

The background of the cover is a close-up photograph of a trout with its mouth open, hooked on a green fly line. To the left, a portion of a fly rod with a cork handle is visible. In the bottom left corner, a silver fly reel with green line is partially shown. The text is overlaid on this scene.

Trout 2010 Annual

Fly Rod & Reel

Trout *Annual* 2010

TRAVELING ANGLER

K-T Ranch, Colorado



The White River is a freestone river with headwaters in the Flat Top Mountains and a range all the way to the Green River in Utah. No matter what season you visit Colorado's K-T Ranch, near the town of Meeker, the variety of fishing you can access on the White River is guaranteed to provide fly-rodders with special memories. There are not many

ivers that legitimately offer year-round fishing, but the White and her three spring creeks is one of them. In the Summer 2010 issue of *Fly Rod & Reel*, John Gierach writes about one of the creeks, "The stream was a pretty little thing meandering widely across the meadow, taking its own sweet time before it emptied into the river." You can almost hear the water burbling....

The White Through the Seasons

Most trout anglers agree that the best part of the year on the White River is the post-run-off summer. Water levels are perfect. Water temperatures are perfect. Hatches are strong. You can wear waders or you can wet wade. There are PMDs, red quills, damselfly, and mahogany duns that hatch all summer long. Nymph fishermen like pre-hatch times in July, and when the hatch is on, dry-fly anglers simply smile when a trout rises to their fly. A variety of dropper rigs tied by the expert guides at K-T Ranch are sure to hook up fish. With seven miles and three spring creeks to fish, anglers do their best to leave no stones unturned. At the day's end, return to the porch to swap fishing stories and take in the stars. Round out the day with Southern fried chicken, BBQ ribs, fresh corn-on-the-cob and blueberry pie.

The autumn brings magnificent color, and, like the leaves, the trout are brilliantly colored. There are browns and rainbows, both in vibrant colors, and cutthroats and cuttbows, too. In Colorado, many sportsmen take to the fields for big-game hunting or for wing-shooting. That means one of two things: you can have the river to yourself, or you can get the best of both worlds by combining a hunting trip with a fishing trip. The trout know that Old Man Winter is rapidly approaching. Ask your guide to fish near one of the K-T's hayfields. The regular gusts of wind deposit hoppers in the river and the water boils with trout. Pack some heavier tippets to keep the big fish from breaking off.

To some anglers, nothing beats a winter's day on the water. The air is crisp against your cheeks, the snow sticks to your felt soles and then melts off when you hit the water, and the trout rise to midges, *Baetis*, and stoneflies that hatch all winter long. Winter provides a different view of the White River, one that reflects a quiet hibernation, and the snow-covered fields have a way of offering an unparalleled solitude.

Those key ingredients for a winter fishing getaway can be found at the K-T. The air is dry so you stay warm. Air temperatures hover in the lower-40s, the skies are Colorado bright and sunny, and a dusting of snow covers the ground. The Washing Machine Hole is a great place to toss a streamer against the bank, and it's common to hook 20-inch-plus fish in the two- to three-pound range.

Or, a visit to the ranch in spring means logging some time when the water levels are perfect and the trout are shaking off their winter chill. Early spring is a terrific time to fish the White River. The water temperatures begin to warm, and caddis, beetles, crickets and ants hatch along with the midges, *Baetis* and stoneflies. Our trout are hungry, and they know instinctively that the snow will melt soon and they'll move out of their feeding lanes and against the bank. Until then, the browns and rainbows feed regularly and aggressively. Good fishing conditions extend from the first day of spring through the middle of May. For travel information, go to thehighlonesomeranch.com. — Tom Keer