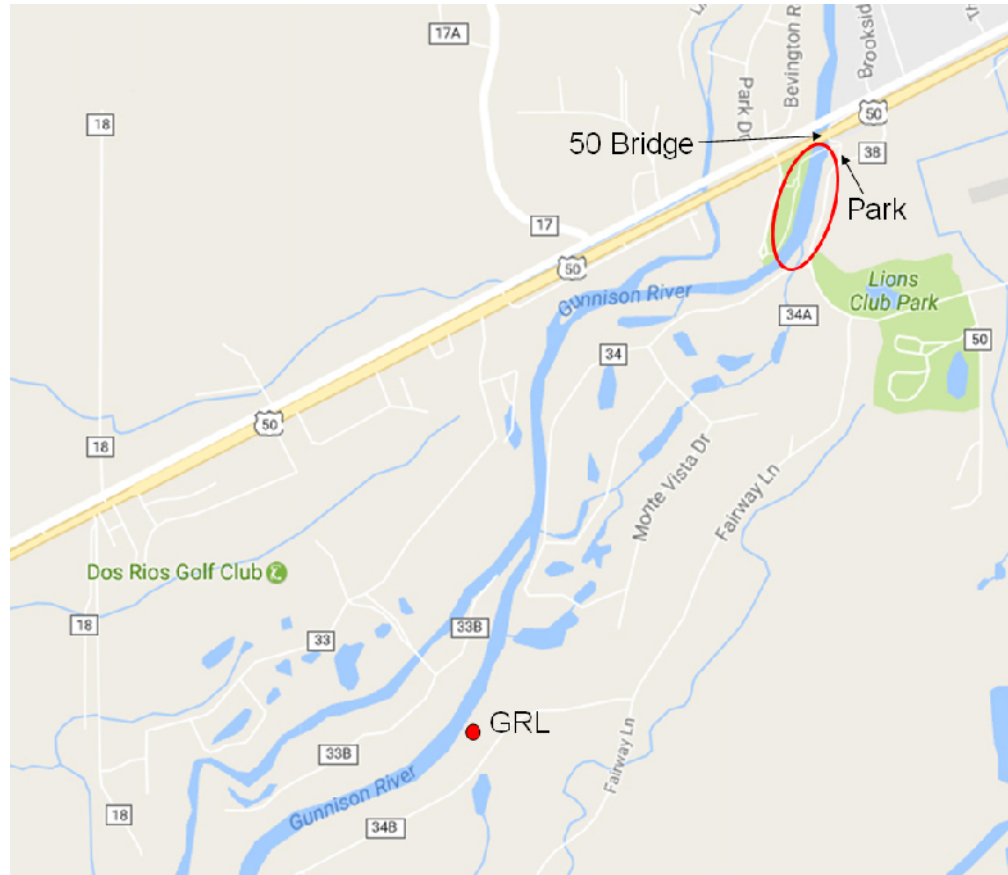
- **RECOMMENDATION:** Each rock perch behind the house provides great habitat and holding areas for trout. If you stand on any of these rock perches and cast a Brown Trout Rapala, Panther Martin, or Gold Vibrax #3 Blue Fox toward the opposite side slightly upstream you can catch trout on the retrieve. Rainbows and browns also hold in the calmer waters between the rocks and respond to streamers and nymphs. You can't walk or wade down stream but our neighbor (Joe) who lives one house upstream is generally fine if one person at a time fishes the island in front of his property. Please be VERY respectful – and do not walk on his property. Enter the river at our hour and walk upstream to the island. Fly fish the run along the far side of the island. The seam just 20 feet off the mid section of the island holds some really nice browns and rainbows. I've caught many many 18" rainbows here on nymph patterns like San Juan worms, Copper Johns, and Prince Nymphs. Pink and white trout magnets below a float work great too.

GUNNISON RIVER – THE BRIDGE

This is a nice little section just above white water park – and only 1 mile from the house (GRL). You pass it immediately on your right when you exit US 50 on the way to the house.

- **DIRECTIONS:**

- From the house drive 1 mile toward US 50. About 100 yards before you reach US 50 exit to the left parking area. You will see white water park downstream a few hundred yards, the concrete raft launch area, the US 50 bridge, and pedestrian bridge.

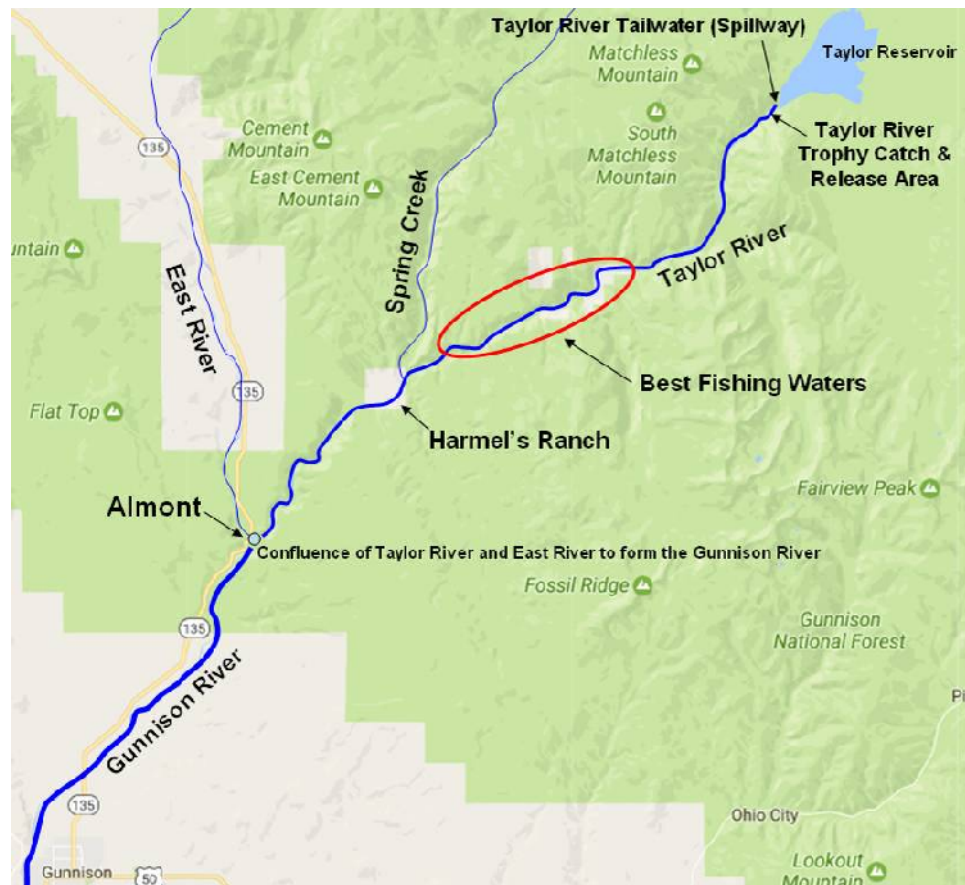


- **RECOMMENDATION:** This is a good area to toss a few spinners – and easy access for everyone. Even though it is heavily fished you'll still catch good fish here. Try Panther Martins, Vibrax #3 Blue Fox Gold, or Brown Trout XRAP Rapalas. There are lots of nice brown trout in this stretch of water.

