Exploring the Greyback

Once again the Jackson Regional Angler Newsletter is featuring a geographical region within the headwaters of the Snake River drainage. This year, the Greys River and Hoback River (commonly known as the Greyback) is receiving the attention. In the past, the areas we have explored have been wilderness areas, the Greyback is not within wilderness and therefore, offers a variety of different recreational opportunities for anglers and adventurists. From ATVs to mountain bikes and horses to snowmachines, this area allows for a diversity of activities for everyone’s interests.

Get out there and explore the Greyback!

When the Skiing Gets Tough, the Tough Go Fishing

Winter fly fishing isn’t for everyone. When your rod ices up and you have to wear gloves to keep your hands from doing the same, it takes a special person to say, “let’s try the next hole”. Late winter and early spring however, have produced some of the best dry fly fishing I have seen on the Snake River. Why? Because, from February through April, Winter Stoneflies (Family: Capniidae) begin to hatch in large numbers. These small invertebrates spend most of their life cycle embedded in the substrate at the bottom of the river. Locally, the dry hatch peaks on the first calm days of the year when the air temperature exceeds 40 degrees. When this occurs, large numbers of adult stoneflies can be seen on the snow and in foamy backwaters. Snake River cutthroat trout key in on both emerging forms and adults laying eggs. To the human eye, they are easily confused with midges because of their small size (size 16-20). Because no commercial fly pattern mimics this hatch, store-bought flies can either be altered or simple patterns can be tied at home. The last key ingredient to successfully fishing this hatch is finding the trout. During the winter months, trout occupy deep slow moving water or areas where multiple channels converge; other aquatic diversity is also a plus. My last hint: once you find the fish, tell only your best fishing buddies.

-Carlin Girard
Flat Creek on the National Elk Refuge

If you are like me, the more regulations that apply to a fishing or hunting area, the less appealing it becomes; with one exception, Flat Creek on The National Elk Refuge. Options for management on a wild trophy Snake River cutthroat trout fishery are limited, especially when it is a small spring creek with highly skilled anglers targeting its finest fish. For Flat Creek, strict regulations maintain the superb fishing. Managers and enthusiasts also look beyond these regulations and ask what else they can do to protect and improve one of our local “honey holes”. This has been the case for decades. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department, National Elk Refuge, and Trout Unlimited stand out as key partners in this endeavor, providing years of knowledge and critical resources to identify important issues and work to mitigate them.

In the late 1970’s, factors including overgrazing and bank erosion caused by elk, increased sediment input from the south park supply ditch and a lack of riparian vegetation contributed to Flat Creek’s degradation and reduced cutthroat trout populations. Two and a half miles of Flat Creek ending at the confluence of Nowlin Creek became the site for Flat Creek Phase 1. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department, National Elk Refuge, and Trout Unlimited worked together to implement a major habitat improvement project to reduce bank erosion, increase water depths, provide overhead cover, and expand cutthroat trout spawning habitat. Using the best available information, the group took on an ambitious multi-year venture.

That was then and this is now. If you are familiar with Flat Creek, it doesn’t take a scientific understanding to see that some of the structures have lived out their life span. Submerged trees which provided a successful buffer to reduce bank erosion now sit mid channel and only provide an obstacle for wading and casting anglers. And from a fisheries manager’s perspective, woody debris is now abundant in a system that otherwise would have very little. They now have to consider what other negative impacts such human derived structures might have. Man made undercut bank structures were also used to reduce bank erosion and act as overhead cover, however, the current condition of Flat Creek might benefit from their removal, letting the creek form natural banks. Assessment of the creek’s stability and need for control structures is currently underway and a recent decrease in this section of Flat Creek’s native cutthroat trout and a relative increase in non-native brook trout (see Table 1) have led managers to ask similar questions.

The need for further research into the relationship between habitat characteristics and use by different trout species is highlighted in Table 1. Fluctuations in Flat Creek’s trout populations are normal, however, a sustained lowered population of cutthroat trout deserves attention. That is why, once again, managers and public interest groups are teaming up to establish current concerns, assess the impact of the old structures on Flat Creek, and decide where to go from here.

