

# Instream Flow Segments In the Wind/Bighorn Basin

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**WGFD Mission:**

**“Conserving Wildlife -  
Serving People”**

# Fish Division Mission

"As stewards of Wyoming's aquatic resources, we are committed to **conservation** and enhancement of all aquatic wildlife and their habitats **for future generations** through **scientific** resource management and informed public participation. We will use an integrated program of **protection**, regulation, propagation, restoration, and control **to provide diverse, quality fisheries resources** and angling opportunities. Our efforts will balance the productive capacity of habitats with public desires "

# Our Charge...

- “...report...those segments of stream which ...have the most critical need for instream flows” (from 41-3-1003(b))
- We have interpreted this to mean “important” sport fisheries like the Wind River
- More recently, native trout fisheries – Yellowstone, Bonneville and Colorado River Cutthroat trout.

# Instream Flow Water Right Process

Game and Fish

- Identify stream segments for instream flow
- Perform studies to identify flows to maintain or improve fisheries

Water Development

- Sign the Instream Flow water right application and submit it to the SEO. Assess feasibility of recommended flow quantities. Hold the IF water right in the name of the State

State Engineer

- Assign priority date
- Schedule and conduct a public hearing

Public Hearing

- Game and Fish and Water Development present study results
- Public provides views and any additional information for the SEO to consider relative to the instream flow application

State Engineer Decision

Board of Control Adjudication

# Instream Flow Water Right Process

Game and Fish (89 IF applications since '86, recently submitted 5 for Greybull basin streams)

