

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA FLY GUIDE

J.E.B. Hall

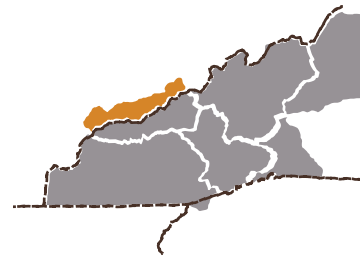


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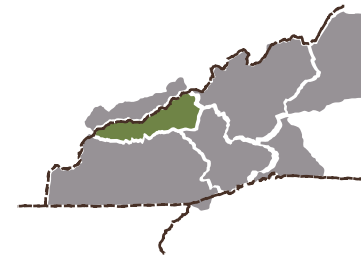
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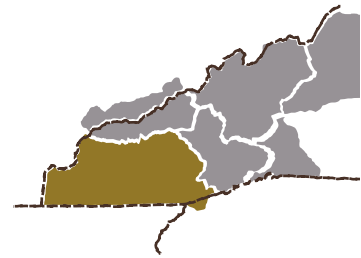
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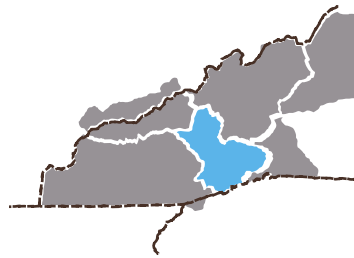
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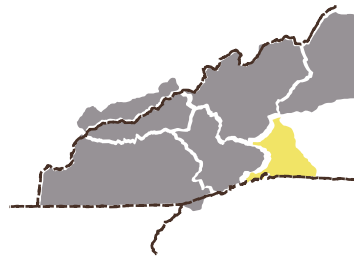
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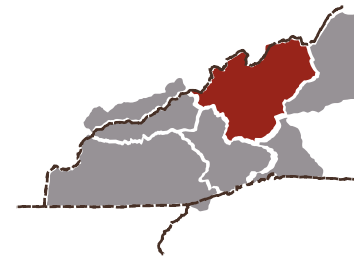
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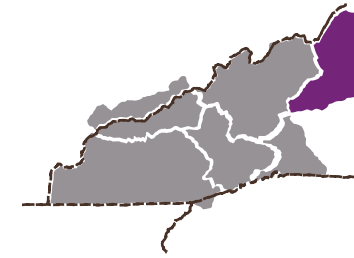
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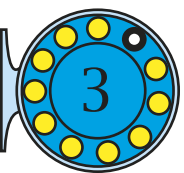


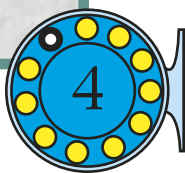
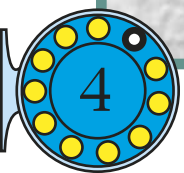
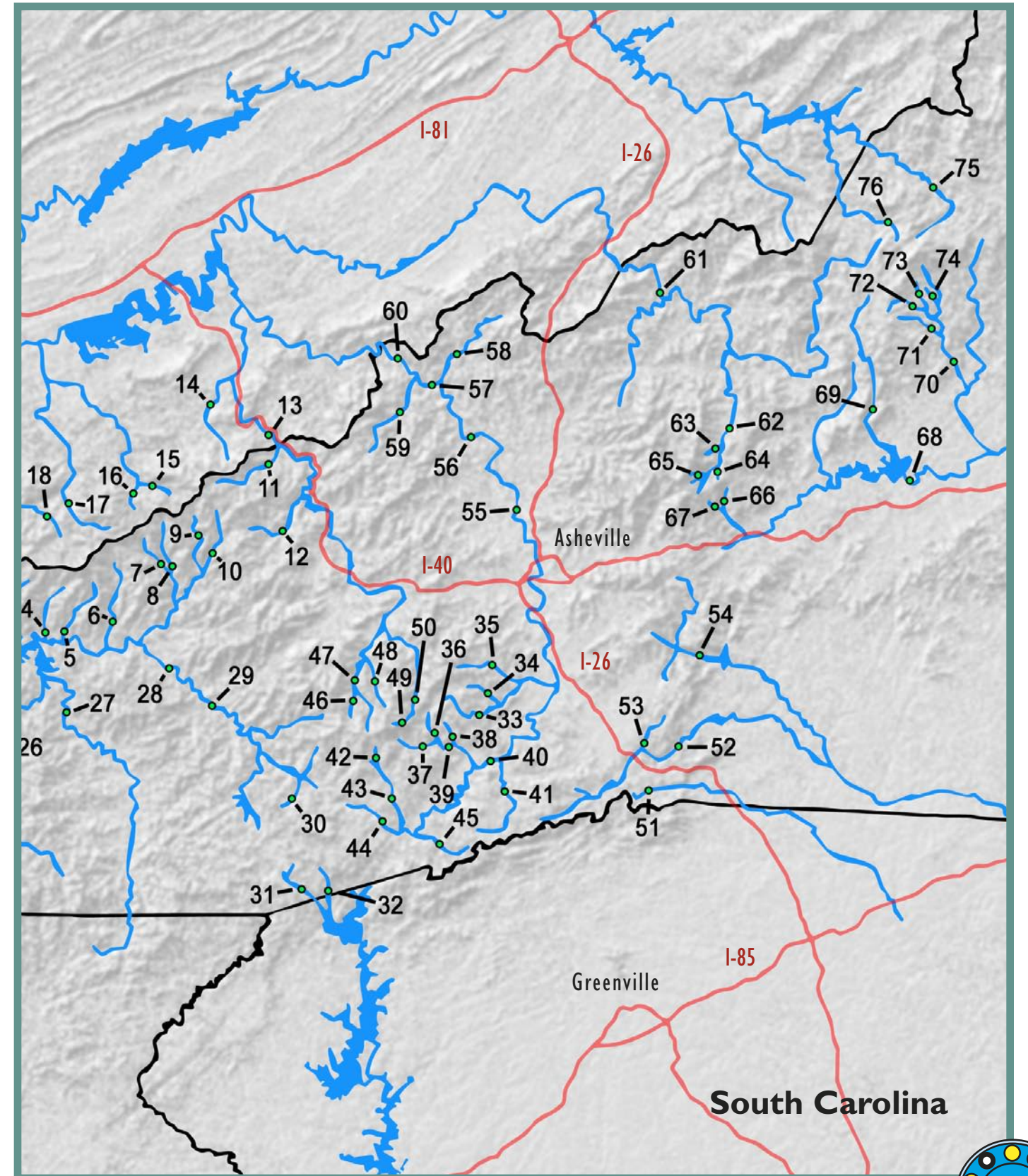
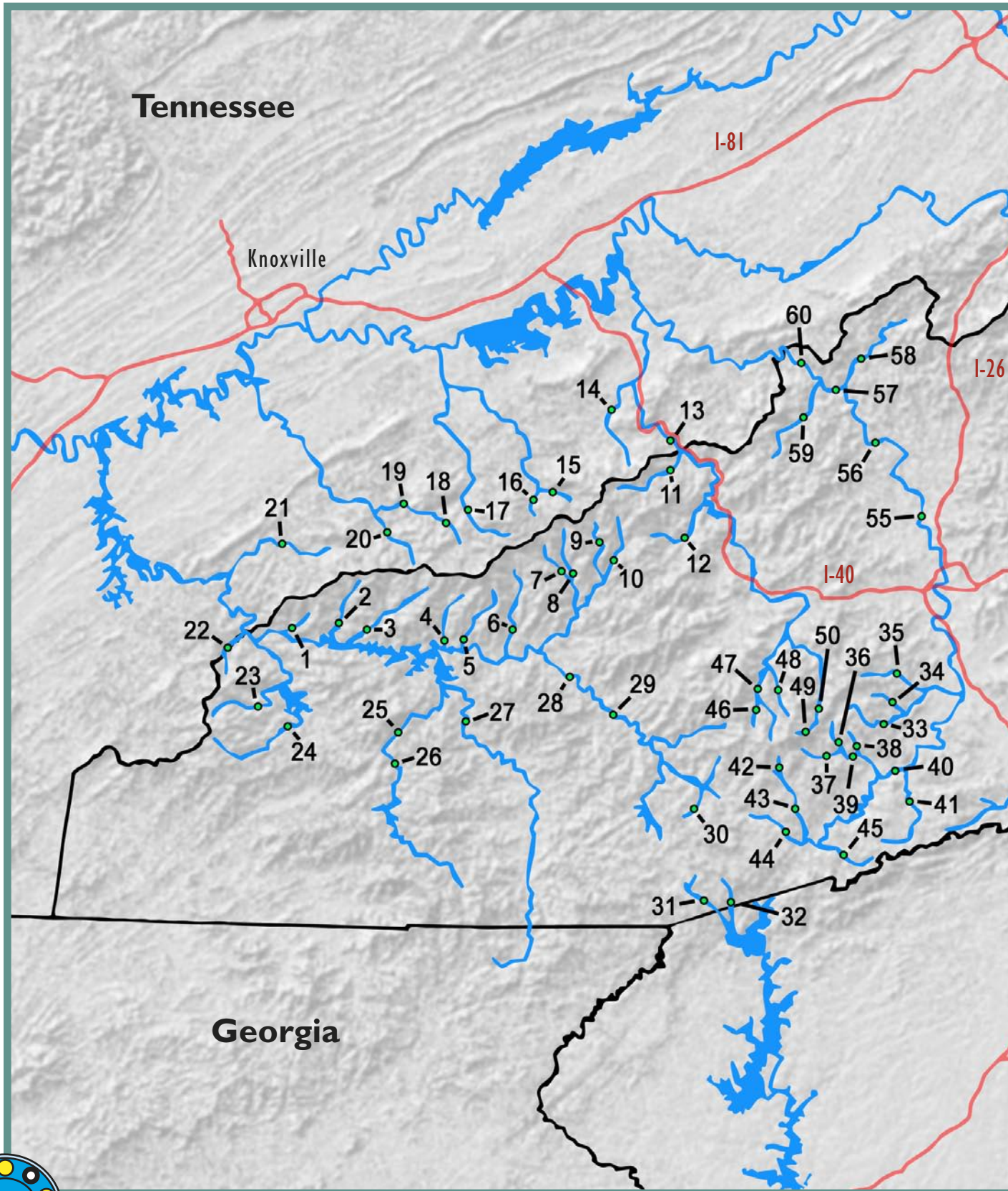
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J.E.B.

Western North Carolina Fly Guide

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♦ INTRODUCTION ♦

The definition of a guidebook should be just that, a book that guides you to something. This book is written to guide you to some of the best fly fishing Western North Carolina has to offer. Many guidebooks are written with overly embellished stories and superfluous detail that can lose anglers in myth and confusion. The idea with this book is to get a quick description, some good directions, and a basic of idea of when you should go. On top of all that, I have put in hundreds of great color pictures to not only inspire you, but to give you a look at what you are about to go fish.

You will notice that not every stream in the area is in the book. Your favorite spot may or may not be listed. Nothing here is a complete and total secret either. If you are offended or put off by my listing of a stream, I apologize.

That being said, there are a few simple rules to go by to make this book work for you. First, a liberal dose of good judgment goes a long way. In other words, hiking into a high elevation stream in the middle of winter and expecting to have a banner day may not be the best idea. Use common sense. Second, read the how to use this book section to better understand how to find areas you would like to fish. Third, proper instruction is key to better fishing. When in doubt about how to fish a stream, hire a local guide to help you find the best spot and make that perfect drift.

Finally, remember that fishing is just that—fishing. Even the very best anglers get humbled from time to time and, you are no exception. It is the timeless battle of wits between man and fish that keeps us going back for more.

Have fun,

J.E.B.



◊ HOW TO USE THIS BOOK ◊

Organization: This book is organized into 7 regions. Each region contains an overall map of all streams in that area as well as individual maps for each watershed. A table of contents by region is located in the beginning of the book, and an index of all runs can be found on the last page. Regulations are marked on the particular stream's page as well as listed in a chart in the appendix. The appendix also contains streams organized by species, possible floats, and recommended overnights.

Maps: All maps are constructed to make finding streams quick and easy – including the essential info and leaving out the clutter. They are also all to scale. For mileages and landmarks please refer to the desired stream's directions on the page for that stream.

Directions: All directions are written to provide readers with the easiest access to a given stream and are generalized. No one can pick out an exact stretch for you to fish. Many streams have multiple access points and not all are listed in this guidebook.

Regulations: Each reach in the book is labeled with the sign for its current designation. A detailed description of each regulation, along with its corresponding sign, are located in the appendix of this book. Be sure to read this information carefully. Be aware that stream regulations change from year to year, so always check a current regulations digest prior to fishing a particular stream.

Descriptions: Descriptions are written to give anglers a brief overview of streambed characteristics and fishability. They are not written to tell you what fish hides behind each rock, or how great the author's fishing days have been. The idea is to get you on the water and fishing so that you can tell stories of your own.

When and What: These are the times to go and what to use. None of the info here is meant to be taken as gospel. You can catch fish at any time on any stream. Fly suggestions are also general recommendations. We all have a confidence in one fly or another, and we all tie or buy differently. Use whatever fly you want. It's fishing, and that artistic license is part of what makes it fun. The when and what info is meant to help beginning anglers as well as those planning to take trips to the region plan their adventure without being completely in the dark.

Fish/Insect ID and Hatch Guide: As a bonus, the appendix of this book contains some useful fish and insect id pages as well as a basic hatch guide. These tools can be used to make more sense of the un-exact science that is fly fishing.

Water Levels and Releases: The following gauges and schedules can be used to access a variety of stream flows:

USGS Streamflows

NC-<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nc/nwis/current?type=flow>

TN-<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/tn/nwis/current?type=flow>

TVA Streamflows

<http://lakeinfo.tva.gov/htbin/streaminfo>

1-800-238-2264 option 3

BOATINGBETA.COM

<http://www.boatingbeta.com/cgi-bin/myflows.pl?view>

Duke Power Release Schedules

1-800-829-5253

Fishing License and Regulations Info: <http://www.ncwildlife.org>

Local Knowledge: A variety of local fly shops have ads throughout this book. Before you go fish an area, give them a call. You will find helpful folks with the latest fishing conditions and advice.

◊ A FEW WORDS ON FISHING ETIQUETTE ◊

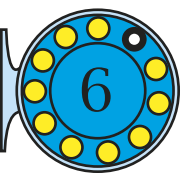
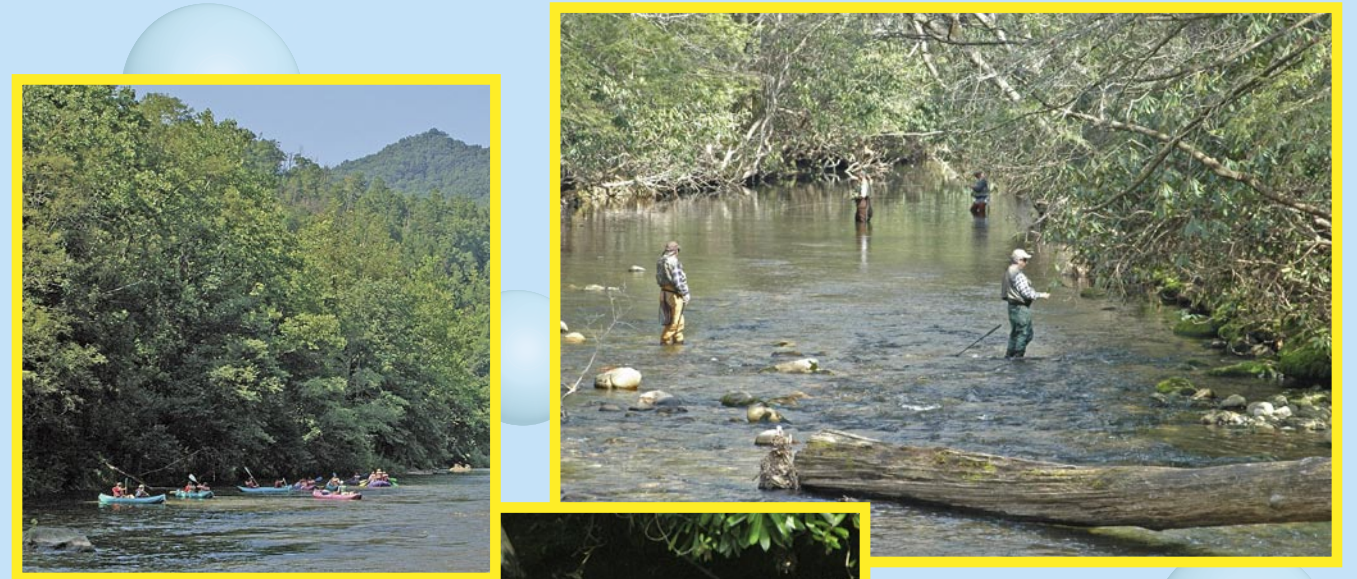
Western North Carolina is a wonderful place to fish. Miles of great fly fishing water and year 'round fishing make it an increasingly popular destination. This – coupled with almost exponential growth in our sport – has led to more folks out on the water than ever before. We as anglers often find ourselves in situations that are less than ideal; a car in every pullout along the river, or finding someone fishing in your honey hole can make for a frustrating start to your day. In cases such as these – or in everyday fishing for that matter – it's up to each and every one of us to behave in a courteous and polite manner. This being said, I would like present a few suggestions to help us all get along on the water:

The first suggestion is to always try to fish upstream. If everyone is covering water in the same direction, it's easier to give each other space. There are exceptions to this, however, and if conditions permit downstream fishing is acceptable. Just be aware of anglers below you.

The second suggestion I have is to give each other some space. A good minimum is 75 yards. This is not always possible or necessary on some streams, but is a good goal to shoot for.

The third is don't fish through without asking. Nothing can ruin your day more than some guy putting a few casts to your fish without asking. If you encounter another angler, approach in a manner that won't disturb his or her fishing and politely ask if you may fish. I think you will find that most folks don't mind and are often impressed that you bothered to ask.

Finally, respect other stream users. Fly anglers often believe that they are the only people entitled to using the stream; this is wrong. If regulations permit other forms of fishing on a particular stretch, then those fishermen have just as much of a right to be there as you do. Some streams are also popular for other forms of recreation such as kayaking, canoeing, tubing, or swimming. Everyone should get to enjoy the outdoors guilt free. The best thing for us to do is to be friendly and make positive conversation with other users. You never know when you might make a friend or convert someone over to the long rod.



◦ FISHING WNC SAFELY ◦

Wading: Remember that wading around in the river is the most dangerous part of fishing. If wearing waders, always wear a wading belt. For most streams in WNC, felt sole wading shoes are a must when walking on slick freestone boulders. For those folks not sure on their feet, a wading staff can be helpful in getting a sure footing both in and out of the river. Finally, if you can't see the bottom, or you're not sure of the depth or current, don't try it. No fish is worth getting hurt over.

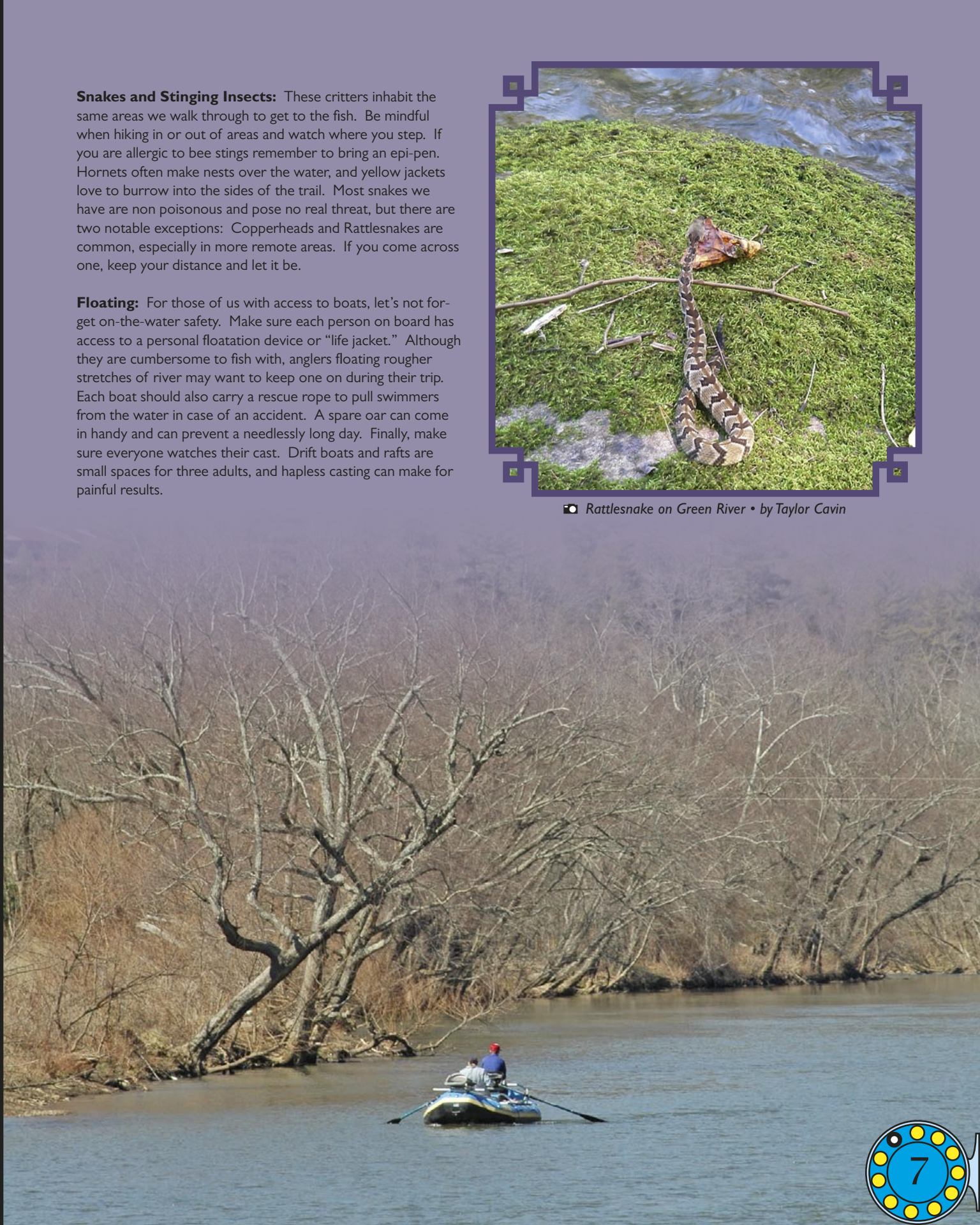
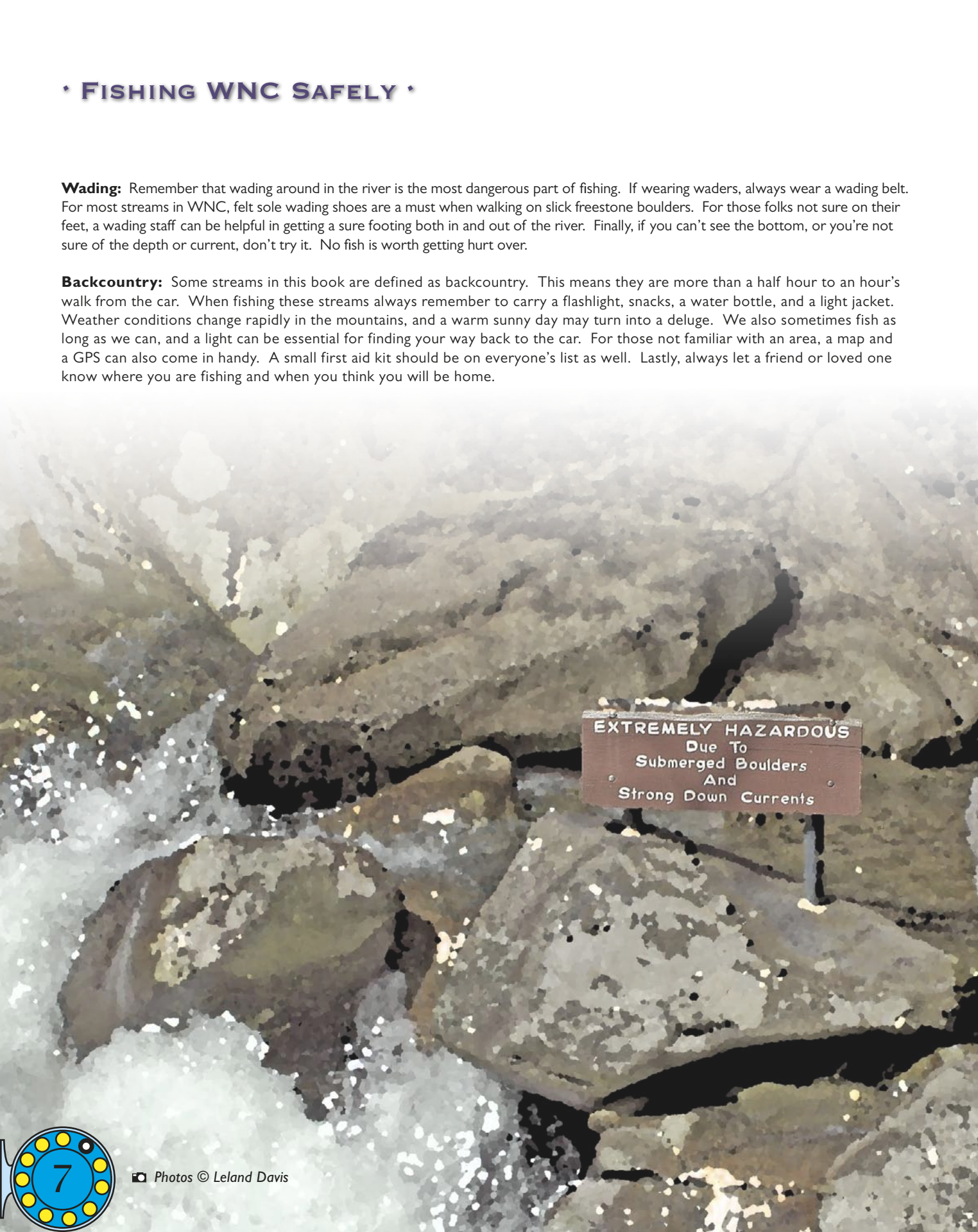
Backcountry: Some streams in this book are defined as backcountry. This means they are more than a half hour to an hour's walk from the car. When fishing these streams always remember to carry a flashlight, snacks, a water bottle, and a light jacket. Weather conditions change rapidly in the mountains, and a warm sunny day may turn into a deluge. We also sometimes fish as long as we can, and a light can be essential for finding your way back to the car. For those not familiar with an area, a map and a GPS can also come in handy. A small first aid kit should be on everyone's list as well. Lastly, always let a friend or loved one know where you are fishing and when you think you will be home.

Snakes and Stinging Insects: These critters inhabit the same areas we walk through to get to the fish. Be mindful when hiking in or out of areas and watch where you step. If you are allergic to bee stings remember to bring an epi-pen. Hornets often make nests over the water, and yellow jackets love to burrow into the sides of the trail. Most snakes we have are non poisonous and pose no real threat, but there are two notable exceptions: Copperheads and Rattlesnakes are common, especially in more remote areas. If you come across one, keep your distance and let it be.

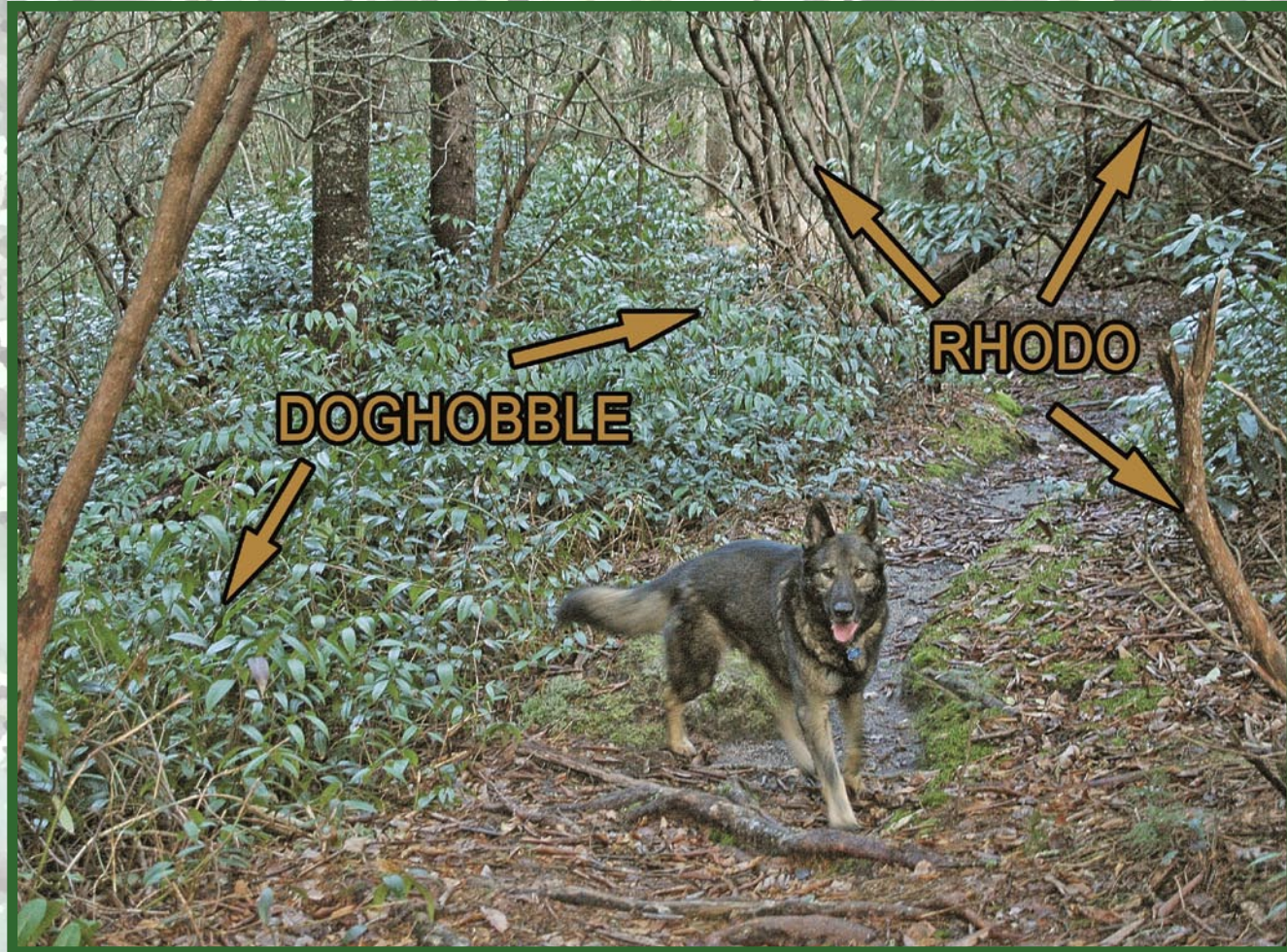
Floating: For those of us with access to boats, let's not forget on-the-water safety. Make sure each person on board has access to a personal floatation device or "life jacket." Although they are cumbersome to fish with, anglers floating rougher stretches of river may want to keep one on during their trip. Each boat should also carry a rescue rope to pull swimmers from the water in case of an accident. A spare oar can come in handy and can prevent a needlessly long day. Finally, make sure everyone watches their cast. Drift boats and rafts are small spaces for three adults, and hapless casting can make for painful results.



