

TOP FISHING SECRETS

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Fluvial Processes

Active processes of river formation and evolution. River alterations dictate the best and worst times to fish.

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This river, the night before, had zero visibility running thousands of Cubic Feet per Second (CFS) higher blowing out the river; however, the grade of the river and the volume of water receded fast enough that it was possible to anticipate how long it would take for it to clear up making the system fishable. Note how easily the body movements of this fish stir up silt from the riverbed.

Fluvial Processes means all actions associated with the birth, longevity, and maintenance of any river or stream through natural interactions of water, gradient, speed, suspended particulate matter, and bed-loads which are all carried by currents. Runoff, saturation, sediment, turbidity, and scouring are forms of fluvial processes that directly affect freshwater fishing. Rivers could not exist without fluvial processes and become important elements to anglers wanting to fish either clear or turbid systems. Glacially fed systems are very different in behavior and formation from that of runoff-fed systems. These processes have minute partial sediment loads that vary by size, frequency, and density. How large a sediment load is dictates how much oxygen is available in any stretch of water. Oxygen depletion will keep many species of fish off the bite, sometimes killing them and is directly correlated to suspended silt where visibility is zero.

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These are just a few reasons to factor in what moves and shakes a river. Every river has some form of sediment load that moves down river. In most cases, provided there is substantial movement, all rivers are capable of providing a livable habitat despite sediment accumulation, dispersion, and suspended load where the water looks traditionally “stained”. These formed habitats are varied and cater to specific needs of fish making fluvial processes an important aspect of drift fishing techniques for anglers to figure out where to fish, what to fish, and how to fish.



Here a river has swollen far beyond its banks but it was still possible to hook into a couple of nice looking steelhead.

The visibility of this river was zero inches with particulate matter completely coloring the water muddy brown. The large volume of floodwater will literally "scour" the riverbed cleaning it of algae, debris, and accumulated bedload silt. How a river floods, recedes, and stabilizes are all fluvial processes that determine oxygen levels, clarity, depth, current speed, and width; how and why these elements work dictate fishing season, species of holding fish, and how to fish each reach of water.

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