

THE BOULDERS

Date	Mid September	Time	All Day
Location	Boulder Mountain in southern Utah	Weather	Clear
Fish Species	Tiger Trout, Splake, Brook Trout & Colorado Cutthroat	Size Range	14"- 22" and larger Brook 16"-18" and larger
Fish Caught	Many - The largest; Brook 18", Tiger 22", Splake 21", Colorado Cutthroat 16.5"		
Flies Used	Wooly Buggers on the fly rod; Jigs on a spin cast rod		
Techniques	Small strips across the bottom of the lake		
Comments	You wouldn't believe me if I didn't have pictures!		

Wow! Rarely do Hogs and alpine lakes near 10,000' mix. It did on this trip! I still can't believe what I witnessed. This two-day fishing trip ranks as one of my favorites. It ranks just behind fishing for Salmon in Alaska & Washington and Golden Trout in the Winds.

First of all, I'm sworn to secrecy so I can't give any locations. I also have some very scenic pictures that I can't share but I think the big fish pictures will do. If you really want to know you can hire a guide which is what my brother Rick did.

Boulder Mountain Fly Fishing: <http://www.bouldermountainguide.com/home.html>

Rick's Fishing Blog: <http://ricksreeladventures.blogspot.com>



Roadside view near Torrey, UT just north of the Boulders

The Boulders are surrounded by Utah's beautiful canyonlands. Capitol Reef National Park sits to the east and Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument to the south. There are places where you drive in the Boulders and look down on these scenic canyons. The views on and around the plateau are absolutely spectacular. The sound of a bull Elk bugling added to the experience as we settled in one night.

I have fond memories of the Boulders growing up in southern Utah. My dad and uncle took our scout troop on a campout to several lakes and reservoirs on/near the Boulders. My fondest fishing memory was catching two 23" Rainbows back-to-back on a spinner. My favorite memory though was sitting down and eating tacos while watching a beautiful sunset camped along the banks of the Fremont River. As the sun disappeared and darkness set in, I crawled into my sleeping bag under the open stars as we told stories. My uncle stressed how difficult it was to catch a snipe with a gunnysack but to keep trying because they were native to this area. We had no luck the night before on our snipe hunt so we were ready for some more tips. Next to me lay my dad, uncle, brother and friends. We were having a great time!

The next thing I know, my dad is waking me up and barking like a dog in the middle of the night. As I come too, I see my dad pointing to the river. I look and see a few skunks walking away. "Jason", my dad exclaimed, "When I awoke, all I saw was a tail sticking out of your sleeping bag". Don't ask me what that skunk was after in my sleeping bag!

Needless to say, the camp was awoken by my dad's barking. The skunks seemed to enjoy the remnants of tacos spread around the camp as much as we did earlier in the evening. There was a great sense of excitement to say the least. I don't think anyone got much sleep that night even though we had devised a plan. The scouts would take turns manning the post and barking like dogs if necessary to keep the skunks at bay while everyone else slept.

This trip was my second time back to the Boulders and boy do I have more good memories. I caught three new fish species and the largest Brook Trout of my life. We fished one lake on the south side of the plateau and two adjacent lakes on the north side.

We spent the first day targeting large Brook Trout (footballs) mostly at 16" with the largest going 18" caught by my brother. It is not uncommon to catch Brook Trout 20" and over in this particular lake so I guess we'll have to try it again next year. They fought hard and it was a hoot on a fly rod. I stripped Woolly Buggers using 8 lb tippet across the bottom of the lake near a spring where the fish were literally stacked. Unbelievable!

My brother smashed them with a jig. It is always fun fishing with Rick because I always get to see a big fish. On this trip I got to see many of his big fish. He uses his spinning rod like a magic wand. As you can see from his blog he can work some magic. He wonders why I only carry a fly rod when I could fish farther and deeper with a spinning rod. I don't know that answer other than I'm perfectly content and love the challenge of a fly rod. With the exception of me catching the largest Cutthroat you can see his point when it comes to catching the big ones.



A couple average sized Brook Trout for this lake; the largest being 18"



The second day we targeted Tiger Trout (Brown Trout/Brook Trout hybrid) and came out with some Splake (male Brook/female Lake Trout hybrid) and Colorado Cutthroat as well. These were all new species for me.

The first lake we tried was full of huge Tiger Trout to at least 25" if not more. We could see them all in the crystal clear water. We fished a half day and Rick was able to get a 22" Tiger Trout to commit to his jig. I'd get fish to follow and rise to my dries but no takers. I reduced my tippet size but I could not trick these educated fish. We were not alone at this lake and the same fate fell upon those fishermen as well.

After lunch we walked to a different lake. While Rick fished the inlet I walked around to the west side of the inlet where I saw a few splashes. My eyes got real big as I motioned Rick to come. The lake bottom literally moved with large fish. We had a hay day catching fish that averaged 16". We quickly made up for the lack of fish from that morning. This is where I was able to catch my first Splake, Tiger Trout and Colorado Cutthroat. I did not want to leave and thought it a big mistake to only plan two days for this trip. Another fisherman tipped us off to another nearby lake that held huge Brook Trout and another lake where you could catch 16" Grayling on the fly.

There are so many good lakes in the Boulders with huge fish. If you want to try it by yourself then the Boulder Mountain Fly fishing website has excellent tips. I have so many places I want to fish that I rarely go back to the same spot. These lakes will be an exception!



22" Tiger Trout



A couple more Tiger Trout





21" Splake and a 16.5" Colorado Cutthroat