Water Development

State Engineer

Public Hearing

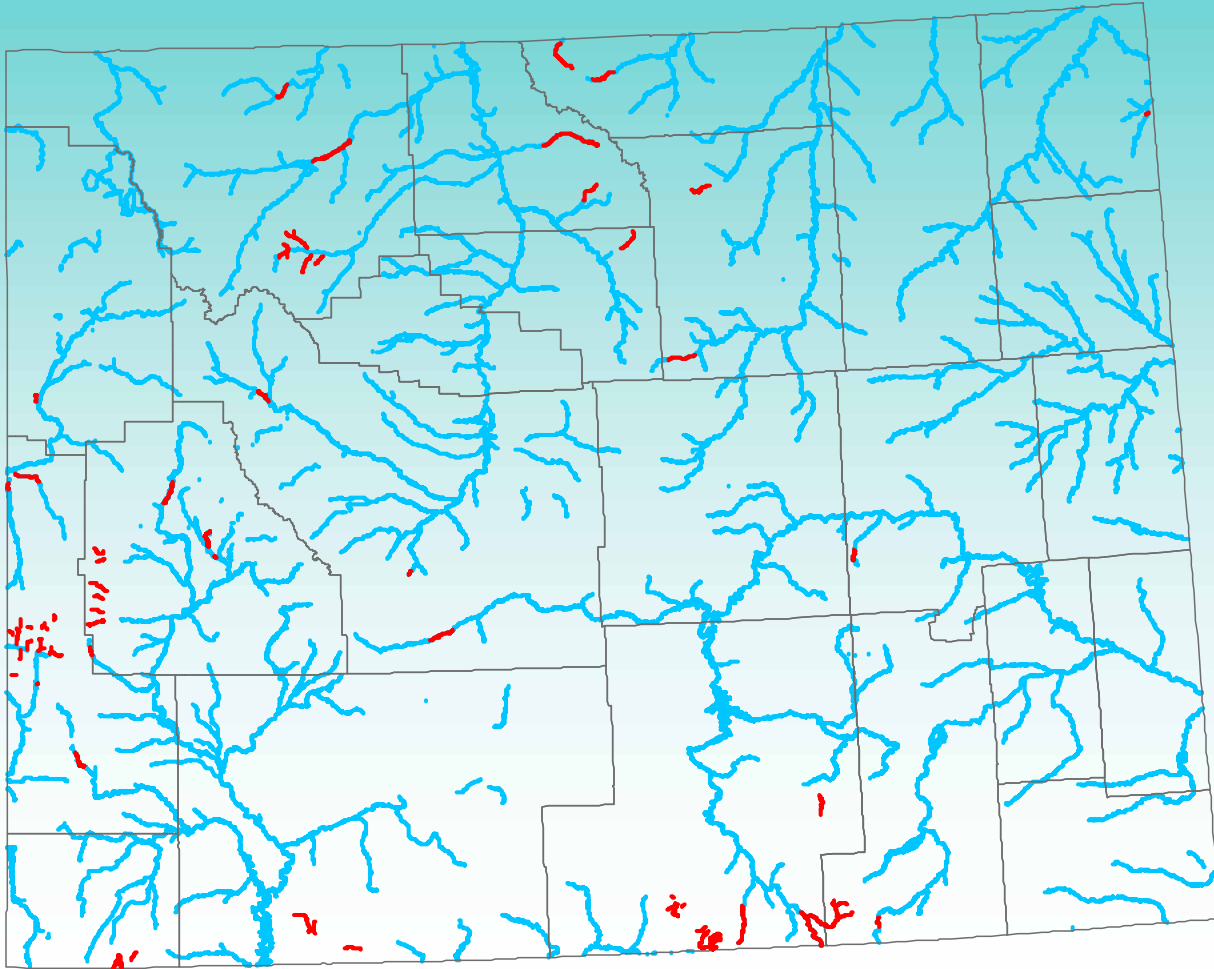
State Engineer Decision

Board of Control Adjudication

26 approved  
63 await decisions

4 adjudicated

# Instream Flow Filings

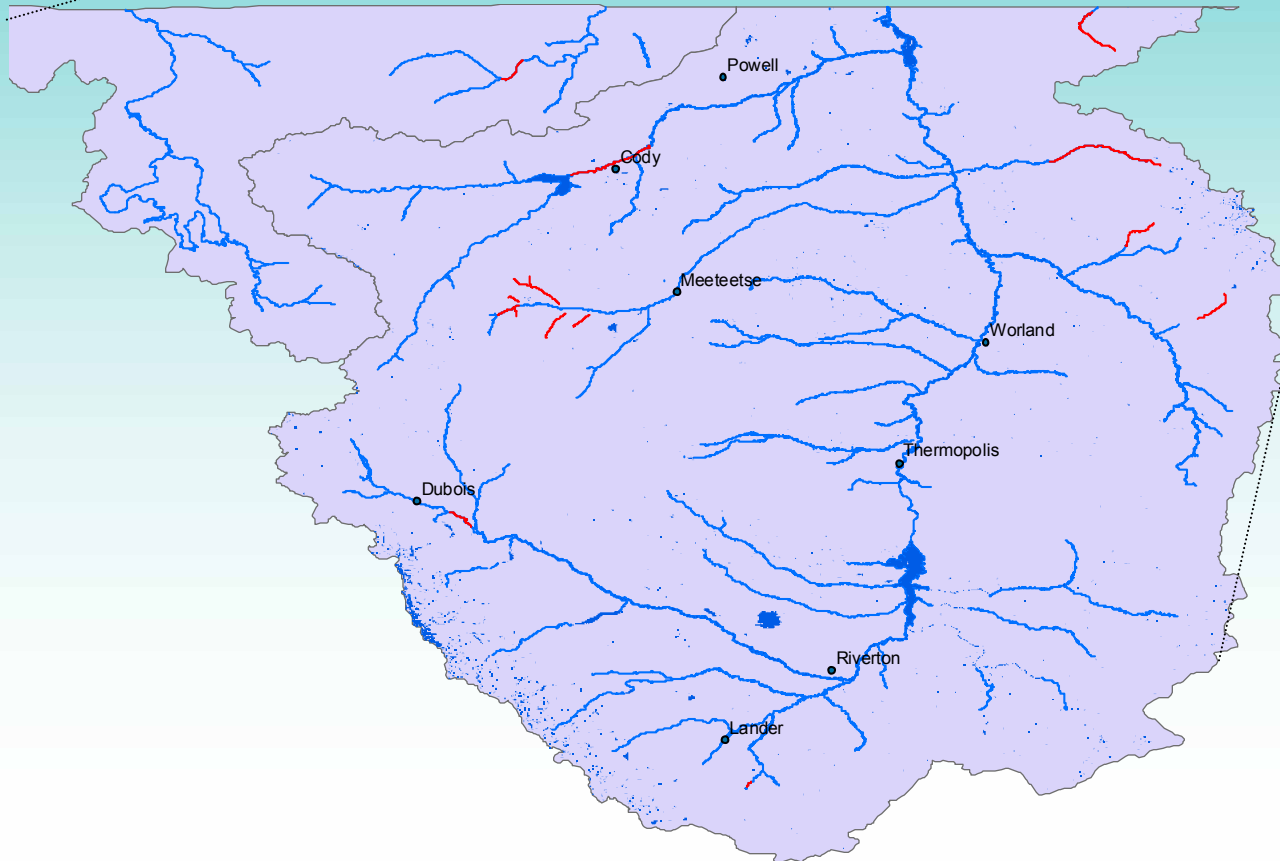
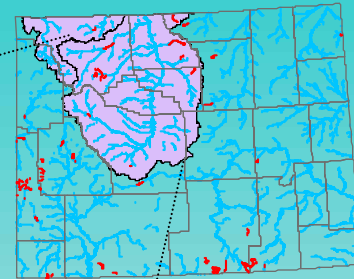