TAYLOR RIVER - MAIN

The Taylor is as beautiful a river as you'll find in Colorado – and loaded with fish. Everyone who fishes the Gunnison Valley spends as much time on the Taylor as they do the Gunnison. It holds all wild trout - Rainbows, Browns, Cutthroat, and Brookies. The Taylor is 18 miles long from it's beginning at the top (Taylor Reservoir Spillway) to where it joins the East River and becomes the Gunnison River in the town of Almont.

- **DIRECTIONS:** (Navigate to 6748 County Road 742, Almont, Colorado 81210)
 - from Gunnison take Colorado 135 north out of town about 10 miles. When you come to the town of Almont hang a right on Route 742. Route 742 follows the Taylor River for 18 miles. When you reach Harmels Ranch you will have about 13 miles of great fishable river of which 75% is public access. You will see a few private sections – please observe no trespassing signs as the ranchers take their property boundaries very serious.

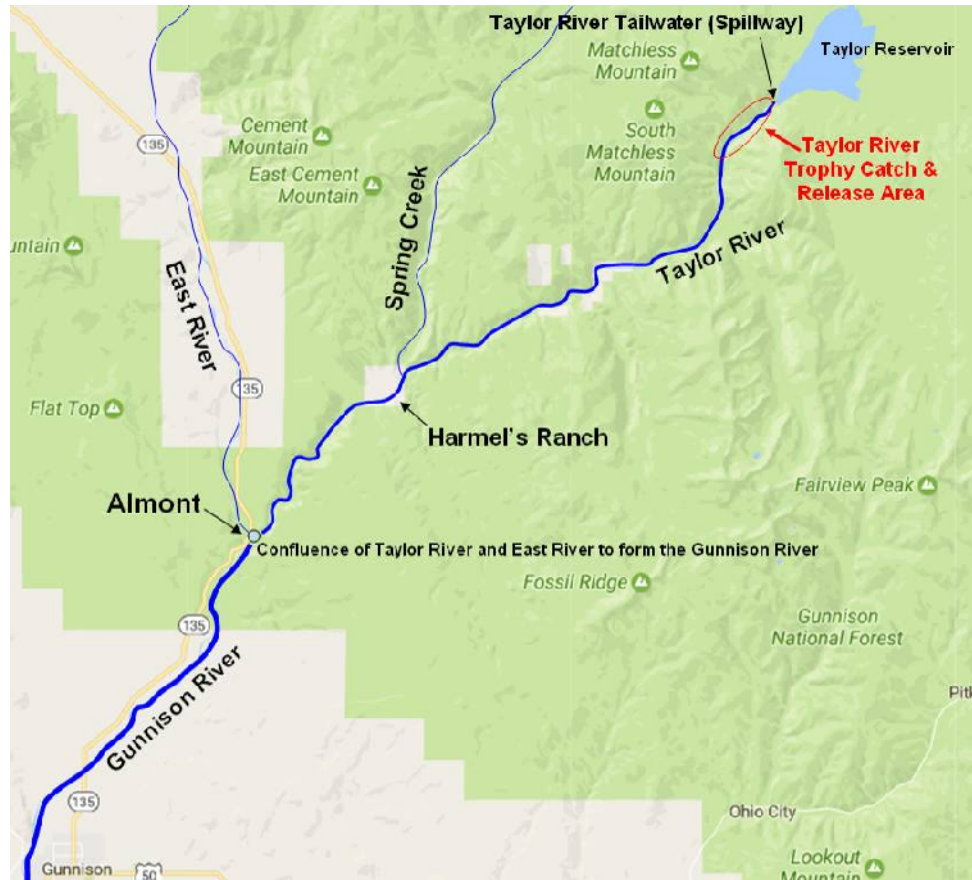


- **RECOMMENDATION:** My favorite stretch of water is on Route 742 between miles 9 and 11 above Almont. With the heavier flows you simply need to adjust tactics. Fish big stuff on top (i.e., Hoppers, Rubber Legs) and fish nymphs below such as small #20 Barrs Emergers, Copper John and Prince Nymphs. The deep pools are plentiful and the big guys are down deep. Stop at the Almont Fly Shop and talk to the guides for their recommendations. If the lower Taylor is cloudy, as a result of cloudy melt water or rain runoff feeder streams just go higher. The closer you get to the top's catch & release area the clearer the water will get. Every evening you'll be fishing small dries. #18-20 BWOs are very productive. Streamers are productive. I like the black red devil sculpin streamers that they sell at the Almont fly shop but olive and black wholly buggers work well too.. For the spin fisherman, try "***Vibrax Blue Fox #3 Gold***" lures sold at Taylor's Sporting Goods in Gunnison. Please cut one of the barbs off. Pay attention to No Trespassing signs - as you probably know, people in Colorado take this seriously.

TAYLOR RIVER - TROPHY CATCH & RELEASE SECTION

This is the most popular section of the Taylor River. The state records for rainbow and brown trout have been caught here. When you arrive, look down from the bridge. Appropriately nicknamed the "Hog Trough" the fish in the catch and release area grow to over 30 inches.

- **DIRECTIONS: (Navigate to 38.81444444, -106.61250000)**
 - from Gunnison take Colorado 135 north out of town about 10 miles. When you come to the town of Almont hang a right on Route 742.
 - Follow Route 742 along the Taylor River for 18 miles. You'll see a small parking lot for about 10 vehicles just before a bridge. Park here. You can fish upstream from the bridge about ¼ mile and downstream from the bridge about ¼ mile.

