

The Golden Stonefly Newsletter Product Review



Winter 2024

from Alan Reyes

The New San Juan Rodworks 10' 5 Weight Gunnison Fly Rod

As usual, I received my 10' 5 weight rod with lightning fast delivery. Took it out of the tube and assembled it. The fit and finish is terrific. As with all San Juan Rodworks fly rods, there is a lot of attention to quality and detail, and they also come with two tips. The new SJRW Gunnison 10' rods come in a 4 weight and 5 weight model. The ten foot rod is nothing new to the fly fishing scene as it has been used for decades as a stillwater go-to for anglers using Float tubes, pontoons and kayaks for the benefits of better lift off the water and of course improved distance casting. The ten foot rods are also great for river fishing, offering better reach and serious mending ability. On big rivers the ten footer is an outstanding drift boat rod for distance, mending, and fighting big fish.

Ok, Back to the New San Juan Rodworks 10' 5 weight. This rod is nicely appointed with a modified full wells grip and an attractive burl wood reel seat and a not too oversized cork fighting butt. I like to see a fighting butt on 9'6" and 10' fly rods as it helps to balance the rod out and aids in leverage when fighting big fish whereas the 10' rods without a fighting butt always seem to be off balance. There's something missing.....a fighting butt. The first thing that I do when I review a rod is to see what fly line or lines cast the best with that rod. The lines I picked for this part of the review was a Scientific Anglers Amplitude infinity, the Scientific Angler Trout Taper, the Scientific Angler MPX, the RIO Gold, The San Juan Rodworks Short Head Line (which is identical to a RIO Grand), and the RIO Perception. I first tried the Scientific Anglers Trout Taper with not very good results. This line just didn't perform at all for this purpose built rod. I immediately relined and with a RIO Perception line and the performance picked up. The Perception is a line specific standard weight forward line with a 30' head and cast just fine at standard trout distances 15 to 50 feet and accuracy was good. I went to the heavier longer

head lines that are a half or a line size heavy. Casting the SA MPX performed very well with good feel and improved distance over the Perception line and brought out the potential of this rod. The SJRW line cast very well, but after casting for a while the full line size heavy fly line seemed to bring on some casting fatigue. I took a break and went back at it. My conclusion on the line is that this rod doesn't need a full line size heavy fly line to bring out its full potential. I went to the two long head weight forward lines and "Bingo". The RIO Grand and SA Amplitude Infinity both were the ticket. Both lines are approximately a half line size heavy, the longer head suited the longer rod as casting was effortless and had better control at short as well as long distance, a throw to 70' was no problem. Accuracy was spot on.

The rod in the cast was responsive once the right lines were figured out. Recovery was very good. The rod feels light in the hand and casting fatigue is at a minimum for the longer rod.

Okay, on the water is the true test of any rod and this one is no exception. I went to the North Fork of the South Platte River with my brother and a good friend for a full day of fishing on a private section known as "The Meadows". Big hard fighting fish, challenging currents and very technical fishing. We were being guided by none other than Former Boss, outstanding guide and good friend Chris Wells, owner of Mile High Angler and his senior guide Ron. This water holds fish in the 8 to 10 pound range and usually a 5 weight will leave you in the out-gunned category. My rod was rigged with The new for 2024 Cheeky Spray Reel. I chose this reel for its extremely powerful oversized sealed drag system and non flexing design. The reel also balanced perfectly with the 10' rod. The line used was the Scientific Anglers Amplitude Infinity 5 weight line. Over the course of the day the rod surprised me with its ability to fight and land bruisers up to approximately the 5 pound range. I fished hard all day, casting, mending and fighting fish. I even tried a couple of single hand spey casts with the long head line for an approximate 60' cast without a back cast. I'll have to get out a RIO Single Hand Spey line or Short Skagit line to see what this rod can do.

My conclusion of the San Juan Rodworks 10' 5 weight Gunnison Fly Rod is that this rod did everything I asked of it and more. An outstanding performer, effortless casting and mending, a full progressive bend in the rod when fighting the big fish combined with a powerful butt section to beat said fish. I've had to remind myself on occasion that I'm fishing a \$250.00 fly rod because they are so darn good. I have never been disappointed when fishing this company's rods and I have used every series. They are outstanding fishing tools.

Alan Reyes

Tight Lines Everyone!

Newsletter Design – Courtesy of Chris Prelaz