📷 Rattlesnake on Green River • by Taylor Cavin



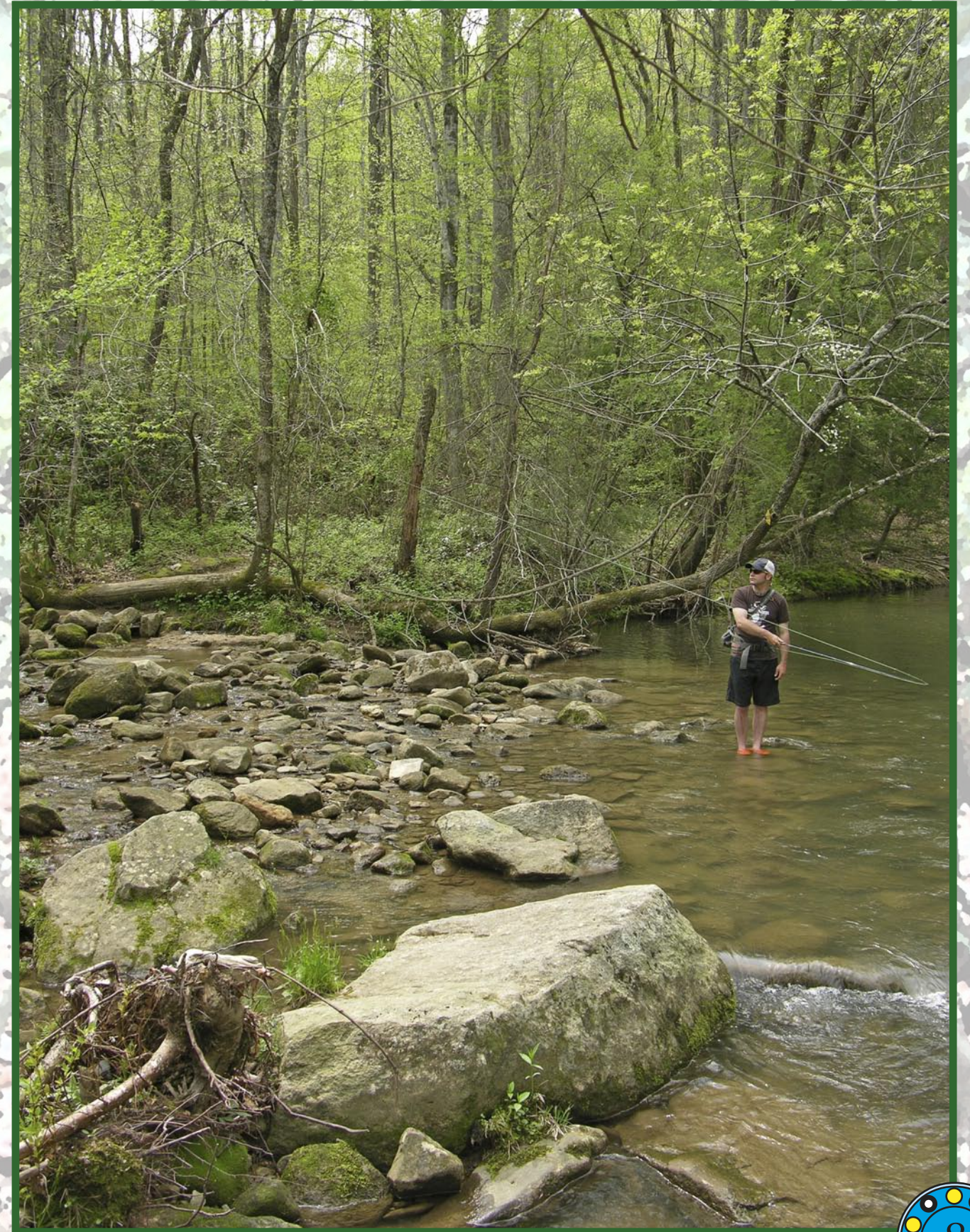
• VEGETATION •



One of the most noticeable features that almost all WNC streams have in common is the abundant vegetation growing streamside. In most of the stream pictures throughout the book you can readily see the banks lined in green. It is this green that can make

river access a challenge, both physically and mentally. For the most part, this dense growth is comprised of Rhododendron and Doghobble - two plant species that fishermen love to hate. Just remember when wading through the forest to the stream to

keep your rod lined up so as not to lose end pieces, and not to use too much profanity in the process. Also remember that the thicker the foliage, the fewer the people you'll see once you get to the stream.



• FLOODS •



📷 A massive riverside pile of logs created by a flood • © Leland Davis



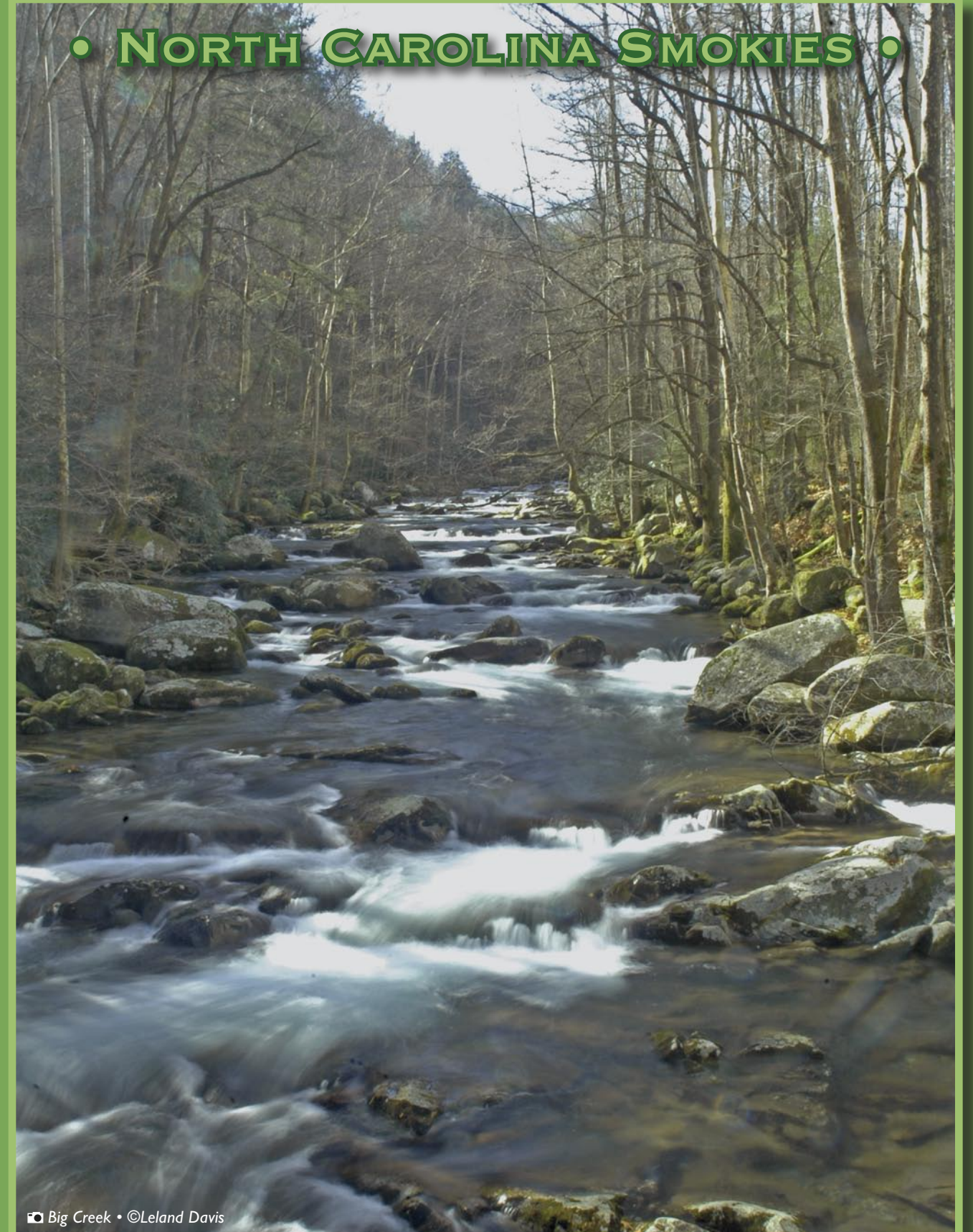
📷 Highway 215 after the floods of '04 • © Leland Davis



📷 Highway 215 in reach #47 • © Leland Davis

Western North Carolina rivers are dynamic and ever-changing. The round loose boulders that form the streambed tumble and shift with each high water event. Many streams in the region are prone to flooding due to torrential rains from hurricanes and strong storm fronts. Many inches of rain can fall in a short period of time, making for catastrophic rushes of water charging through what normally is your favorite trout stream. Be aware of these flood events, and keep in mind that when the river levels drop back to normal, rocks, logs, and even fish may be in totally different places. Floods clean our streams of unwanted silt and debris. Even though that log that was home to that huge fish you never could get to eat your fly anyway has moved, it was for the best – and that fish has found another home for you to discover.

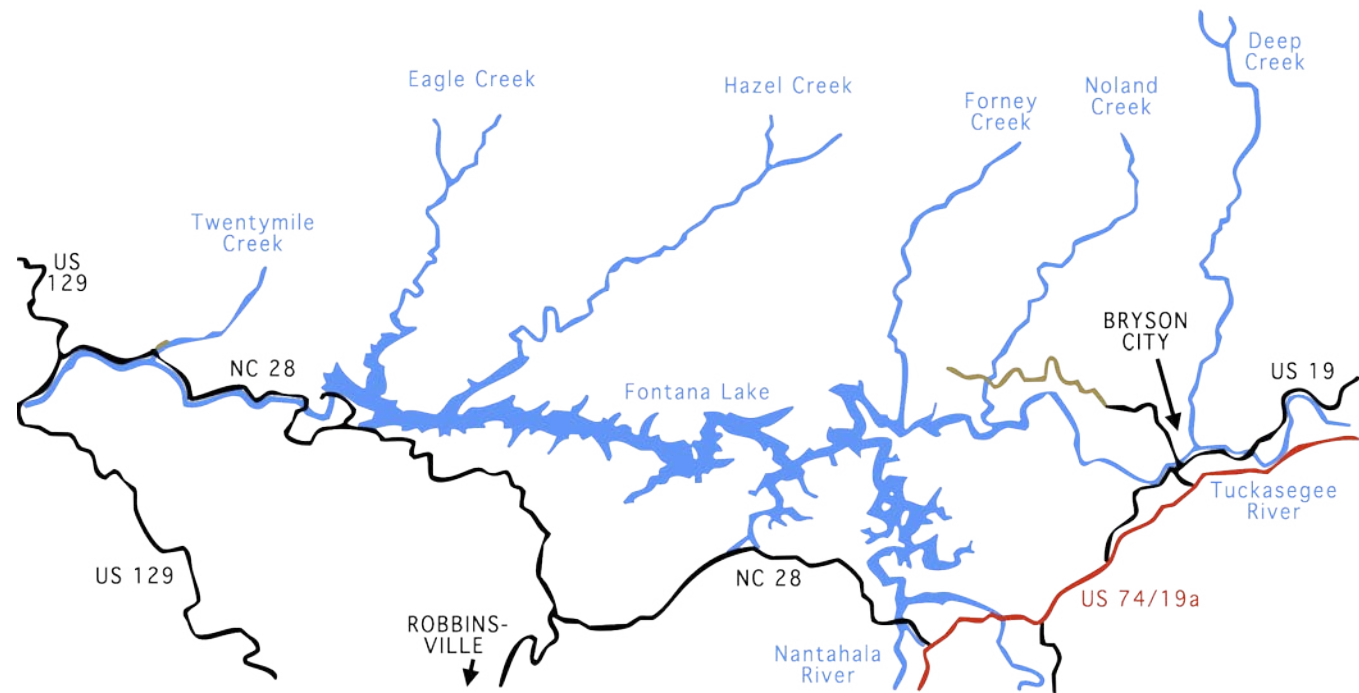
• NORTH CAROLINA SMOKIES •



📷 Big Creek • ©Leland Davis



♦ FONTANA LAKE AREA ♦



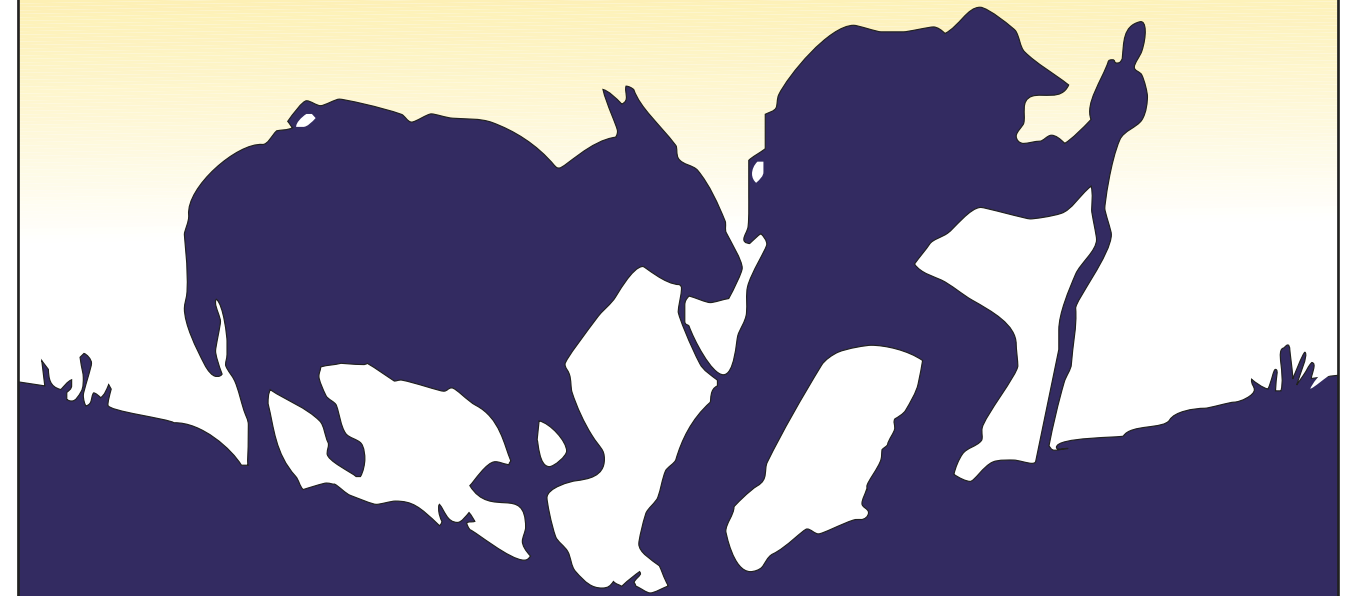
Fontana Dam • © Leland Davis



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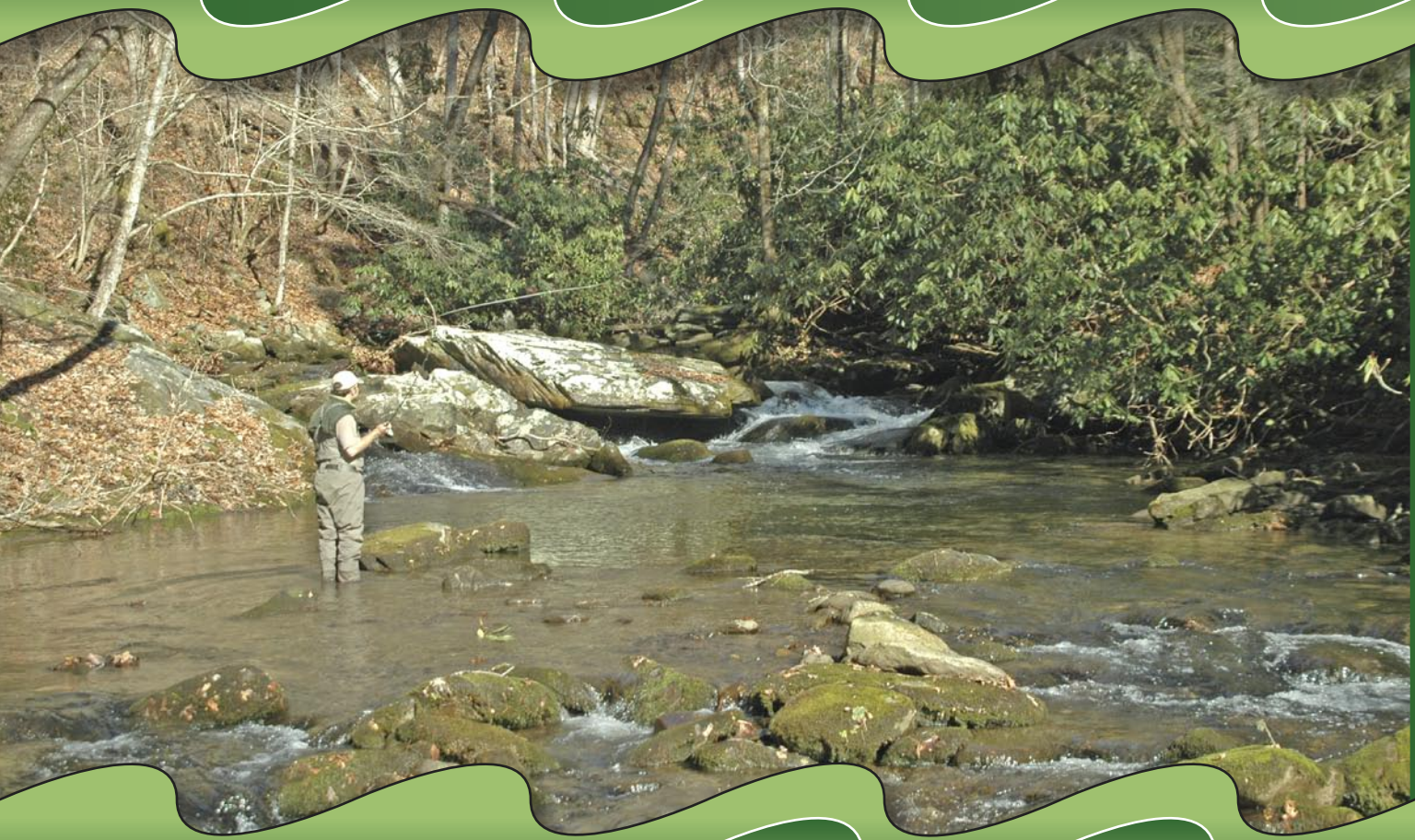


Fly Fishing Specialists

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| Park Road Shopping Center
Charlotte, NC
704.523.1089 | Friendly Shopping Center
Greensboro, NC
336.851.1331 | Thruway Shopping Center
Winston-Salem, NC
336.727.0906 |
| Cameron Village
Raleigh, NC
919.833.1741 | Eastgate Shopping Center
Chapel Hill, NC
919.933.6148 | Hanover Center
Wilmington, NC
910.343.1648 |
| | | La Promenade II
Greenville, NC
252.321.1308 |

Fishing Report, Gear Reviews & More at www.GreatOutdoorProvision.com





1 • TWENTYMILE CREEK

photos © Leland Davis

TWENTYMILE TRAIL	
Wolf Ridge Trail	0.5
Long Hungry Ridge Trail	3.0
Appalachian Trail	5.0



Twentymile is a small stream located in the far southwestern end of the Park. Popular with Tennessee anglers due to its relatively close proximity to the state line, this

creek offers great fishing for small wild fish without the use of a boat or an extensive hike. For non anglers wanting to go along on the adventure or for anglers with more than a one track mind, hiking along the stream is quite nice, and the trail leads to a fire tower high on the spine of the Smokies. This stream also makes for an excellent option for anglers who don't have the time or

money for multiple days on Hazel or Eagle and can be fished for a couple of hours "on the way home" as well.

When and What: Mid March to late October will find happy anglers on this stream. Winter months bring slow fishing and cold water. Bring similar flies as you would for Eagle Creek or Nolan Creek and enjoy.

Directions: From the US19/74/Hwy 28 Intersection near Bryson City, follow Hwy 28 towards Fontana for 29.5 miles. Turn right at Twentymile Creek ranger station sign and continue on a very short gravel road until you reach the Twentymile Creek trailhead.

Eagle is the western most of the north shore streams. Being relatively the same size as Nolan Creek, Eagle's fishing is in turn fairly similar in both numbers of fish and size. The scenery is a bit better, and getting there is more scenic as well. Most anglers choose to access the stream via boat from Fontana Lake. For anglers without means of water transportation, shuttles are available from Fontana Boat Dock. Anglers looking to save a little money or wanting to hike can also travel by foot from the trailhead located at the north side of Fontana Dam. From here it is a short 5.6 mile jaunt into the Eagle Creek drainage. As with most Smokies streams, camping is available in designated sites with a back country camping permit. Also worth mentioning is Eagle's seemingly higher snake population than other

streams. Watch your step as you make your way along stream banks on this one.

When and What: Anglers will find the best fishing starting in spring and staying consistent through early fall. A box of dry fly basics such as Parachute Mayfly patterns and Elk Hair Caddis are a must, as well as some bead heads for down below. A few hoppers and such for summer and you are ready to fish.

Fontana Lake Access: From the US 19/74/Hwy 28 Intersection near Bryson City follow 28 for 17.7 miles to Cable Cove Access for public lake access. For lake shuttles, continue on for 4 miles to Fontana Boat Dock.

Hike-in Access: From the US 19/74/Hwy 28 Intersection near Bryson City, follow 28 for 21.6 miles. Turn right and cross Fontana Dam. Lakeshore Trail trailhead parking is located on the north side of the dam.

Fishing Regulations	
<i>Great Smoky Mountains National Park</i>	
Season	Open year-round.
Lures	Artificial lures or flies with single hook only. No bait allowed.
License	Valid state license from Tennessee or North Carolina.
Size Limit	All trout - 7" minimum. Smallmouth bass - 7" minimum. Rock (redeye) bass - no limit.
Croel Limit	Trout or smallmouth bass - combined total of 5. Rock (redeye) bass - 20.

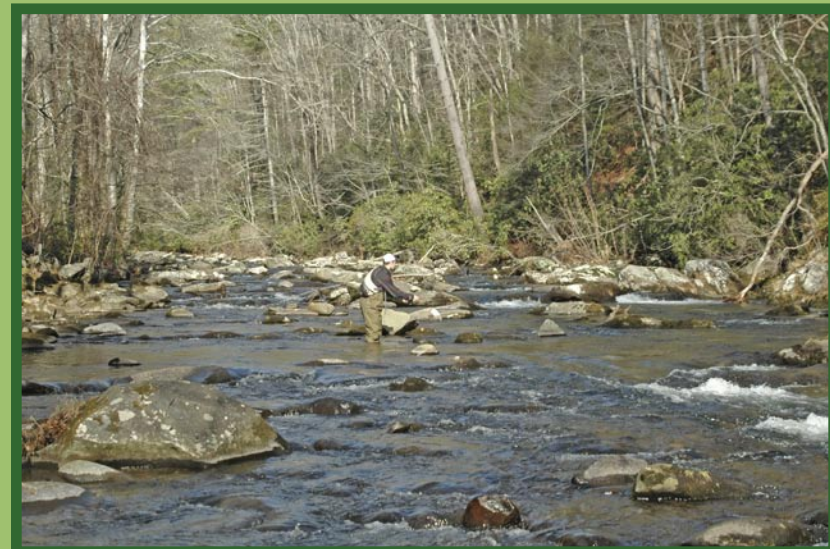




Hazel Creek is probably the most famous of all Smokies trout streams—and for good reason. It is wider, longer and features a much bigger drainage than any other stream on the North Carolina side of the Park. This in turn yields bigger fish and more miles of open, fishable water as well. Hazel Creek is the shining star of Fontana’s north shore streams and is only accessible via boat or a long hike from Clingman’s Dome. For anglers who don’t want to make the hike or do not own their own boat, Fontana boat dock offers lake shuttles to both Hazel and Eagle Creeks for a fee.



Once on the stream anglers not only step into fantastic fishing for wild browns and rainbows, but also take a step back in time. Near the mouth of the creek are the ruins of a small logging town named Proctor. Here park rangers use an old house as a base for trail maintenance and patrols. Besides the house, there are remnants of the old saw mill and log ponds. There is even an old powder house where dynamite was stored. Further up the drainage are other signs of old settlements, and cemeteries can be found just off the trail. The fishing definitely lives up to the stream’s reputation, with potential for fish over 16 inches. Weekends during summer months can be crowded for such a remote stream, so try to fish mid-week if you can.



Camping is available with backcountry permits – and with so much water to cover, multiple fishing days allow anglers to get a better sampling of what this stream has to offer.

When and What: March to November will give anglers the best shot at good fishing. Winter months can be cold with slow to no fishing and a bit harsh for overnight adventures. Fly selection is similar to all other streams in the Smokies. Anglers should also come prepared with some more realistic patterns and light tippet for some of the more educated fish near the lake access.

Directions: Clingman’s Dome Access: From US 19/441 intersection in Cherokee, follow 441 north for 19.8 miles to Clingman’s Dome road. Turn left and continue for 6.9 miles to Forney Ridge Parking area. Fontana Lake Access: From the US 19/74/Hwy 28 Intersection near Bryson City follow 28 for 17.7 miles to Cable Cove Access for public lake access. For lake shuttles continue on for 4 miles to Fontana Boat Dock.

Fishing Regulations	
Great Smoky Mountains National Park	
Season	Open year-round.
Lures	Artificial lures or flies with single hook only. No bait allowed.
License	Valid state license from Tennessee or North Carolina.
Size Limit	All trout - 7" minimum. Smallmouth bass - 7" minimum. Rock (trout) bass - no limit.
Catch Limit	Trout or smallmouth bass - combined total of 5. Rock (trout) bass - 20.

photos © Leland Davis





4 • FORNEY CREEK

Forney Creek is a great example of larger Smokies stream fishing with a wilderness feel. Even though it is the eastern-most of the north shore streams that are only accessed via substantial hikes or boat travel, Forney receives the least traffic. This comes as a surprise given that there are three ways to enter the watershed, one of which can even make for a nice day trip. The easiest and quickest is to enter from the "Road to Nowhere." From here it is a moderate hike into the Forney drainage—and is short enough in length to hike in, fish, and hike back out during summer months with no overnight gear. The second access is via Fontana Lake. There is no lake shuttle service to Forney, so you will have to provide your own. For sea

kayaks and canoes the easiest access point is Wilderness Boat Ramp. For power boats, other marinas in the area will work fine. The third way to access Forney is to drop down from Clingman's Dome on the Forney Ridge Trail. Once on the water you will find classic Smokies freestone fishing with large boulders and rhododendron banks. Forney is not known for being a big fish stream, but the numbers of fish make up for it. This is also a great destination for the angler who enjoys hiking and exploring outside the fishing realm. The watershed is filled with remnants of a time gone by. Old house seats and chimneys dot the surrounding woods, and cemeteries stand watch on nearby hills. It is also rumored that there are 40 acres of virgin timber higher up on the stream, making

it one of the rare areas in the park that weren't logged around the turn of the century. Strap on your hiking boots, take your camera, and enjoy.

When and What: Spring through fall is the season for this stream. Some unseasonably warm days in winter can yield a few fish mid-day, but for the most part December through February is slow and cold. For flies, basic mayfly imitations such as Parachute Adams and Elk Hair Caddis will work just fine on top. Sub-surface try pheasant tails, hare's ears, and a variety of Stone Fly Nymphs. In summer time don't forget the beetles, hoppers, and the ever popular inchworm. Throw in some streamers for high water and you're set.

Directions: For the Lake Shore Drive/ Road to Nowhere entrance: From the US19/Veterans Blvd. intersection in Bryson City, follow US 19 North for 0.2 miles. Turn left at the light onto Everett Street. Everett Street will turn into Lake Shore Drive. After this turn it is 8.8 miles to the parking area at the tunnel. From here hike 3 miles on the Lake Shore Trail and you're there.

