

# LAND OF ENCHANTMENT GUIDES

NEWS & FISHING REPORT • SEPT, OCT & NOV 2010

Tuesday, September 21st, 2010

Hi Everyone,

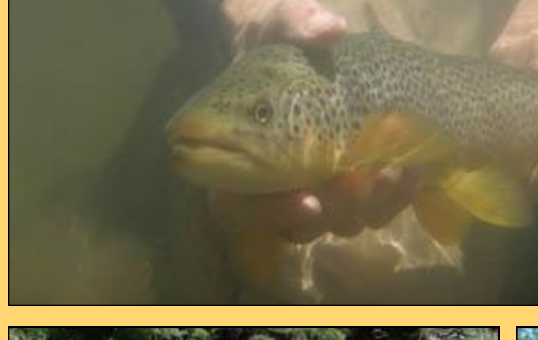
I hope that all of you are well and have had a good fall. Last Thursday and Friday, we got our first real snowstorm of the year, here in Northern New Mexico. It was a much welcomed event. We have had a very warm and dry early winter so we'll take any and all of the moisture we can get at this point. In any case, the dry, warmer weather made for some very good late fall/early winter fishing.

Fall is just about upon us which means the magic time of year for fly fishing in New Mexico is almost here! October and November offer up the best weather, the most consistent water conditions and, most importantly, the best fishing for large trout. With both the air and water cooling off and the days getting shorter, the trout start to perk up and come out of their lethargy of the dog days of Summer. Also, the larger brown trout are throwing some of their usual caution to the wind and have started to become quite aggressive in their pre-spawn actions. In the Fall, the larger browns, which often are nocturnal and extremely hard to catch during the rest of the year, start to come out of hiding and will take flies during the middle of the day. If ever there was a perfect time of year to get on the river and go fishing, this is it.

Below are some detailed descriptions of where we have been fishing recently and of what should occur in these spots over the next couple of months. *All of the pictures were taken within the last 1 to 8 weeks.*

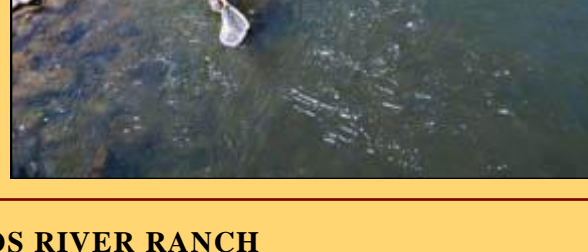
## THE RIO CHAMA

For the last month or so, we have been making trips to the upper sections of the Chama and the fishing has been excellent. In the last couple of weeks, the bigger fish have started moving around and, if you are willing to hike a bit, a good day is almost certain to be had. In the next week or two, the flows out of all of the dams should start to be cut back substantially and we should be able to get to many spots that have been basically un-fishable (due to high flows) for most of the Summer. Bigger fish on larger flies are often the norm. This is what we wait most of the year for. Here are some recent pictures taken on the upper Chama...



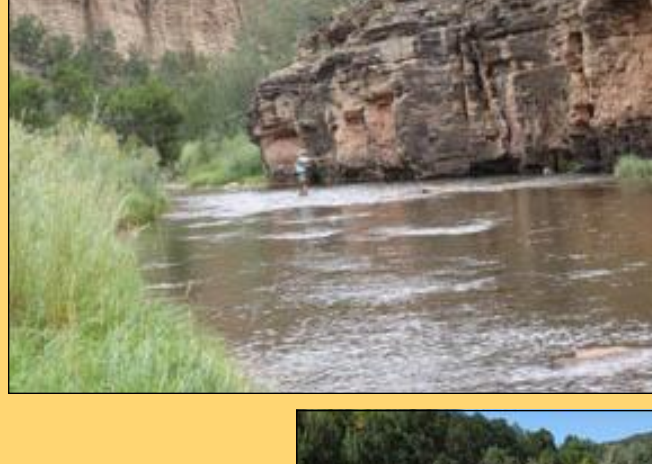
## THE ABEYTA RANCH ON THE CONEJOS

The Fall is the best time of year to fish on the Conejos and The Abeyta Ranch is one of the best stretches on the river. The water flows are down to a manageable level and the wading is easy this time of year. We have been up to the Abeyta Ranch a few times this season and have had great fishing every trip. There are lots of really nice browns and a fair number of larger rainbows throughout the 2.5 mile private stretch of water running through the ranch. The drive time to the ranch from Santa Fe is about 2 hours so it makes for a very reasonable day trip.



