



III. Fly Fishing Information Resources

General Information

1. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region 5 Field Office
2300 Lake Elmo Drive
Billings, MT 59105
(406) 247-2940

Montana's Fishing Access Sites – Field Guide (printed copy available from MT FWP Field Office)

Montana Fishing Guide Page – Select "Fishing Access Sites – Field Guide" under "Resources", PDF format download: <http://fwp.mt.gov/fishing/guide/default.aspx>

Montana's Fishing Access Sites – Field Guide: <http://fwp.mt.gov/content/getitem.aspx?id=27322>

Fishing License Information and Laws: <http://fwp.mt.gov/default.html>

2. The following web site is a must see. It includes all of Montana's rivers, lakes and streams. For our district, select, South Central Montana Rivers (includes location, general description of watershed, hatch charts, fly-fishing, wading and floating information, and MT-FWP Fishing Access Sites)
<http://www.bigskyfishing.com/River-Fishing/South-MT-Rivers/Southern-MT-Rivers.htm>
3. General Information on Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington rivers and streams: WestFly, Inc.
<http://www.westfly.com/cgi-bin/fly-fishing-entry?state=MONTANA>
4. The Montana Angling Guide, by Chuck Fothergill and Bob Sterling, 2002
Stream Stalker Publishing Company, PO Box 6025, Battlement Mesa, CO 81636
ISBN 0-9614704-2-9, \$29.95

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River Maps

1. **Bighorn River.** This is a very nice map of the Bighorn River (includes names of all fishing locations).
QuickByte Productions (maps for sale, \$5.00)
<http://quickbyte.com/RiverMaps/>

Another nice map of the Bighorn River with aerial photography, GPS coordinates and public roads and river access is available from:

The Carta Group, LLC, Fort Collins, CO
(970) 224-5997

My Adventure Map: Bighorn River, Fort Smith, Montana Sections A-L & L-B
Fishing Map and Guide, \$9.99 (also sold at local fly shops)

2. **Yellowstone River.** MT-FWP downloadable map in a PDF format
http://fwp.mt.gov/fishing/guide/q_Yellowstone_River__1039825479787_15.3889999389648_570.177001953125.aspx

Rocky Mountain Maps and Guide Books, maps for sale (\$4.95)
<http://rockymountainmaps.com/item/284/upper-yellowstone-river-mapInformation>

Bureau of Land Management - Montana State Office
5001 Southgate Drive, Billings, MT 59101
(406) 896-5013

"Yellowstone River Floaters Guide" – maps available in 4 river sections for a nominal fee

1. **Stillwater River.**
http://fwp.mt.gov/fishing/guide/waters_a_z.aspx (scroll down to Stillwater River)

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Fly Tying Recipes

There are hundreds of web sites for fly-tying recipes and instruction, but the following is a club favorite:

WestFly, Incorporated

<http://www.westfly.com/fly-pattern-recipe/fly-pattern-recipe.shtml>

Numerous recipes can also be found on the Magic City Fly Fishers web site:

<http://mcfonline.org/education.htm>

River Information and Water Flows

United States Geological Service (USGS): <http://www.riverservices.com/main.htm>

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III. Fly Fishing Equipment Check List