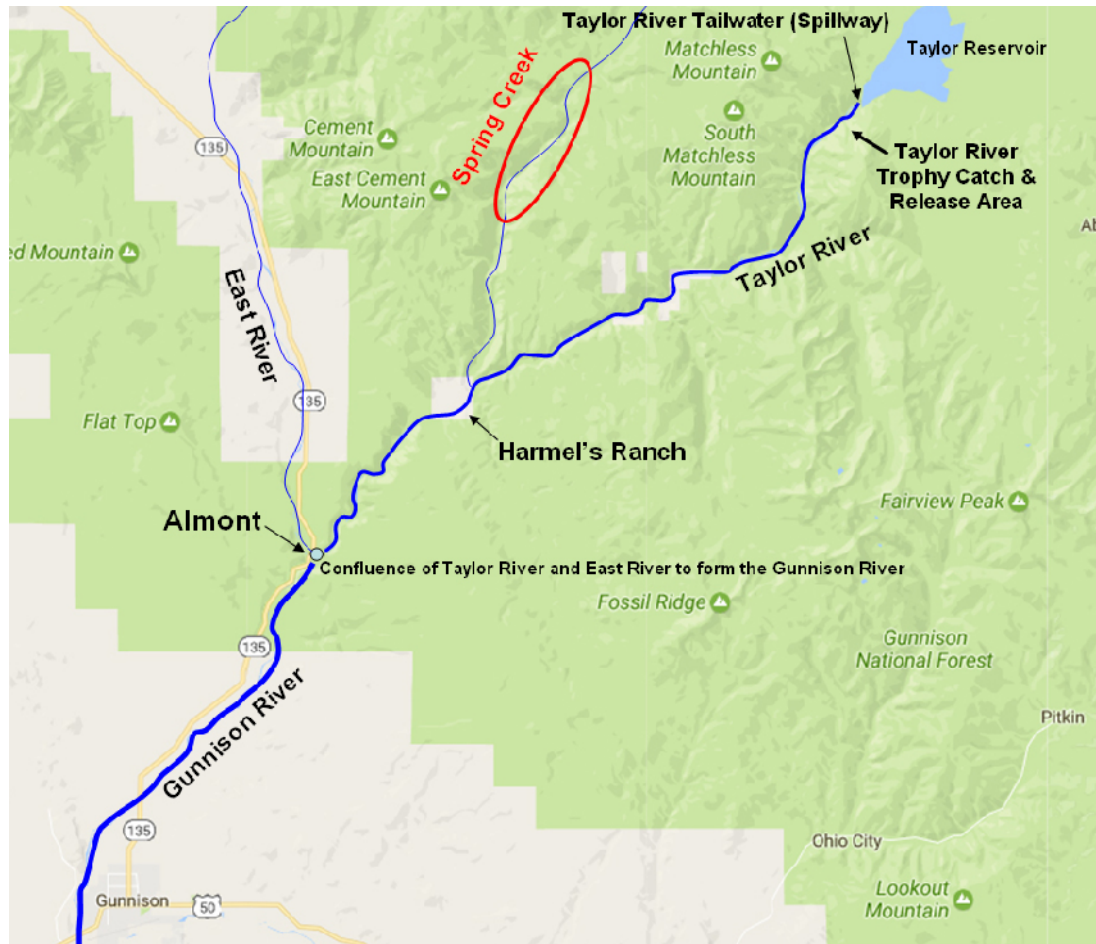


- **RECOMMENDATION:** The trout here feed on high protein mysis shrimp that flow through the reservoir spillway. This water fishes well 365 days a year. Fishing the mysis shrimp nymph patterns work well. You'll see some of the most beautiful colors of any trout – as a result of their high protein diet. You'll catch an equal number of Rainbows and Browns. I've had good days and bad days on the C&R. Best day was 8 fish in 4 hours ranging from 16" to 23" on pink and white trout magnets below a float. Dry fly hatches occur throughout the day – the huge trout will put on an aerial show when this happens. Really small stuff is the ticket. #20 BWOs for example. Best to stop at the Almont Flyshop and talk to the guides and pickup any gear/flyes you might need. Make sure you are fishing with fluorocarbon tippets. These fish are smarter than most and will see monofilament tippet and pass on by. You can fish with spinners here. For the spin fisherman, try Brown Trout "Rapala X-Rap" lures sold at Taylor's Sporting Goods in Gunnison – fish the lure using a "wounded" bait fish method where you reel slowly, make a hard jerk, pause and repeat. Never fish with more than one treble with one of the 3 barbs cut off. Please don't ever through a multiple treble lure as you will surely wound, or worse, kill the fish.

TAYLOR RIVER TRIBUTARY – SPRING CREEK

This is a small tributary stream that flows into the Taylor River about 5 miles north of Almont. The confluence of Spring Creek and Taylor River occurs at the famous Harmels Dude Ranch.

- **DIRECTIONS:** (Navigate to Spring Creek Rd, Almont, CO 81210)
 - from Gunnison take Colorado 135 north out of town about 10 miles.
 - When you come to the town of Almont hang a right on Route 742. Follow Route 742 along the Taylor River for 5 miles. You will see Harmels Ranch of the right.
 - Take a left on County Road 744 which follows Spring Creek. The first mile winds you past a community of cabins - after that the creek is accessible to public access with lots of pull off spots.



- **RECOMMENDATION:** There are tons of 9-14" brown trout in these waters. If you are stealthy you can sneak up on any of the pools and see tons of fish swimming about. The key to fishing this creek is being stealthy – stay out of sight. If you can see them they can probably see you. These browns are very aggressive and will hit well presented dry flies and nymphs. I like the classics here such as BWOs and Parachute Adams, Stop at Almont Fly Shop to see what else could be good. Spinners such as the *Panther Martin* and *Vibrax Blue Fox #2 Gold* work awesome here. Please cut one of the barbs off of the treble hook.

OHIO CREEK - BEAVER PONDS

This is one of my most favorite places. I've taken about 30 people fishing here over the years and it ranks right at the top of everyone's favorite. AND, oddly enough many of the locals don't know about this – including the guides. This also is not your typical beaver pond, rather more like a small lake (about 5 acres in size) loaded with big brookies. A 12" brookie is very common. The best part is the ¾ mile hike from the parking area that winds through an Aspen and fern forest. The grade is not too bad and only takes 20 minutes once you leave your car to get to the first beaver pond.

- **DIRECTIONS:** (Navigate to 38.81255, -107.0864)
 - From Gunnison, travel north about 3 miles on Highway 135 and then make a left on Ohio Creek Road, CR 730.
 - Continue north on CR 730 for approximately 22 miles to the Beaver Ponds Trailhead. (This road is also the road to Lake Irwin) (NOTE: There is one fork along this 22 mile road that some people will error on. (just remember if there is any doubt stay left - You want to keep the Castle Rocks in view on your left until the last few miles where the Aspen trees take over. It takes about 45 minutes to get to the parking lot from the house (GRL).