Carlin Girard

| Table 1. Number of Snake River Cutthroat (SRC) and Brook Trout (BKT) per mile for the Hatchery Station from 1999-2009 of Flat Creek above the Jackson National Fish Hatchery outflow on the National Elk Refuge. |
| Species | Size Group (inches) | 1999 | 2002 | 2008 | 2009 |
| SRC | >6.0 | 409 | 210 | 42 | 43 |
| BKT | >6.0 | 42 | 21 | 95 | 42 |

The need for further research into the relationship between habitat characteristics and use by different trout species is highlighted in Table 1. Fluctuations in Flat Creek’s trout populations are normal, however, a sustained lowered population of cutthroat trout deserves attention. That is why, once again, managers and public interest groups are teaming up to establish current concerns, assess the impact of the old structures on Flat Creek, and decide where to go from here.
Welcome to the Greys-Hoback area. Unlike our previously featured areas, the Greys-Hoback is outside of wilderness areas and offers a variety of different recreational opportunities. We will be delving into streams and lakes that drain into the Hoback River from the south, the Grey’s River from the north and east, and the Snake River between Hoback Junction and Palisades Reservoir. Accessible by foot, horseback, vehicle, ATV, or snowmachine, no matter what your preferred method of transportation may be, this area has a stream or lake for you to explore.

**Waters in the Hoback Drainage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water</th>
<th>Species</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adams Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alder Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bondurant Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buck Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clause Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cliff Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout Mountain Whitefish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gibbs Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoback River, South Fork</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout Mountain Whitefish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hole in the Wall Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamb Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerr Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilgore Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lick Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lime Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Cliff Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muddy Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout Brook Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mumford Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phosphate Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snag Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willow Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout Brook Trout</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The streams that flow into the Hoback River from the south can be accessed by from a variety of trails, roads, and access point. HWY 89 follows the Hoback River for much of it’s length and provides many pullouts and trailheads that may be used as starting point. The Upper Hoback Road and Cliff Creek Road also provide access by vehicle or ATV to may of the waters listed here.
Hoback River and Snake River Drainage

1. Munger Mountain
2. Camp Davis
3. Bull Creek
4. Granite Falls
5. Pine Creek
6. Bailey Lake
7. Clause Peak
8. Bondurant
9. Raspberry Ridge
10. Deer Creek
11. Pickle Pass
12. Hoback Peak
Greys River and Snake River Drainage

Topographic Maps

1. Alpine
2. Ferry Peak
3. Pine Creek
4. Bailey Lake
5. Deer Creek
6. Pickle Pass
7. Hoback Peak
8. Man Peak
9. Blind Bull Creek
10. Lookout Mountain
11. Park Creek
12. Triple Peak
Waters in the Grey’s River Drainage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water</th>
<th>Species</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Canyon Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind Bull Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind Trail Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boco Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box Canyon Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buck Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cow Camp Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dead Dog Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadman Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadman Creek, North Fork</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deer Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fawn Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Box Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey’s River, East Fork</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot Foot Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Blind Bull Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Elk Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Greys River</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Greys River, South Fork</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lookout Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynx Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marten Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCain Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moffat Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moose Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porcupine Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridge Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shale Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep Creek, North Fork</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skull Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steer Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewart Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stump Lake</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail Creek (Greys River)</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail Creek (Little Greys River)</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twin Creek, North</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiskey Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Waters in the Snake River Drainage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water</th>
<th>Species</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bailey Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bailey Creek, West</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bailey Lake</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roos Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Creek</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterdog Lake</td>
<td>Snake River Cutthroat Trout</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Greys River: The streams that flow into the Greys River from the north are accessed most easily from Forest Service Road 10138, also known as the Grey’s River Road. This road follows the Greys River from its headwaters, to its confluence with the Snake River. Numerous other Forest Service roads spur off of this road and up other drainages, including the Little Greys River, Blind Bull Creek, and Sheep Creek.