Fishing Regulations	
Great Smoky Mountains National Park	
Season	Open year-round.
Lures	Artificial lures or flies with single hook only. No bait allowed.
License	Valid state license from Tennessee or North Carolina.
Size Limit	All trout - 7" minimum. Smallmouth bass - 7" minimum. Rock (redestye) bass - no limit.
Creeel Limit	Trout or smallmouth bass - combined total of 5. Rock (redestye) bass - 20.



photos © J.E.B. Hall



♦ EASTERN SMOKIES AREA ♦



5 • NOLAND CREEK



photos © J.E.B. Hall

Located along the infamous “Road to Nowhere,” Noland creek is a Smokies small stream gem. With easy access available from Lake Shore Road, this is another easy day or overnight trip from Bryson City. Almost all of Noland is paralleled by fire road trail and is an easy hike. From the trailhead there is a lower mile that leads down to the lake which is often overlooked but holds a good number of fish. From here up is more of the same, and the characteristic of the stream never really varies from its tight pocket water configuration. Like all other Smokies streams, backcountry camping is available via permit and can make for a nice weekend get away without too much effort. The fish are smaller than in some of the other streams on this side of the Park, but the numbers usually make up for the lack of size.

When and What: April to November are your best bets for this stream. Colder temps during winter lead to very lethargic fish and slow fishing. Simple dries such as Parachute Adams and Elk Hair Caddis will do the trick on top. Hare’s ears and pheasant tails work below. A few hoppers and beetles for summer time and you are ready to go.

Directions: From the US 19/Veteran’s Blvd. intersection in Bryson City, follow 19 north to the traffic light at the Everett Street intersection. Turn left onto Everett Street and continue for 8.2 miles to Noland Creek Trailhead. The parking area is located on the left just before crossing the stream on a high bridge. Everett Street turns into Lake Shore Drive, which is the “Road to Nowhere.”





When and What: Optimum fishing time is from April until the first week in November. March can be OK depending on weather, as well as December. The depths of winter rarely fish well and can be quite cold. As with all Smokies streams, fly selection should consist of parachute mayfly imitations, caddis, and yellow stone fly patterns on top. For sub surface, pheasant tails, hare's ears, princes, and copper johns make for great droppers. Summer time means terrestrials so don't forget to take along some hoppers, beetles and inchworms. Thunderstorms can make for off color water so bring some streamers or large dark stone imitations as well.



Fishing Regulations	
Great Smoky Mountains National Park	
Season	Open year-round.
Lures	Artificial lures or flies with single hook only. No bait allowed.
License	Valid state license from Tennessee or North Carolina.
Size Limit	All trout - 7" minimum. Smallmouth bass - 7" minimum. Rock(redeye) bass - no limit.
Creel Limit	Trout or smallmouth bass - combined total of 5. Rock (redeye) bass - 20.

Directions: From the US 19/ Veterans' Blvd. intersection in Bryson City, follow 19 north for 0.2 miles. Turn left at the light onto Everett Street. Continue on Everett for 1/4 mile, and turn right at the train depot onto Deep Creek Rd. Follow the brown signs to the park service campground and trailhead. Fishing begins as soon as you cross the national park boundary into the campground area.

6 • DEEP CREEK

photos © J.E.B. Hall

Deep creek is the most easily accessed Smokies stream from Bryson City. The large boulders and higher volume flow make it capable of holding bigger fish than most streams in the area. The fishing begins as soon as you pass the tubing companies and cross the Park boundary,

and gets better the further you go. Not too long after driving up through the campground and picnic area you hit the Deep Creek Trailhead. From here access is on foot via a fire road. The fire road only lasts a short while, and soon you hit single track that lasts until the headwaters.

Wading is tough in the upper stretches and much easier closer to the car. As with other streams, the further you hike the better it gets. A Great Smoky Mountains National Park trail map is key for planning you adventure here as the trail often leaves the stream bank and crosses a hill or two. Backcountry trips on Deep Creek are popular with both the hiking and horse pack crowd, and camping is allowed in designated sites only. Maps and backcountry permits are available at the office located in the campground at the bottom of the stretch. The bottom 1.5 miles is also used by tubers in the summers months, and makes it unfishable and almost unbearable during the day. Mornings and evenings can still be productive however, and the upper reaches can fish all day. Remember to watch for snakes and yellow jackets during summer as the stream is home to both. Famous stretches are marked by their related campsites with names like Poke Patch, Bryson Place, and the Jenkins Field. The tributaries that feed the stream also hold fish and are worth a look. Strap on you hiking boots and have fun.



7 • OCONOLUFTEE RIVER



Fishing Regulations	
Great Smoky Mountains National Park	
Season	Open year-round.
Lures	Artificial lures or flies with single hook only. No bait allowed.
License	Valid state license from Tennessee or North Carolina.
Size Limit	All trout - 7" minimum. Smallmouth bass - 7" minimum. Rock (reidye) bass - no limit.
Creeel Limit	Trout or smallmouth bass - combined total of 5. Rock (reidye) bass - 20.

When and What: This river fishes spring to fall, and like almost every other stream in the area, seems to go dormant in winter months. Fly selection is simple: Elk Hair Caddis and parachute mayflies in a variety of colors work for dries. Use your choice of bead heads under the surface. A few terrestrials, especially inchworms, for summer, and you're ready to fish.

Directions: From the US 19/441 intersection in Cherokee, follow 441 north for 4.8 miles. Turn right into the ranger station parking area. Fishing begins in the section just behind the ranger station and continues for 7.3 miles until the river splits into the Kephart Prong and the Beech Flats Prong.



photos © J.E.B. Hall

If you are looking for a Smoky Mountain fishing quick fix, this is it. Completely roadside along US 441 (the connection between the tourist hubs of Cherokee and Gatlinburg), the Oconaluftee offers surprisingly good fishing given its accessibility. The river features a healthy population of small Rainbow and Brown trout that are sure to put a smile on any angler's face. While not the most picturesque stream in the Park due to the constant flow of traffic on the road above, the scenery is still better than most streams in the southeast, especially in autumn. Abundant parking areas and pullouts can be found along the length of the 'Luftee, and rarely is the walk to the river a strenuous one. Wading may pose the only difficulty here due to the large slick boulders that make up the stream-bed. Anglers unsure of their footing are advised to bring a wading staff, and as with all Smoky Mountain trout streams, felt soled or sticky rubber wading shoes are a must. Keep this river in mind next time members of your vacation party want to gamble in Cherokee, or you are stuck in traffic crossing the mountain. I think you will find it a pleasurable diversion.



8 • BRADLEY FORK

The Bradley Fork is the perfect Smokies base camp stream. Flowing through the Smokemont Campground into the Oconaluftee, it offers close to camp hike and fish with many other stream options within a short drive. The Oconaluftee is within walking distance. Small streams such as the Kephart Prong, Collins Creek and the Beech Flats Prong are all within a five to ten minute drive. If you are willing to drive 20-30 minutes, you can fish the West Prong of the Little Pigeon, the Straight Fork, or even Deep Creek. The Bradley itself offers classic pocket water fishing, and occasionally can yield a fish over 14 inches. Camping in the Smokemont Campground is by permit only. Permits are available at the small ranger station at the campground.

Fishing Regulations	
Great Smoky Mountains National Park	
Season	Open year-round.
Lures	Artificial lures or flies with single hook only. No bait allowed.
License	Valid state license from Tennessee or North Carolina.
Size Limit	All trout - 7" minimum. Smallmouth bass - 7" minimum. Rock (reidye) bass - no limit.
Creeel Limit	Trout or smallmouth bass - combined total of 5. Rock (reidye) bass - 20.

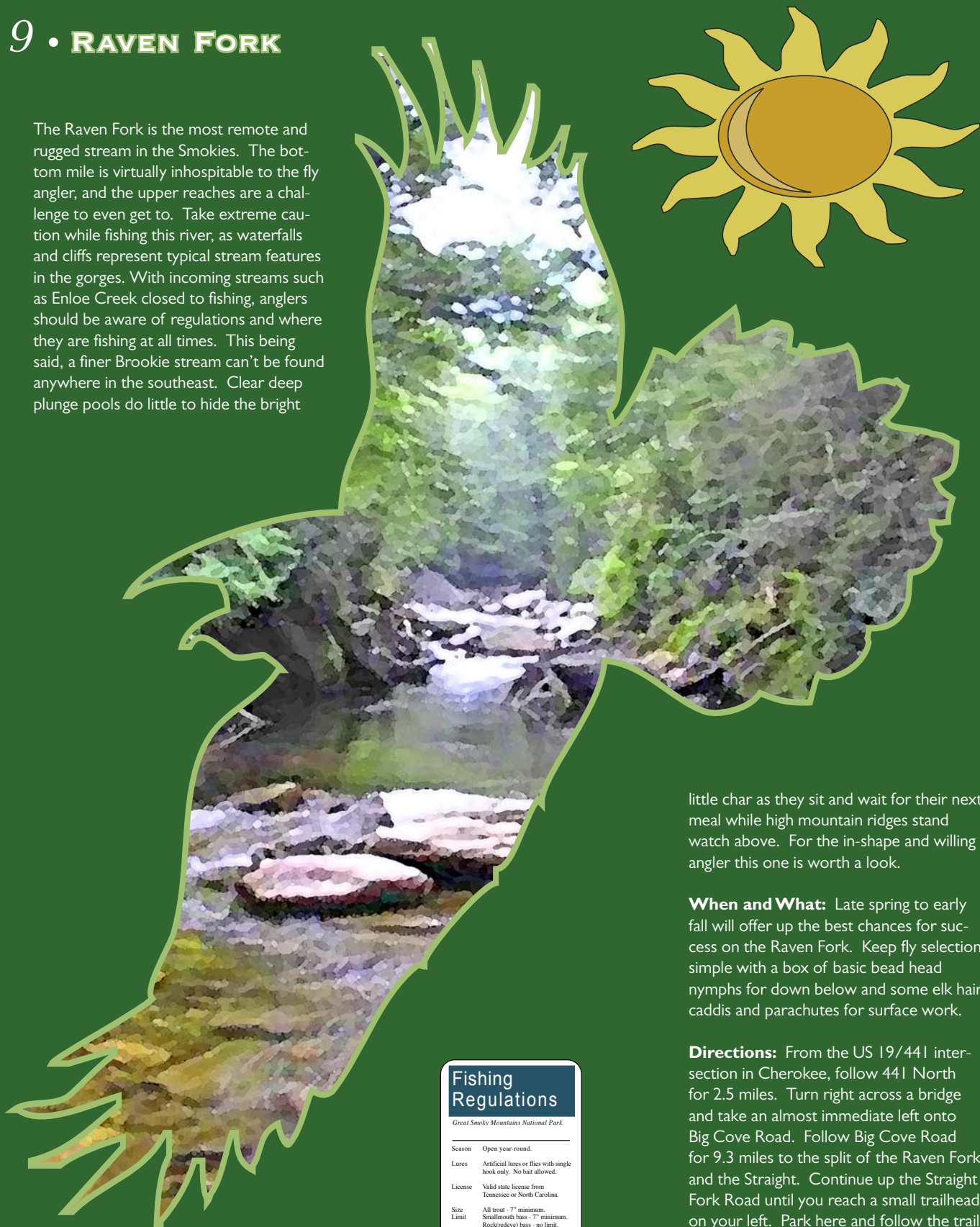


When and What: Like all other streams on the North Carolina side of the park, the best time to go is between March and November. Fly selection is also similar and includes Parachutes, Elk Hair Caddis, and Stimulators for dries. Pheasant tails, Prince's and Hare's ears work for nymphs. Bring terrestrials for summer and small streamers for high water days, and you are ready to fish.

Directions: From the US 19/441 intersection in Cherokee, NC follow 441 north for 7.5 miles. Turn right across a bridge into Smokemont Campground. Turn left after crossing bridge. Parking for day use is available at the trailhead located toward the back of the campground.

9 • RAVEN FORK

The Raven Fork is the most remote and rugged stream in the Smokies. The bottom mile is virtually inhospitable to the fly angler, and the upper reaches are a challenge to even get to. Take extreme caution while fishing this river, as waterfalls and cliffs represent typical stream features in the gorges. With incoming streams such as Enloe Creek closed to fishing, anglers should be aware of regulations and where they are fishing at all times. This being said, a finer Brookie stream can't be found anywhere in the southeast. Clear deep plunge pools do little to hide the bright



little char as they sit and wait for their next meal while high mountain ridges stand watch above. For the in-shape and willing angler this one is worth a look.

When and What: Late spring to early fall will offer up the best chances for success on the Raven Fork. Keep fly selection simple with a box of basic bead head nymphs for down below and some elk hair caddis and parachutes for surface work.

Directions: From the US 19/441 intersection in Cherokee, follow 441 North for 2.5 miles. Turn right across a bridge and take an almost immediate left onto Big Cove Road. Follow Big Cove Road for 9.3 miles to the split of the Raven Fork and the Straight. Continue up the Straight Fork Road until you reach a small trailhead on your left. Park here and follow the trail up and over the ridge and down into the Raven Fork valley.

Fishing Regulations	
Great Smoky Mountains National Park	
Season	Open year-round.
Lures	Artificial lures or flies with single hook only. No bait allowed.
License	Valid state license from Tennessee or North Carolina.
Size Limit	All trout - 7" minimum. Smallmouth bass - 7" minimum. Rock (redeye) bass - no limit.
Creed Limit	Trout or smallmouth bass - combined total of 5. Rock (redeye) bass - 20.

Photo by Kirk Eddlemon

10 • STRAIGHT FORK

The Straight Fork offers classic Smokies fishing and scenery with easy roadside access. Flowing out of the southeast corner of the park into the Cherokee Indian Reservation, this stream can make for an excellent get away for travelers coming to gamble at the reservation casino, as well as a starting point for backcountry anglers looking to wet a line before hiking in to more remote locales. The Straight Fork also is one of the few streams in the area in which an angler can catch brook, brown and rainbow trout in the same stretch, with all fish being from wild reproducing populations. Just remember the fishing begins inside the park boundary. Downstream, the waters belong to the Cherokee and fall under tribal regulations, so they require a tribal permit in sections open to the public.

When and what: This stream—much like the others in this watershed—is a spring through fall fishery. Low light levels and cold temps can make winter time fishing next to impossible. Fly selection is very similar as well: Parachute mayflies, caddis patterns, and stimulators work for dries. Basic nymphs such as princes, pheasant tails and hare's ears cover sub surface needs. Bring hoppers, ants, and inchworms in summer and you are good to go.

Directions: From the US 19/441 intersection in Cherokee, follow 441 North for 2.5 miles. Turn right across a bridge and take an almost immediate left onto Big Cove Road. Follow Big Cove Road for 9.3 miles to the split of the Raven Fork and the Straight Fork. Turn right. Fishing begins as soon as you cross the Park Boundary.

Fishing Regulations	
Great Smoky Mountains National Park	
Season	Open year-round.
Lures	Artificial lures or flies with single hook only. No bait allowed.
License	Valid state license from Tennessee or North Carolina.
Size Limit	All trout - 7" minimum. Smallmouth bass - 7" minimum. Rock (redeye) bass - no limit.
Creed Limit	Trout or smallmouth bass - combined total of 5. Rock (redeye) bass - 20.

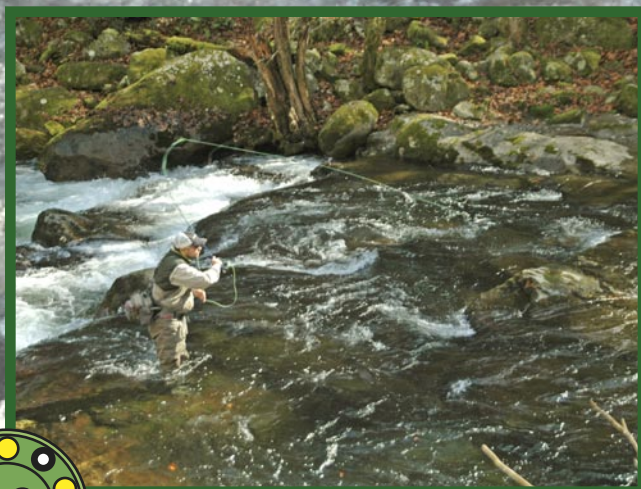


photos © J.E.B. Hall

Big Creek is one of the more beautiful freestone streams in the area. With clear blue water and large round boulders, Big Creek is like a Bob Ross painting come to life. Wading is difficult in the lower stretches of this stream due to the gradient of the streambed and the rock size. However, once anglers hike three to four miles upstream the river starts to flatten out, and the fishability improves. Overnight camping is available in the upper reaches as well. This is another great one to bring along a non-fishing friend. While you enjoy the small wild Rainbows and Browns, your buddies can enjoy swimming at spots such as Midnight Hole or just taking in the view as they hike along the trail.

When and What: Fishing Big Creek is an early April to early November endeavor. The water in this one seems to be especially cold, and the fishing seems non-existent in the winter months. Fly selection is similar to all other Smokies streams with the addition of some very heavy nymphs and streamers to explore the deep plunge pools found along the way.

Directions: Take the Waterville Road exit off I-40 near Hartford, TN, and turn left and continue along Waterville road for 3.3 miles to Big Creek Trailhead day use parking area.



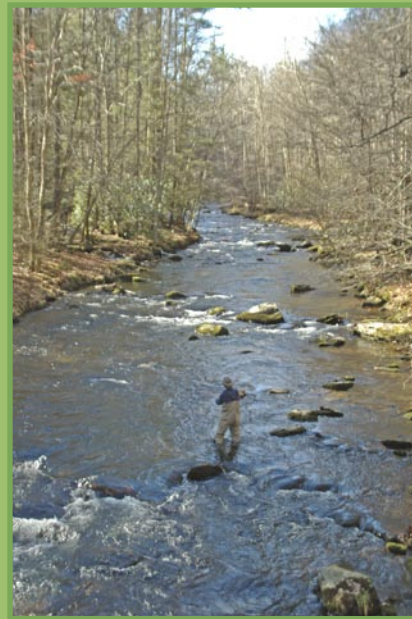
photos © Leland Davis

12 • CATALOOCHEE CREEK

Cataloochee Creek is located in the Cataloochee valley— a beautiful isolated area in the northeast corner of the Park. Along with a long stretch of fishable stream, this area also offers anglers a chance to see elk. That's right, elk in the South. These animals are part of a reintroduction project the Park Service launched in the 90's. Although the fish in the stream aren't reminiscent of western streams, the feeling one gets when an elk crosses the river just ahead of you is. The upper reaches from the lower steel bridge up to the confluence with Palmer Creek is the most easily accessed section of river. The lower gorges require some hiking, and at times a bit of bushwhacking. At any rate, the fishing is great and anglers can bring the whole family along for elk watching, hiking and picnics while still being able to get in a few drifts.

When and What: March to November is best for Cataloochee. Bring along your standard Smokies box and make sure it includes some Stimulators for summer months. Who knows, with so many elk around you may find enough hair to tie your own fly streamside.

Directions: From the Hwy 276/ I-40 Intersection near Waynesville, NC, take 276 east for 0.2 miles and take an almost immediate right onto Cove Creek Rd. Signs for Cataloochee will be located at the turn. Follow this road for 9.6 miles until you reach a split. Left goes towards upper reaches through the meadows. Right takes you downstream towards the gorge.



photos © Leland Davis



• TENNESSEE SMOKIES •



© Leland Davis



The Big Pigeon is a great Smallmouth fishery. A healthy population of bass live amongst the bedrock shoals and in throughout the deep pools in this stream. Tennessee trophy Smallmouth regulations add to the fishing, allowing only one fish over 20 inches to be harvested per angler. It appears to be the bronzeback angler's dream. This is where it turns into a nightmare. This section of the Pigeon is a tailwater with unpredictable flows, difficult access and polluted water. For anglers looking to fish pristine crystal clear waters, forget it. This one is diet cola brown and full of Dioxin. River levels change randomly from fishable flows with good visibility to brown and high. High enough in fact, that this section is home to a healthy population of whitewater rafters as well. For the determined Smallmouth crazed long rodder this one may be worth the effort. If you are into predictable and easy, this one is not for you.

When and What: Hot months work best for bass. Summer brings heavy recreational use by rafters so be forewarned. Fly selections should include your standard Smallmouth fare as well as some beefy nymphs for the occasional tailing Carp.

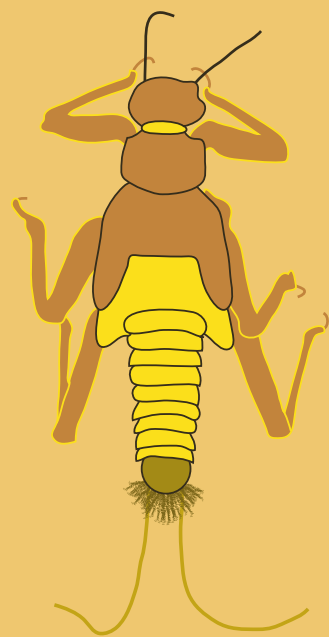
Directions: From I-40, take Tennessee exit 447 (Hartford Rd.). Turn south towards the river, and then turn right onto River Rd. towards Denton. Fishing and access points are located along this road.





Cosby Creek is another small Smokies stream that offers both easy access and scenic fishing. For Knoxville and Sevierville anglers, Cosby can make for a quick afternoon fish without the crowds of the Little River or the TVA tailraces to the north and west. Once streamside, anglers will find small Rainbows and Browns, holding in classic Smoky Mountain pocket water awaiting drag free drifts and well tied flies.

When and What: Cosby is a spring to fall fishery with the occasional warm winter day yielding a fish or two. Fly selection is similar to all other Smokies streams, and a box of basic dries and bead head nymphs will serve anglers well all season long.



Directions: From Tennessee Exit 440 off of I-40 near Wilson Springs, follow Hwy 321 for 2.5 miles and turn left. Continue on 321 for 6.9 miles. When 321 veers right, continue straight and follow signs to Cosby Creek. Fishing begins as soon as you enter the National Park.

Fishing Regulations	
Great Smoky Mountains National Park	
Season	Open year-round.
Lures	Artificial lures or flies with single hook only. No bait allowed.
License	Valid state license from Tennessee or North Carolina.
Size Limit	All trout - 7" minimum. Smallmouth bass - 7" minimum. Rock(redeye) bass - no limit.
Cred Limit	Trout or smallmouth bass - combined total of 5. Rock (redeye) bass - 20.

Porters creek is one of many excellent small streams in the Gatlinburg area. Flowing into the Middle Prong of the Little Pigeon along Greenbrier Road, it can also make a great alternate to fishing the Middle Prong in times of high water or high traffic. Porters Creek is your typical Smokies pocket water stream with abundant Rhododendron lining the stream bank. Don't look for deep pools and long drifts on this one. For the angler with a large family or group along for the ride, Porters Creek Picnic Area features one of the nicest pavilions in the Smokies. Enjoy.

When and What: Porters Creek typically fishes best from April to October. That is not to say you can't catch a fish or two in the winter, but that time of year can be spotty at best. Your fly box should include basic dries and bead head nymphs in a variety of sizes. Bring a few beetles and ants for summer as well.

Directions: From the 441/321 Intersection in Gatlinburg, follow 321 north for 5.5 miles and turn right onto Greenbrier Rd. Continue along Greenbrier Rd and follow signs for Porters Creek. Parking is located at the top of picnic area circle.

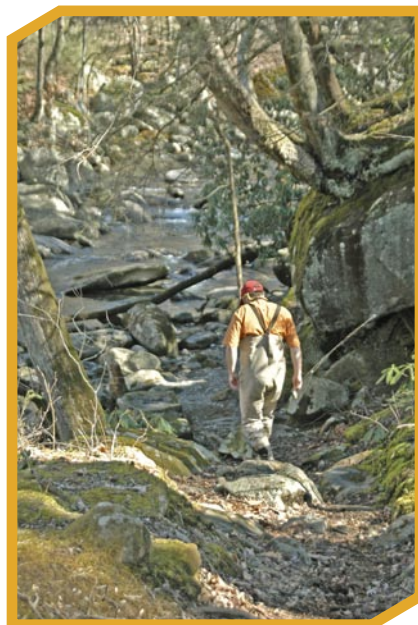
Fishing Regulations	
Great Smoky Mountains National Park	
Season	Open year-round.
Lures	Artificial lures or flies with single hook only. No bait allowed.
License	Valid state license from Tennessee or North Carolina.
Size Limit	All trout - 7" minimum. Smallmouth bass - 7" minimum. Rock(redeye) bass - no limit.
Cred Limit	Trout or smallmouth bass - combined total of 5. Rock (redeye) bass - 20.



Photos © Leland Davis

The Greenbrier—or Middle Prong of the Little Pigeon—is a Smokies angler’s dream. Large deep plunge pools along with miles of mossy boulder gardens form a perfect playing field for the fisherman looking to spend an entire day in the Park without having to spend a lot of time hiking. Don’t worry, backpacking anglers will find plenty to explore by simply parking at the Ramsay Cascades Trailhead and hiking up. This stretch can make for excellent day trips for folks coming over from the Knoxville or Asheville areas as well as tourists coming from Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge.

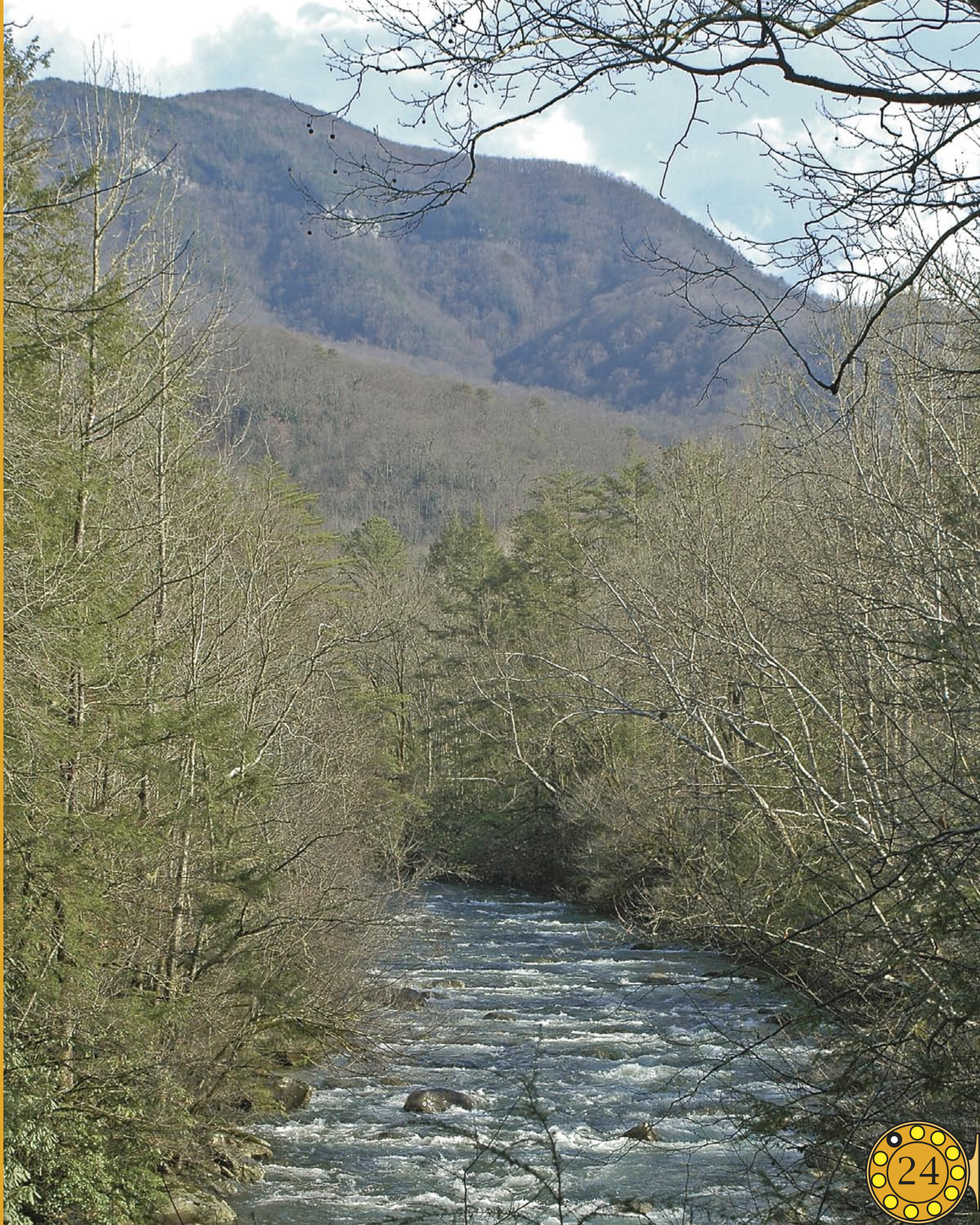
When and What: Although spring through fall represents the best time for anglers to visit the Middle Prong, warm winter days can produce as well. For fly selection bring your standard Smokies box plus some large stonefly nymphs for the deep

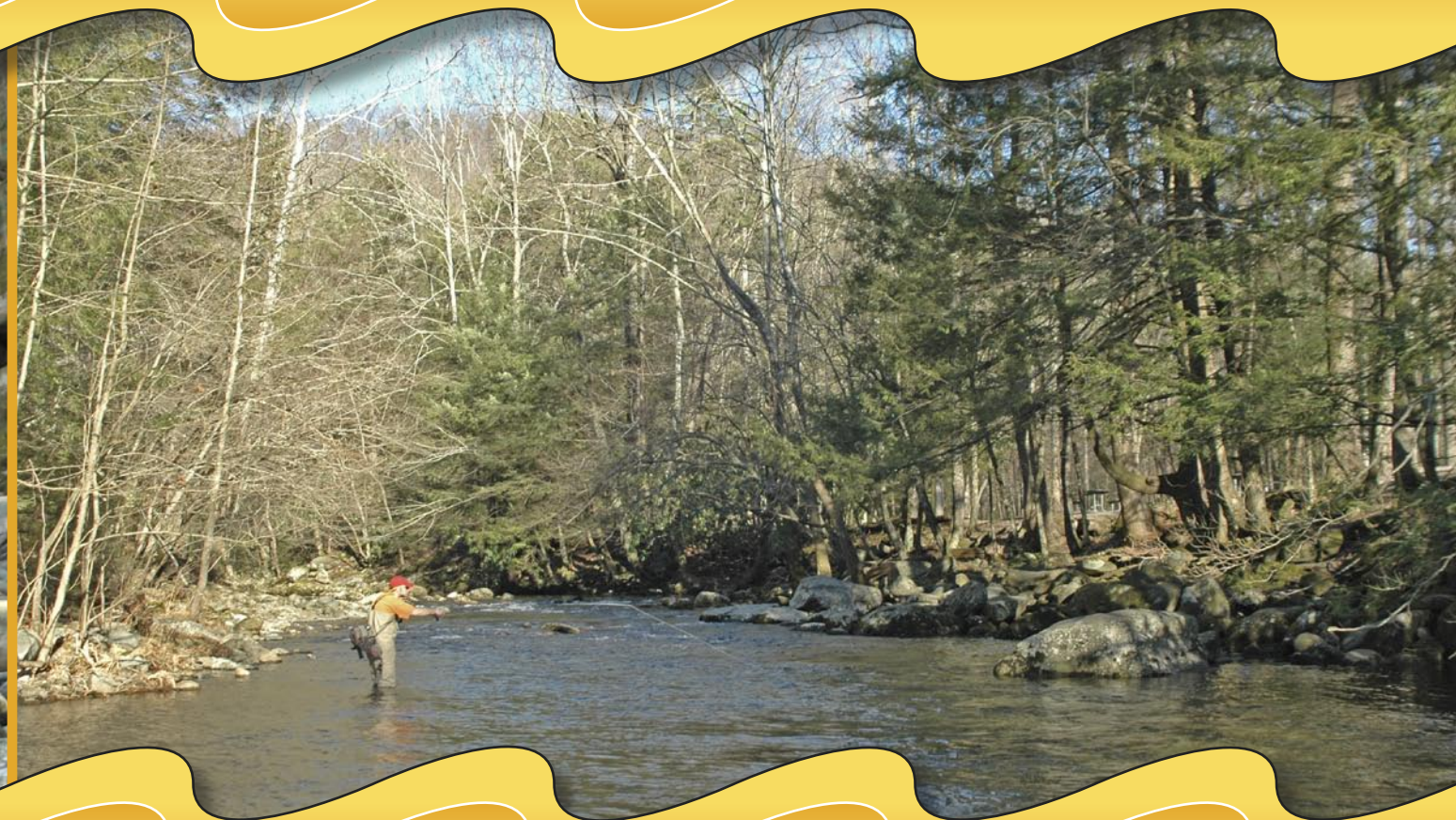


pools and pockets. Some big dark streamers will come in handy for off color and high water days as well.