- **MY RECOMMENDATION:** Nymphs work well. Pink or white trout magnets below a float work great. You can target the big open water – or even cast right next to the shore/grass around the perimeter. When the hatch is on the fish go nuts – you'll see dozens of big brooks sailing out of the water. BWOs, Adams, Royal Wulffs work well during the hatches. Small flashy spinners can work ok here too, especially if you are stealthy. Please cut one of the barbs off of the treble hook.
- There is also a second and third pond – that few people venture to see. The second pond is void of fish but the third pond is loaded with cutthroats. These ponds are accessed by a trail that starts southwest of the 1st pond. So, think of it like this. When you reach the first pond imagine the trail continues straight across the 1st pond to the tallest pine trees to the right (clockwise) of the beaver dam. Just look around those tall pines and you'll see a trail heading in the woods – follow it. After 10 minutes you'll come to a small "dead" pond. When you see this – that's good news - keep walking. Walk another 15 minutes and you'll reach the 3rd pond where the cutthroats live. Spend about 75% of your time on the 1st pond as the 3rd pond isn't very big and a few people can exhaust it after an hour or so.

MILL LAKE

(After July 1st) This is a classic Colorado alpine lake sitting in a spectacular mountain bowl. The hike to the lake is beautiful and when you get there you will not be disappointed. Absolutely gorgeous setting and the lake is filled with big bruising cutthroat trout. But, it's a 3 mile, moderately challenging uphill hike. If you have heart issues you might want to pass on this one. The starting elevation is about 8,500 feet and you hike to about 10,00 feet.

- **DIRECTIONS:** (Navigate to Gold Creek Campground - Gunnison RD, Co Rd 771, Ohio City, CO 81237)
 - Take US 50 east out of Gunnison for 11.5 miles to Pitkin.
 - Make left on County Road 76 for 8.7 miles to Ohio City
 - Make Left on County Road 771 (Gold Creek Road) for 7 miles.to the Gold Creek Campground.
 - Park in the higher elevation area on the left when you enter the campground and look for the trail head signs
 - Once you depart the vehicle you will follow a very well marked and established foot path. You can't get to Mill Lake until about July 1st as there will still be snow blocking and masking the trail – so don't attempt this until mid summer. The hike takes approximately 1.5 hours and is moderately tasking, which means you will stop multiple times to catch your breath, rest, and take in the view. **STAY HYDRATED!** Take food –and take an extra layer of cloths and windbreaker. Even a nice warm summer day can turn to high winds and sub 50 degree temps at the top.

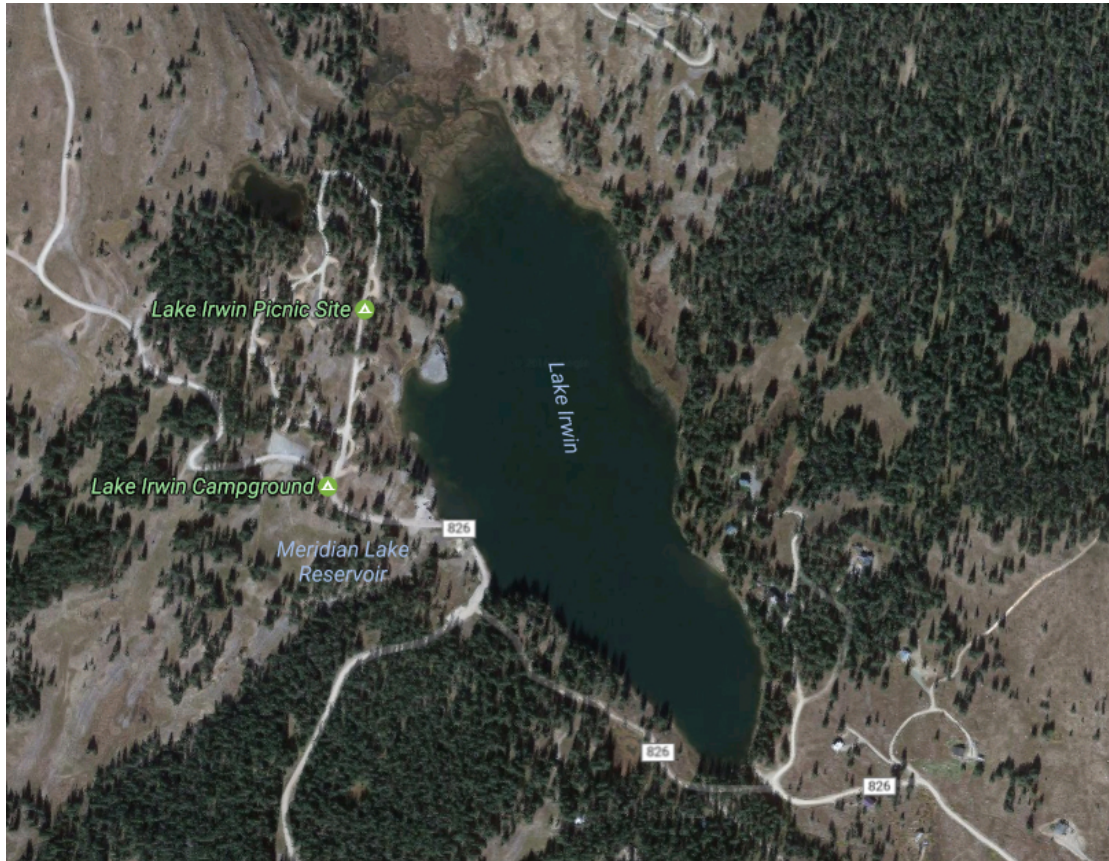


- **RECOMMENDATION:** I've been here several times and each time the fish will rise to a dry fly, but there is generally no hatch so it feels like you are fishing blink. I use Elk Hair Caddis flies with good success. My best fishing used common nymphs (Copper John, Prince Nymphs) at about 4 feet in depth. Pink or white trout magnets work great below a float too. I've seen two 24" cutthroats caught. Being stealthy pays off big! The fish will cruise close to shore in plain sight. If you can be stealthy you can do well targeting individual fish.

LAKE IRWIN

Lake Irwin is a beautiful alpine lake above Crested Butte that is loaded with rainbow trout and can be easily fished by walking the shoreline. Because it is close to Crested Butte you will see a number of tourists that are just taking in the view or a short hike – but very few are fisherman – so you’ll have miles of shoreline to yourself. For those that don’t want to fish – there are lots of beautiful hiking trails around the lake to explore.

