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| Date | Mid August | Time | Evening |
| Location | Mill Creek Lake – Challis, ID | Weather | Clear |
| Fish Species | Grayling, Cutthroat | Size Range | 10 – 12”, 11” Grayling |
| Fish Caught | Several; 1 Grayling to every 4 Cutthroat | | |
| Flies Used | Royal Wulff | | |
| Techniques | Dry Fly | | |
| Comments | I finally caught my first Grayling! | | |

Wow, I haven't been this excited about catching a fish for a while. My first Grayling was a nice surprise. Not only that but it was 11” which I consider a pretty nice size for Idaho.



My first Grayling of 11” caught in Mill Creek Lake

I knew there were several lakes in the Lemhi range that contained Grayling but I was unaware that they were in this lake. The state record Grayling was caught in the Lemhi's north of Mill Creek Lake on the other side of the range in Nez Perce Lake near Leadore, Idaho. It was just over 18” and weighed in at 2lb. 7oz. back in 1992. I had tried fishing a few lakes over the last couple of years that I knew contained Grayling but had no luck.

The lake sits at the head of Sawmill Canyon which waters drains into the Little Lost River. I scouted the Little Lost River a little before hiking the trail to the lake but did not fish. I've heard the fish are more active in the evening and there is the possibility of catching a Bull Trout. Just make sure to release them unharmed because they are a threatened fish.

I got to the trailhead around 5:00pm and was excited to hike in a new mountain range. All I knew about the lake is that it was easily accessible and didn't know which fish species it contained. It was a moderate two mile hike to the lake. The hike started off well as I noticed a Buck in the velvet.



As I reached the saddle and walked down to the lake I noticed several fish rising to insects. I tied on a Royal Wulff and began casting to the rings. It didn't take long to hook a few fish but I had a hard time landing them. I soon realized after catching a few Cutthroats and landing a Grayling what was going on. The Grayling has a small soft mouth which easily tears. My thought was that I had hooked into a few Grayling and the hook tore out of their mouth.

I was so excited when I landed my first Grayling and got to lift up and see the big fin they have on their back. They remind me of a Mountain Whitefish except with a big sail fin on their back.



Mill Creek Lake and a Grayling that it harbors



The nice thing about the fishing is that I could back cast anywhere on the lake and I was catching nice sized Grayling on the surface. It is definitely worth a stop if you are in the area. The only problem with that is why would you be in the area? It's on the road to nowhere but if by chance you're around, you'll have to give it a try along with the Little Lost River.

I think this is a well kept local secret but at a nearby recreation site there is a hot spring that contains small tropical fish. It looks like a pond and has a few logs in the middle to sit on. You are surrounded by many colorful fish. Another unique spot in Idaho's backcountry!