Directions: From the 441/321 intersection in Gatlinburg, take Hwy. 321 for 5.5 miles to Greenbrier Road. Turn right and continue along the dirt road. Follow signs to Ramsay Cascades and the trailhead for the hike in sections, or park in the available lower pullouts and enjoy.

Fishing Regulations	
Great Smoky Mountains National Park	
Season	Open year-round.
Lures	Artificial lures or flies with single hook only. No bait allowed.
License	Valid state license from Tennessee or North Carolina.
Size Limit	All trout - 7" minimum. Smallmouth bass - 7" minimum. Rock (redeye) bass - no limit.
Crest Limit	Trout or smallmouth bass - combined total of 5. Rock (redeye) bass - 20.





17 • WEST PRONG

Photos © Leland Davis

For Gatlinburg bound anglers the West Prong of the Little Pigeon is as close as a Smokies stream gets. Just a short drive up 441 into the Park, the West Prong offers steep pocket water fishing with beautiful Rainbows and Browns waiting amongst large boulders that line the streambed. With its close proximity to the road, travelers stuck in the mind numbing traffic between Gatlinburg and Cherokee would be wise to bring along the fly rod to stop and sample the fishing along the way. Wading in a beautiful stream is way better than succumbing to road rage.

When and What: With its high altitude beginnings, the West Prong stays clear and cold much of the year. April through October are the prime months to fish this one. Winter water temps can be much too cold to offer

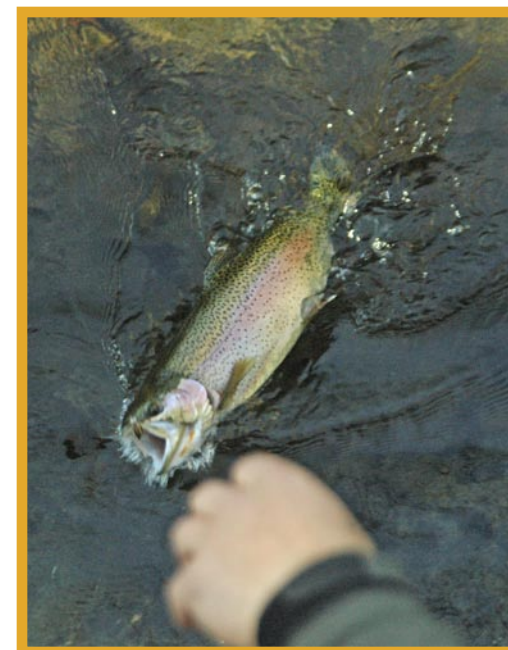


quality fishing. Keep your fly selection simple and concentrate more on your drift than your fly pattern.

Directions: From Gatlinburg follow US 441 south into the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Stream access is via quiet walkways, picnic areas, and overlook parking off of 441.

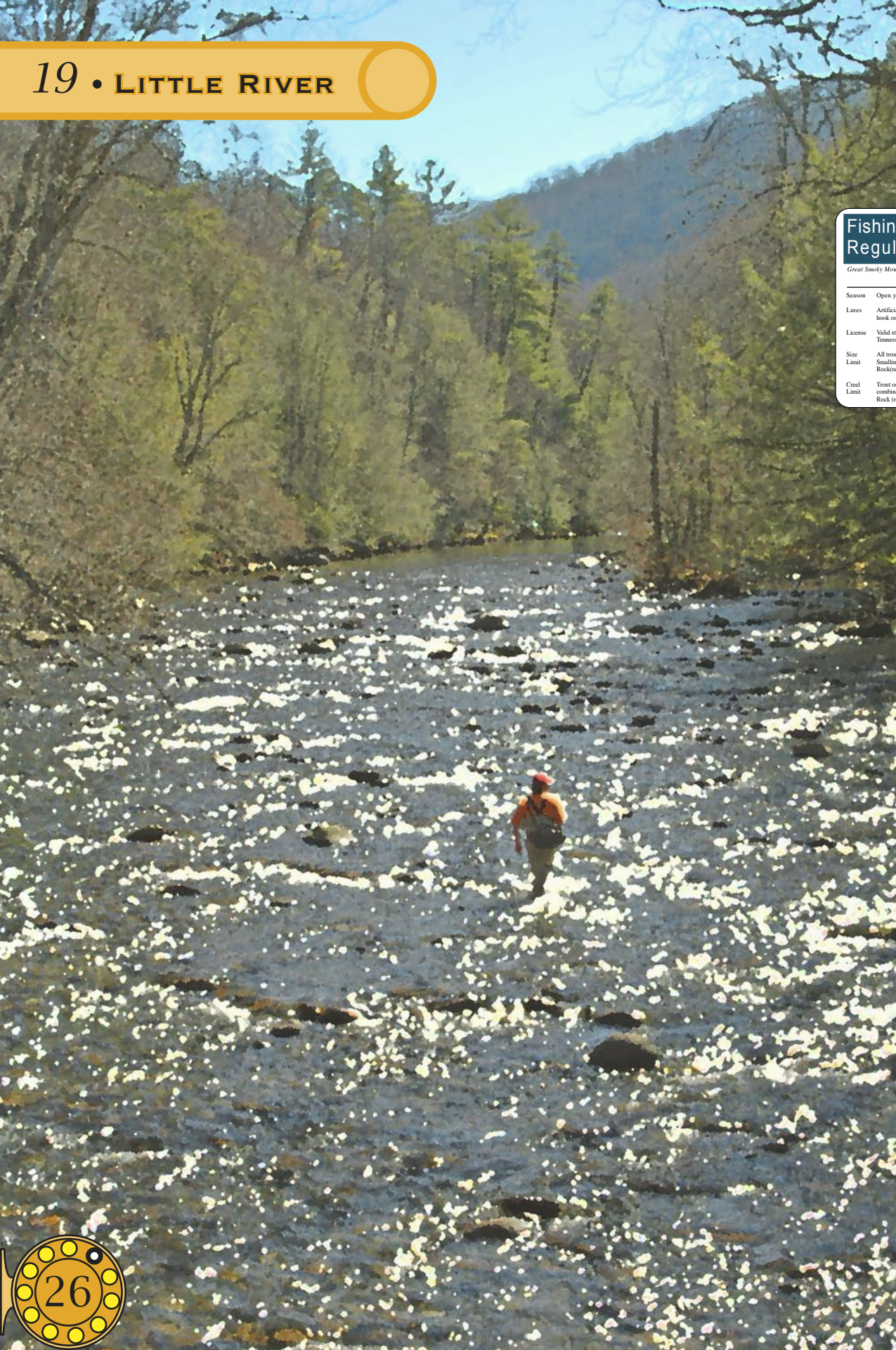
Fishing Regulations	
Great Smoky Mountains National Park	
Season	Open year-round.
Lures	Artificial lures or flies with single hook only. No bait allowed.
License	Valid state license from Tennessee or North Carolina.
Size Limit	All trout - 7" minimum. Smallmouth bass - 7" minimum. Rock (redestye) bass - no limit.
Creek Limit	Trout or smallmouth bass - combined total of 5. Rock (redestye) bass - 20.

The Elkmont section of the Little River is another northern Smokies stream with a lot to offer. Home to a large streamside campground, this river can serve as a base camp for anglers looking to explore reaches throughout the Little River drainage, the Cades Cove area, and for treks into Gatlinburg for food and entertainment. Once established, anglers can both start and end the day fishing near camp, and may find that they never want to leave! For anglers willing to hike, following the stream higher into the watershed and away from crowds can produce a more pleasant experience and add a variety of smaller tributaries to explore.



When and What: Spring through fall is the season to explore this one. Warm winter days can produce a few fish down lower, but for the most part winter is slow. Anglers should come prepared for pocket water fishing and have fly boxes loaded with parachute mayfly imitations, Elk Hair Caddis, Stimulators, and a variety of bead head nymphs. Bring your terrestrials for the hot months and enjoy.

Directions: From the Sugarlands visitor center near Gatlinburg, follow Hwy. 73 towards Townsend for 5 miles. Turn left onto Elkmont Road. Fishing begins as soon as the river becomes roadside and continues on long past the trailhead.



Fishing Regulations	
Great Smoky Mountains National Park	
Season	Open year-round.
Lures	Artificial lures or flies with single hook only. No bait allowed.
License	Valid state license from Tennessee or North Carolina.
Size Limit	All trout - 7" minimum. Smallmouth bass - 7" minimum. Rock (reel) bass - no limit.
Catch Limit	Trout or smallmouth bass - combined total of 5. Rock (reel) bass - 20.



The Little River is the largest stream in the Smokies. Its large deep pools and high volume pocket water make it stand out from most other streams anglers encounter in the Park. With its lower elevation and deep pools come year round angling opportunities and larger fish. Anglers will find that warm winter days can fish well, and at the same time not experience the pressure of summer crowds. Access on the Little can't be beat. Numerous roadside pullouts and picnic sites give anglers a variety of points from which to reach the river. As a bonus, the river is also home to a population of Smallmouth in its lower reaches, which can sometimes be encountered while streamer fishing during warmer months.

When and What: This one fishes all year long, but the best fishing occurs in spring and fall. Summer is warm and crowded, and winter can be quite cold with hit or miss fishing. For fly selection come armed with a more diverse fly box than you would for most Smokies fishing. Large stonefly nymphs work well in dredged through deep pools, and streamers are a winner for high off colored water. Make sure dries are tied in a variety of sizes and patterns to match the hatch and fool picky fish. Have plenty of bead heads as usual and some terrestrials for summer and you will be ready to do a "little" fishing.

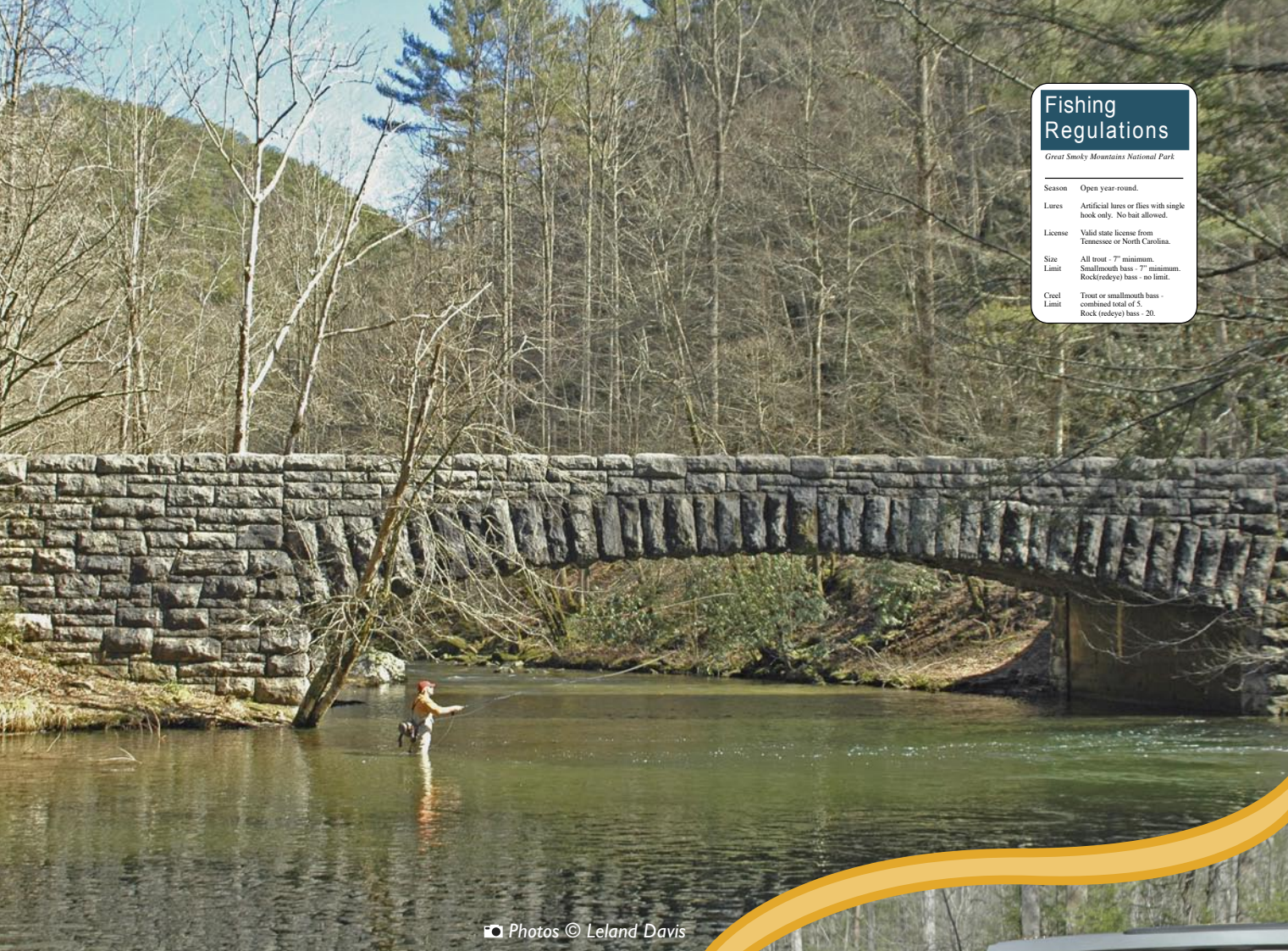
Directions: From the Sugarlands Visitor Center near Gatlinburg, follow Hwy. 73 west until the stream becomes roadside. Fishing runs from here to the park boundary near Townsend.



Fishing Regulations

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Season	Open year-round.
Lures	Artificial lures or flies with single hook only. No bait allowed.
License	Valid state license from Tennessee or North Carolina.
Size Limit	All trout - 7" minimum. Smallmouth bass - 7" minimum. Rock (reidye) bass - no limit.
Creel Limit	Trout or smallmouth bass - combined total of 5. Rock (reidye) bass - 20.



Photos © Leland Davis

The Middle Prong of the Little is a great small stream featuring classic Smokies pocket water that seems meant for roll casts, daps and high sticks. The bottom section of this stream is easily accessed and roadside, while the upper reaches are a hike-in affair. As with most streams, fishing is better the further one travels from the car, but don't let that discourage you from trying your luck on the way to and from the trailhead. This one is close to both Townsend and Cades Cove, so it can make a quick trip for anglers with little time to sneak away.

When and What: Like most streams in this part of the world, spring through fall offers the best shot at consistent fishing. Anglers should bring their standard Smokies box of basic dries and bead heads. For fun, one should throw in a few Thunderheads, since the Thunderhead Prong is a major tributary. Not sure that is where the name came from, but it's fun to think so.

Directions: From Townsend, follow Hwy. 73 towards Gatlinburg. In about 2 miles turn right at an intersection. After crossing the Middle Prong of the Little River, turn left towards the Tremont Institute and follow the river to the trailhead. Fishing begins as soon as you cross the river and continues up past the trailhead into the headwater tributaries.



Photo by Ben Wiggins

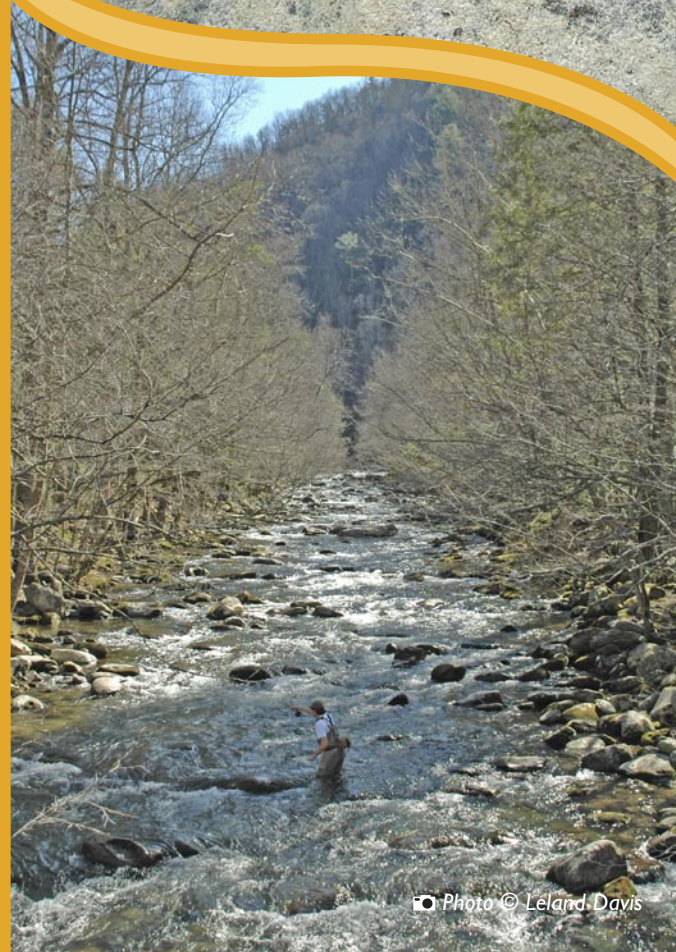
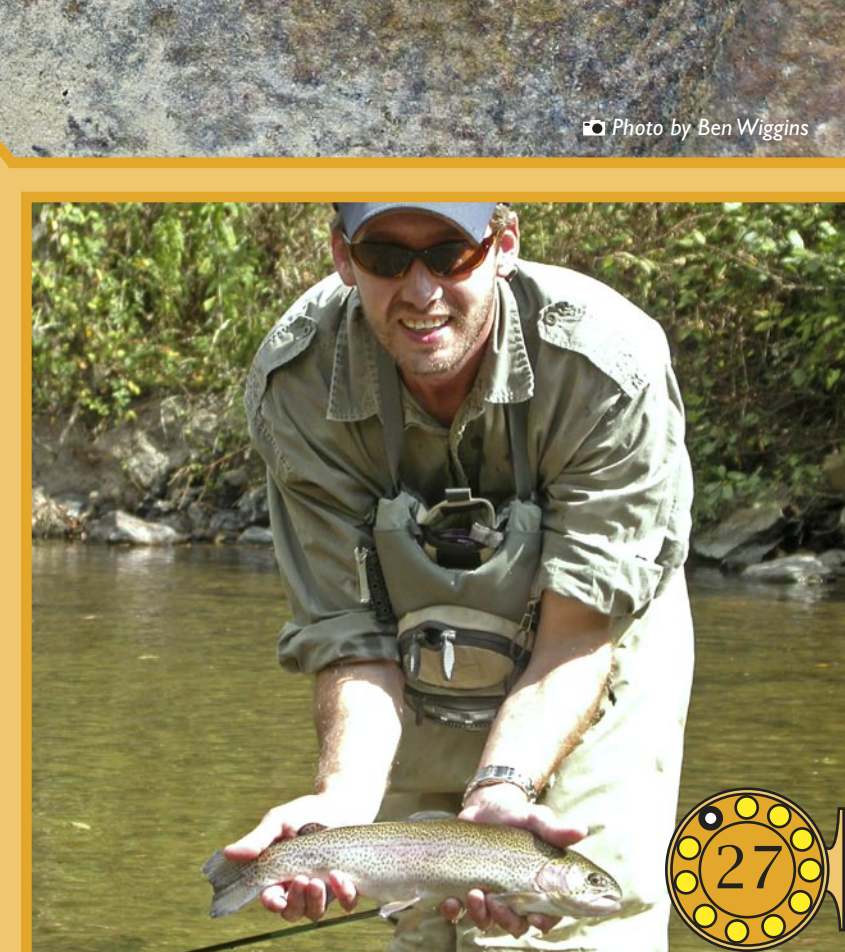


Photo © Leland Davis





Abrams creek has a different feel than other Smokies streams, with a streambed composed of bedrock ledges and long pools as opposed to the typical moss covered round boulder gardens found in most streams throughout the Park. The difference here is that Abrams has a limestone birth. This also makes for stellar aquatic insect hatches both in the caddis and mayfly department. Most everyone loves fishing dries, and this is a great setting to do it in. Anglers will enjoy Abrams Creek Falls as it forms a beautiful misty cascade into its deep green plunge pool, and the drive into the trailhead isn't a bad one either. Cades Cove Scenic Loop offers a parade paced drive filled with historic buildings, awe inspiring views, and abundant wildlife.

When and What: Abrams can fish all year, but spring through fall seems to be best. Bring a good assortment of dries that includes a variety of mayfly and caddis patterns as well as some stimulators for summer. Nymph selections should be slightly more technical than ones used for most Smokies fishing, and should include unweighted as well as flies with bead heads. Streamers for high water and terrestrials for summer and you're ready to wade on in.

Directions: From Townsend, follow Hwy. 73 east for a little over two miles and turn right at the intersection. Follow the signs to the Cades Cove Scenic Loop and continue around the loop until you reach the parking area for Abrams Creek Falls.

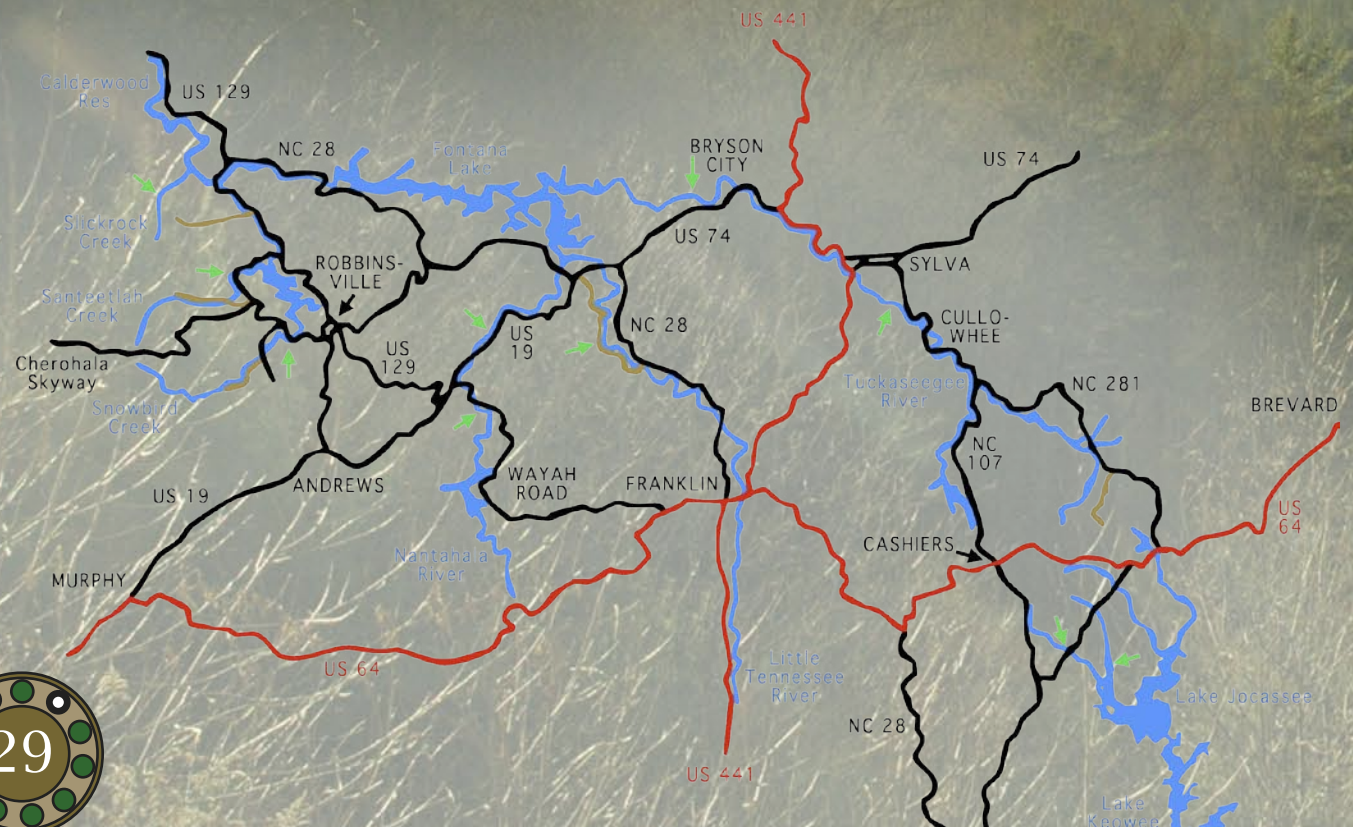
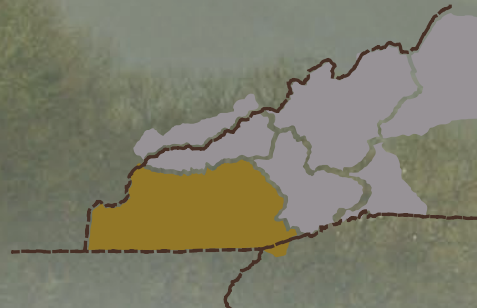


Photos © Leland Davis

◦ SOUTHWESTERN MOUNTAINS ◦



Photos © Leland Davis





NCWRC
DESIGNATED
PUBLIC MOUNTAIN
TROUT WATER
SINGLE HOOK ARTIFICIAL LURES ONLY

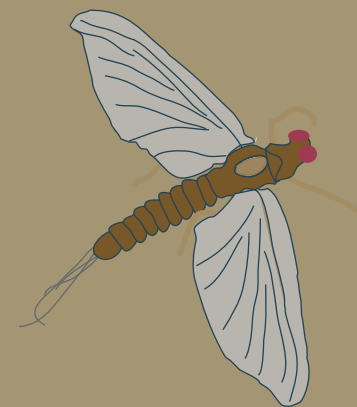
WILD

MINIMUM SIZE - 7 INCHES
DAILY LIMIT - 4 FISH
NO CLOSED SEASON

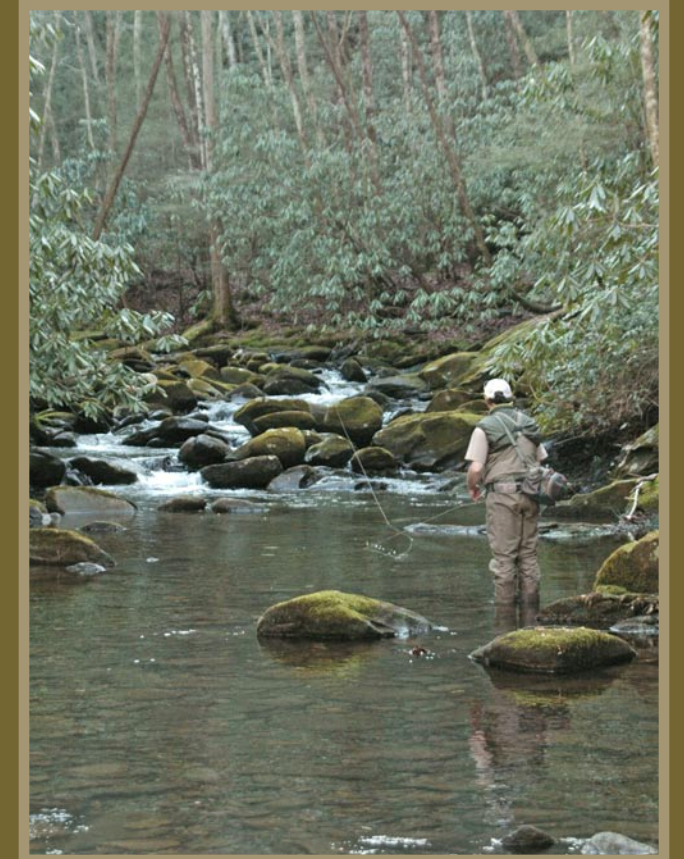
Perfect pocket water with a pristine wilderness backdrop—dare I say more? Slickrock Creek offers the hike-in angler excellent shots at small wild fish while allowing for picture perfect hiking to boot. From the trailhead at Big Fat Gap, the walk in can seem long and steep. It's definitely not for the faint of heart or for those who like to hike in their wading shoes. Once in the stream however, everything makes perfect sense as one roll casts and daps their way through the moss covered boulder gardens and gin clear pools. Backpackers will also find this a great stretch, as overnight loops are as simple as looking at your map. Fill up your water bottle, strap on your boots, and get ready for one of the best hike and fish streams in the state.

