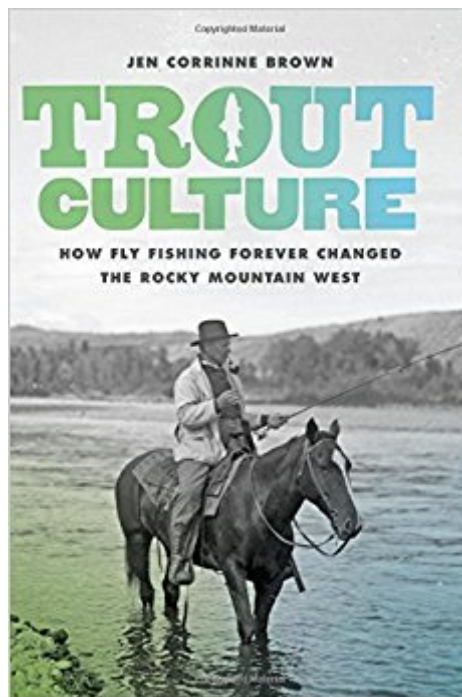




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Trout Culture: How Fly Fishing Forever Changed The Rocky Mountain West (Emil And Kathleen Sick Book Series In Western History And Biography)



Synopsis

From beer labels to literary classics like *A River Runs Through It*, trout fishing is a beloved feature of the iconography of the American West. But as Jen Brown demonstrates in *Trout Culture: How Fly Fishing Forever Changed the Rocky Mountain West*, the popular conception of Rocky Mountain trout fishing as a quintessential experience of communion with nature belies the sport's long history of environmental manipulation, engineering, and, ultimately, transformation. A fly-fishing enthusiast herself, Brown places the rise of recreational trout fishing in a local and global context. Globally, she shows how the European sport of fly-fishing came to be a defining, tourist-attracting feature of the expanding 19th-century American West. Locally, she traces the way that the burgeoning fly-fishing tourist industry shaped the environmental, economic, and social development of the Western United States: introducing and stocking favored fish species, eradicating the less favored native "trash fish," changing the courses of waterways, and leading to conflicts with Native Americans' fishing and territorial rights. Through this analysis, Brown demonstrates that the majestic trout streams often considered a timeless feature of the American West are in fact the product of countless human interventions adding up to a profound manipulation of the Rocky Mountain environment.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

[T]his is a well-researched, richly detailed history of trout and trout fishing in the Mountain West that, as the author promises, 'overturns the biggest fish story ever told.'--John Gierach"Wall Street

Journal" (01/01/2015)[A] remarkable book. Brown's pithy, beautifully written prose conveys an important message: that anglers and managers need to stop imagining western lakes and rivers as wild places and start thinking about how the human history of Rocky Mountain trout has had a disastrous impact on ecologically significant native species that genteel recreationists too readily deemed 'trash fish.'--Miles Powell"Western Historical Quarterly" (01/01/2016)[T]his is a well-researched, richly detailed history of trout and trout fishing in the Mountain West that, as the author promises, 'overturns the biggest fish story ever told.'--John Gierach"Wall Street Journal" (01/01/2015)This is a well-researched, richly detailed history of trout and trout fishing in the Mountain West that, as the author promises, 'overturns the biggest fish story ever told.'--John Gierach"Wall Street Journal" (01/01/2015)[A] remarkable book. Brown's pithy, beautifully written prose conveys an important message: that anglers and managers need to stop imagining western lakes and rivers as wild places and start thinking about how the human history of Rocky Mountain trout has had a disastrous impact on ecologically significant native species that genteel recreationists too readily deemed 'trash fish.'--Miles Powell"Western Historical Quarterly" (01/01/2016)