Snake River: The streams that flow into the Snake River from the east are a bit more difficult to get to. Forest Service road 10124, off of the Little Greys River road, and numerous trails from both the Hoback River and Greys River drainages access the area.
**Essential Flies for the Snake River**

We asked local fly shops and leading fly fishing guides what flies they couldn’t live without on the Snake River. We were looking for good all around flies, not specialized flies. The response was great! Whether you are new to the sport or a seasoned angler, we hope you will find their collective knowledge useful.

Most responses included either the Parachute Adams or the Parachute Hares Ear. The Parachute Hares Ear is a combination of the hares ear nymph and the Parachute Adams. These flies are most popular in September and October, but work well for many of the smaller hatches throughout the year. These flies can also be used as dry trailer flies.

**Parachute Adams / Parachute Hares Ear**
Size range: 10-18

The Bead Head Prince Nymph is a great year around fly since it has attributes of many different aquatic species. This fly can also be effectively fished as a dropper fly. Add split shot and you can fish deep slow holes.

**Bead Head Prince Nymph**
Size range: 10-18

The Muddler Minnow and Woolly Bugger are versatile flies since they imitate a variety of aquatic and terrestrial food items. Fished wet, the Muddler imitates sculpins, shiners, stonefly nymphs, to name a few. Fished dry, the Muddler can be an effective hopper imitation. The Woolly Bugger, depending on the specific material used and how it is fished, can resemble large nymphs, baitfish, or drowning terrestrial insects.

**Streamers:**
**Muddler Minnow / Woolly Bugger**
Size range: 4-10

The Elk Hair Caddis is an all purpose searching pattern. This tried and true classic and has been a standard in fly vests since 1957. This fly works well during afternoon hatches. Popular body colors are cinnamon and olive.

**Elk Hair Caddis**
Size range: 12-18

Turk's Tarantula is a very popular attractor pattern. Although this fly was developed 20 years ago, it is the youngest on our list. It has a bulky, wide profile making it easy for fish to see. Its bulk moves lots of water, so fish often sense it even before they see it. It floats high, making it easy to see in fast water and under low-light conditions.

**Turk’s Tarantula**
Size range: 8-12

Photos by Mark Gocke
21st Annual Kids Fishing Day

This year kids fishing day will be held on the 4th of June at the **Jackson National Fish Hatchery**. Registration begins at 10:30am and all activities are concluded by 2:00pm. Jackson Jaycees will, once again, provide a free lunch. All kids, age 13 and under, are invited to participate and parents can listen in for a great learning experience. Activities include aquatic insects, fly tying, boating safety, and fish identification.

Bridger-Teton Nation Forest, Jackson Hole Jaycees, Jackson National Fish Hatchery, Teton Conservation District, Teton County EMS, Teton County Parks and Recreation Department, Trout Unlimited, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Geological Survey Jackson Field Station, and Wyoming Game and Fish Department are local sponsors of the event.

Thanks to this year’s newsletter contributors: Carlin Girard, Rob Gipson, Mark Gocke, Lara Sweeney-Gertsch, and Tracy Stephens.

Take Me Fishing

Where do you take your child fishing? If you live in Teton and Lincoln Counties, it may be difficult to find a close, easy fishing pond for your child. Next time you decide to take a kid fishing, consider these options:

**Sleeping Indian Pond at the Jackson National Fish Hatchery.** Located only a few miles north of Jackson, Sleeping Indian pond provides easy access and Snake River cutthroat trout. The pond is open for fishing from 8am to 4pm. A disability accessible observation/fishing deck is open for public use.

**Swift Creek Reservoirs.** Lower Swift Creek Reservoir is located only 1 mile east of Afton up Swift Creek on Forest Service road 10211. Due to recent construction activities, this reservoir has been deepened and access has been improved. Upper Swift Creek Reservoir is located another 2.1 miles up this road. Both reservoirs have Snake River cutthroat and brook trout.