- » 9' long, 5-weight, 2 or 4 piece fly rod for general fishing (dry, wet and nymph fishing), with 5-weight WF-floating line and hard rod case for transport (If you can only afford one rod, make it a 5-weight.)
- » 9' long, 4-weight, 2 or 4 piece fly rod for fishing where delicate fly/nymph/midge presentation is required, with 4-weight WF-floating line and hard rod case for transport
- » Appropriately sized reel with quality drag system (avoid "palm" drags as they are difficult to use while landing fish) – if buying, I recommend a "large arbor" reel as line is wound in larger loops and tends not to take a set when stored on reel for long periods. "Trout" or "Nymph" fly lines are recommended. Backing should be a bright color (bright orange or fluorescent green are favorites) and 20# test strength. The length of backing depends on the chosen reel.
- » 7-1/2 foot 3X leaders for midge and nymph fishing (Trout find 90% of their food beneath the surface!)
- » "Fluorocarbon" tippet in sizes 3X, 4X and 5X for nymph fishing
- » Monofilament tippet in sizes 4X, 5X, 6X and 7X for dry fly fishing
- » 9 to 12 foot long, 4X through 7X leaders for dry fly fishing (size TBD to match fly sizes, and relevant hatches at various times of the year)
- » Weighted sinking tip (optional) – most people used crimped-BB or twist-on weights and WF-Floating lines.
- » Bright colored Leader Indicators (bright orange is common). The use of an indicator is almost required for midge fishing.
- » Pinch-on "non-lead" (tungsten) weights for nymph fishing...typically a variety of sizes up to about BB size.
- » Line/leader nippers
- » Long forceps, bright color that can be seen if dropped in the water
- » Leader straightener
- » Light weight breathable waders for summer fishing, insulated waders for winter fishing – or add polypropylene long-underwear and fleece sweatpants with lightweight waders for winter fishing
- » Fleece sweatpants and/or polypropylene long-underwear inside of waders (spring, fall and winter)
- » Felt-soled wading boots (The use of non-felt soled wading boots that do not transfer mud snails and didymo from stream to stream are also encouraged.)
- » Wader belt
- » Woolen wading socks
- » Wading stick or staff (optional, but highly recommended; consider a bayonet style that transports easily and unfolds for use)
- » A fly-fishing vest is not recommended during the "hot" summer – instead a water-resistant waste bag or open-style chest pack is recommended. A neck-lanyard is handy for tools and tippets.
- » Loaded fly boxes
- » Catch & Release Net (with a rubber basket to minimize fly tangles is preferred)
- » Covered-toe, felt-bottomed wading sandals for wet-wading during summer months (optional --- but beware, water temperature usually stays around 45 degrees on the Bighorn River even during the hot summer)

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- » Camera (optional)
- » Tape measure (optional)
- » Stream thermometer, recommend infra-red thermometer to keep hands dry and warm, and prevent spooking of fish (optional)
- » Wader bag (for storing wet waders on trip home)
- » Large duffel bag to transport gear (optional)
- » Flashlight (optional)
- » First-Aid Kit – include cutting pliers to remove hooks embedded in flesh (a most common type of fly-fishing injury)
- » Baggies for storing cell phones, wrist watch and wallet
- » Flip-style magnifying glasses, if needed. Also, consider magnifiers built into sunglasses specially designed for fly-fishing

Clothing and Miscellaneous Items:

- » Montana weather is always subject to change without notice. The day can start out warm and sunny, and turn cold and windy by noontime, or stormy by late afternoon or evening. Daytime temperatures can reach 100+ degrees and nighttime temperatures on the same day can fall into the low-50s. Always bring plenty of clothing, and layering is highly recommended.
- » Long-sleeved fishing shirt (bright colors OK, but many prefer Sage Green or darker colors) for year-round comfort (roll sleeves up and down as needed)
- » Sun Glasses (polarized to allow vision beneath the water) – quality optics are highly recommended and are helpful in spotting fish.
- » Sun-blocker, sun-screen, or tanning lotion
- » Brimmed hat (a baseball cap, or a cowboy hat with a clip-on hat retainer to prevent loss due to wind, is typical).
- » Fleece shirt or jacket (recommended for spring, fall and winter), sometimes worn under a rain jacket.
- » Short-bodied, hooded rain jacket (Gore-Tex is recommended for comfort as it “breathes”) with Velcro sleeved cuffs to prevent water from running down casting arm (yes, we do fish in the rain and snow). I recommend a jacket that is designed specifically for fly-fishing.
- » Split mittens or fingerless-tipped gloves (spring, winter, fall).
- » Woolen skullcap (spring, winter, fall), often worn over a baseball cap to stay warm and shade the eyes.
- » Bring water and food. The nearest towns are Fort Smith and Hardin, and both are usually a very long ways away from where you are fishing.