- **DIRECTIONS:** (Navigate to Lake Irwin, Colorado)
 - from Gunnison take Colorado 135 north out of town toward Crested Butte for 26 miles.
 - Upon entering Crested Butte make a left on Whiterock Avenue and drive ½ mile
 - Whiterock Avenue turns into County Road 12 – continue for 6 miles
 - Turn right onto County Road 826 and drive 2 miles

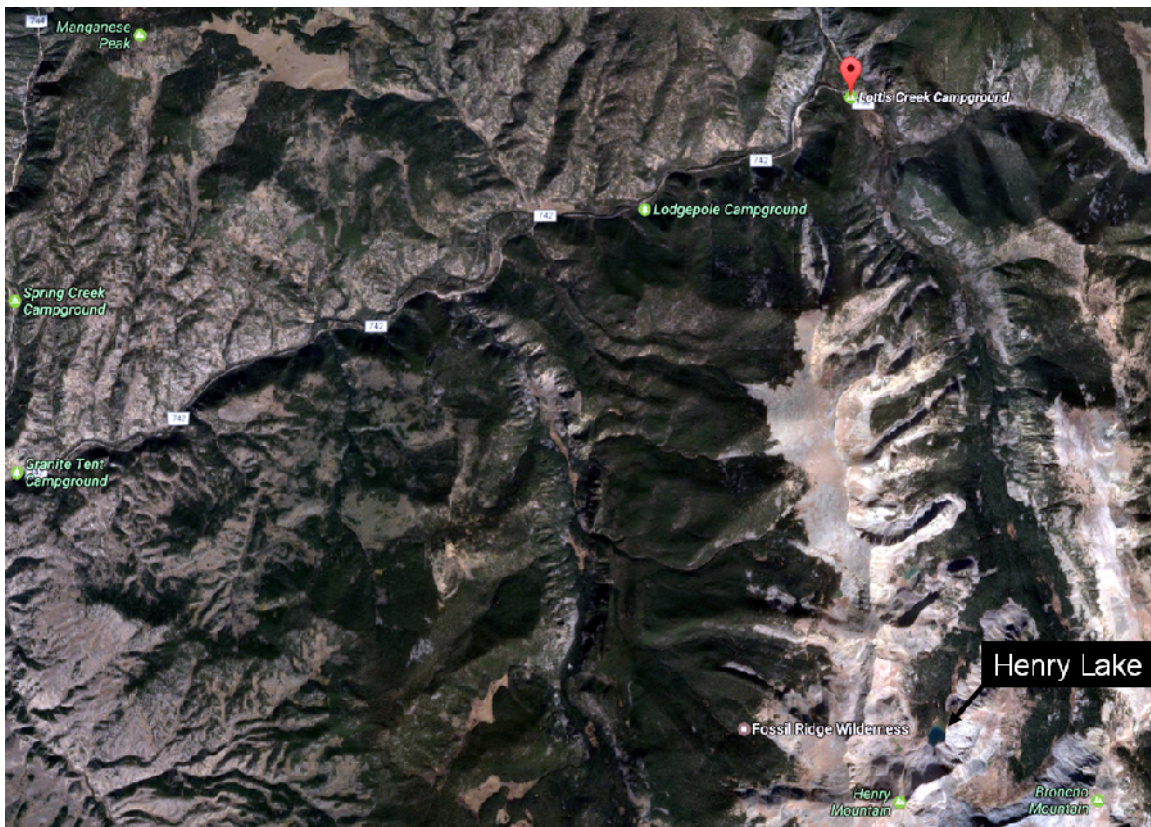


- **RECOMMENDATION:** After you park, you can begin by walking clockwise around the lake. About 100 yards from your vehicle you should be able to stand and see rainbow trout cruising about 40 feet from the shore. I’ve only ever fly fished here and had great success with dry flies such as #14-#16 Elk Hair Caddis and #14 Sarah’s Bugg (sold at Taylors fly shop in Gunnison). Trout magnets below a float are awesome too. Simply pick out your fish and cast about 20 feet in front of them and make some twitches to attract them. My last trip there in 2016 I caught 6 in 30 minutes this way. The sizes here seem to all be in the 12-14” fish range – so they are more than likely stocked here, but they are still fun!

HENRY LAKE

Oh Boy!!! Feel like a challenge? Feel like taking a big hike?? If you plan well, are in reasonably good shape, and give yourself plenty of time you can experience one of the most beautiful high alpine lakes in the entire State of Colorado. I did this in 2015 with 8 guys, and we're still talking about it. Once you park your vehicle you'll walk 7 miles and ascend about 3000 feet. It takes 4 hours to reach the lake and 2.5 hours to get back down. The trail is very well marked so once you start it's very easy to make your way up the gradual incline. The key is to start early and plan well for time, food, water, and weather. Henry Lake is absolutely one of the most beautiful, crystal clear, alpine lakes you'll ever see. And, it is loaded with big hungry cutthroat trout that are very responsive to dry flies that you can individually target. We arrived at the lake at noon and left at 3pm. In that 3 hours I caught 18 trout – all fishing elk hair caddis dry flies – and every fish was 15-18" in size.

- **DIRECTIONS:** (Navigate to Lottis Creek Campground, Co Rd 742, Almont, CO 81210)
 - from Gunnison take Colorado 135 north out of town 10 miles.
 - When you reach Almont make a right on Route 742. Follow Route 742 along the Taylor River for 16.6 miles until you see the signs for Lottis Creek Campground. Turn right into the campground and drive to the back end where you can park and see the trailhead signs.
 - Don't let any website fool you. I've read some that say it's a 2 mile hike. Flat out, it's 7 miles – and the trailhead is well marked.