When and What: Like most small streams, Slickrock is best from April through October, with the fishing remaining quite good during summer's heat. Fly boxes on this journey should be loaded with Elk Hair Caddis, Stimulators, and Parachute Mayfly imitations for surface action, bead heads in a variety of patterns for below, and some terrestrials for summer.

Directions: From the 129 intersection in Robbinsville, follow US 129 north for 15.8 miles to a left turn across a metal bridge spanning the Cheoah river. From here continue on the dirt road, taking a right at the first intersection. Stay on this road following the signs to Big Fat Gap Trailhead.



Photos © Leland Davis



Beautiful southeastern freestone, pocket water, green moss, deep pools. Likes flashy nymphs, dry flies, and streamers stripped slow, seeks avid angler for tight loops, roll casts, delicate presentations, maybe more....ask for Snowbird. Snowbird is one fine trout stream in Graham County. The upper reaches are home to a healthy population of native Brookies, while the lower end is a Hatchery Supported stretch with a run of large Rainbows from Santeetlah Lake each fall. This may be one worth getting to know a little better, if you know what I mean?

When and What: Snowbird, like most everything in our area, is a spring through fall affair. Late fall can be especially good on the lower end, given there is a push of fish from the lake. Don't forget that the Hatchery Supported sections close from March 1st to the 1st Saturday in April. Fly selections should include basic dries and nymphs for the wild Brookie sections, and larger flashier stuff for the Hatchery Supported stretches. Bring some large streamers for the lake run fish, and this bird is ready to fly (fish, that is).

Directions: From the 143/129 intersection in Robbinsville, follow 129 north for about 1.5 miles and turn left at the signs for Joyce Kilmer and the Cherohala Skyway. Follow this road until it dead ends into NC 1127 and turn right. Stay on 1127 for about 2 miles and look for Snowbird Rd. on your left. Turn left onto Snowbird Rd. and drive up as far as possible. Fishing begins along 1127. Only fish in state designated waters.



photos © Leland Davis



23 • SANTEETLAH CREEK

If you like fishing in wilderness areas amongst old growth, this stream may be the ticket. Santeetlah is a beautiful trout stream draining the heart of the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest into Santeetlah Lake. The river itself offers up both Hatchery Supported and Wild Trout water for anglers to enjoy. The surrounding area features hiking, camping, horseback riding and views that can't be beat. Santeetlah—along with neighboring Snowbird Creek—can be combined into a family or friends get-away weekend that will keep everyone in the group happy. While you enjoy fishing miles of steep pocket water and gin clear pools, others in your group can explore forests of old growth Tulip Poplars and Hemlocks. In the late fall this stream also experiences a run of lake run fish. Timing and run size are impossible to predict, and only a lucky few have ever caught it.

It's not a run to make plans on fishing but is a pleasant surprise if you're there.

When and What: Being a mountain stream means that fishing is best spring through fall. Keep in mind that Hatchery Supported stretches are closed the month of March and should be avoided. Fly boxes should be loaded with WNC standards such as Parachutes, Caddis, Pheasant Tails, and Prince Nymphs. Throw in beetles and inchworms for summer and you are ready to wet a line.

Directions: From the 143/129 intersection in Robbinsville, follow 129 north for about 1.5 miles and turn left at the signs for Joyce Kilmer and the Cherohala Skyway. Follow this road until it dead ends into NC 1127 and turn right. Continue on 1127 until reaching the intersection at Santeetlah Gap. Turn right towards Joyce

Kilmer and make an immediate left onto a dirt forest service road. Stay on this road until it becomes streamside. Fishing begins as soon as you reach the creek.



• NANTAHALA VALLEY •



📷 Nantahala Angling Obstacles • © Leland Davis

25 • LOWER NANTAHALA

The lower Nantahala is one of most recreationally utilized streams in the area. Home to a huge whitewater kayaking and rafting community, summer days can seem chaotic—especially to the fly fisherman trying to make a drift. The beauty is that eventually everyone goes home, the flows drop and the trout begin to feed. It is during this twilight transition that anglers should make their appearance on the stream. Not only is the “Nanty” one of the few tailwater stretches in the region, it’s one of only two trout streams that can be fished after dark. For the angler with a Jedi-like sense of awareness this can be a very rewarding experience. If you have trouble tying knots and making hook sets by day, you’d best leave this alone. For daytime excursions winter brings days of no releases, and Blue Wing Olives and can make for an excellent back up when the DH section is too crowded. Just remember that this stretch is closed the month of March due to its Hatchery Supported status. If all this doesn’t inspire you, the state record Brown came from this river. I’ll bet that has you loading up your car right now.



When and What: Prime time for the Nantahala is typically summer evenings or late fall and winter days. Spring usually brings a 24 hour release that makes wading impossible. Fly selection should be a bit more technical for this stream and include various Caddis dries, Blue Wing Olives, small midges, Yellow Sallies, and believe it or not hexes. Nymphs should be bead heads in a variety of styles and sizes. Streamers should be big and mean.

Directions: From Bryson City, follow Hwy. 19/74 toward Andrews/Murphy into the Nantahala Gorge. Fishing begins just upstream of the Nantahala Outdoor Center and is accessed via pullouts all the way to the Swain and Macon County line.



📷 photos © J.E.B. Hall



26 • UPPER NANTAHALA

The upper Nantahala is the original Delayed Harvest stream. The river features classic big pocket water with large bedrock plunge pools and a waterfall gorge at its upper end. A wide riverbed offers anglers a chance to make long casts to rising fish, while deep seams scream out to the chuck-and-duck nymph fisherman. The addition of willing stocked fish to this excellent river layout has created a memorable experience for many southeastern anglers since its Delayed Harvest designation. Weekends during prime months can be a bit crowded, so sneak a week-day if you can. This truly is one of the best streams to learn to fly fish on in the Southeast. If you don't believe me, hop in your car and see for yourself.

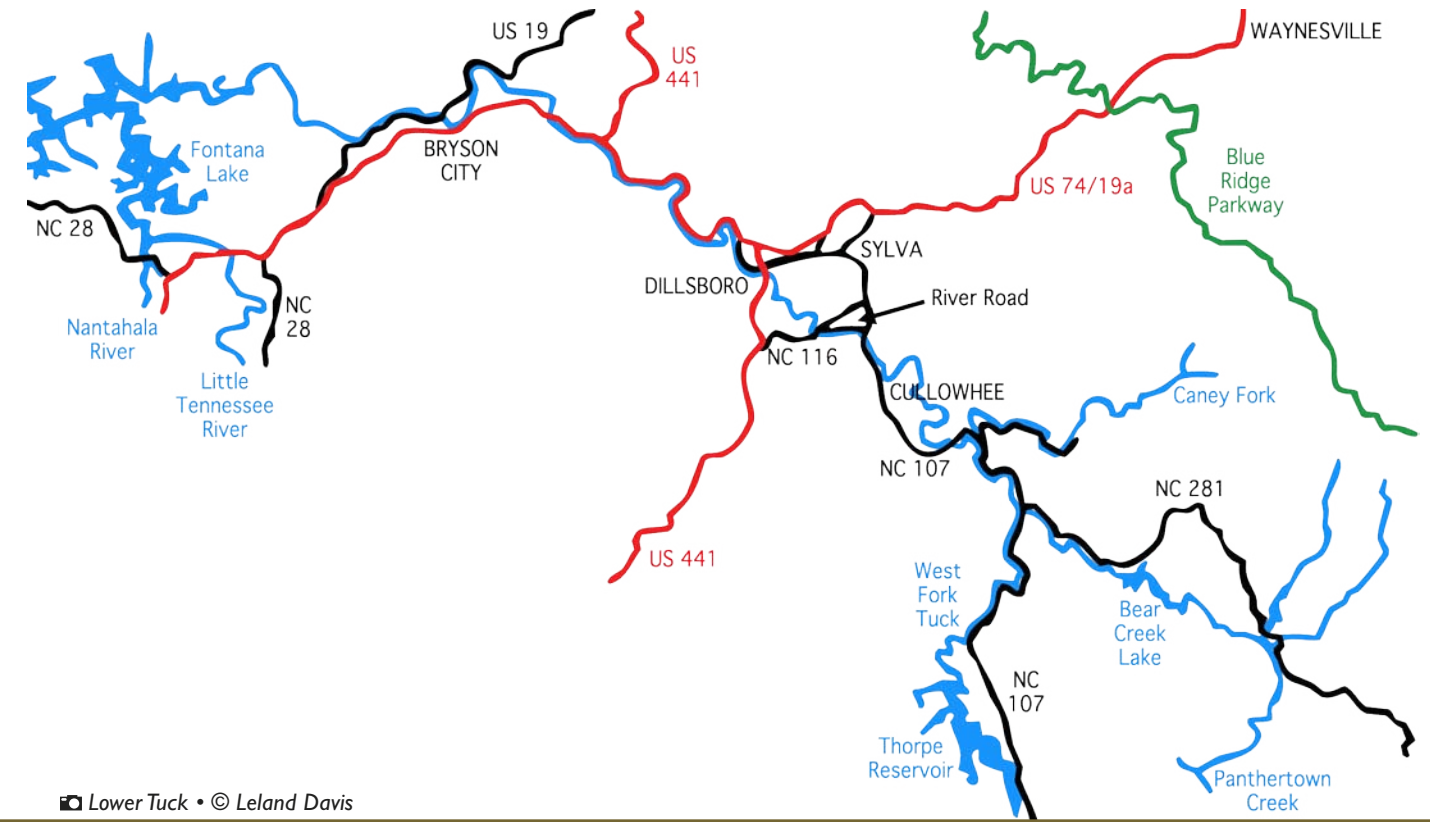
When and What: Like all Delayed Harvest streams, prime time is October through May. Unlike most DH streams, summer on the "Nanty" can yield small wild Rainbows, and should not be regarded as an unfishable time of year. For fly selection bring your standard Delayed Harvest quiver of flashy bead heads, San Juans, eggs, and bushy attractor dries. A few ugly streamers for higher water and you're ready to wader up.

Directions: Take Hwy. 19 West for about 8 miles from the NOC and turn left onto Wayah Rd. Follow this road until you reach pullouts just upstream of the powerhouse. The stretch runs along this road until the river's confluence with White Oak Creek, which is about 4 miles from the turn.





Photo © Leland Davis



Lower Tuck • © Leland Davis

If you are looking for some great fishing for Smallmouth, look no further than the "Little T." Long bedrock ledges and deep pools house numerous bass and Sunfish as well as the rare musky. On average, the bass are smaller in size than most other rivers in the South, but fun no matter what. Wade fishing is quite easy in the low water periods of summer and fall, and many access points

are located along Needmore Road. Be sure to obey all no trespassing signs and keep the peace with locals. Float anglers with one-man watercraft will also find plenty of access on the Little Tennessee, and if floated from Franklin it can make for a long day trip. Tight Lines!



When and What:

Summer and fall are best for the "Little T." Winter is much too cold, and spring often means high, unfishable water. Bring your standard Smallmouth kit for this one and make sure that chartreuse is the leading color in your fly selection.

Directions: From the 19/74/28 intersection near Needmore, follow 74 East and make an almost immediate right on Needmore Road. Once the road comes back to river level access is available via numerous gravel pullouts along the river. Float access is via pullouts at water level and is marginal at best.





Photos Courtesy of Davidson River Outfitters

The lower reaches of the Tuckasegee offer anglers a great shot at true mixed-bag fishing. Not only is a large part of this stretch Hatchery Supported, it is also home to aggressive Smallmouth and a few resident Walleye. Anglers looking to float a different piece of water will find access on the upper end of this stretch a breeze with an excellent public put in and well maintained take outs at rafting outfitters along the way. River features are a combination of bedrock ledges and long deep pools with downed trees. Occasionally musky are spotted in this stretch, and Carp are present throughout the summer. The lower stretches of the Tuck through Whittier and Bryson City hold fish but are difficult to access and harder to float. Next time you find yourself around Sylva or fishing the DH section and looking for a change of pace, try the Lower. Who knows what you'll catch.

When and What: Prime time on the Tuck is Spring through Fall. Remember that most of this section is closed when

Hatchery Supported waters are closed in March. Bring lots of big streamers including buggers, zonkers, clousers, and deceivers. For summer bring along some top water stuff for the bass, and you're ready to drift.

Directions: From Dillsboro, follow 441 North to Hwy 74 west. Once on 74 the river will parallel the highway until it passes under a bridge at Whittier. Additional access is available throughout downtown Bryson City. For float fishing, take 441 south out of Dillsboro and make an immediate left after crossing the river. Take your next left under the bridge and park in the gravel lot. Take outs are available at rafting companies along 74 west.



Lower Tuck Railroad Bridge • by Mefford Williams



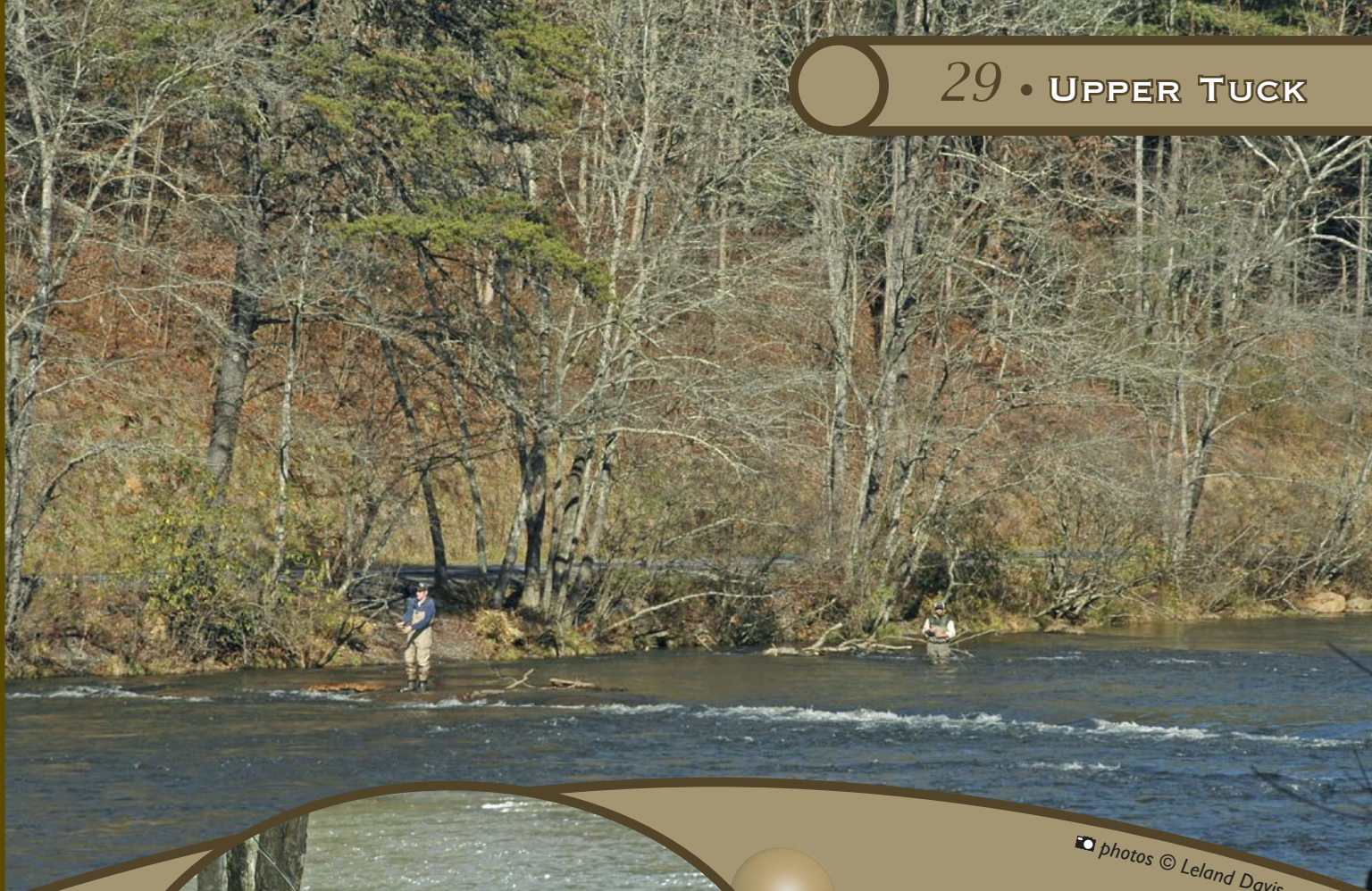
photo © J.E.B. Hall



The Tuck. If you don't know the name, you should. The upper section of the Tuckasegee River is one of the best Delayed Harvest stretches in NC. The river is wide and very open allowing for long casts, while the river bottom itself is very wade-fishing friendly; It's almost like it was custom tailored for the beginning fly angler. Better yet, you can also float the first three miles with relative ease. While this all sounds wonderful, the Tuck does have one drawback. Daily power generation releases from dams upstream can cause the water level to rise and fall without warning, creating a dangerous situation for wade fishermen or leaving rowers high and dry. Duke Power does post a three day release forecast online, but often is forced to vary from that particular schedule due to power demand. No units means great wade fishing, one unit means limited wading and excellent floating, and two units means no wading and marginal floating. This being said, the Tuck still is a wonderful place. Spring brings excellent Caddis hatches as well as heavily stocked pools with literally hundreds of fish lined up and waiting for a meal. Fall can't be beat for sheer aesthetics, and winter means less people and more water. Weekends can be a bit crowded, but somehow everyone almost always finds a little piece of water to call their own. Float anglers should be advised that the private takeout on river left which so many folks take for granted may not always be around, and it would be wise to pressure the state to put in a public access. Wader up, tie on a fly and enjoy.

When and What: The Tuck fishes best during Delayed Harvest season from October 1st to the first Saturday in June. Summer equals fished out, warm water. Fly selections are standard Delayed Harvest fare, and should include San Juans, princes, eggs, and wooly buggers. Bring Caddis dries for spring and a few for fall as well. F.Y.I., this is also a great section of water to try out that top secret fly you invented after three single malts, a cigar, and an epiphany about dubbing.

Directions: From Sylva, head south on 107 towards Cullowhee. Turn right on River Road just before crossing the bridge over the Tuck. Once on river road, access is available via pullouts along the river.



photos © Leland Davis



PANTHERTOWN CREEK



PantherTown Valley is an outstanding place to fish—not only because of the quality of the Brook Trout fishing in the streams, but because of the scenery as well. Huge rock faces watch over the valley like stone gods, while large cascading waterfalls help the river make its way downhill. It is a truly magical place. For the angler, eager Southern Appalachian Brookies wait in deep plunge pools ready to pounce on almost whatever comes

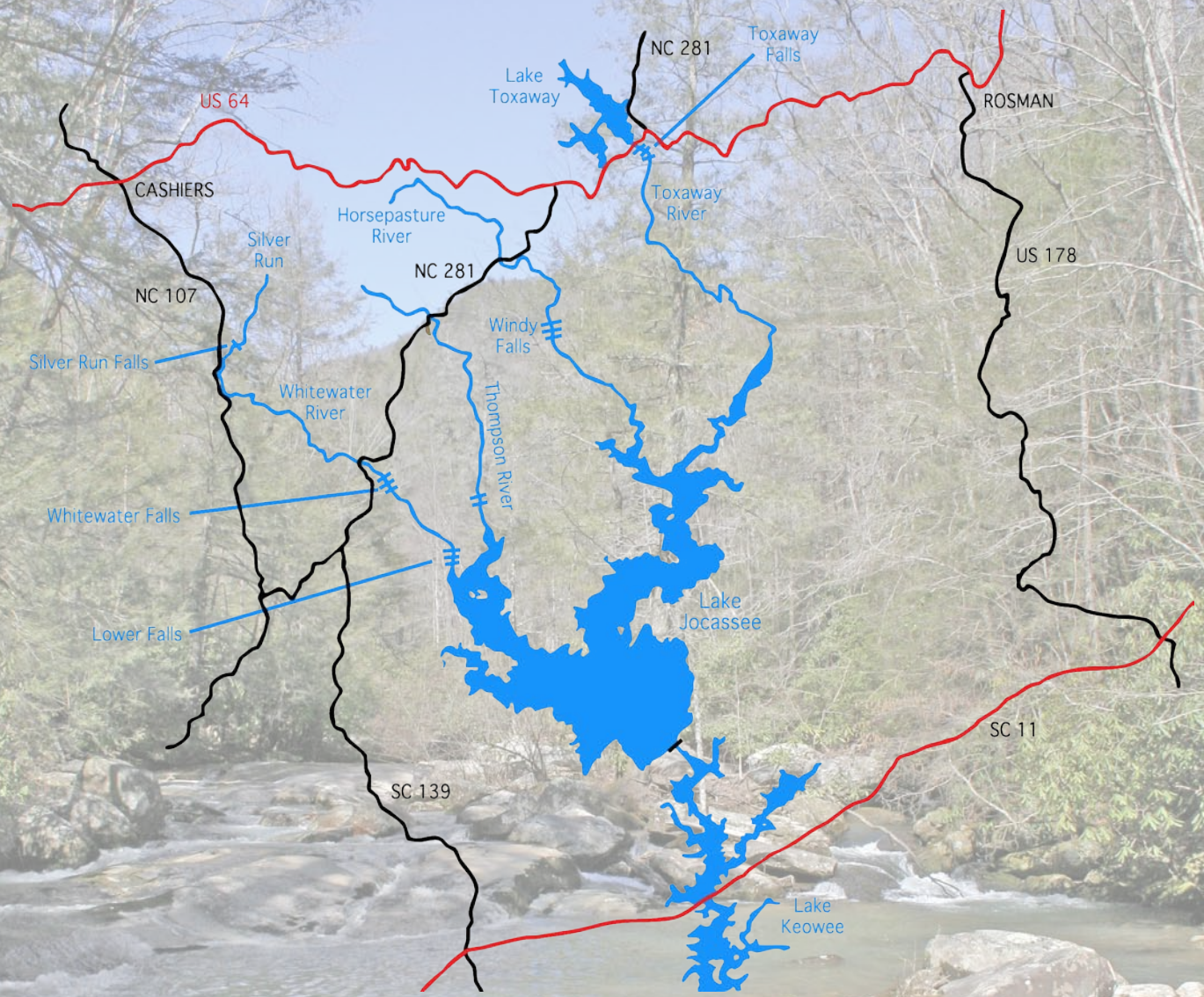
their way. Although the stream requires a short hike in, it is well worth the effort and should be at the top of any Brook Trout junkie's hit list.

When and What: PantherTown is best from mid spring to mid fall, although people do occasionally take winter trips into the valley for whatever reason, and still catch a few fish. Fly selection should be similar to any other small Brook trout

stream, and should be kept simple with a few of your favorite dries and nymphs, and confidence in your ability to make the drift.

Directions: From the hwy. 64/281 intersection near Lake Toxaway, follow 281 north for 0.9 miles. Turn left onto Toxaway Church road. From here follow the road around the north side of the lake and up the ridge. Follow signs to PantherTown access area.

JOCASSEE LAKE AREA



Thompson River • by Ben Wiggins



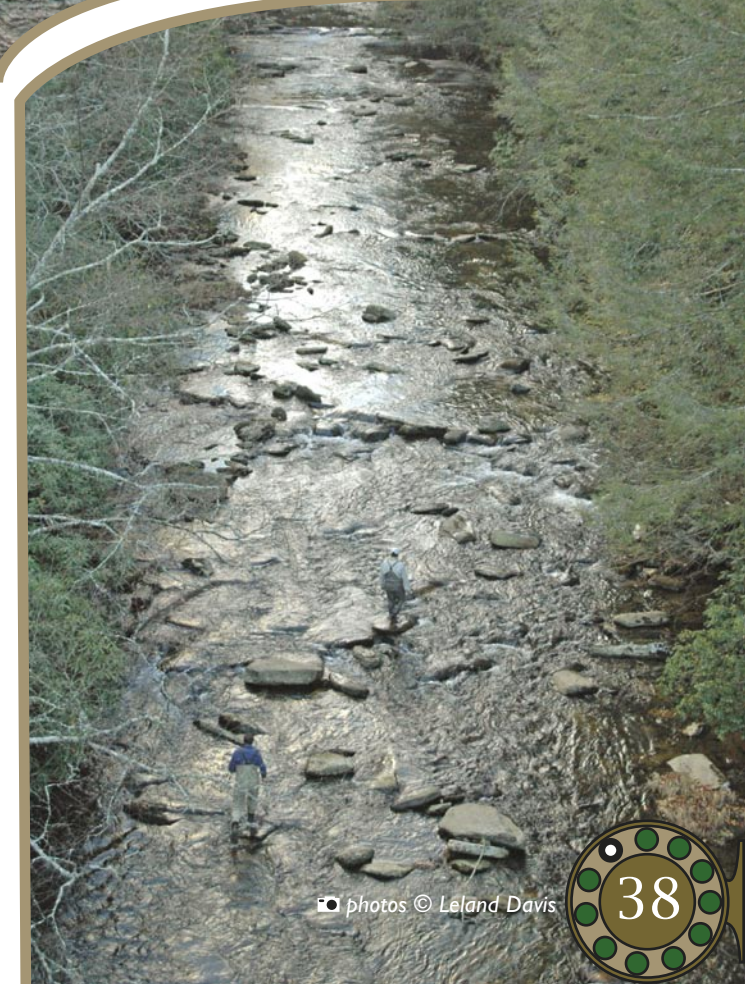
Whitewater Falls • by Ben Wiggins



The Whitewater River is a fantastic Jocassee drainage stream, offering beautiful scenery as well as good fishing for wild trout. Most famous for Whitewater Falls, the Whitewater gorge also contains other large waterfalls and slides. Between these glimmering cascades are long stretches of large pocket water and deep plunge pools that are home to sly Browns and Rainbows waiting for their next meal to wash by. The Whitewater tends to be very warm in summer, which can cause fish to be somewhat lethargic. On the very hottest days, anglers should avoid fishing this and other warm southern streams for fear of unnecessarily killing fish due to stress. Keeping this in mind, the Whitewater makes for an excellent spring and fall destination with eager fish, cooler water temps, and amazing backdrops of colorful foliage and stunning cascades.

When and What: Spring and Fall are best for the Whitewater. Winter can have its moments as well. Avoid summer fishing for the health and well-being of the fish. Fly boxes should contain Stimulators, Parachutes, and Caddis for dry selections. Include a variety of bead heads as well as some large Stonefly nymphs for sub surface work, and you can't forget the ever present terrestrials.

Directions: From Lake Toxaway/Sapphire, follow Hwy. 281 south for 7.8 miles to a large bridge crossing the Whitewater River. Park on the river right side of the bridge and follow a small footpath down to the river.



photos © Leland Davis



NCWRC
DESIGNATED
PUBLIC MOUNTAIN
TROUT WATER
SINGLE HOOKS ONLY

**WILD
NATURAL BAIT**

NATURAL BAIT - EXCEPT LIVE FISH
MINIMUM SIZE - 7 INCHES
DAILY LIMIT - 4 FISH
NO CLOSED SEASON

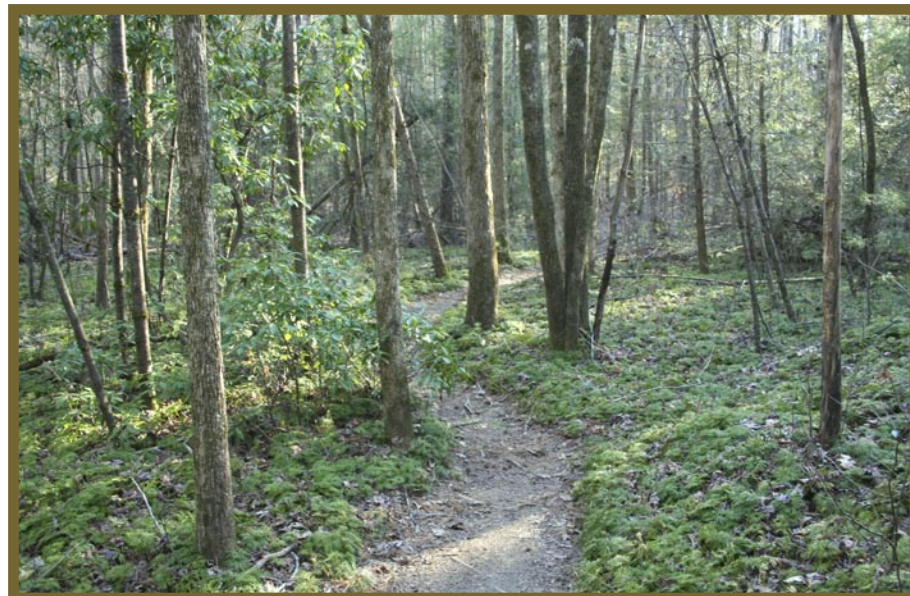
The Thompson is a remote stream in the Jocassee drainage that is home to picturesque waterfalls as well as beautiful wild trout. Most of the river requires dedicated hiking, and fishing here is not for the faint of heart. Located on the border of NC and SC, part of the river falls under South Carolina regulations, and anglers venturing further downstream should have proper licensing. The Thompson can make for a wonderful day trip and is definitely one to bring the camera on.

When and What: The Thompson can fish all year, but Spring and Fall are best. Make sure to bring lots of large heavy nymphs for dredging deep plunge pools and some streamers as well. As always, bring a few dries for the occasional hatch and a few terrestrials for summer.