🐟 92 filings on 91 segments covering 426 miles

🐟 Segments range from 0.1 to 22.3 miles in length

🐟 Priority dates range from 1986 to February 2004

# Bighorn Basin Instream Flow Filings



🐟 18 filings for  
101 miles

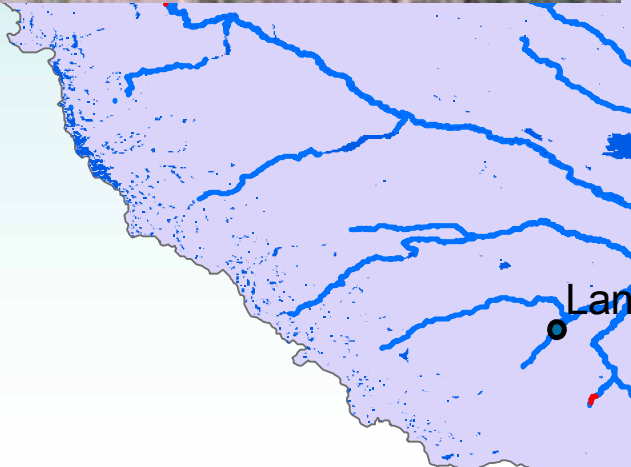
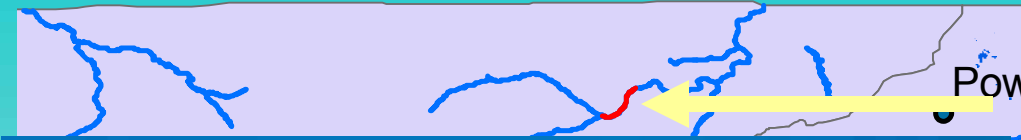
🐟 Segments range  
from 1.4 to 15.1  
miles in length

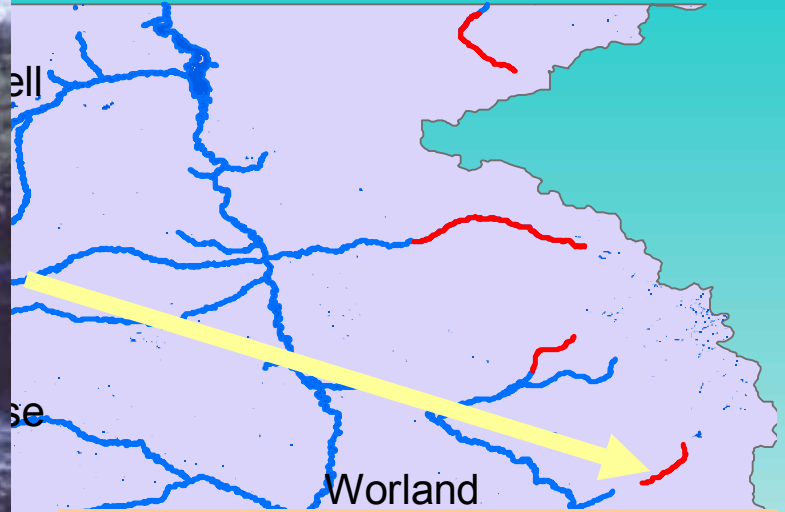
🐟 Priority dates  
range from 1986 to  
February 2004



## Clarks Fork

- The first IF segment
- 1986 priority date, issued in 1988 for 220 cfs year around.
- 5.8 miles
- Overlaps Wild and Scenic segment
- Mixed trout fishery of Brook, Rainbow, Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout and Mountain Whitefish





## Tensleep Creek

- 1987 priority date, issued in 1991 for 22 cfs year around.

- 7.9 miles

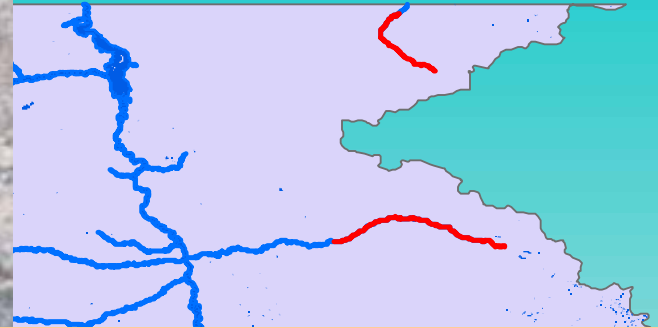
- Mixed trout fishery of Brook, Brown, and Rainbow Trout and Mountain Whitefish