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VIII. Local fly, tackle, outdoor shops and sporting goods stores

The Base Camp
1730 Grand Avenue
Billings, MT 59102
(406) 248-4555

Big Bear Sports Center
2618 King Avenue West
Billings, MT 59101
(406) 652-5999

Bighorn Fly & Tackle Shop
485 S 24th Street West
Billings, MT 59102
(406) 656-8257

Bighorn Fly & Tackle Shop
1 Main Street
Ft. Smith, MT 59035
(406) 666-2253

Big Horn Angler
577 Park Dale Court
Ft. Smith, MT 59035
(406) 666-2233

Bighorn River Shop
1 Mile North of Ft. Smith
on Hwy-313
Ft. Smith, MT 59035
(406) 666-9299

Big Horn Trout Shop
Parkdale Court
Ft. Smith, MT 59035
(406) 666-2375

The Bozeman Angler
23 East Main Street
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 587-9111

Cabela's
4500 King Ave.
Billings, MT 59101
(406) 373-7300

Dan Bailey's Fly Shop
209 West Park Street
Livingston, MT 59047
(406) 222-1673

East Rosebud Fly Shop
(March 2009)
South 24th Street West,
North of Broadwater

Fins & Feathers of Bozeman
1500 North 19th St, Suite B
Bozeman, MT 59718
(406) 586-2188

Fins & Feathers of Bozeman
81801 Gallatin Road
Bozeman, MT 59718
(406) 585-2917

Fins & Feathers of Bozeman
West Clark Street
between 8th & 9th Streets
Livingston, MT 59047
(406) 585-2188

Fish Montana Fly Shop
3 North Stillwater Road
Absarokee, MT 59001
(406) 328-6548

The Fort
223 Big Timber Loop Road
Big Timber, MT 59011
(406) 932-5992

Hatch Finders Fly Shop
113 West Park #3
Livingston, MT 59047
(406) 252-0503

Master Angler
107 South Main Street
Livingston, MT 59047
(406) 222-2273

Montana Troutfitters
1716 West Main
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 587-4707

The Otter's Den
637 9th Street North
Columbus, MT 59019
(406) 322-4977

The Powder Horn
Sportsman's Supply
35 East Main Street
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 587-7373

Rainbow Run Fly Shop
2244 Grand Avenue
Billings, MT 59102
(406) 656-3455
(10% Discount to MCFF members)

The River's Edge
2012 North 7th Street
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 586-5373

Scheels Sports Shop
300 S 24th Street West
(In the Rimrock Mall)
Billings, MT 59102
(406) 656-9220

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Shipton's Big R
216 North 14th Street
Billings, MT 59101
(406) 252-0503

Shipton's Big R
2600 Gabel Road
Billings, MT 59102
(406) 652-9118

Spring Creek Specialists
Fly Shop
2742 East River Road
Livingston, MT 59047
(406) 222-5664

The Sports Authority
100 North 24th Street West
Billings, MT 59102
(406) 656-3888

Sportsman's Warehouse
3676 Pierce Parkway
Billings, MT 59106
(406) 651-1000

Suds N' Bugs Tackle Shop
142 South Pratten Street
Columbus, MT 59019
(406) 322-4054

Sweet Cast Angler Fly Shop
119 West 1st Avenue
Big Timber, MT 59011
(406) 932-4469

Yellowstone Angler
5256 Highway 89 South
Livingston, MT 59047
(406) 222-7130

Yellowstone Gateway Sports
1106 West Park #22
Livingston, MT 59047
(406) 222-5414
Yellowstone Troutfitters
123 9th Street West
Red Lodge, MT 59068
(406) 446-3819

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