Directions: From 64 near Lake Toxaway, follow 64 West towards Cashiers and turn right onto Hwy. 281. Follow Hwy. 281

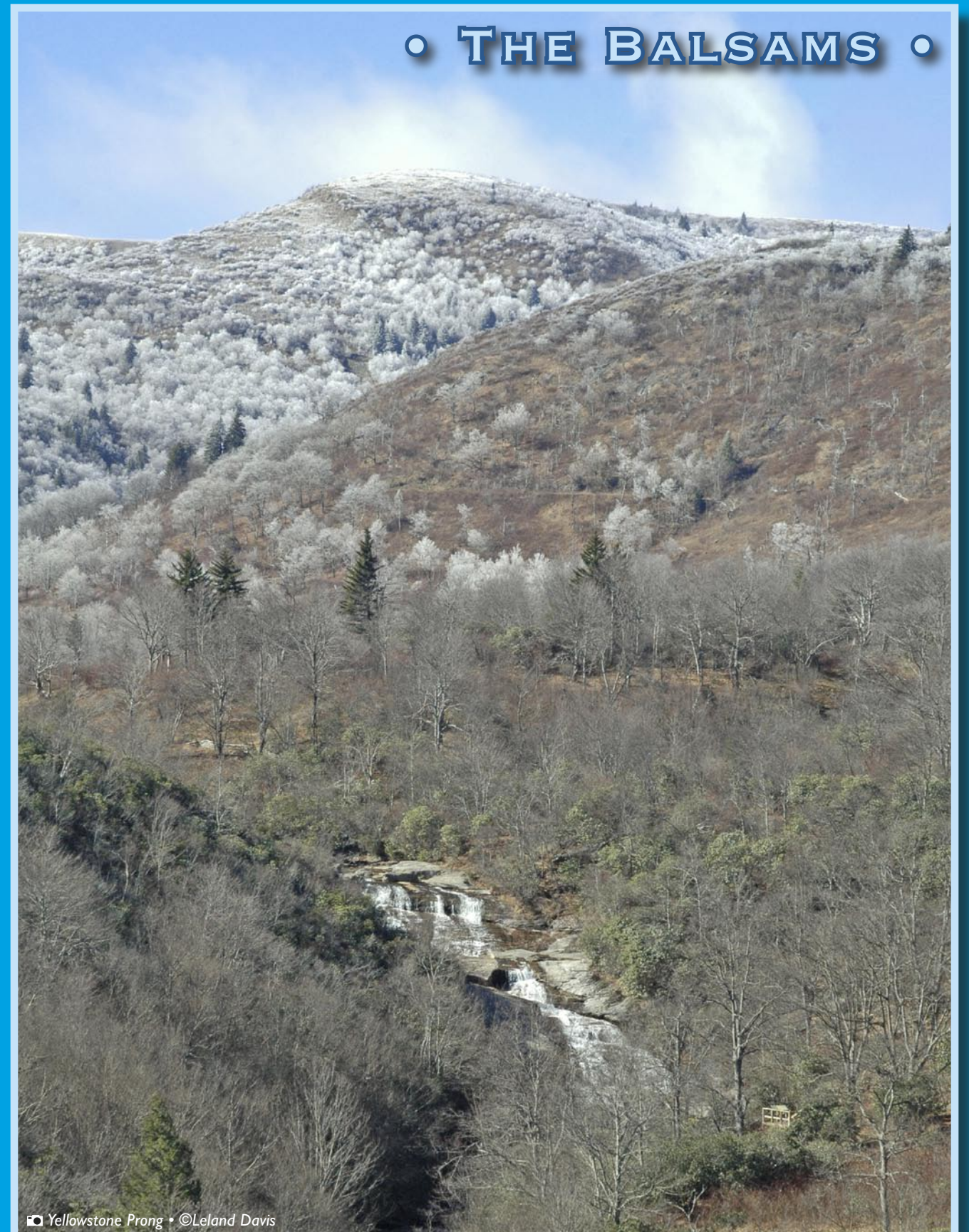
for 3.8 miles and turn left onto a small gravel access road. This road will eventually meet the Thompson River and may require some hiking. Access is also avail-

able where 281 crosses the river, and from across the state line in South Carolina via a 3.6 mile hike in on the Foothills Trail starting in the Bad Creek Project.

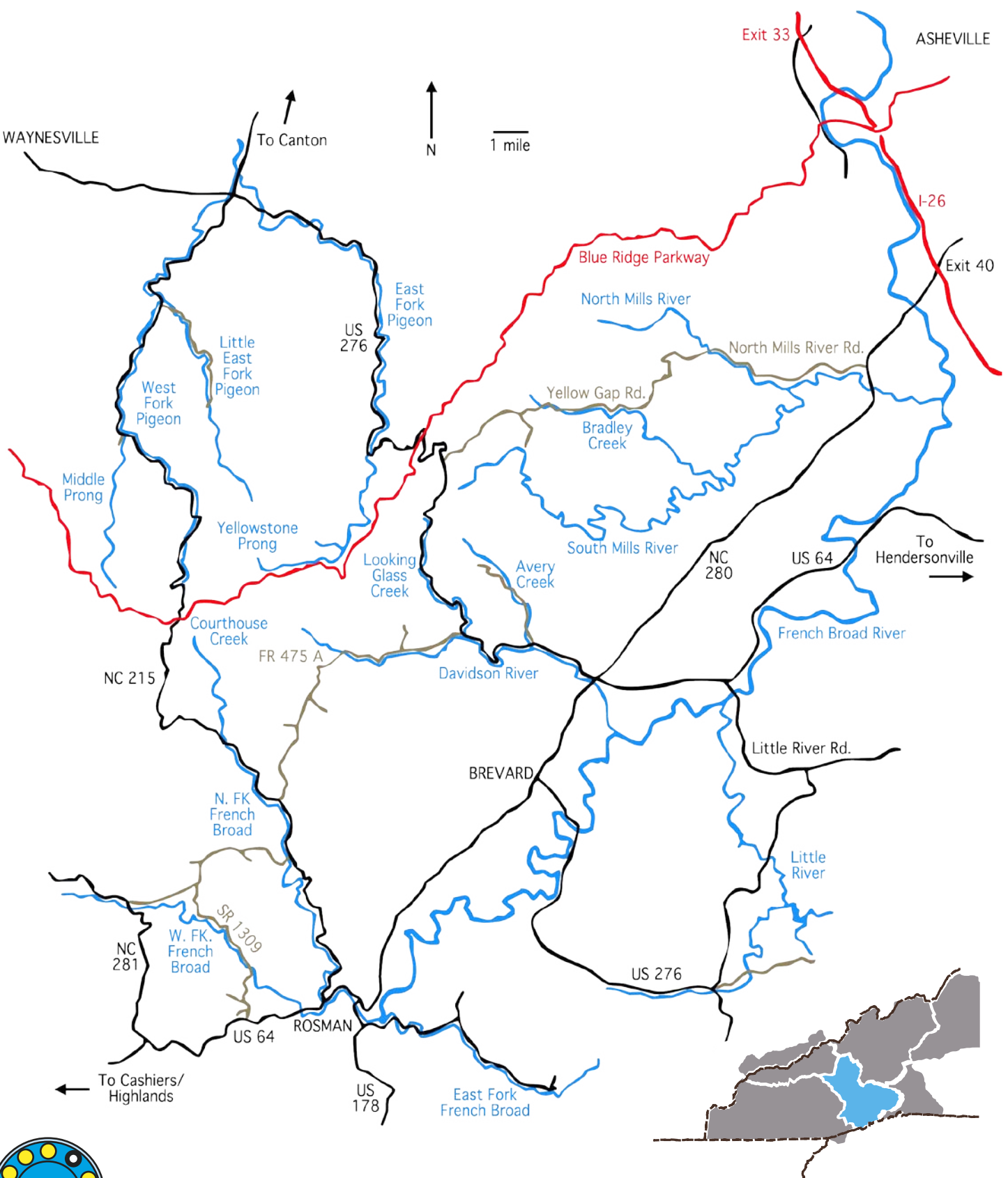


photos by Ben Wiggins

• THE BALSAMS •



Yellowstone Prong • ©Leland Davis



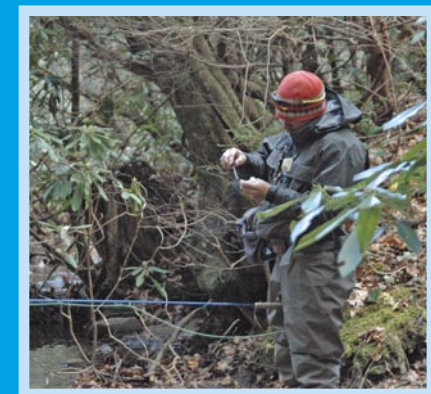
The South Mills River is a great hike-in stream that is relatively close to town. With two access points and a well maintained trail network, it is fairly easy for the angler who enjoys hiking to cover multiple stretches of stream in a day. The South Mills also offers the option of overnight camping throughout the trail network, and can make for a weekend get-away that is not so away. The lower end of the river is accessed via the Turkey Pen Trailhead and features slower longer pools and gentle riffles. The upper end of the river is accessed from Yellow Gap Road and features bigger rocks and more of a pocket water, plunge pool feel. The areas along this section of stream are also used by many other outdoor enthusiasts, so be on the look out for equestrian riders, mountain bikes, and hunters. If you enjoy any of these other activities this could also be a good dual sport location for you. A mountain bike makes a great way to get to where you want to be on the stream faster. The trail doesn't always follow the stream, so a map of the Pisgah Ranger District can come in handy as well. Enjoy, this is one of the author's favorites.

When and What:

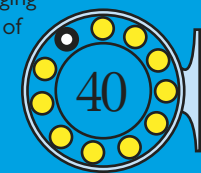
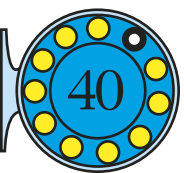
The South Mills—like so many other wild trout streams—usually fishes best from late March through early November. The winter time tends to be very cold and very slow. During the spring months, expect to see mayfly and caddis hatches mid to late day. Late spring and early summer yield yellow sallies and golden stones in the evening hours, and terrestrials work through September. The fall brings us back around to caddis again, and late season you can expect to

find some blue wing olives. Your fly box should include basics such as Parachute Adams, Elk Hair Caddis, Cahills, Hare's Ears, and Pheasant Tails. For summer have a variety of hoppers, beetles and the ever deadly inchworm pattern. With all this you should be set for a great trip into one of the best streams in Pisgah.

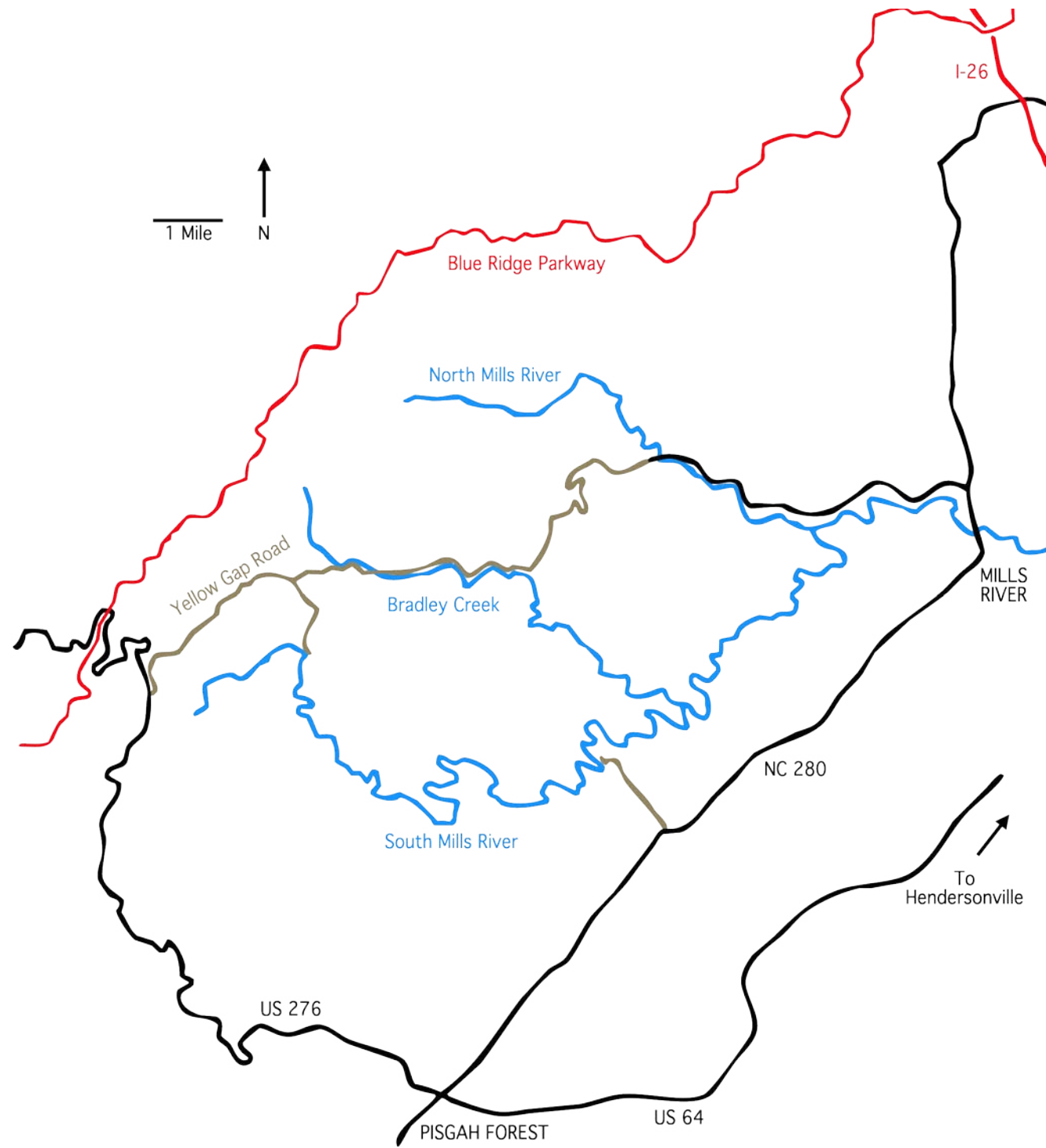
Directions: For the lower river from the 280/276/64 Intersection in Pisgah Forest, follow 280 north 5.1 miles and turn left onto Turkey Pen Gap Road. Follow Turkey Pen Gap for 1.3 miles to the trailhead parking area. For the upper river access, go north on US 276 for 11.8 miles from the 280/276/64 intersection in Pisgah Forest to Yellow Gap Road. Turn right and follow the Yellow Gap Forest Service Road for 3.3 miles to South Mills River Forest Service Road and turn right. From here you can either hike or drive down a bit further toward the old gauging station depending on the status of the gate at the top of the road.



photos © Leland Davis



• MILLS RIVER DRAINAGE •



Bradley Creek is an almost hidden gem. This small pocket water stream is located less than 25 minutes from Asheville and is home to lots of eager little Rainbows and a few Browns. The best thing about Bradley is that it makes an excellent alternative to the North or South Mills. Located between the two streams along Yellow Gap Road, this little creek is perfect on days when there are just too many cars on either end. A short section of stream is roadside, and the rest accessible via a trail that runs the length of the creek down to the South Mills River. The upper reaches are more open and easier to fish, while the bottom stretch is tight and technical. Wading is fairly easy due to the small size of the stream, but some of the Rhododendron can be frustrating when carrying a fly rod. At the upper end of the stream it splits in two. The right

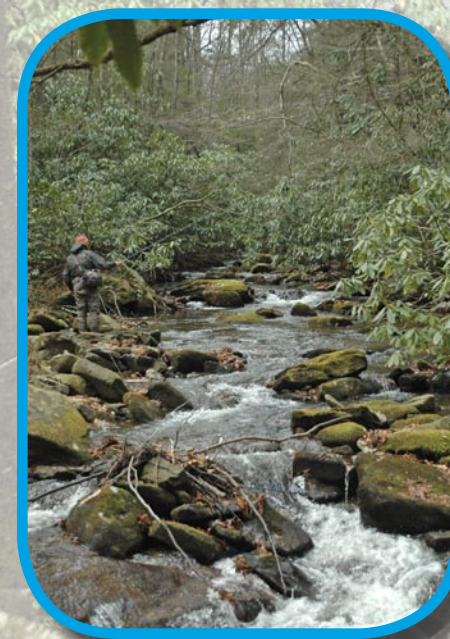
fork looking upstream is a great little Brook Trout stream. You can actually make this a destination. Just take Yellow Gap road past Bradley Creek and you will see a parking area and a sign on your right for Slate Rock Creek. Park at the sign and start fishing. The campsites at the Bradley Creek Trailhead area are both a blessing and a curse. They can make for a great base camp for anglers looking to have a streamside point to access multiple rivers. On the other hand, they also make a great place for ignorant tourists to leave trash in the stream, move rocks in the stream bed and bait fish for dinner. Don't let this last bit discourage you. Bradley creek is beautiful and the Forest Service has taken extra measures in the last few years to clean the aforementioned area up. Put on your waders and enjoy.

When and What: Bradley Creek is another typical WNC Wild Trout Stream. Spring through fall is prime time with winter being marginal at best. Fly selection should be simple with a few dries such as Parachute Adams and Elk Hair Caddis on top, and Pheasant Tails and Prince Nymphs down below.

Directions: From the I-26/280 intersection at the Asheville airport, follow 280 south for 3.6 miles to North Mills River road. Turn right and follow North Mills River Road for 4.9 miles to North Mills River Recreation area. From here, continue straight onto Yellow Gap road.

Follow 4.4 miles to Bradley Creek Parking. Parking is gravel pull-the-trailhead. The stream will be visible on your left.

Yellow Gap for to Bradley Trailhead. available via offs near sign.



photos © Leland Davis



©Leland Davis

NCWRC
DESIGNATED
PUBLIC MOUNTAIN
TROUT WATER

**DELAYED
HARVEST**

OCTOBER 1 TO FOLLOWING FIRST SATURDAY IN JUNE
ONLY SINGLE HOOK ARTIFICIAL LURES
NO FISH MAY BE POSSESSED
ALL OTHER TIMES:
HATCHERY SUPPORTED
REGULATIONS
APPLY

The North Mills could quite possibly take the title from the Davidson as the most popular trout stream in WNC. With a very close proximity to Asheville—15 minutes—and a large population of fish in season, it's easy to see why. The North Mills can be divided into two sections. The Lower, which meanders through a picnic area and campground, and the Upper. The lower section is the most crowded on any given day due to its easy access—practically roadside at any given point. This changes after one drives through the campground and across a bridge. The river makes a sharp turn to the right and disappears into the woods. This marks the end of the Lower and the start of the Upper. The Upper is trailside instead of roadside, and like any other stream with a trail, the further you hike the fewer anglers you see. The Upper is quite a bit longer than the Lower, and if hiking the entire length of stream doesn't interest you a second access point is available starting at the Trace Ridge Trailhead. From here you can hike down the Trace Ridge trail or down the first fire road to your right if you are facing the Forest



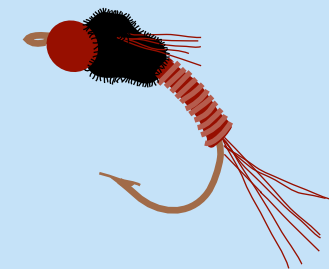
©J.E.B. Hall



©J.E.B. Hall

Service trail info sign. When you reach the reservoir, you will know that you have reached the top of the DH section. The two streams that feed this reservoir can make for a great alternative to the North Mills and feature small wild Rainbows and Brookies in tight brushy streams. Finally, I will issue a word of warning concerning parking and fishing through the North Mills River Campground. If you park in the fee area make sure you pay. The campground host can be a bit of a stickler for the rules and will issue a warning or ticket if you fail to pay.

When and What: Like any other Delayed Harvest stream, the best time is the catch and release period from October 1st to the 1st Saturday in June. Fly selection is similar to other DH streams as well. Flashy nymphs, Woolly Buggers, Egg Patterns, and San Juan Worms will work most days. Dries work well too, and you

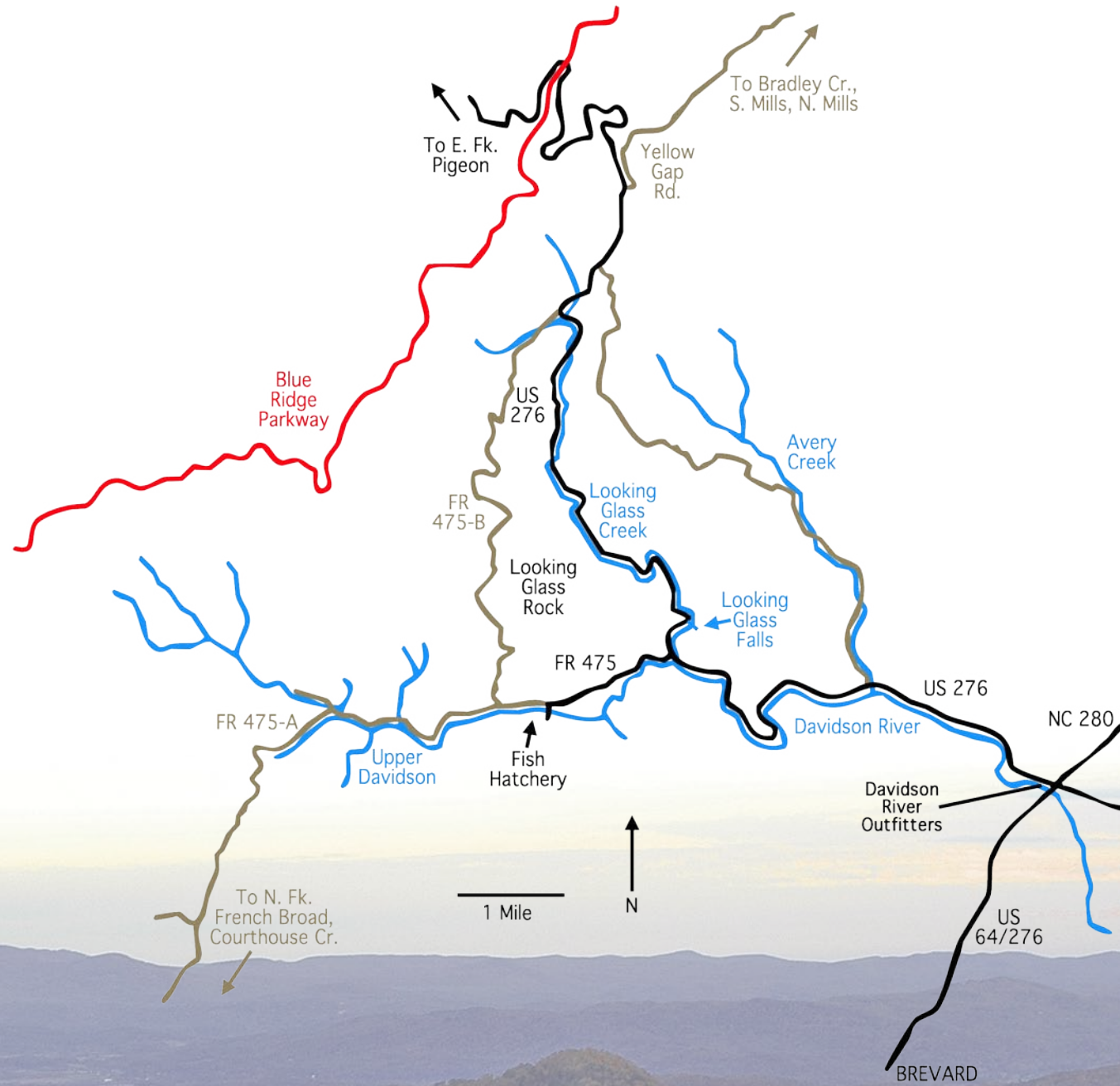


Directions: From the 280/1-26 intersection near the Asheville Airport, follow 280 south 3.6 miles to North Mills River Road. Turn right and continue for 4.9 miles until you reach the national forest boundary and campground.



can match the hatch—if there is one—or fish attractor patterns like Royal Wulffs or Stimulators.

• DAVIDSON RIVER DRAINAGE •

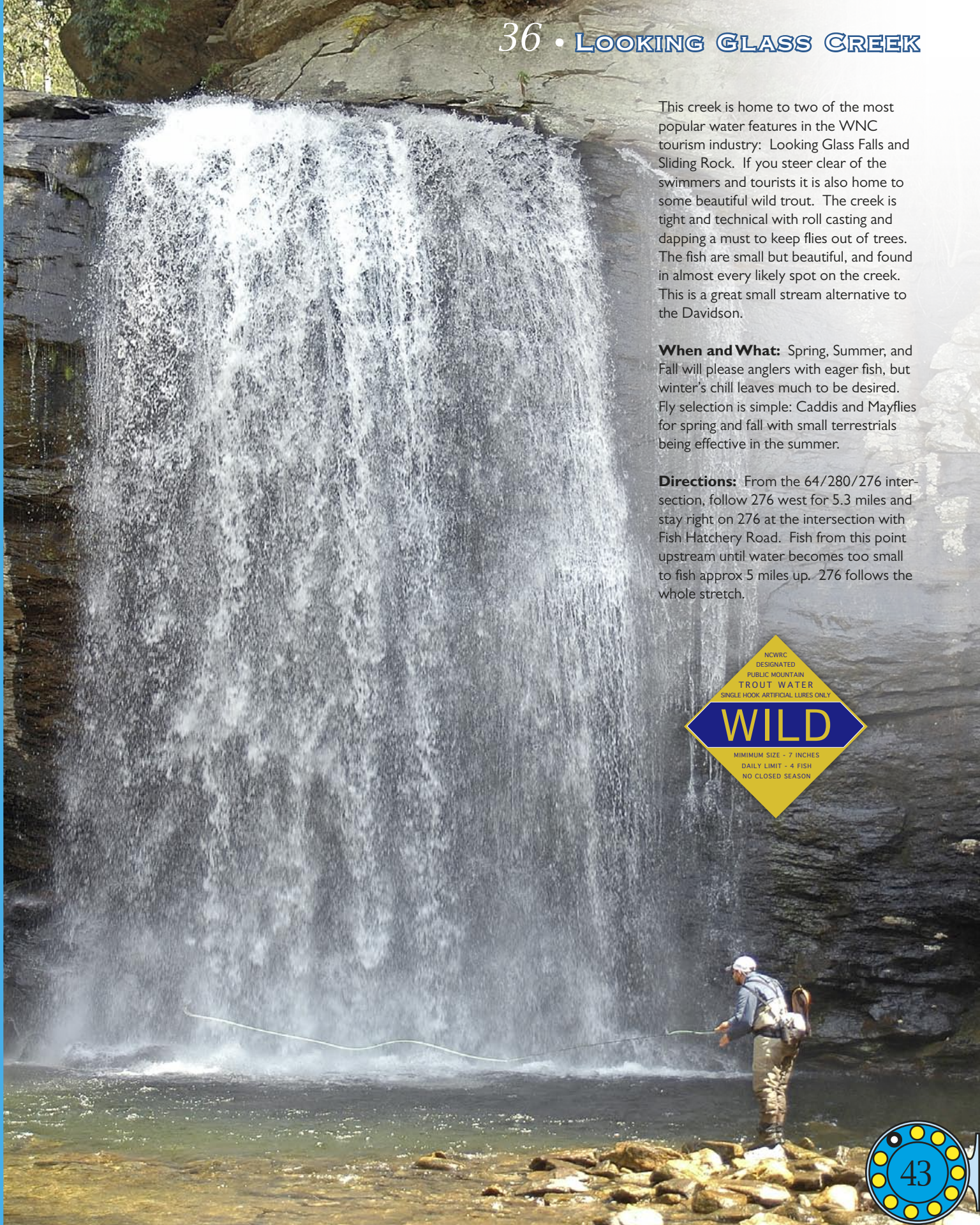


36 • LOOKING GLASS CREEK

This creek is home to two of the most popular water features in the WNC tourism industry: Looking Glass Falls and Sliding Rock. If you steer clear of the swimmers and tourists it is also home to some beautiful wild trout. The creek is tight and technical with roll casting and dapping a must to keep flies out of trees. The fish are small but beautiful, and found in almost every likely spot on the creek. This is a great small stream alternative to the Davidson.

When and What: Spring, Summer, and Fall will please anglers with eager fish, but winter's chill leaves much to be desired. Fly selection is simple: Caddis and Mayflies for spring and fall with small terrestrials being effective in the summer.

Directions: From the 64/280/276 intersection, follow 276 west for 5.3 miles and stay right on 276 at the intersection with Fish Hatchery Road. Fish from this point upstream until water becomes too small to fish approx 5 miles up. 276 follows the whole stretch.



photos © Leland Davis



NCWRC
DESIGNATED
PUBLIC MOUNTAIN
TROUT WATER
SINGLE HOOK ARTIFICIAL FLIES ONLY
**CATCH AND
RELEASE**
NO FISH MAY BE HARVESTED OR POSSESSED
NO CLOSED SEASON



37 • UPPER DAVIDSON RIVER

The Upper Davidson has a much different character than what lies further downstream. Big boulders and ledges create typical wild trout water and similar fishing conditions. The gorge section sees more anglers than the smaller section upstream and has much larger plunge pools—and in turn larger fish. The fish in this section of river are smaller and less particular than their brethren downstream, and make for a great alternative to the tourist infested Lower Davidson on a hot summer day.

When and What: The Upper Davidson fishes just like the other small wild streams in the area. Spring, Summer, and Fall are prime times, with Winter being slow and cold. Hatches are similar to the lower but not as critical to match. Parachute Adams or Elk Hair Caddis will typically suffice for dries, and the small bead head of your choice for a dropper. Nice and simple goes a long way here.

Directions: From the 276/280/64 junction, follow 276 west for 5.3 miles. Take a left onto Fish Hatchery Road. At 7.4 miles you can access the stream via the



Davidson River Trail. The road continues further upstream until the stretch becomes unfishable.

Avery Creek serves up micro creek fishing only five minutes from town! Rhododendron and tight brush provide an extra challenge while fishing this stream. The fish are small on average but every so often one is surprised with a fish in the 14" to 15" range. Another Davidson River alternate, this stream is worth a fish when crowds and picky fish have frustrated you to no end.