## Little Bighorn River

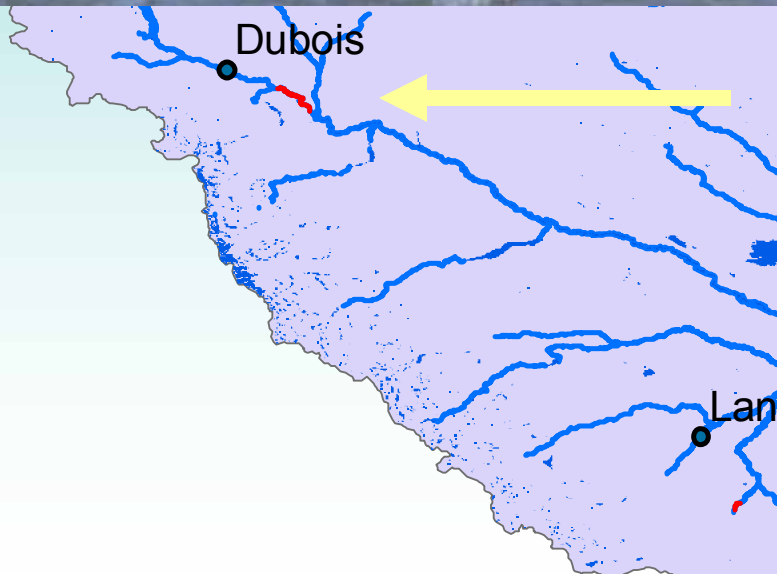
- 1989 priority date, issued in 1996
- 4.4 miles; FS boundary up
- 60 cfs Oct 1-Nov 15; 50 cfs Nov 16-Mar 30, 60 cfs Apr 1-Jun 30, 62 cfs Jul 1-Sep 30
- Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout, Cutthroat Trout, Mountain Whitefish





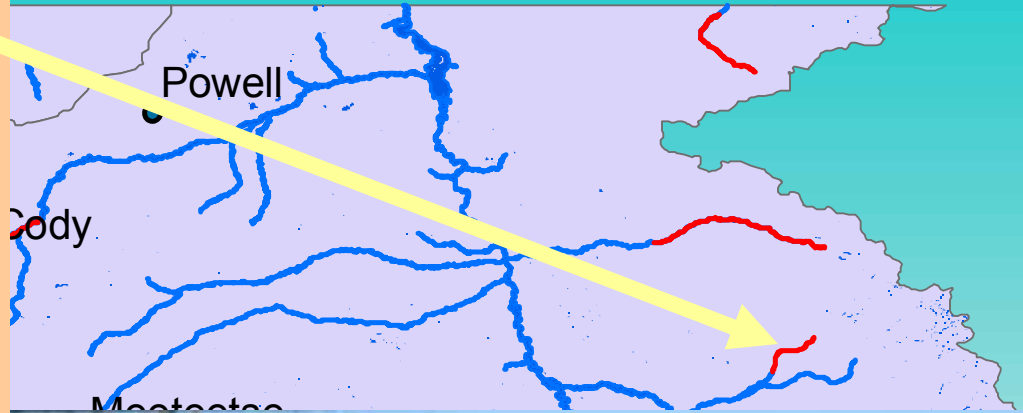
## Wind River

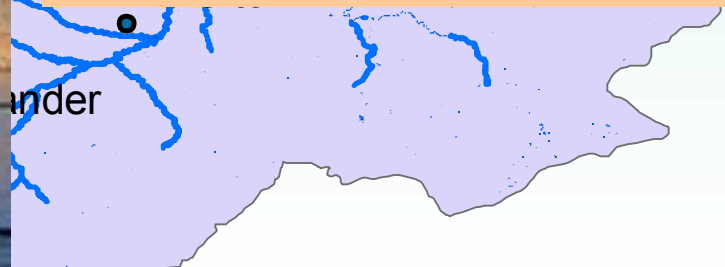
- **1989 priority date, issued in 1997**
- **102 cfs Oct 1 – Jun 30; 110 cfs Jul 1 – Sep 30**
- **5.2 miles**
- **Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout, Cutthroat Trout and Mountain Whitefish**



## Medicine Lodge Creek

- 1990 priority date
- Not issued
- 15 cfs Oct 1 – Nov 30
- 9 cfs Dec 1 – Jun 30
- 20 cfs Jul 1 – Sep 30
- 7.5 miles
- Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout, Mountain Whitefish