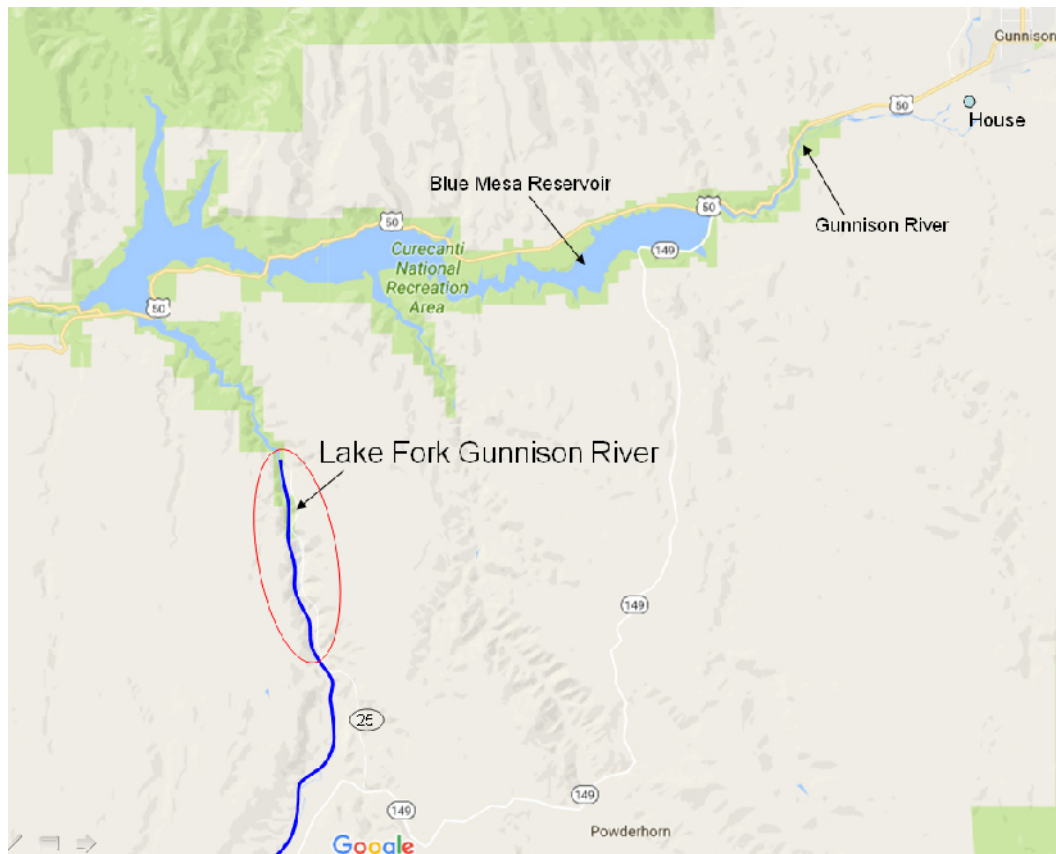


- **RECOMMENDATION:** I packed as light as I could using a day pack (mini fly kit, fly rod/reel, water, sandwich, snacks, trail mix, clothing layers, and rain poncho). Good hiking shoes and good socks are key. Take something for blisters if you are prone to that kind of thing. We had one person that would have killed for some "Glide" to doctor some chapping he had going on. 90% of the time I was fine without my waders, but there were a few occasions I would have liked to have had them, but that's a lot of extra weight to haul 14 miles. Try to get to the trailhead by 8am as you won't reach the lake until noon – and you might want to stay 4-5 hours. I used elk hair caddis dry flies and was completely satisfied the entire time. I have a friend that only spin fishes and does quite well using Panther Martins.

LAKE FORK GUNNISON RIVER

This is another must see river in the region. It's amazingly rugged with boulders the size of houses everywhere. A very different scenery than all the other rivers in the region. It's a photographers dream. And, the best place you'll find for spinner fishing.

- **DIRECTIONS:** (Navigate to Red Bridge Campground, 2258 Blue Mesa Rd, Powderhorn, CO 81243)
 - Take US 50 West out of Gunnison for 8 miles
 - Make a Right onto Colorado Route 149 and travel 24.5 miles
 - Make a Right onto County Road 25. After about a half mile you will see the river on your left. After you travel about a mile or so you'll see the first campground on your left. This is where the public fishing begins. You have about 8 miles of river from here downstream. But, don't spend too much time here – you'll want to get downstream a few miles and fish from there all the way until the road ends.



- **RECOMMENDATION:** For fly fishermen you'll want to use small dries (#18 BWOs, Adams, for example). Casting upstream to still pools behind boulders in the riffle areas work well. I've tried nymphing with some success (San Juan worms, Copper Johns, Prince Nymphs, Trout Magnets) – but basically I haven't cracked the nut to give you any tried and proven techniques. The water everywhere looks awesome – let me know if you find something that works best.

Here's the trick for spin casting. Cast a #2 Gold Vibrax Blue Fox lure across the river and **UPSTREAM** (yes, upstream) and reel faster than the speed of the water. If you see a deep pool – let the lure drop deep and then reel slower. For some reason the rainbows and browns love to chase lures downstream here. If you cast down stream you may never catch anything. In 2014, my son and I caught 75 in two hours. In 2015, I had a 20 fish hour. In 2016, I caught 35 in 3 hours. And, you'll be surprised that you'll catch a few in the 17-20" range. Please cut one of the barbs off of the treble hook with a pair of wire cutters so the fish aren't bruised up too badly.

BLACK CANYON - GUNNISON RIVER @ PINE CREEK

Gunnison River Tailwater just below Blue Mesa Dam – this is one of my favorite places. Why? (A) because I always catch big fish; (B) it is a tailwater and is always productive no matter the season, weather, or water flow level; (C) few people know about it; and (D) you get to experience the beginning of the “Black Canyon of the Gunnison”

- **DIRECTIONS:** (Navigate to Pine Creek Trailhead, Pine Creek Trail, Gunnison, CO 81230)
 - From Gunnison, take Highway 50 west towards Montrose.
 - After you pass the Blue Mesa Dam on the far end of the Blue Mesa Reservoir, start looking for the **mile marker sign 130** on the left side of the highway.
 - Directly opposite that sign is a sign on the right side of the highway that says: Pine Creek Boat Tours/Fishing Access.
 - <http://www.colorado-hiking-vacations.com/morrow-point-boat-tour.html>
 - Turn right at that sign and drive about 3/4 of a mile to the boat tour parking area.
 - Walk down 232 steps to the canyon floor. Once you reach the river you have two options: Continue downstream toward the boat tour. However, I think the fishing downstream is tough. The water looks great but the water is fast and difficult to fish.



