



SLV Fishing 101

Regulations

- [2022 Fishing Brochure](#)

Useful Links

- [CPW Fishing Report](#)
- [Rio Grande Cutthroat Recreational Fisheries and General Information](#)
- [Upper Rio Grande Fishing Map](#)

Stream Gages & Temperature Data

(select "dischrg" & "wattemp" in the parameters list on the left)

- [Rio Grande Near Del Norte](#)
- [Rio Grande below Rio Grande Reservoir](#)
- [Rio Grande at Wagon Wheel Gap](#)
- [Conejos Below Platoro](#)
- [Conejos near Mogote](#)
- [Beaver Creek below Beaver Reservoir](#)
- [South Fork of Rio Grande](#)
- [Saguache Creek near Saguache](#)
- [Medano Creek at Sand Dunes](#)
- [Rio Grande National Forest Info](#)
- [Stream Management Plans for Rio Grande, Conejos, and Saguache Creek](#)

Rio Grande Headwaters Fishing

With over 2 million acres of public land, including 4 wilderness areas and hundreds of streams and lakes, fishing in the Rio Grande headwaters holds a lifetime of opportunity. As anglers and conservation minded stewards, we must protect the resource and maintain quality fisheries for future generations.

Today, our only native trout, the Rio Grande cutthroat is in trouble, occupying only 10% of its historic range. Efforts are underway to restore this beautiful fish to larger more resilient watersheds. Fortunately, CPW also maintains recreational populations of Rio Grande cutthroat. These fisheries are mostly high elevation lakes and streams, and they are managed by aerial and pack plant stocking.

The Rio Grande headwaters is also home to legendary "wild" trout fisheries in many of our rivers and streams including the Rio Grande and the Conejos. These wild fisheries are founded on self-sustaining populations of Brown Trout, which are native to Eurasia. These fisheries need clean cold water and functioning ecosystems to persist into the future.

Lastly, CPW manages put-and-take recreational fisheries through stocking, providing easy access and high success rates for anglers. These fisheries are gateways for young anglers and provide the best opportunities for angler harvest for the dinner table.

There is a lot of diversity in angling opportunity in the San Luis Valley and it's important to learn about the different types of fisheries and experience them first hand. Through stewardship and a culturally based conservation ethic we can maintain our diverse fisheries and pass them on for our kids. There is something for everyone and that is how it should be.

Tips and Tricks for Success

The following tips and tricks are all ecological based strategies— Think like a fish!:

- In small streams, stealth is often more important than your bait. Take time to see you quarry before the cast and take note of the habitat they are in (i.e., tailout of the pool)
- Even though lakes offer deep habitat— good for refuge from high temps and bright sun— trout primarily feed in shallow water along the shorelines. A light wind ripple offers cover for these fish mid-day. Take time to observe the natural prey items and emulate their behaviour (i.e., Damselflies swim to shore and crawl out, while mayflies rise vertically to the surface to hatch).
- Use data to your benefit. Trout are most active when water temperatures are between 45 to 65 °F. Use a thermometer, or better yet stream gage data, to plan your timing (i.e., in the spring and fall temperature hits daily optimum in the afternoon). Look at a few days to predict your best window for feeding fish.
- Observe as much as you can and share your knowledge appropriately. Humans are great hunters and anglers because of communication. That is also how we share the stewardship ethos!