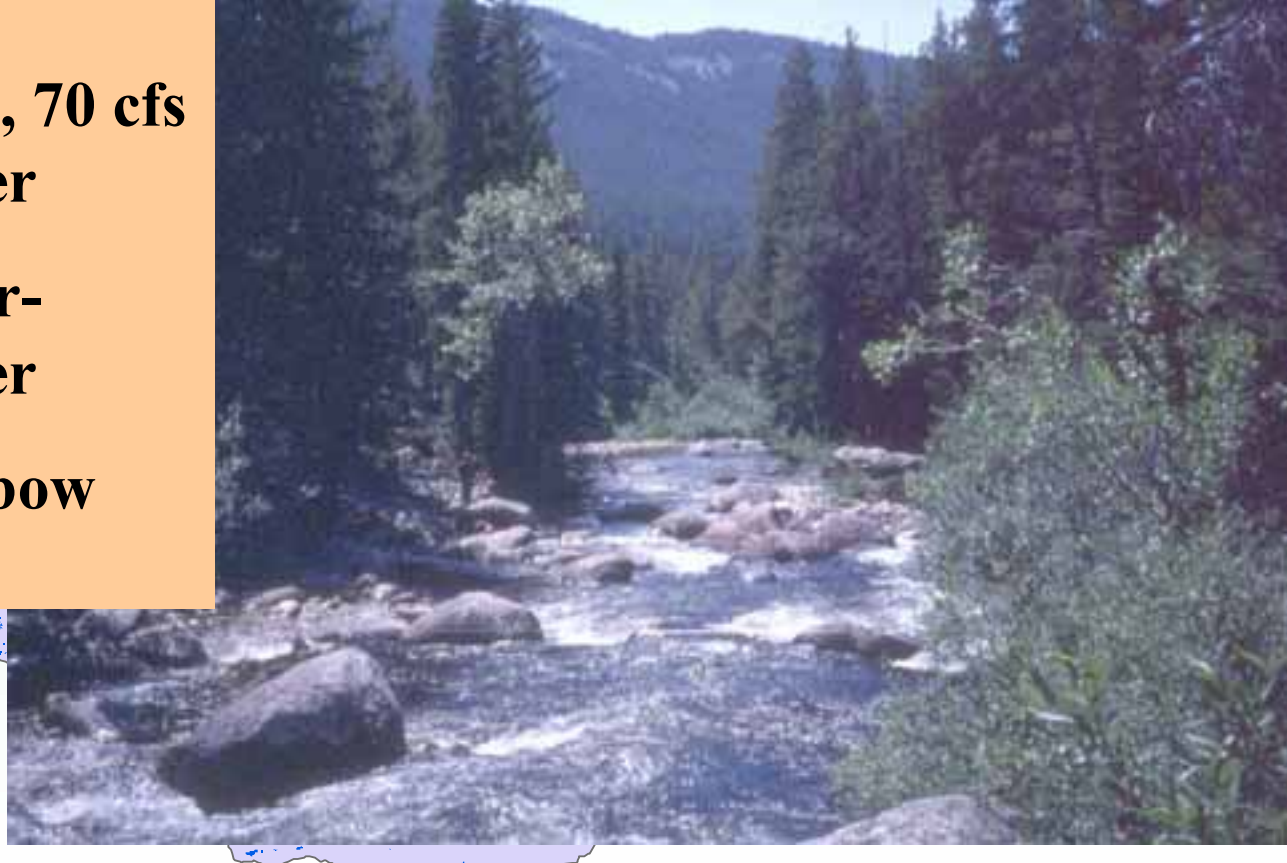
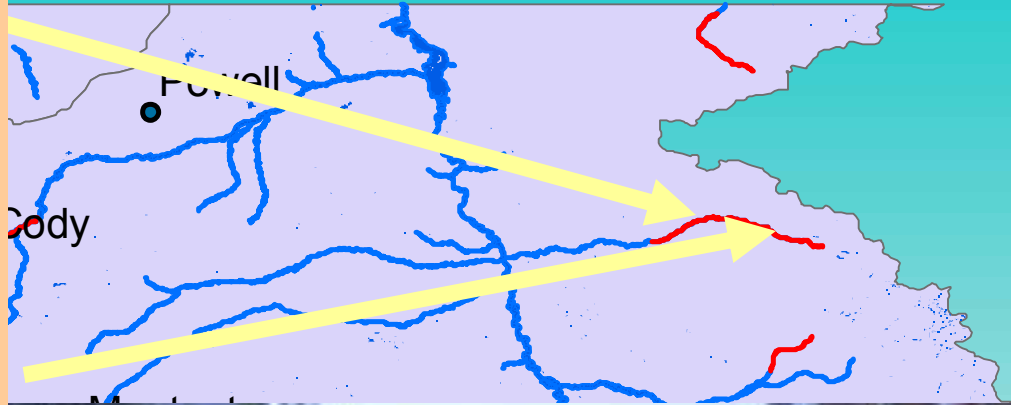


## Shoshone River

- 1991 priority date for 162 to 350 cfs.
- No permit
- 15.1 mile segment from Buffalo Bill downstream to Corbett Diversion
- Wild Brown Trout, stocked Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout and some Rainbow Trout.

## Shell Creek #1 & #2

- Segments above and below Shell Falls – 16.6 miles
- 1993 priority dates, issued in 1999.
- Upper: 19cfs winter, 70 cfs spring, 40 cfs summer
- Lower: 23 cfs winter-spring, 40 cfs summer
- Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout



## Little Popo Agie River

- 1993 priority date for 1.4 mile segment on Public Fishing Access area.
- Not issued
- 21 cfs winter, 30 cfs spring, 45 cfs summer
- Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout

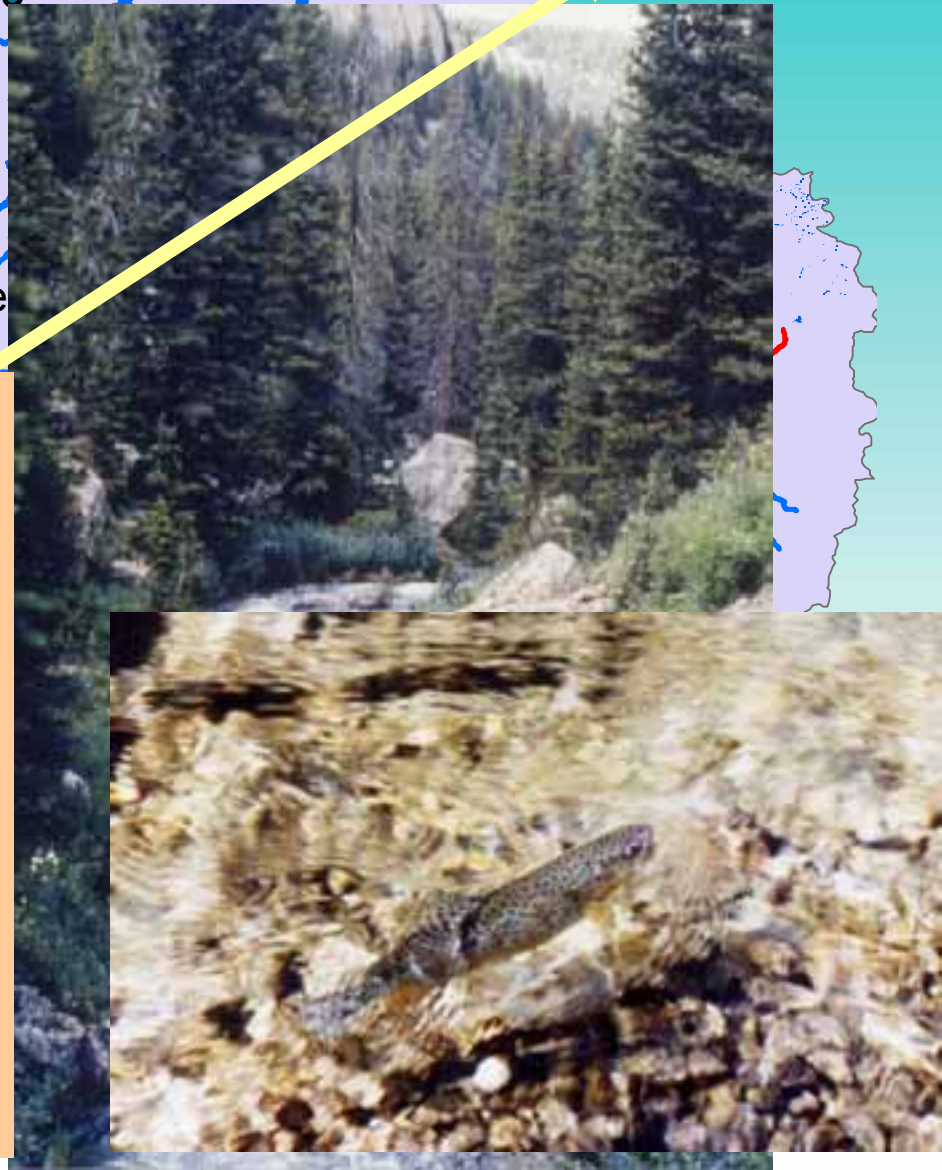
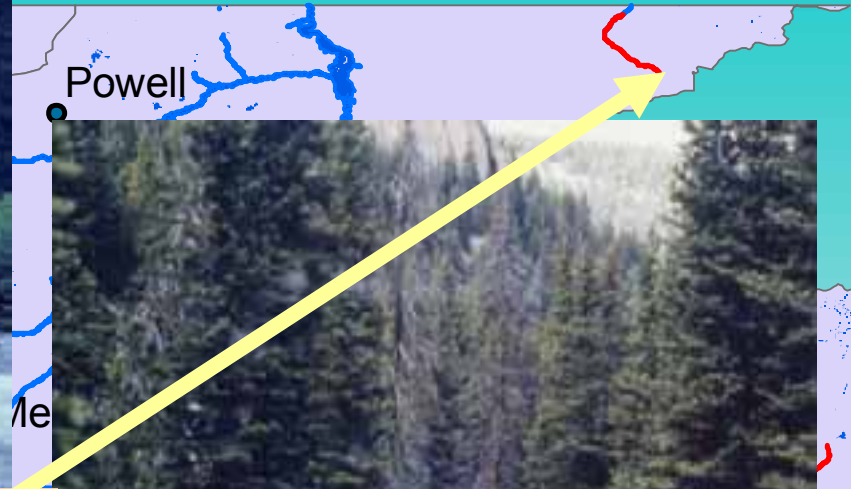