"In wonderfully approachable prose Jen Corrinne Brown guides readers through the many environmental manipulations that were needed to create the mountain states' renowned trout fisheries. In the process, she ties fly-fishing into the wider history of outdoor recreation and environmental change in the West, giving anyone who loves the region or the sport much food for thought."--William Philpott, author of *Vacationland: Tourism and Environment in the Colorado High Country*"A truly intriguing argument that reshapes our understanding of the region, its environment, and culture. Features a wealth of original research."--Michael W. Childers, author of *Colorado Powder Keg: Ski Resorts and the Environmental Movement*"Jen Corrine Brown's timely and well-researched *Trout Culture* should become a key feature of the national conversation over the ecological, economic, and recreational future of western rivers. Whether we knew it or not, we have been waiting for this book."--Paul Schullery, author of *Cowboy Trout* and *If Fish Could Scream*"A welcome and clear-eyed history of Rocky Mountain fly fishing, *Trout Culture* links the growth of the sport and its passionate following to western tourism, and, most importantly, to a history of fish management and environmental change that reveals the significant and often troubling results of our fascination with trout. Fishing enthusiasts and western historians alike should read this book; they will never look at a trout stream the same way again."--Annie Gilbert Coleman, University of Notre Dame

This is an expensive book and I write the review only because of that. I would not wish to sound mean. The book seems to be part of some academic process and may represent a dissertation but if so I would not think it would have done well. The material is not well organized and the author's points are repeated to a fault both within chapters and throughout the book. The style is ponderous and it is a difficult read, surprisingly so for someone who really enjoys reading about western fishing, fish culture and history. While I have no argument with what the author believes I think it could have been better written and provided more information about "how fly fishing changed etc".

Well worth a read, very similar read to the book, "An Entirely Synthetic Fish," by Anders Halverson. Good historical information and discussing the issues with early 20th century fish stocking. The book could have used a little less discussion about racism. I do not need to hear how fishing is racist, I think our society is obsessed with race at this point in time and it should stop. So obsessed in fact that we interpret racism where none was. Even with that criticism the book was very informative around the culture of Fly Fishing, a culture I consider myself a part of.

This was sent as a gift to an inveterate fly fisherman. It was very well received and deemed most interesting. It was especially appreciated as he lives in Carolina and had recently been fishing with a friend in Denver. Among other subjects the book discusses how the hydroelectric system it used to enhance the trout fishery.

I'm a bit puzzled by another review alluding to concerns about racism. Brown does indeed consider how trout culture has been elitist, and has acted to elite-ize the sport, which is a matter of class and education as well as ethnicity. Common to many sports, fishing for sustenance or for food has been seen as unsporting and lacking aesthetic appeal. I don't see this book as harping on the matter, simply recording the history of the trout culture. Elitism is an element in many sports, such as tennis and golf once were. Perhaps more telling is than Brown fairly often refers to colonialism and capitalism in the sense of privileged folks having the ability to shape the world the way they wanted it--this does not determine her theme, but it is a bit grating at times. Trouble is, what the book discusses happens to be history. That said, this is a good read. She identifies five Rocky Mountain states and how trout culture has affected them. The "culture" there stems from growing leisure and local desire for the economic benefits of tourism, including railroads seeking to increase traffic. Among the consequences have been extinction or near extinction of many native species (the

chapter "Trash Fish" covers this well including what might almost be called--my phrase, not used in the book--managed extinction given massive efforts to get rid of other species). The book describes the origin and rise of trout culture, including developments in fishing technology, the impact of dams and irrigation. In a sense this is a case study in environmental history and ecosystem change. There's some hope, a rising interest in fly fishing for wild--native wild--species, particularly in Montana. However the culture of fish hatcheries continues, with the system's often negative consequences.

I was expecting to read about the misguided fishery administration and the stocking of non native sport fish (Rainbow and German Brown trout) at the expense of the native and wild fisheries (Cutthroat, Lake, and Brook trout). What I wasn't prepared for was the authors spin on racism in the Western Rockies. I found that it took away from reading the material as I found myself distracted by the amount of time the author spent on racism. I spent more time on counting the times and looking at the authors spin on racism than on the actual historical material of the book. I would suggest you save your money and instead pick up a copy of "An Entirely Synthetic Fish. It'll give the same history but with a lot less of this authors attitude and spin.

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