

FISHING IN OURAY COUNTY

RIVER FISHING

Uncompahgre River

(Year-Round Fishing)

The best place to fish the Uncompahgre River is 15 miles north of Ouray at the Ridgway State Park. The tail water fishery below the dam (Pa-co-chu-puk) has been rehabilitated with boulder placements, log anchors and many features that provide excellent cover for the fish. The river has both stocked and wild trout. Browns, rainbows and cutthroat, are present in good numbers. Within the park boundary, a mile and a half of river, holds some very large trout. Public access is excellent with walking trails and well-defined pools just begging to be fished. During the spring run-off when most of the region's rivers are "blown out", Pa-co-chu-puk can be the best bet. Summer and fall are very consistent with complex mayfly hatches occurring every day. The winter can be good with small hatches occurring at the warmest time of the day. Pa-co-chu-puk is a catch-and-release area. You must use artificial lures and flies only.

Cimarron River

(Summer-Only Fishing)

The Cimarron River offers great angling opportunities for wild rainbows and browns. This often overlooked fishery can provide excellent dry fly-fishing throughout the year. Public access to the Lower Cimarron is limited. Target the bottom three miles starting at the confluence of the Gunnison River. A good piece of water lies just below Silver Jack Reservoir. Access the river along Forest Road 858 and at the Big Cimarron Campground. The Forks of the Cimarron offer excellent public access, solitude, scenery and fun action on dry flies. You never know if it is going to be a rainbow, cutthroat or brook trout that grabs your fly. Mid-summer is the best, with fall being the most beautiful. Caddis and mayflies work well but do not overlook big attractor patterns in mid to late summer.

San Miguel River

(west of Ouray --Hwy 162)

(Year-Round Fishing)

The region's only un-dammed, free-flowing river is the San Miguel River. The fishing can range from outstanding to very poor depending on snow pack and runoff. There is good fishing in this river from April to November. Rainbows and cutbows are the most common, with browns and cut-throats being less common. Public access is outstanding with the road only a short distance away. Look for the turnouts along the road and a nice hole or run lies only a short hike away. This

free-stone river has great hatches of caddis, stoneflies, mayflies and midges. Every day is different so it pays to come prepared and ask the local shops what is going on.

Gunnison River

(Hwy 50 east of Montrose)

(Year-Round Fishing)

The Black Canyon is the most famous trout fishery in the region, and according to Shock Surveys, the Gunnison is the top fish river in the United States for fly fishing. The best time of year is late spring and early summer during the "Salmon Fly Hatch". These giant bugs really get the big browns and rainbows fired up! Look for it to start in mid-May in the lower "Gunny" (near confluence with the North Fork) and continue all the way up river to the East Portal and beyond by late June. Mid-summer and fall can be good. Look for consistent caddis and mayfly hatches. Match the hatches with nymphs and/or dry flies.

CREEK FISHING

Cow Creek

(Summer-Only Fishing)

Upper Cow Creek offers excellent opportunities for those seeking solitude. The more difficult the access (bushwhacking required), the bigger the trout. Four-wheel drive is needed to get to this one.

Dallas Creek

(Year-Round Fishing)

This large feeder creek flows into Ridgway State Park Reservoir and is home to an excellent trout population. Access is limited.

Canyon Creek

(Summer-Only Fishing)

This is one of the few good streams in the Ouray area for fly-fishing. Both brook and rainbow trout are found here. Be sure to know what is public versus private property.

LAKE FISHING

Blue Lakes

(Summer-Only Fishing)

These three lakes sit at an elevation of approximately 11,100 feet, with stunning views and some nice size

trout as an added benefit. Unfortunately, access to these beautiful lakes is accomplished by hiking four miles into the Mt. Sneffels Wilderness area on TR #201. The three lakes range from 6 to 16 acres in size. Remember to go prepared for all types of conditions.

East Dallas Lake

(Summer-Only Fishing)

This lake is located 11 miles west of Ridgway on East Dallas Divide Road at the Willow Swamps Campground. Regular stocking of this small lake can provide good family fishing

RESERVOIR FISHING

Ridgway State Recreation Area

Ridgway Reservoir

(Year'Round Fishing)

Rated as one of the best parks in Colorado, this 1,000-acre reservoir provides great fishing in a beautiful setting. A full-service marina and plenty of access points allow for excellent fishing and boating opportunities for the whole family.

Silver Jack Reservoir

(Summer-Only Fishing)

This reservoir is primarily used for irrigation, resulting in major fluctuations in the water levels. The DOW does stock this body of water that covers 250 acres. There is no boat ramp so float tubes and canoes are the best way to access these waters. There are excellent campsites located below the dam.

GEAR RECOMMENDATIONS

Listed are some basic essentials for the fishing part of your visit to Ouray County. If you don't have some of the specified necessities, most can be rented in the area from a local outfitter.

Fly Fishing Essentials

- Rod & Reel—(4-6 weight rod/reel/line is perfect)
- Waders and Boots
- Leaders—(3 to 5x) try to bring one of each.
- Tippet—Most guides would provide this but it is nice to have 3 to 5x.

Fly Suggestions

You will have the opportunity to purchase flies in the area or bring your own. Below is just a small list, but ones that consistently work.

- PMD
- Adams
- Royal Wulff
- Elk Hair Caddis
- Red/Yellow Humpies
- Pheasant Tail Nymph
- Hare's Ear Nymph
- Prince Nymph
- Wooley Bugger
- Hoppers

GENERAL EQUIPMENT

- Fishing hat—Intense sun!
- Polarized sunglasses
- Long-sleeve shirt—Synthetic/lightweight
- Water bottle—Large. Camelback hydration packs are ideal
- Camera—Bring a good waterproof case.
- Sun screen—SPF 30+ and lip balm.
- Rain gear & synthetic long underwear (tops and bottoms)
- Additional warm synthetic/wool clothing
- Day pack
- Mosquito repellent

For Tackle or License Information

call or visit the following:

- RIGS Fly Shop & Guide Service—888.626.4460
- Ouray Convenience Store – 970-325-4388
- Ridgway State Park – 970-626-5822
- Conoco Station in Ridgway – 970-626-5454

ALSO:

- Please respect private property.
- Enjoy our mountain scenery. Please keep it clean.
- Take only photographs, leave only footprints.
- Please refer to fishing regulations to protect this resource for everyone.
- Practice "Catch and Release"
- If you are unfamiliar with the area, consider hiring a local guide for at least one day.

Information presented by Ouray Chamber Resort Association

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