

BRUNEAU RIVER

Date	Mid March	Time	All Day
Location	Bruneau River, ID	Weather	Snowy & Clear
Fish Species	Rainbow Trout, Pike Minnow	Size Range	10-14"
Fish Caught	Several		
Flies Used	Pheasant Tail		
Techniques	Nymph drifting, spinners		
Comments	Indian Hot Springs is a long way from civilization in the middle of the Owyhee's		

The Bruneau River is one of three rivers in the Owyhee Wilderness that people can float for a month out of the year. The Owyhee and Jarbidge are the other two rivers in this high desert expanse. Indian Hot Springs is within a mile of where the Bruneau and Jarbidge join and is the put-in for the Bruneau River float. Once you start there is no turning back and there are only a few places to climb out of the canyon in an emergency. It is one of the most uncivilized and inaccessible rivers in the lower forty-eight.

The few places that I have fished in the Owyhee's have produced small native Redband Trout. My friend Brandon, who took me on his UTV, said there were some big trout in the Bruneau. I questioned him by asking if he meant Bass. He then asked if I wanted to walk back to town as he said I may not be the fisherman you are but I think I know the difference between a Bass and Trout! He still won't let me live that down. I just wasn't expecting 14" Trout thinking it was probably a warm water fishery.

It would not be fun walking. It is sixteen miles from the nearest decent gravel road and a long way from anything paved. The roads deteriorate as you approach the canyon rim and is impassable when wet. As the locals will tell you, the best way to travel the Owyhee's is in your friends rig. Brandon's UTV makes it nice for traveling this tough terrain. I personally only visit the Owyhee's in the spring. Summer brings many reasons to stay out of the desert such as Rattlesnakes, Ticks, Poison Ivy and the searing heat. Actually, watch out for the Ticks in the spring as I've pulled out plenty.

The following link provides directions. Don't miss the Bruneau Overlook on the way out!
http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/fo/bruneau/recreation/indian_hot_springs.html

I went with Brandon and his wife so I sat in back on a strapped down cooler. It worked very well except for the snow that was blowing horizontal. As we ascended from the rim into the canyon, the weather cleared below the snowline and it felt warmer in the canyon out of the wind.



Ascending into the canyon

The UTV



The volume of steam coming from the hot springs caught my attention first. The hot water and cool weather made quite a show.



I also noticed an abandoned homestead next to the spring and an old bridge crossing the river that looked like it was going to collapse. I wouldn't try taking a truck across but we took our chances and drove the UTV across. We walked over to the hot spring to check it out. The water was too hot to touch. It looks like people bucketed water over to a pool on the river. There were also remnants of an old tub that use to do the trick. Up on the rim to the west we could also see a white rock structure. We were curious as to its purpose. It makes you wonder what life would have been like living out here all alone in such a rugged environment.



Abandoned homestead at Indian Hot Springs

Downstream view of Indian Hot springs & bridge



After checking out the hot spring and homestead we drove a mile or so up to the confluence of the Bruneau and Jarbidge rivers to check out the scenery and wet a line. It wasn't long before Naomi hooked into a nice 14" Rainbow.

Just a few miles up the Jarbidge the canyon steepens and classic views of sheer walled canyons can be viewed. Just below Indian Hot Springs is where the sheer walled canyons of the Bruneau begin.

I love exploring the slot canyons and deep canyons of the Owyhee's in the spring. It is a perfect kickoff to the summer that I spend in the mountains. I live in a great place having Idaho's wilderness areas so close to home.



After exploring and fishing we drove downriver to do some more fishing. We caught several trout and what I think are Pikeminnow. What a great place to be able to fish in March. It was another great day in one of the more remote areas of the Owyhee's.



Pikeminnow



Fishing the Bruneau

The Bruneau just downstream from the hot spring