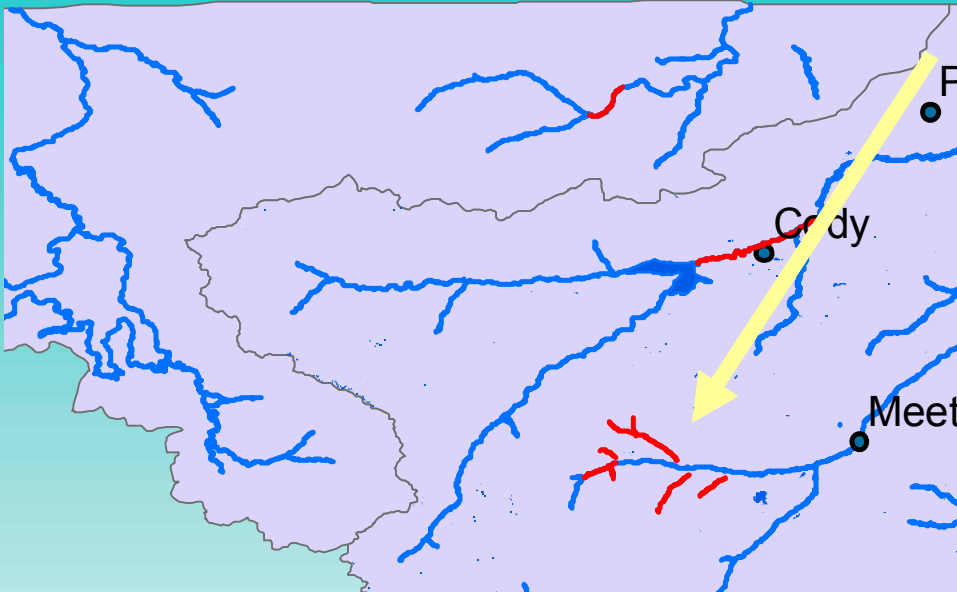
## **Dry Fork Little Bighorn River**

- **2000 priority date for 7.4 mile segment**
- **Not issued**
- **20 cfs winter, 25 cfs spring, 25 cfs summer**
- **Cutthroat Trout, Brook Trout, Rainbow Trout**



## 8 Upper Greybull River Segments

- 2003 and 2004 priority dates
- Not issued
- 29 miles total, all on public land.
- Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout







8/14/2001















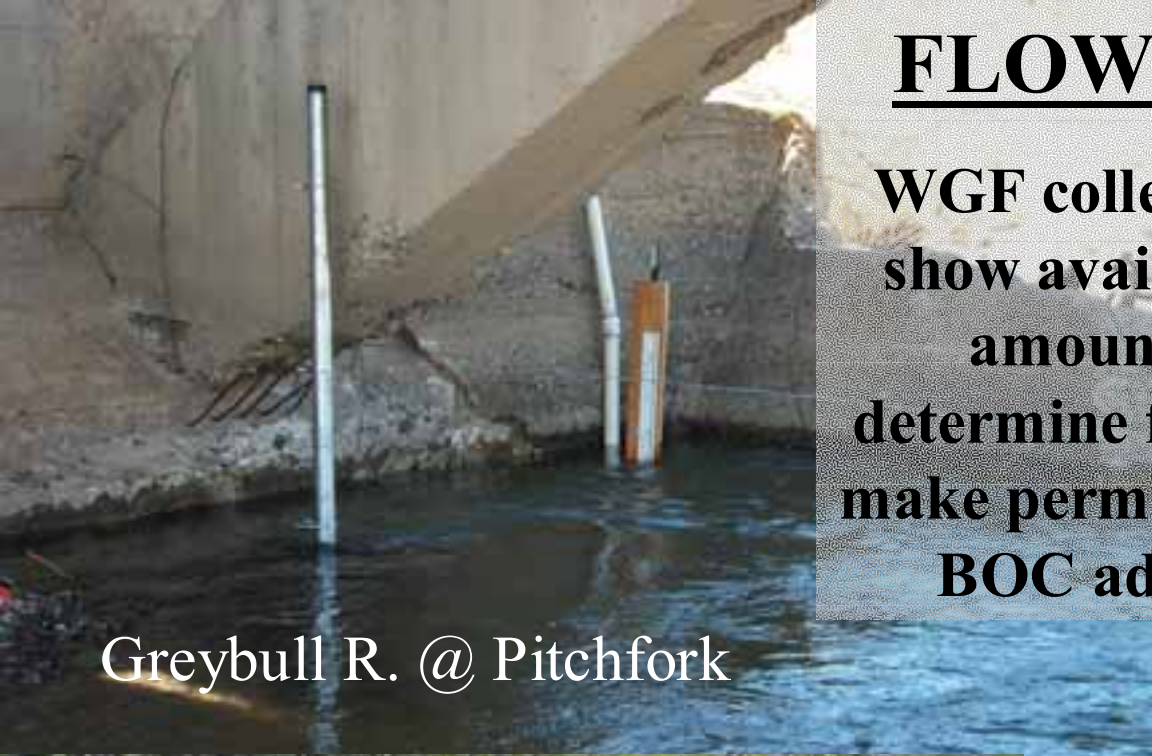
# **Future Instream Flow**

## **Segments**

- **Continue targeting YSC streams on National Forest with healthy habitat and populations.**
- **Also consider segments for “at risk” populations.**
- **Attempt to dovetail with restoration efforts**
- **2004: small tributaries to N.Fk. and S.Fk. Shoshone Rivers**
- **2005 and beyond: Clarks Fork drainage and Bighorn Mountains.**

