But as Jen Brown demonstrates in Trout Culture: How Fly Fishing Forever Changed the Rocky Mountain West, the popular conception of Rocky Mountain trout fishing as a quintessential experience of communion with nature belies the sport's long history of environmental manipulation, engineering, and, ultimately,
transformation. A fly-fishing enthusiast herself, Brown places the rise of recreational trout fishing in a local and global context. Globally, she shows how the European sport of fly-fishing came to be a defining, tourist-attracting feature of the expanding 19th-century American West. “In reality, the exceptional (and oversold) trout fisheries of the West are neither wild nor natural, but now exist because of drastic and complicated environmental and social changes,” Brown writes. An avid fly fishing enthusiast herself, Brown has dug through American history to piece together the tale of how the Rocky Mountain West’s prized trout fishery was cleverly engineered. Popular species favored by sportsmen were introduced to the region’s waterways, eradicating native fish populations. By the early twentieth century, western hatchery systems were churning out millions of rainbow, br