## THE PECOS RIVER RANCH

The Pecos River Ranch has been offering up some of the best fishing we have had in the last month or so and it looks to get even better as the Fall progresses. With all the rain we had in July and early August, the river didn't seem to get as warm as usual and it appears that this has helped the overall condition of the fish. They are very healthy and quite feisty! Right now, the river is very clear and wadeable everywhere. The fish are eating all types of flies - we have been fishing a full range of nymph rigs, dry droppers and, in the deeper holes, dredging for the larger fish with streamers. For the dry-fly fanatics, the afternoons have been offering up some good action as well. As the leaves start to turn and the temperatures get cooler, the Pecos River Ranch is one of the most beautiful, enjoyable spots to fish in all of New Mexico and there are some very large fish in the bigger pools.



## THE VALLES CALDERA NATIONAL PRESERVE

Just a quick heads-up on the Valles Caldera. The last fishing day for the 2010 season on the preserve will be Thursday, September 30th. The elk season starts on October 1st and there will be no more fishing once the hunters start.

## THE SAN JUAN

As with most of our rivers, October and November are great months to fish on the Juan. The midges and baetis start hatching again and the fish get fired up and easier to catch. The fishing has been fair to good throughout August but there haven't been the large insect hatches typical of the Fall so the "return of the bugs" will be a welcome change. Also, we surely won't miss the hot, windless days of August during our float trips!

## DON'T TARGET FISH ON THE SPAWNING BEDS & WATCH YOUR STEP FOR REDDS!!

The Fall is when the brown trout spawn. This causes them to become very aggressive and protective of their area of the river. Fishing for them during their "pre-spawning" time can be some of the best fishing of the year. Once the fish go up onto the spawning beds and gravel, we don't fish for them and try to leave them alone. If you keep your eyes out in shallower water which has gravel bottom, some current and oxygenation, you often can see pairs or groups of fish spawning. We encourage everyone to leave these fish alone and let them do their thing. As well, during this time of year, we try and be more careful of where we walk, especially in areas that look as though they could be spawning beds or gravels. When the female trout gets ready to lay her eggs, she will scout out a shallow, oxygen-rich piece of sandy gravel river bed to deposit her eggs into. She will then carve out a small trench called a redd by scooping out the gravel and sand with her tail. Once the redd is complete, the female will deposit her eggs and wait for a male to fertilize them with his sperm. Upon completion of spawning, the female will cover the redd with loose gravel and sand as it swims away, providing the future hatchlings with shelter. Redds look like areas where the river bottom has been swept or cleaned and often the gravel in the redd is a slightly different color and finer than the surrounding bottom. Typically they will be from one to three feet long and often have a slight depression to them, though this is not always the case. If you look at the image below, the areas circled with a blue line are trout redds on a spawning bed.



As you are wading in the rivers this Fall, watch out for redds and try to avoid walking through them. Disrupting them will harm the trout's eggs and hurt the future of the biomass. A good rule of thumb while wading is to try to avoid walking through spots in a river that might make good spawning beds (i.e. smaller, sandy gravel bottom; shallow, oxygenated; riffing water; the tail ends of large flat pools; etc.) or any area where you see small pieces of the bottom that look as though they may have been disturbed. If you don't fish directly for spawning fish and avoid disturbing redds, you will be helping to protect the future of the fishery for everyone.

As always, give us a call anytime for daily fishing and weather conditions, to book a trip or just to say hi and talk trout. Enjoy yourselves and stay well.

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