YOUR FIRST DAY: A CHECKLIST

Pick a trout water close to you and read its Fly Findr page the night before: the report's date, the flow against the usual range, and the weather.

THE NIGHT BEFORE ON THE WATER PAGE

- [ ] **Pick a water close to you.** Your state page's Start here list puts the waters with the newest reports first.
- [ ] **Read the report's date first.** Only a report from the last 8 days is called this week's. A conditions report says no shop or angler report came in.
- [ ] **Check the flow against the usual range.** The flow tile gives the reading's date and the usual range for that date. "Nearest gauge" means it may be on a different water.
- [ ] **Look at the 7-day trend.** Catch was lower while flow was rising (bass and Mongolian salmonids; no North American trout study).
- [ ] **Check the weather tile.** It gives air temperature, sky and wind, with the date.
- [ ] **See where the fly picks come from.** "Conditions-based, not report-based" means no report named a fly; they come from the flow and the hatch chart.
- [ ] **Check the rules and your license.** Know before you go lists what agencies say about the water, each with a link to its source. The Regulations block links the official regulations where Fly Findr has the link.
- [ ] **Clean and dry your boots and waders** if you fished another water recently.

AT THE WATER

- [ ] **Take the water temperature.** Catch rates fall as water warms; on the Madison River they were unsatisfactory at 66 °F and above.
- [ ] **Plan the evening in summer.** In June and July in Colorado, trout fed most from 6 to 10 pm. The peak differs between studies.
- [ ] **On stocked water, go soon after the stocking date.** In small lakes, catch fell with time and distance from the release point.
- [ ] **Expect a harder bite on busy water.** Caught fish become harder to catch.

WHEN TO CHANGE PLANS

The river just rose
Wait for it to settle if you can. If you go, fish nymphs near the bottom and look in the nearest slow water. Set a flow alert to hear when it is back in range.

The water is 68 °F or warmer
Stop targeting trout, or fish early before the water peaks. Above about 67 °F, unhook fish in the water.

The water is muddy
Trout kept feeding in muddy storm flows in California streams. Fish near the bottom and put the fly closer.

The report is old or a conditions report
Treat it as a rough guide, not as word from the water.