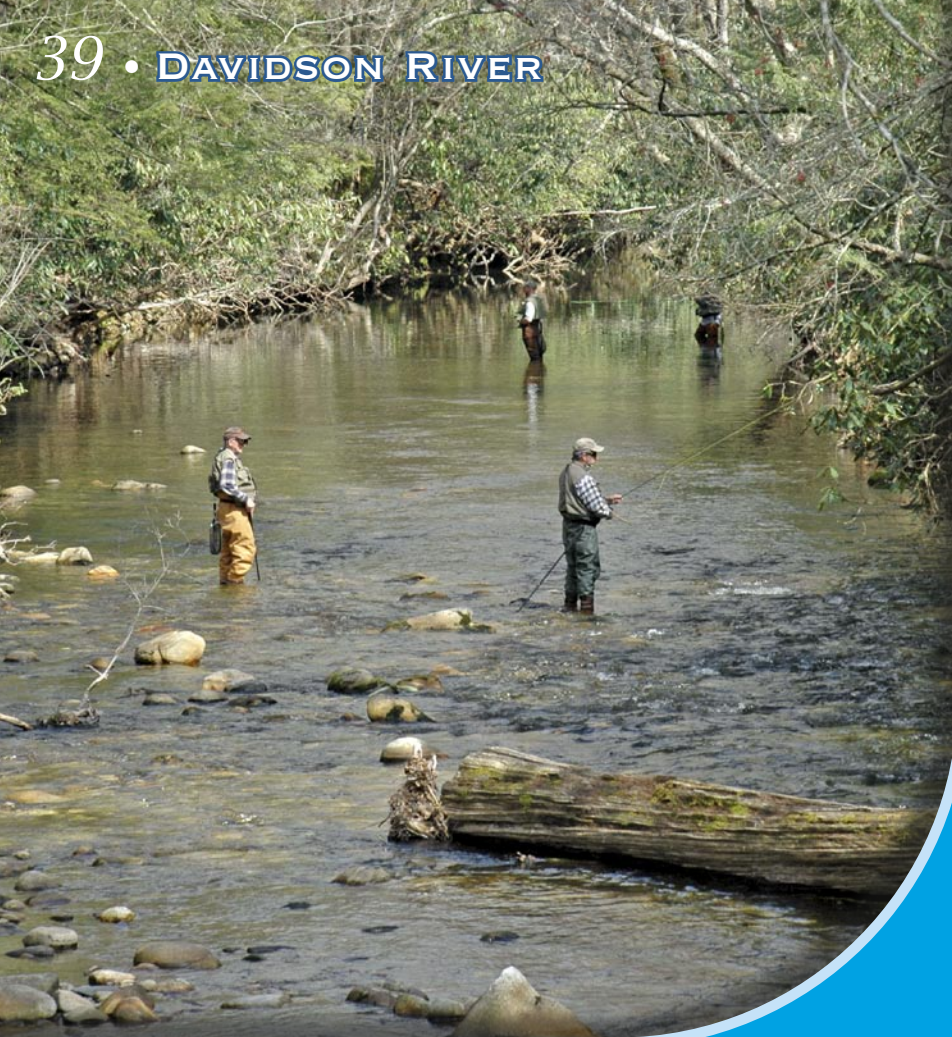
When and What: Spring, Summer, and Fall. Similar hatches as the Davidson with not quite so picky fish. This is a great stream to break out the short rod on.

Directions: From the 276/280/64 junction, follow 276 west 2.2 miles and turn right onto Avery Creek Rd. at the Pisgah Riding Stable sign. Fishing starts here and continues upstream until the stretch becomes too small to fish (approx 3 miles).





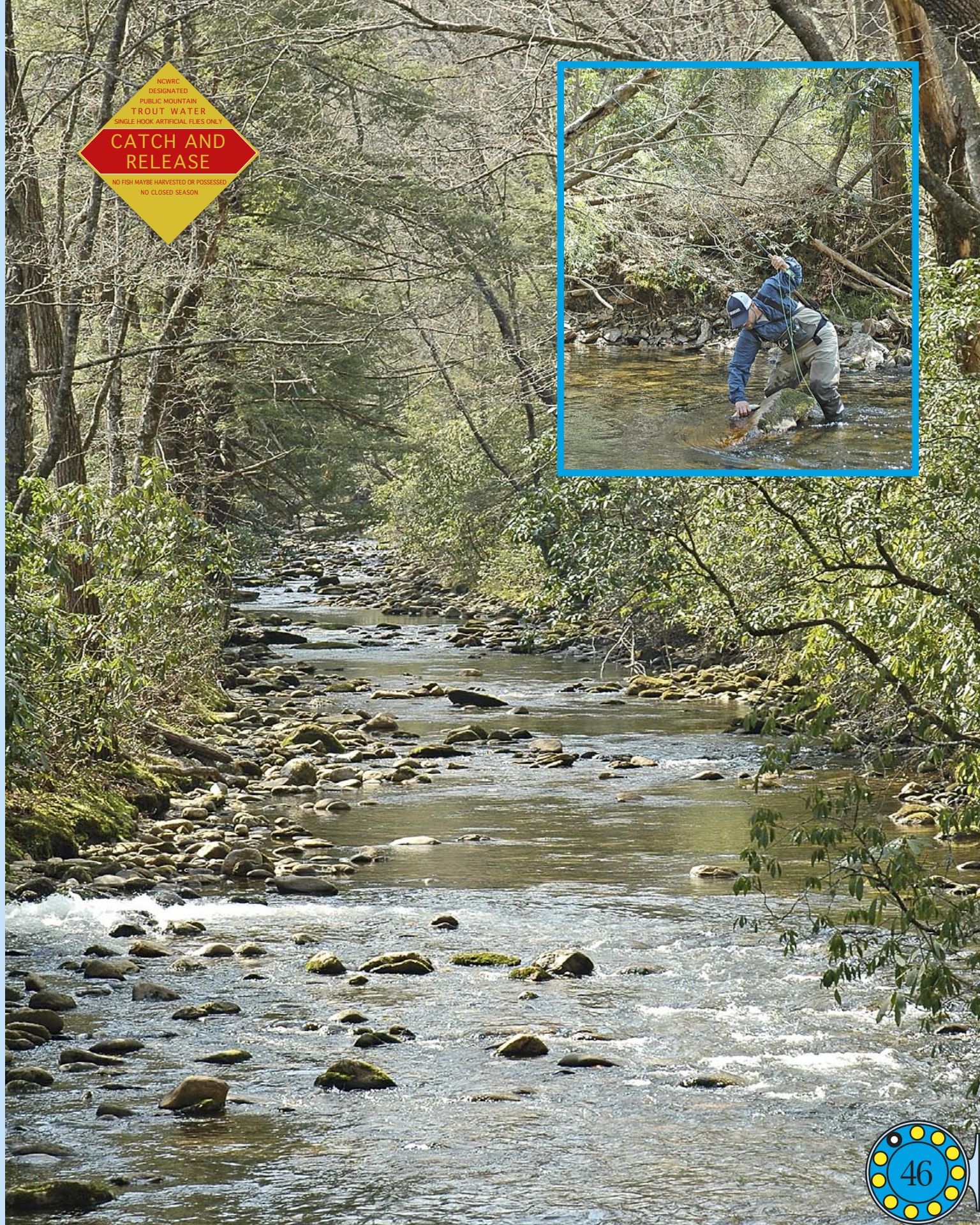
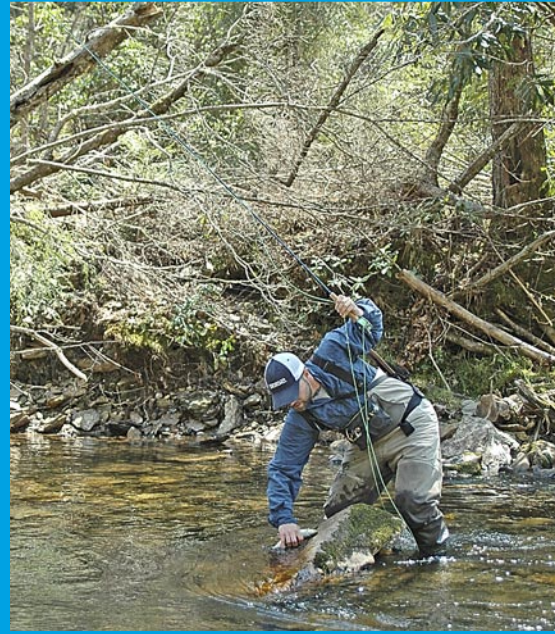
photos © Leland Davis



When and What: You can fish the Davidson all year! This is one of the only wild trout streams in WNC that consistently produces throughout the winter. Winter time fly selections should include Blue Wing Olive imitations, dry midges in cream, olive and black, midge larva in black, red, and olive, a variety of nymph patterns, and streamers for high water days. Spring is the prime time on this river due to its fantastic hatches. March Browns, Hendricksons, Quills, Caddis, Cahills, Yellow and Green Sallies, and the magical Green Drake hatch make for an exciting spring. Bring along dries and nymphs to match the hatches accordingly, along with something for the ever present midge population. Again, streamers for off color high water and you are set for whatever comes your way. Summer brings warmer water and tougher fishing. Terrestrials can be productive as well as midge fishing. Beware the tube hatch that occurs around 11:00 or so each day as tourists seek water to escape the heat. Fall brings cooler temps and fantastic action with caddis dries.

Directions: From the 64/280/276 intersection follow 276 West 2.2 miles to the Avery creek confluence. This marks the beginning of the fly fish only stretch. Continue on 276 west following the river. After 5.3 miles turn left off of 276 onto Fish Hatchery Road. At 6.7 miles turn left into the Fish Hatchery (this marks the end of this stretch). Stretch length=5.2 miles.

photos © Leland Davis



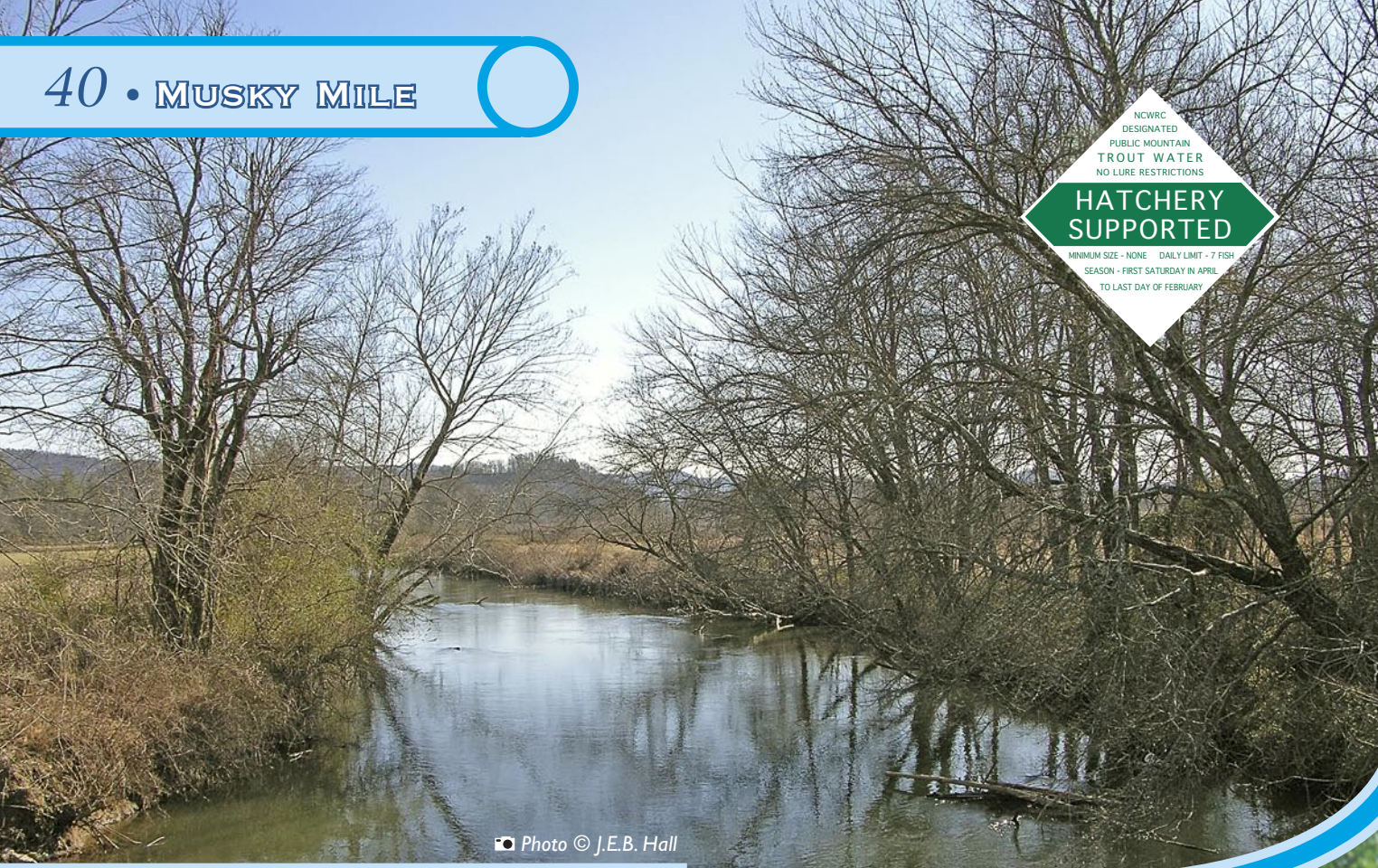


Photo © J.E.B. Hall

NCWRC
DESIGNATED
PUBLIC MOUNTAIN
TROUT WATER
NO LURE RESTRICTIONS

**HATCHERY
SUPPORTED**

MINIMUM SIZE - NONE DAILY LIMIT - 7 FISH
SEASON - FIRST SATURDAY IN APRIL
TO LAST DAY OF FEBRUARY

Musky? Here? On a fly? No way! This may be what is going through your mind as you read this, but for North Carolina anglers looking to catch one of these large angry fish on the fly, this section of river can make it happen. Just be prepared to cast and strip. A lot. If musky are the fish of a thousand casts for conventional gear anglers, then they are the fish of 100,000 casts for fly fishermen. The river doesn't make fishing easy either. Muskies hang in tight quarters amongst downed trees. Sending a 10 inch fly back amongst a web of tree branches with any sort of accuracy is a tough game to play. Don't forget you have to be able to row your boat through countless logjams as well. If you have the heart and desire it takes to catch one of these awesome fish then what is written here won't phase you. Set the hook hard and hang on!

When and What: Fishing lasts all year except for during the period which Hatchery Supported trout water is closed. Flies should be large baitfish imitations between 7 and 12 inches with lots of motion and flash. Don't forget to integrate a stinger setup into your flies as Muskies love to short strike.

Directions: From the 280/276/64 intersection near Pisgah Forest, follow 276 East for a little over a tenth of a mile and turn left onto Ecusta Road. At the end of Ecusta Road turn right onto Old Hendersonville Hwy., then make an immediate left onto Wilson Road. Soon after the turn, you will see Pisgah Forest River Access to the left. This is the take out for float fishing. The put in is reached by staying on Wilson Road and taking a right onto Hwy. 276. The access point is a small county park on the left.



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11.18.2006

The Little is probably the most scenic of all DH streams in NC. Located in the heart of Dupont State Forest, the river not only holds a healthy population of fish in season but is also home to five gorgeous waterfalls. The access here is via hiking from a trailhead located near the bottom of the stretch. From the parking area you can hike downstream to Hooker Falls and fish up, or you can take the High Falls trail and walk upstream. The most popular stretch is from Hooker Falls to Triple Falls. The trailhead is located in the middle of this stretch, and the walking is much easier than on the higher sections. The section from Triple Falls to High Falls sees less pressure due to the uphill hike involved to reach this section. The wading in this run is a bit more difficult, and a wading staff is advisable if you aren't steady on your feet. The things to be careful of on this stream are the waterfalls. I recommend staying clear of the pools at the very tops of them, but if you feel you must fish there, please exercise extreme caution. NC sees a waterfall related fatality almost every year. Be careful and have fun. You'll want to bring a camera for sure.

When and What: Prime time is the catch and release portion of the season from October through June. This river does have hold-over fish in the upper sections throughout the summer, but water temps get fairly high due to its lake origin. As far as fly selection is concerned, a variety of flashy nymphs such as Copper Johns work great. San Juan Worms and Eggs are aces in the hole on slow days. A few dries such as Elk Hair Caddis and Parachute Adams and you have all you need. Make sure to bring some split shot for this river as it features deeper holes than most.

Directions: From the 64/276/280 intersection in Pisgah Forest, take 64 East 3.7 miles and turn right on Crab Creek Road. Follow Crab Creek Road 4.4 miles to Buck Forest Road (Dupont State Forest sign). Turn right and follow Buck Forest Road for 3.2 miles. The trailhead is located on your right. If you cross the Little River you have gone too far. Total stretch length is 1.4 miles

photos © J.E.B. Hall





Courthouse creek offers fantastic small stream pocket water fishing with roadside access. Some larger pools are interspersed in between the faster water and make for great evening dry fly fishing during the spring and summer months. Higher up on the stream is Courthouse Falls. This waterfall is almost 40 feet in height and adds a beautiful incentive to fish this stream. For the angler in search of a great car camping spot with fishing access, Courthouse creek also has roadside camping available at marked pullouts along the adjacent forest service road.

When and What: Like all small wild trout streams in the higher elevations, Courthouse Creek's window of opportunity is between mid March and mid November. Winter months bring long shadows, cold days and lethargic fish. The fly selection again is also pretty basic, with Elk Hair Caddis and Parachute Mayfly imitations doing most of the surface work.



A variety of your favorite bead heads will work for down below. Throw some hoppers and inchworms in your box for summer and you've got it made.

Directions: From the 276/64/280 intersection in Pisgah Forest, follow 64 west out of Brevard for 9.1 miles to 215 North. Turn on 215 North and continue for 10.2 miles to Courthouse Creek FSR. Turn right. Fishing begins as soon as you hit the gravel road and continues up as high as you are willing to fish.





photos © Leland Davis

Don't let the reg's fool you. The North Fork of the French Broad is a fantastic wild trout stream. The river's large plunge pools are home to some nice Rainbows and Browns as well as a very healthy population of Stoneflies. This is definitely a river to bring a 9 ft. 5 or 6 weight on. It is mostly a nymph fishery and requires throwing heavier flies, along with split shot and possibly an indicator. The characteristic of the river's large boulders and deep pools also requires a longer rod to make a better presentation across deep seams and un-wadeable runs. Great scenery and some steep hiking make for a wonderful day trip. The gorge section of the stream also features some small waterfalls which can make for a nice photo opp.

When and What: You can fish this one all year, but prime time is March to June and September to November. For fly selection, bring a full nymph box with lots of big Stonefly imitations such as Sheep Flies, Kauffman's Stones, Brook's Stones, etc... Also, in your box include Copper Johns, Hare's Ears, Princes, and Red Fox Squirrel Nymphs in smaller sizes to round out the mix. Late

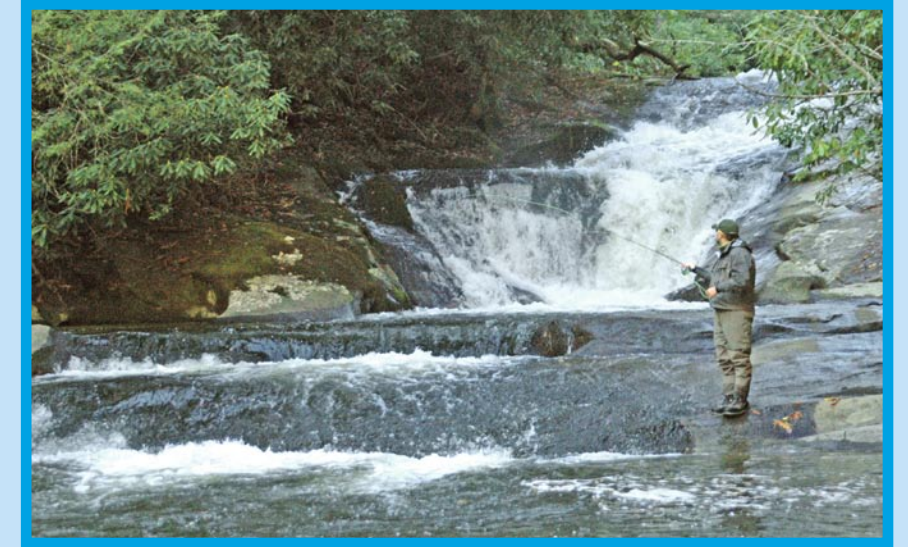
spring and early summer yield some nice hatches late day with big Yellow Drakes, Cahills, Yellow Sallies, and Golden Stones. A few dries that match accordingly are nice, especially if fishing into the evening. Other than that, split shot, indicators, and maybe a wading staff and you are set for a great day of fishing.

Directions: From the 64/276 intersection in downtown Brevard take 64 west 9.1 miles. Turn right on 215. Follow 215 for 5.4 miles and look for a large pullout on the left. Follow the trail down to the water from here. If you fish upstream through the gorge you will reach a trail through a power line cut on your right. Follow this back to the road and walk the road back down towards your car. Additional access points are located downstream and further up, but the gorge section holds the best fishing.



Now here is a hatchery supported stream worthy of a visit from the fly angler. Located between Rosman and Lake Tox-away, the West Fork offers up some spectacular fishing in a beautiful whitewater setting. This stream is very similar to the North Fork in both size and streambed geology and offers similar fishing opportunities. The West Fork does offer one of the best Yellow Drake hatches in the area as well. Occurring around the last week in May, this hatch happens late evening and gives anglers a chance to fish large dries to eager fish in fading light. Remember to take a headlamp for the hike back to the car on this one due to the overgrown nature of the trail along the stream.

When and What: This stream can potentially fish all year but is closed for the month of March due to its hatchery supported designation. The prime times are from April through June and in October. Fly selection should include a variety of large Stonefly nymph imitations, Hare's Ears, Princes, and Copper Johns for sub surface work. On top come prepared with Mayfly imitations in sizes 10 – 18 based on hatches, as well as Stimulators, Caddis, and the occasional terrestrial.



Directions: From the 64/215 intersection near Rosman, follow 64 West for 2.6 miles. Turn right onto SR 1309 using a Citgo station as your landmark. Continue on 1309 for 2.2 miles until you reach a bridge crossing the river. Parking is located just to the other side of the bridge, and an unmarked trail leads downstream into the gorge. Fishing also is available both up and downstream of the gorge but tends to be more heavily pressured.

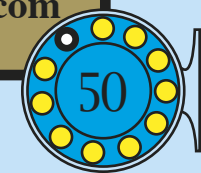
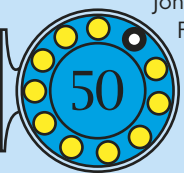
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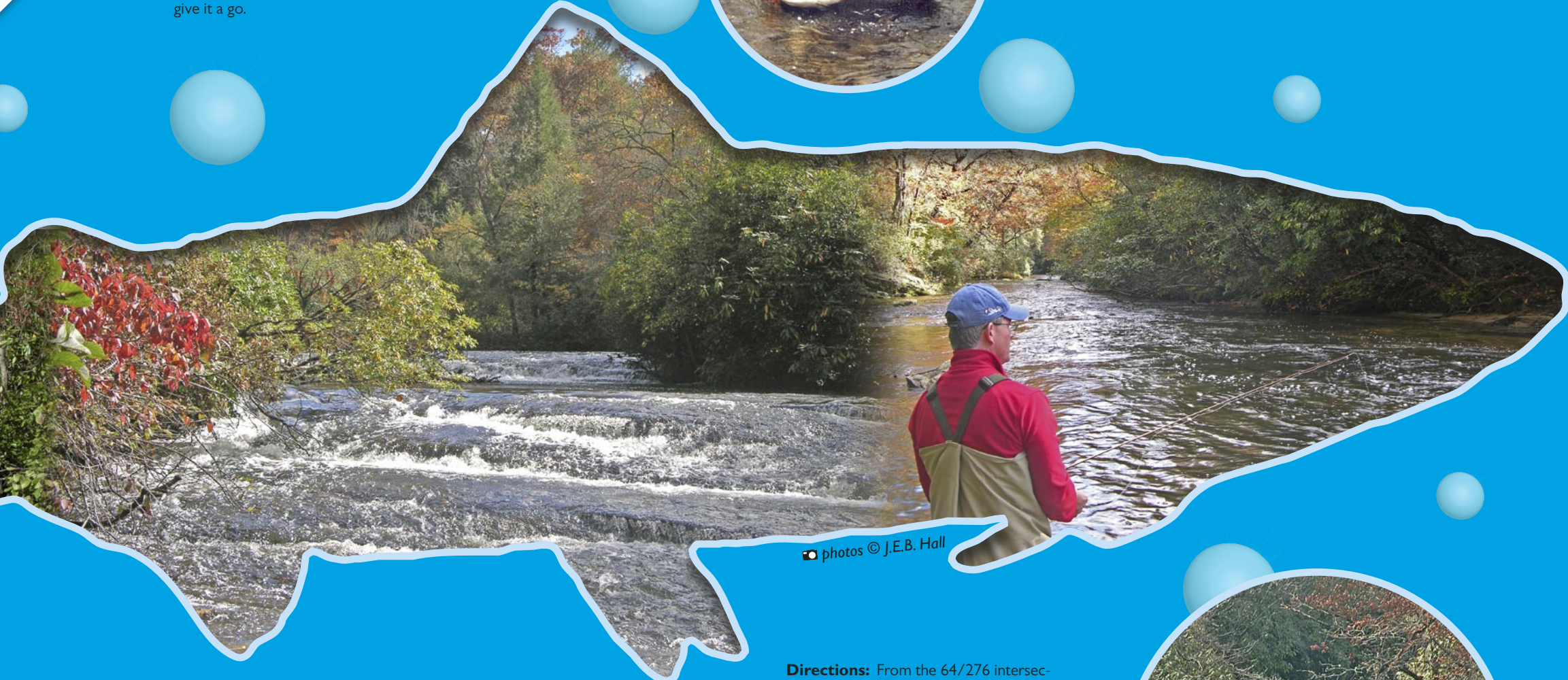
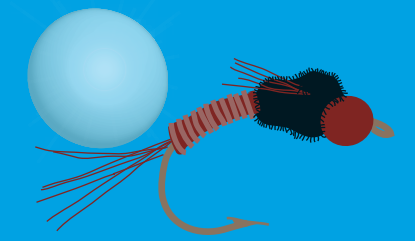
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The East Fork is one of NC's most popular Delayed Harvest streams, and for good reason. It is an easily accessed stretch of river that features big slow pools, fairly gentle riffles, and easy wading. Combine this with the thousands of fish the NC-WRC puts in during the catch and release period, and you have a winner for anglers of all skill levels. One small fact about the East Fork that anglers should watch out for is the short stretches of posted property along the banks. This resulted from an angler falling on a slippery rock and attempting to sue a landowner. Avoid exiting the stream in these areas.

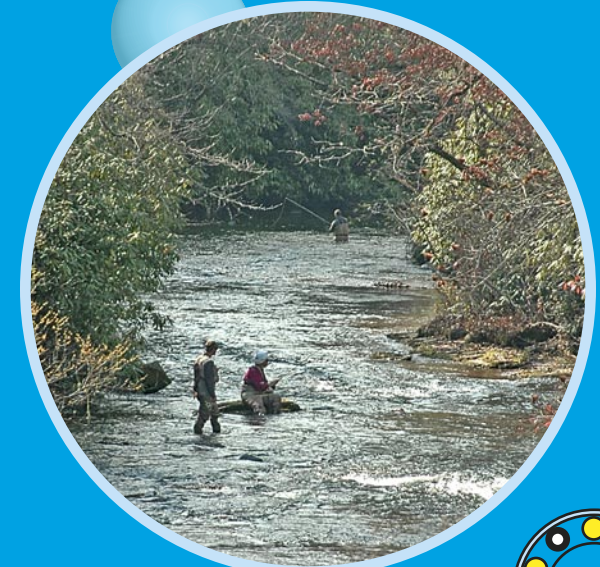


When and what: Prime time is the catch and release period between October and June. Bright flashy nymphs, San Juans, and Eggs produce below the surface, while Caddis and seasonal Mayflies work up top. Streamers can be effective just after a stocking or in periods of high, off color water. If you have a highly experimental fly, this is the place to give it a go.