# FLOW MONITORING

**WGF collects stream flow data to show availability of requested IF amounts, help the WWDC determine feasibility, help the SEO make permit decisions, and help the BOC adjudicate the permits.**



Greybull R. @ Pitchfork



Wood R., Forest boundary

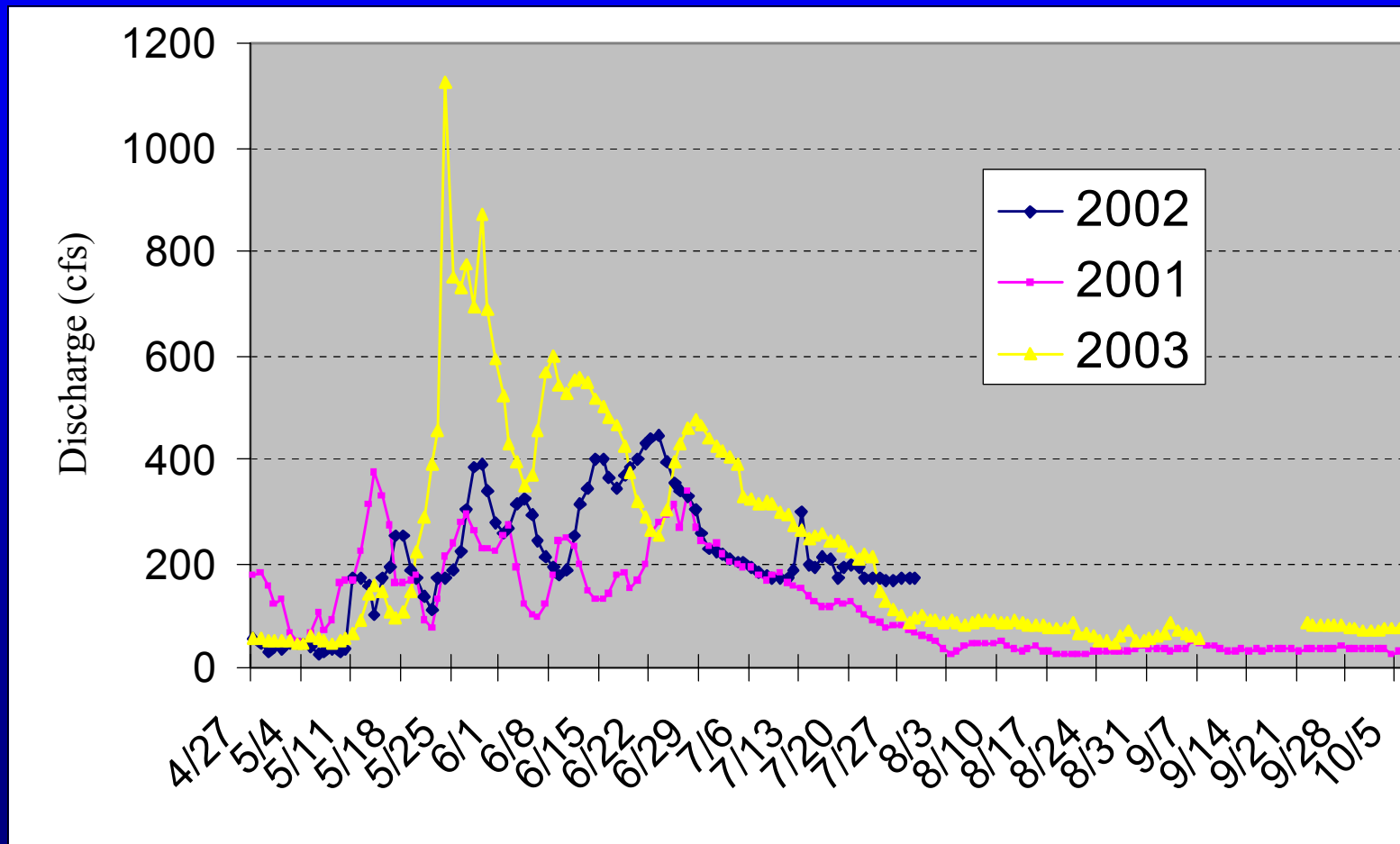


Wood R., above M. Fk.

6/3/2002

6/3/2002

# Greybull River Flows at Pitchfork Bridge





**Additional Literature:**


✓ Instream flow reports

✓ Flow monitoring reports

✓ 5 year plan

✓ <http://gf.state.wy.us/fish/watermangtISF>

9/26/2003

A fishing rod with a wooden handle and a black reel lies on a gravelly riverbank. A fish, possibly a trout or salmon, is lying on the gravel next to the rod. The background is a dense field of small, multi-colored pebbles.

***Instream flows protect  
valuable fisheries from  
future harm while  
preserving traditional  
water uses.***