



Overall: good to very good trip.

Fishing: high, somewhat off-colored water made conditions less than ideal. Results:

* **Saturday:** Elk float (photo at right): 21 cuts (top 18 inches; 18 on bright pink SJ worms; 3 on dries); 5 bull trout (tops = 20 and 24 inches; 4 on SJworms; 1 on dry)

* **Sunday:** Elk float: 25 cuts (top 19 inches; all on dries-orange caddis)

* **Monday:** Crowsnest wade trip: 8 rainbows (top 18 inches; mixed bag of flies; about one hour of 15-20+ savage strikes by large bows on stoneflies; only one landed out of 10 hook-ups; scraped out a few small ones (10-14 inches) after that but dry action went dead followed quickly by everything turning off)

* **Tuesday:**drum roll....River X: on this particular day, the river lived up to my expectations, which were pretty darn high. Never experienced this quality of rainbows, even in Alaska; very healthy, acrobatic fish; 5 bows landed, all 3-4



pounds (streamers and nymphs); 3 other solid hook-ups (4-5 pounds x2; the other one, take your pick: 7-8-10-12 #'s? Only got two looks and he was the biggest non-Alaskan trout I've ever had on); the 2 smaller fish both jumped a few times, hit the current hot, headed straight downstream, and "dumped" my 6 weight fly line and all the backing from my terribly outmanned Orvis Battenkills; having no choice but to gab the backing as the knot alone remained affixed to the reel, one leader broke and one hook bent and pulled. And I won't mention the 4 or 5 fish we saw from a bluff 50 feet above that were all close to double digits in

weight. And another all-time first for me: a 20 inch walleye on black marabou! Then, of course, we had to end the day with 7 small (12-16 inch rainbows) at about 10 PM as the lights went out on the Oldman River...shall I sing? Awesome day!

* **Wednesday:** Elk float: 19 cuts, all on dry; best cut of trip 21-22 inches; best story of trip: 12 inch cut eats elk hair drake in deep, dark green, slow pool; Dennis says out-loud, "Here, bull! Here, bull!" Jeff has obviously trained these fish well for, on command, a 35-40 inch fish consumes the cut and immediately does NOTHING but sit there; so I let him munch for a good 60 seconds (recall this is a 4 wt rod and a 25 year old Hardy Flyweight or Featherweight (the small one, whichever, that I bought with my first real paycheck after my training ended); after 8-10 minutes of "fighting" this fish, I'm thinking I've got a chance; Joel gets the net, can't quite lift him to the surface, so Joel embarks from the boat and I lead him down stream



toward Joel: Bad mistake! Fish feels current, sees Joel's beautiful earrings, and heads downstream never to be seen. Dumped again! But a good (and true) story.



View from room at Island Lake

Photo credits - Dennis Smith

Biggest surprise: Great food at 2 different Middle Eastern restaurants

Second nicest surprise: how few boats we saw on the ELK on the weekend: one and three.

Guides: really good group of people: personable and knowledgeable.

Summary: We will definitely be back! I can't imagine what fishing and scenery must be like under ideal conditions or in the Fall. I recommend Jeff et al without reservation.

Dennis and Julie Smith