

**McPhee Lake boasts warm and cold water species and is a special treat for any angler**

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# Fishing

## McPhee Recreation Area

Mike Japhet, a fishery biologist with the Colorado Division of Wildlife, calls McPhee Lake "the best fishing spot in the San Juan Basin." What makes McPhee Lake so special?

McPhee Lake covers 4,470 surface acres, with over 50 miles of shoreline and several long, narrow tree lined canyons. It is one of the largest lakes in Colorado with a maximum water depth at the dam of 270 feet. Since McPhee is located in a river canyon, much of the best fishing is accessible only by boat. In the side canyons, wakeless boating zones have been established for safety and to allow still-water fishing.

The second largest body of water in Colorado, McPhee is managed as a two story lake, supporting both cold and warm water fish. Stocked with McConaughy rainbow trout, Kokanee salmon, bluegill, channel catfish, large and small mouth bass, and crappie, the reservoir also supports such native marine life as fathead minnow, crayfish, green sunfish, bullhead, and yellow perch.

There aren't many lakes in Colorado where rainbow trout and crappies can be caught in the same water, but McPhee is one. And you can catch a lot of them! To date, over 4.5 million fish have been stocked in McPhee and more are stocked by the DOW each year. A special strain of rainbow trout, the McConaughy, is the primary fish species. They have greater tolerance to warm water and have adapted to McPhee very well. Kokanee salmon have also been stocked as an experiment.



*McPhee Lake is the second largest body of water in Colorado, and is one of the few places where rainbow trout and crappies can be caught in the same water. McPhee Recreation Area provides boating, fishing and camping for outdoor enthusiasts year-round.*

Warm water fish stocked at McPhee include large and small mouth bass, pan fish, catfish, and other forage fish. Bass under 15 inches in length must be released immediately. Check with the local marinas and tackle shops for more details about fishing at McPhee Lake.

McPhee Lake has two concrete boat ramps, one located at the recreation site on the west bank and the other at House Creek Recreation Site on the east bank. Parking for trailers and easy boat access are provided at both areas. Five fishermen access points with parking are located on improved gravel or paved roads. Car top boats can be launched from these points: Dolores, Dolores Town Park, Big Bend, Old McPhee Road, Sage Hen, and Dry Canyon.

[Click here to download our McPhee Recreation Area brochure & map.](#)

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