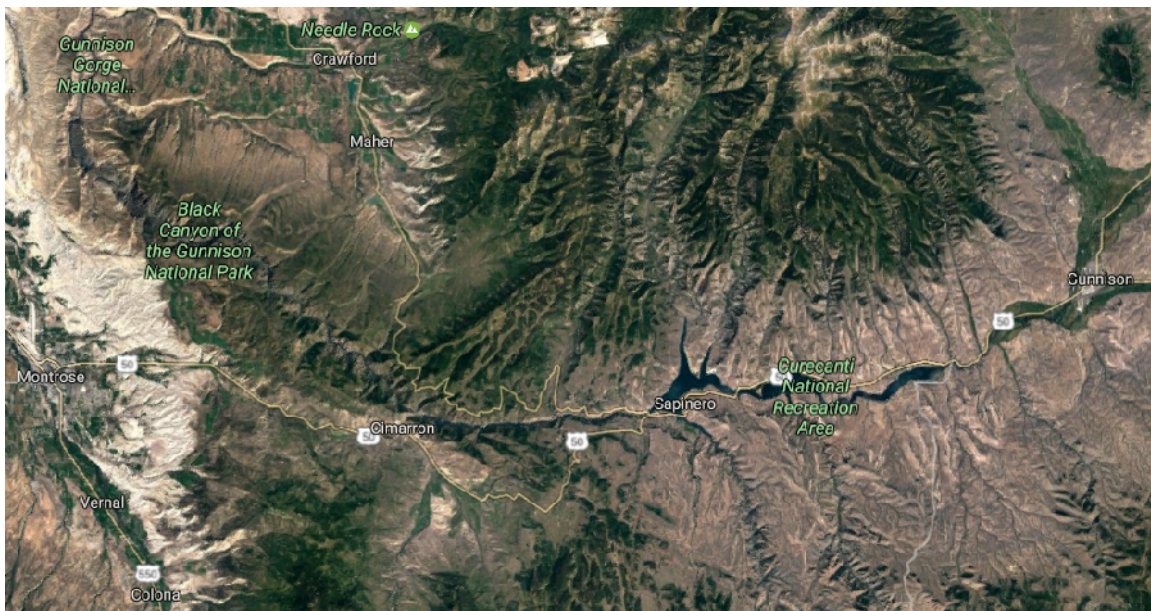
- **RECOMMENDATION:** Once you reach the canyon floor turn and follow the rivers edge and walk upstream. This is not easy. There is no trail for the first 150 yards walking/wading up stream. You will have to walk carefully in waste deep water over rocks and under tree limbs. After about 150 yards you'll reach some shoreline that has a cleared trail. From this point you have about a quarter mile of unbelievable virgin water. The water is deep here – generally 5-6 feet. There are tons of big rainbows and lake trout to be caught if you can get your nymphs down deep. Catching 18-22” rainbows and lake trout here are very common. Flashy nymphs work. San Juans can work great too. I tend to fish pink or white trout magnets 5 feet below a float using 2-3 small split shots for weight with phenomenal success. Fish every point to the dam. You will need to climb up and over a few rock obstacles to get upstream. **BE VERY CAREFUL!**
- Take everything you'll need for the entire day. Food, water, sunscreen, camera, toilet paper, etc. as you won't want to hike back out for anything until the end of the day. A lot of people have tried spin fishing in this water but I've never seen anyone catch fish.
- When you are leaving you may be tempted to bushwhack through the brush up high – but don't do it. I've tried it and it doesn't work. Follow the rivers edge back out like you came in.

BLACK CANYON OF THE GUNNISON NATIONAL PARK

Tailwater at East Portal – This is a MUST. Deeper than the Grand Canyon. Spectacular! The rainbow trout here are unbelievable.

<http://www.nps.gov/blca/learn/historyculture/eastportal.htm>

- **Directions** (Navigate to Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. This takes about 1 hour and 15 minutes to get there from the house (GRL))
 - From Gunnison, take US 50 West for 57 miles.
 - Turn Right on CO-347N (@ Black Canyon Corner Store – you will see Black Canyon signs here - travel 5.2 miles). Also, recommend you spend 20 minutes at this store if you can too. They have lots of neat natural history items on display and for sale.
 - When you reach the National Park attendant booth you have two choices.
 - If you go straight for ½ mile from the Park attendant booth you arrive at the “Overlook” and “Visitor’s Center”. You don’t want to miss this – try to budget an hour here if you can – and watch the 15 minute movie!.
 - If you hang a right from the Park attendant booth you will travel to the canyon floor. This is a well maintained, paved road, with 16% grade for several miles.



- **RECOMMENDATION:** When you get to the bottom you have two choices. I suggest you go upstream toward the dam. Here the water is deep and you’ll be nymphing at about 6 feet in depth. I like bright pink and red San Juan worms and trout magnets. Others will say go small and go dull (black and brown scuds) You’ll catch mostly Rainbows here – and nothing is small. A typical 4 hours for me is dozen rainbows in the 15”-20” range. If you go downstream from the small dam at the bottom you’ll want to nymph the shallower water unless a hatch is on. Experts will tell you to use brown and black scuds, nothing fancy, no colors. Spinners can work ok down stream. Try “**Orange Panther Martins**” or “**Vibrax Blue Fox #3 Gold**” lures sold at Taylor’s Sporting Goods in Gunnison. Please cut one of the barbs off of the treble hook with a pair of wire cutters.

EAST RIVER - ROARING JUDY

The East River flows from Crested Butte to its confluence with the Taylor River in the small town of Almont to form the Gunnison River. The East River is a fabulous trout fishery and also the home of the Roaring Judy hatchery where millions of Kokanee salmon make their return visit home each fall.

- **DIRECTIONS:** (Navigate to Roaring Judy Fish Hatchery, 14131 CO-135, Almont, CO 81210)
 - from Gunnison take Colorado 135 north out of town toward Crested Butte for 13 miles.
 - Make a left at the Roaring Judy Hatchery sign
 - Drive about ¼ mile and take the first left when you cross the River/Bridge
 - Drive about ¼ mile and park on the right just before the gate
 - Walk 100 yards through the trees and you have arrived.



- **RECOMMENDATION:** This first pool is literally loaded with rainbows and browns throughout the year and will also fill with hundreds of kokanee salmon in the fall. My largest brown is 23". Nymphing works great in these waters. Mid day in the summer use Hopper/Dropper rigs. Spinners like the Gold Vibrax Blue Fox #3 and Brown Trout Rapalas work well if you spin fish. From early September through November 1st you can fish this pool or the 2-3 pools down stream for Kokanee Salmon. Fly patterns such as San Juan worms or Salmon Eggs work great. You don't need to get fancy – simply wade into the area where you can see the salmon just in front of you – use a float, 2 feet of tippet, and some lead weight about a foot above your fly. I would suggest using 3x-4x tippet as these fish are big and strong – and they won't be spooked by the heavy line. Simply drop your rig into the salmon pod and twitch it around. One will eventually slam it – and then the fight is on.

BLUE MESA - STEVENS POINT

If Blue Mesa is well below full pond (i.e., below 70% capacity) you have the opportunity to fish a peninsula (which is normally an island when the lake is full) that is great for catching big brown trout. Check the website below to see the level of the lake. If you use Google Maps or Google Earth you can see the island/peninsula if you input in the GPS coordinates below.









<http://bluemesa.water-data.com/>

- **DIRECTIONS:** (Navigate to 38.476405, -107.109157)
 - From the house, drive out to US 50, turn left and drive 10.9 miles. Turn left on the sand road toward the lake.
 - Drive about 300 yards, or as far as you can. Park, and then walk to the farthest possible point.









- **RECOMMENDATION:** For spin fishing – Try casting deep running lures (such as Rapala Brown and Rainbow Trout patterns) that you can get down 5-6 feet and reel fairly slowly. Many 20+ inch browns are in these waters. In mid April the Roaring Judy Hatchery releases several million fingerling kokanee salmon which tend to take refuge in these really rocky shore areas – this is where the big browns will live as well. I haven't cracked the nut on fly fishing these waters so let me know if you come up with a good technique.

Nymphs

Copper John		Pheasant Tail	
Prince Nymph		20 Incher	
Barrs Emerger		Mysis Shrimp	
Scuds		San Juan Worm	

Dry Flies

Blue Winged Olive		Parachute Adams	
Royal Wulff		Elk Hair Caddis	
Rubber Legs		Hopper	

Streamers

Red Devil Sculpin		Wholly Bugger	
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Spinning Rig Lures – All sold at Taylors Sporting Goods in Gunnison, CO

1. Gold #3 Vibrax Blue Fox Spinners



<http://www.vimageoutdoors.com/blue-fox-vibrax-3-gold-plain/?gclid=CKzFsPGSpNECFdWCswodCLQB1g>

2. Rapala X-Rap 08 Fishing lure, 3.125-Inch, Brown Trout



<https://www.amazon.ca/Rapala-X-Rap-Fishing-3-125-Inch-Brown/dp/B005WTHH1E>

3. Panther Martin – Classic Regular (Gold Blad, Yellow Body, Red Dots)



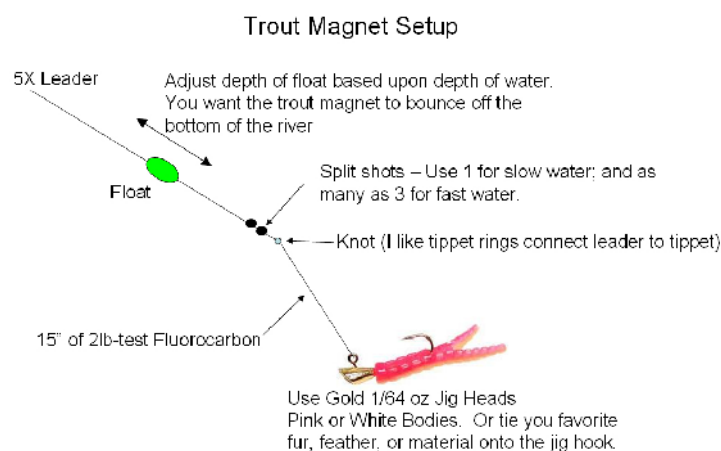
https://www.amazon.com/Panther-Martin-Classic-8-Ounce-Spinning/dp/B00C503QKY/ref=sr_1_7?s=sporting-goods&ie=UTF8&qid=1483384740&sr=1-7&keywords=Panther+Martin+Gold

The story behind the Trout Magnet

After five years of fishing the Gunnison area I found that I was successful in catching trout just about anywhere I went. However, the one place that eluded me was in the trophy catch and release section of the Taylor River. I tried every fly in the book, and admittedly I was still a novice fly fisherman – so I knew a lot of it was simply my presentation. Then one day, after a frustrating few hours I found myself walking back to the truck with my friend Angus defeated once again. As we neared the truck we passed by an older gentleman when Angus asked him “how’d you do?” The old timer turned around and said “oh, caught 8 today”. We stopped in our tracks turned around and asked if he minded telling us how. The gentleman, who we later found out was from Tennessee, was more than happy to share his secret. Ten minutes later he had my fly rod rigged exactly as shown in the diagram below.

I walked to the water just below the bridge and made my first cast. Three seconds later I was fighting an 18” brown. A few minutes later I brought the fish to the net. I was stunned. After releasing the fish I stood up and presented my second cast. “FISH ON” I couldn’t believe it.

Ever since that day I’ve used the trout magnet successfully across ten states and have probably landed a thousand trout using it. I’ve learned since then, that it’s really more the hook than anything that seems to make the difference. The jig head, which has the eyelet rotated 90 degrees in comparison to a typical nymph hook allows the fly to bounce off the bottom in a more natural means. I’ve experimented with this theory by replacing the rubber body of the trout magnet with everything you can imagine (shoe strings, pipe cleaners, velcro, yarn, silk cloth from my wife’s dress, and even a lock of my own hair). I’ve caught trout on everyone of them. It just works.



Basically, if you aren’t catching fish you have 3 options. Change the depth, change the weight, or change the color. Eventually, if there are fish, you’ll catch them. When compared to other flies or nymphs I would guess that I catch 5x more trout using a trout magnet than any other nymphing method.



Horse-flies or horseflies are in the family Tabanidae in the insect order Diptera. Entomologists consider these insects as “**The True Flies**”.

Now, one may ask what does the Trout Magnet emulate? So, I did a bit of research and it turns out the larval body of a Horse Fly is a dead ringer for a trout magnet. And, here’s the cool part.

Wal-Mart generally sells Trout Magnet components but you can order online direct using these links.

Hooks: <http://troutmagnet.com/trout-magnet/trout-jig-heads/1-64oz-gold-50-pc-tm-replacement-heads.html>

Floats: <http://troutmagnet.com/trout-magnet/trout-magnet-floats.html>

Fluorocarbon Line: <http://troutmagnet.com/trout-magnet/s-o-s-fishing-line/4lb-5x-phantom-fluorocarbon-leader-line.html>

Pink Bodies: <http://troutmagnet.com/trout-magnet/trout-magnet-50-pc-body-packs/pink-50-pc-tm-body-pack.html>

White Bodies: <http://troutmagnet.com/trout-magnet/trout-magnet-50-pc-body-packs/white-50-pc-tm-body-pack.html>

Split Shot: <http://troutmagnet.com/pss-b-split-shot.html>