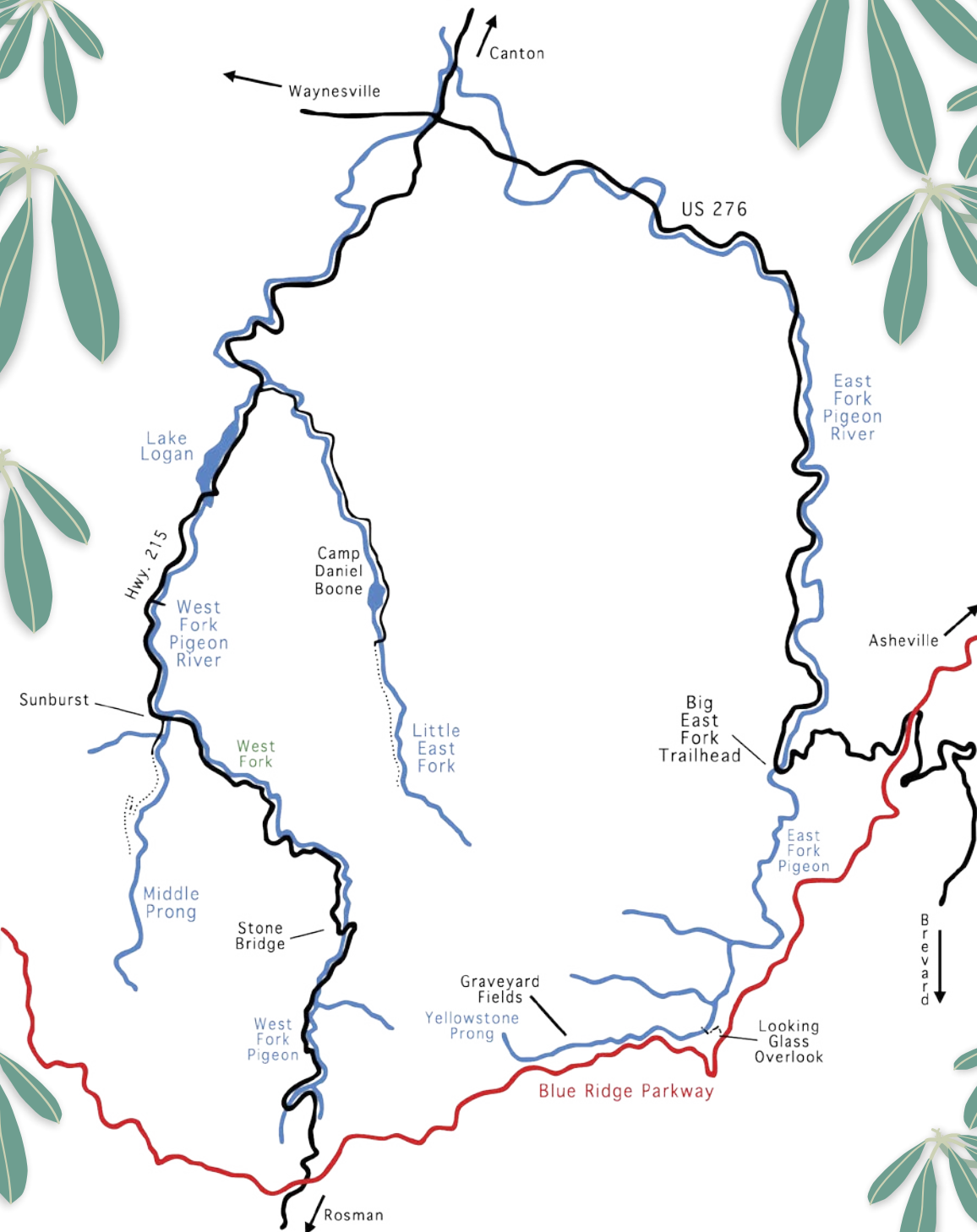


photos © J.E.B. Hall

Directions: From the 64/276 intersection in downtown Brevard, follow 64 West for 8.4 miles. Turn left onto 178 (towards Rosman/Pickens). After 3/4 mile take a right across a bridge on 178, and in 0.9 more miles take a left onto East Fork Road. Fishing starts approx. 2 miles from this turn. You can fish upstream from here. At 3.7 miles from the 178 intersection turn you must turn right to follow the river. When the road splits at 5.2 miles from the same 178 intersection you have reached the end of the stretch. Stream length is 2.81 miles.



© Leland Davis



Found in the Middle Prong Wilderness Area, this stream is one of the best Brook Trout fisheries in Pisgah. With a trail that follows its entire length and low pressure due to hike in only access, this stream has become a favorite of the hard core Brook Trout fisherman. Access either starts at Sunburst Group Camp on the downstream end, or from the Blue Ridge Parkway at the top. The Pisgah Ranger District Map is a vital tool to plan trips into this area, so pick one up before you go. Day trips are fairly easy, but the watershed holds enough fishable water that overnight trips can be planned. You could fish the lower half the first day, set up camp, and fish the upper half the next – all the while being within reasonable distance of the car in case of foul weather or emergencies. The stream is steep and boulder strewn so take caution while wading. This is also a great stream to park a car at one end and get dropped off at the other for a through fish.

When and what: The best time to fish this stream is from April through October. The water and air temperature can be a bit chilly the rest of the year. For fly selection bring a box of basic dries such as Parachute Adams and Elk Hair Caddis. Pheasant tails, Hare's Ears, and Princes should suffice in the nymph department.

Directions: From the 276/280/64 intersection in Pisgah Forest follow 276 West 14.8 miles to the Blue Ridge Parkway. From here follow the Parkway South for 11.8 miles to highway 215 North. Take 215 for 7.9 miles to a bridge over the Middle Prong and Sunburst Group Camp. Turn left and follow the dirt road to a gate. In hunting season the gate may be open, which can allow you to drive further up the drainage. Otherwise park clear of the gate and hike in from here. Upper reaches can be accessed via the Parkway, but due to parking issues I will leave that one up to you.



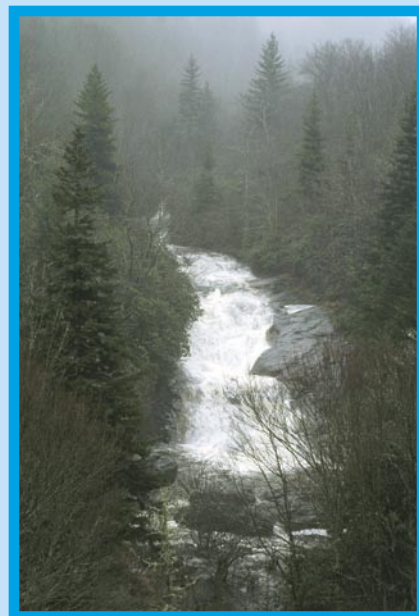
47 • WEST FORK PIGEON

The West Fork of the Pigeon has a wide variety of fishing to choose from based on what time of year you go. The stretch from Lake Logan upstream to the Sunburst group camp offers great Delayed Harvest action from October until June. The gorge section offers Wild Trout fishing with very tough access in the warmer months. The steep section from the archway bridge on 215 to the next bridge up offers put and take action in every month but March. Finally, the far upper reaches offer tight Rhododendron choked Brookie fishing in spring, summer, and fall. All of this is accessed via Highway 215 and is all on the same stream. Wading in the lower DH section is easiest, and the far upper stretches are tight but not terribly precarious. The middle sections are very steep with limited to no access trails. Use caution when moving through these areas of stream, as big boulders and steep gradi-

ent make for difficult movement at river level. These obstacles, coupled with steep banks and no trails, make these sections inappropriate for the faint of heart.

When and what: The DH water on the West Fork is just like all other DH water – The best fishing is October until June. The Wild Trout sections fish best from mid April until mid October. The Hatchery Supported water fishes only so-so at best. Fly selection for Delayed Harvest and Hatchery Supported stretches are the same—flashy nymphs, San Juans, Egg Patterns and your pick of dry flies will do for those fish. For the wild streams keep things basic. Elk Hair Caddis, Parachutes with Pheasant Tails or Prince Nymph Droppers are great. In Summer, terrestrials work well too. The tiniest upper reaches can even be fished with things like Coachmans or Royal Wulffs due to the opportunistic nature of the fish that live there.

photos © Leland Davis



Directions: From the 276/280/64 intersection in Pisgah Forest, follow 276 North 14.8 miles to the Blue Ridge Parkway. Take the Parkway exit and turn right, following the Parkway South for 11.8 miles to Hwy 215. Turn North on 215. Fishing starts as soon as the road reaches a fishable sized stream. Designations are marked on roadside trees. The delayed harvest water is at the lower end of the stretch before you reach Lake Logan.





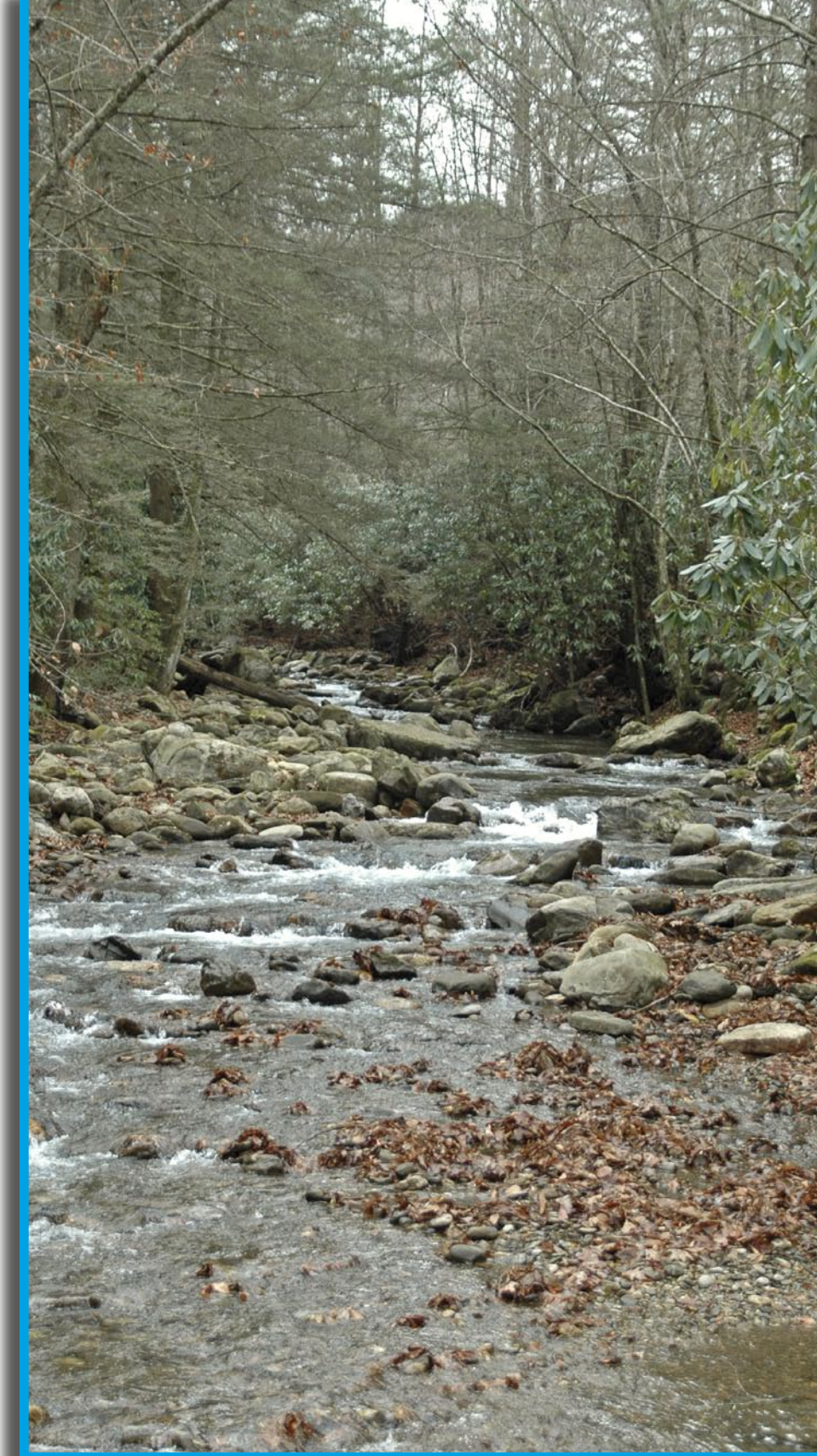
• 48 •

LITTLE EAST FORK OF THE PIGEON

This little stream can be a great alternative to the both the West Fork of the Pigeon and the Middle Prong of the Pigeon. Small in size and quite steep, both wading and casting can be tricky. For the angler willing to hike and fight the Rhododendron however, the rewards can be lovely. The small Rainbows in the lower reaches are all too willing to take properly presented dry and dropper combos, and their Brookie neighbors further upstream can be even more eager. Just remember to respect the camp property as you walk to the trailhead, and you might just earn your own fly fishing merit badge.

When and What: Like all Wild Trout streams, April through October is prime. Summer months can be crowded due to campers but they still fish. Bring an assortment of basic dries such as Elk Hair Caddis along with some Pheasant Tails and Princes for droppers and you should be good to go. Inchworms and beetles can make summer fishing more interesting, but the aforementioned basics work just as well then too.

Directions: From Canton, follow NC 110 to the Hwy 215/276 intersection. For here follow 215 south 2 miles to Little East Fork road. Follow Little East Fork Road several miles and through Camp Daniel Boone until you reach signs for Forest Service Parking on the right, just before a gated bridge. Make sure you park in designated areas. From here follow signs upstream to the trailhead.





The Yellowstone Prong combines a high meadow western feel with tiny Southern Appalachian Brook Trout. Located in the heart of Graveyard Fields off the Blue Ridge Parkway, this little stream is the definition of scenic. Wide-open meadow views with blueberry bushes lining the banks create a feeling not of WNC. Although small, the fish are beautiful and their color almost reflects that of the surroundings in Autumn. Oranges and reds line the banks and the fins of the fish that time of year, creating a great sight fishing situation. The clown colored fish amongst dark rocks stand out like a Kennedy at a GOP convention. Some days it seems you can draw a strike from every fish you spot. Other times its like

When and What: Located above 5,000 ft. in elevation, the temperature stays rather cool a large portion of the year. May to mid October is prime time, though fish can be caught as early as mid March and as late as November. Summer can bring low water and spooky fish, so make sure you approach with caution. Fly selection should be simple: Terrestrials for the summer months and dry/dropper combinations for the shoulder seasons.

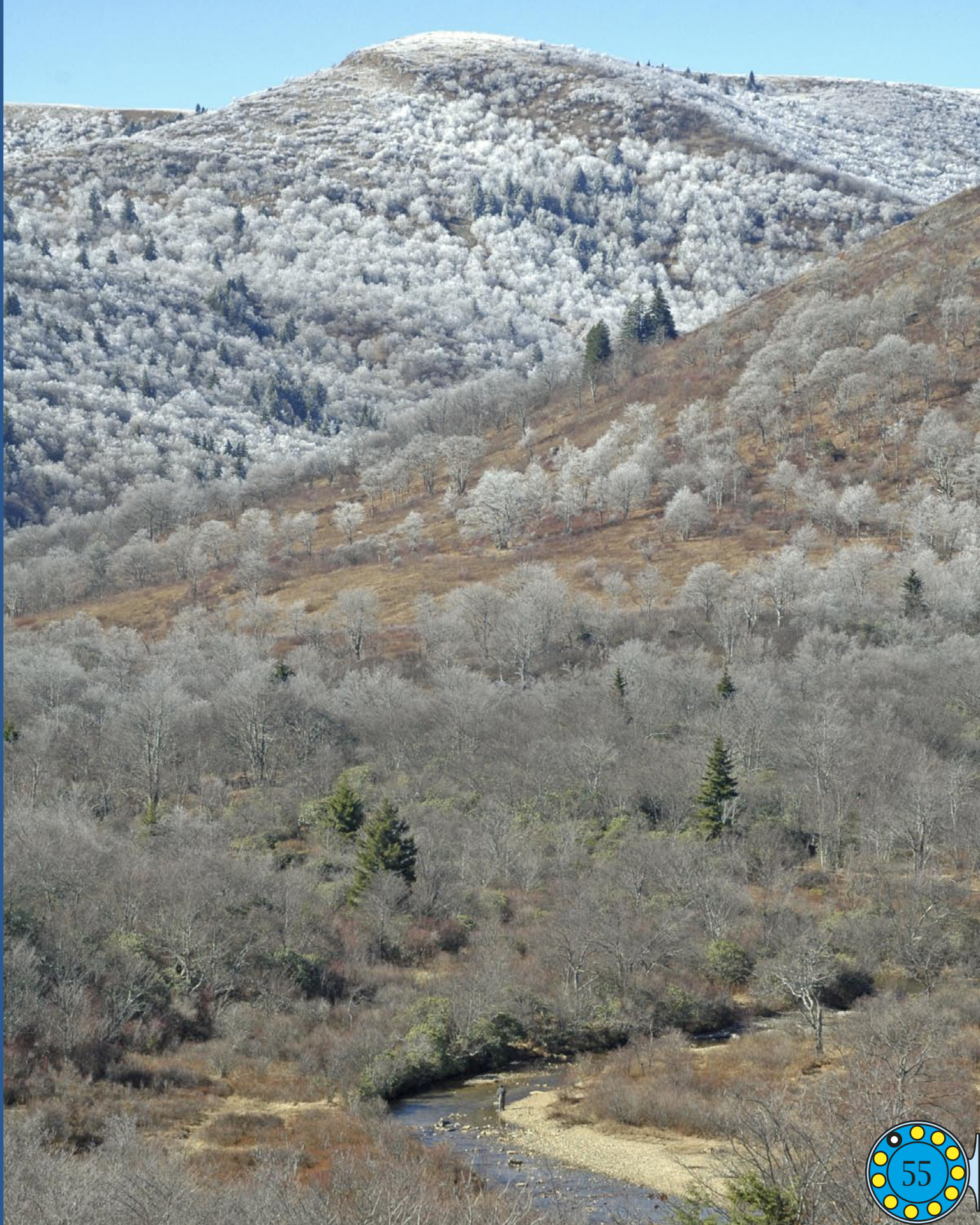
Directions: From the 276/280/64 intersection in Pisgah forest follow 276 north for 14.8 miles to the Blue Ridge Parkway. Turn south on the parkway and continue for 10.6 miles to the Graveyard Fields parking area. Follow the trail to the river.



stalking a western spring creek. This is definitely a stream to fish at least once in your life. Besides, where else can you eat blueberries off the branch you just untangled your fly from?



photos © Leland Davis





waters are often opportunistic and take flies eagerly. The water is quite clear and the bank quite brushy. Approach with some stealth and watch those back casts. Enjoy!

When and What: Due to the higher altitude and shady nature of this stream, water temps remain a little lower. Prime time here is from mid April to mid October. The winter is almost completely dormant. Flies are easy. Caddis, Stimulators, Parachute Adams, and small hoppers for dries. Prince Nymphs, Hare's Ears, and Pheasant Tails down below.

Directions: For the Big East Fork Trailhead access point: From 276/64/280 intersection in Pisgah Forest, follow 276 north for 17.3 miles to the Big East Fork Trailhead. Parking is located on both sides of the river. However, the river right parking area is the start of the Big East Fork trail, which runs the length of the river. Other access points are located off the Blue Ridge Parkway south of where 276 passes underneath.



If you are looking for a picturesque stream with quality fishing for Wild Trout in a wilderness area, this is it. The East Fork of the Pigeon is located in the Shining Rock Wilderness Area and is paralleled on a ridge to the south by the Blue Ridge Parkway. The small stream makes its way downhill rather steeply at first and gradually mellows as it nears the Big East Fork Trailhead. The lower end of this stretch of river is accessed from the trailhead mentioned above. From here upstream, you will find small Rainbows and an occasional Brook Trout. Once you pass a set of cascades known as East Fork Falls, it is a Brookie stream from there on out. The character of the lower river is larger plunge pools interspersed with pocket water. The upper reaches are small plunge pools with steep pocket water. Needless to say the wading is easier on the lower stretch. The Big East Fork Trail runs alongside the river, and the Parkway offers a variety of access points. A Pisgah Ranger District map is a great asset to find easier access to the upper end of the stream. Check out the tributaries that enter from the sides too. They can be phenomenal fishing with little pressure. The fish in these



photos © J.E.B. Hall

• EASTERN ESCARPMENT •



Green River Gorge • © Leland Davis

♦ EASTERN ESCARPMENT ♦



📍 hickory nut gorge, home of the rocky broad - © Leland Davis

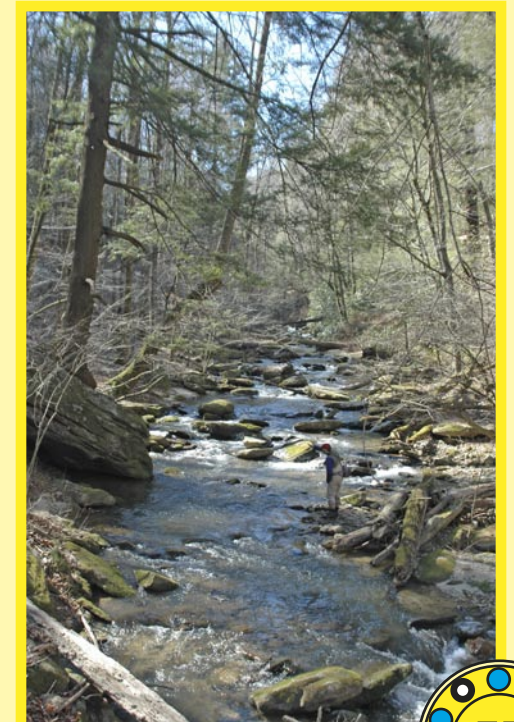
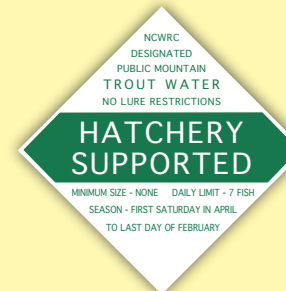


51 • NORTH PACOLET

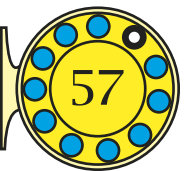
If you are in Saluda or Tryon and you want a quick fish on a small stream, the Pacolet is your ticket. Small boulder gardens and short plunge pools make great homes for small wild Rainbows that coexist with the hatchery fish that are stocked in spring. Surprisingly pretty for its close proximity to the road, the North Pacolet can make for a great after-work adventure or a good excuse to get out and explore.

When and What: The North Pacolet fishes best from April until June with fishing being decent in the fall and occasionally rewarding during the winter. Keep in mind that due to regulations, fishing is closed during March and does not reopen until the first Saturday in April. For flies bring a box of nymphs including buggy Stonefly imitations and an assortment of bead heads. A few Elk Hair Caddis and some Parachute Mayfly imitations for surface action and you are ready to fish.

Directions: From Exit 59 off I-26, head toward Saluda until you reach Hwy 176. Turn left and follow 176 for 2.6 miles, and turn right across river. From here follow the road upstream to the Pearson Falls Parking Area. Fishing begins just upstream from here and continues until the private property boundary.



📍 photos © Leland Davis



52 • GREEN RIVER

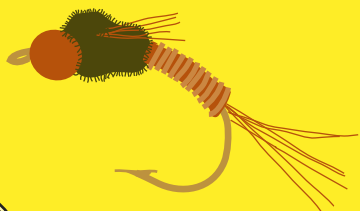
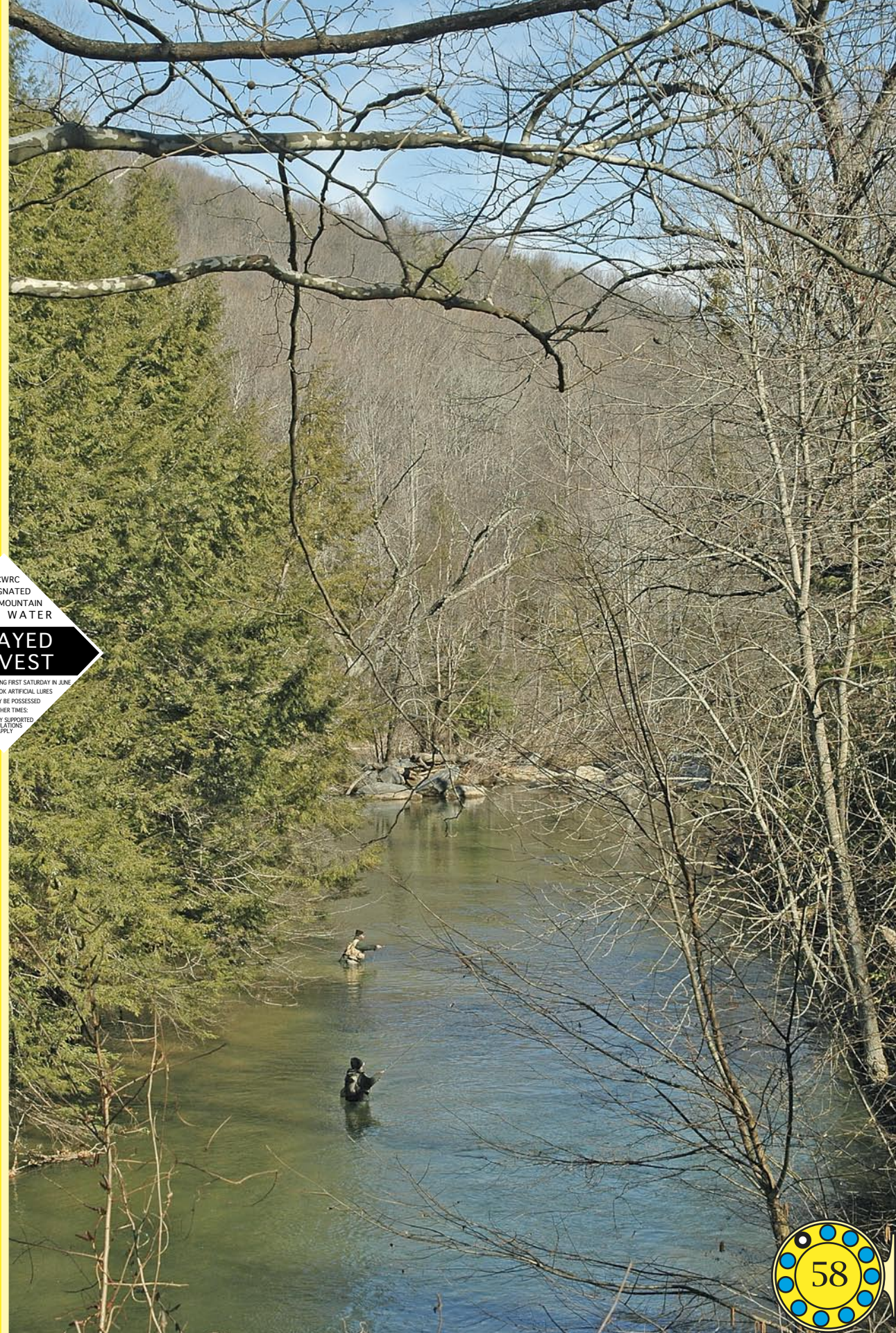
The Green River is one of the best sections of Delayed Harvest in WNC and for good reason. Deep pools interspersed with long riffles give the fish lots of places to hold and feed, while the power generation provides cooler water temps and higher oxygen levels that they otherwise wouldn't have in a stream this low in elevation. The power generation is bittersweet for the fly angler however, and with the benefits comes the nearly impossible wading. At generations of 100% or higher, fishing is all but impossible. Flows can be checked daily after about 7:15 AM by calling 1-800-829-5253 and pressing 1-4-2. If the release begins at 7:00 AM, anglers have until about 11:15 AM to fish before the water arrives. If the release is only 60% capacity then the river is still very fishable. As a bonus for anglers with canoes or personal inflatables, the river is floatable with any release and can offer up angling opportunities wade fisherman can't reach. The put in is located at the large gravel parking lot known as Fish Top Access Area, and the take out can be determined based on how long anglers want to float.

When and What: The Green fishes best from October through early June when Delayed Harvest regulations are in effect. Fly selections should include a variety of streamers, large Stonefly patterns, flashy bead heads, and San Juan Worms. Throw in a few Caddis dies for the occasional hatch and you're set.

Directions: From Exit 59 off of I-26, turn North going away from Saluda and take your first left onto Green River Cove Rd. Wind your way down the hill to the large gravel parking lot at the bottom of the hill. Delayed Harvest fishing runs from here downstream.



NCWRC
DESIGNATED
PUBLIC MOUNTAIN
TROUT WATER
**DELAYED
HARVEST**
OCTOBER 1 TO FOLLOWING FIRST SATURDAY IN JUNE
ONLY SINGLE HOOK ARTIFICIAL LURES
NO FISH MAY BE POSSESSED
ALL OTHER TIMES
HATCHERY SUPPORTED
REGULATIONS
APPLY



The Big Hungry is a great little stream that runs into the Green River. The stream morphology is mainly bedrock, with deep plunge pools that give fish places to hide from the heat of summer as well as dine on the plentiful Stoneflies and crayfish that live among the rocks. The state stocks the stream up top, but the river also has a reproducing population of Browns and Rainbows that are available year round. The lower section of river is the most scenic and features small sloping waterfalls and deep pools. This one is worth visiting even if it's just to explore.

When and What: The best time for the Big Hungry is from April until June and again from mid October through February. Fishing is closed during March due to regulations. Fly selection should include a variety of large Stonefly imitations, Woolly Buggers, and Bead Head Nymphs. Have a few Stimulators and Caddis on hand for the occasional hatch, and don't forget the camera.

Directions: From exit 53 off of I-26 take Upward Road east for 1.7 miles. Turn right onto Big Hungry Road. In 0.5 miles, turn left onto Big Hungry Road. In 0.25 miles, turn right onto Big Hungry Road again. For the lower gorge take a right onto Gallimore road and park in the hunter/angler spots on the left across from the kayaker parking lot. The trail begins in front of the parking space. For the upper gorge continue on Big Hungry Road and park at the pull out just before the bridge crossing the river.



photo © Leland Davis



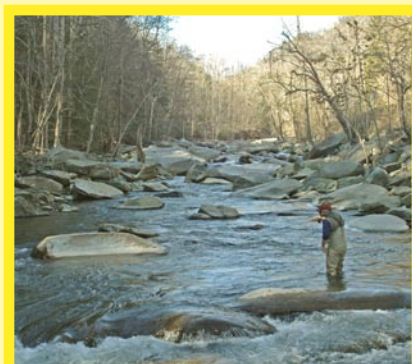
photo © J.E.B. Hall



photos © Leland Davis

The Rocky Broad is a fantastic river with a beautiful backdrop of both Chimney Rock and Rumbling Bald. Flowing through Hickory Nut Gorge and terminating in Lake Lure just downstream of the tourist hub of Chimney Rock, the Rocky Broad tumbles over large boulder gardens and winds through deep pools, giving anglers lots of water to cover along the way. If you are on vacation in the surrounding area, this is a great number to fish while the family wanders through gift shops and enjoys views from Chimney Rock Park. For more adventurous anglers the lower end of the river offers fishing for spawning fish running out of Lake Lure during winter months, although the exact run timing remains a mystery to all but the most dedicated and tight lipped locals.

Access is iffy in spots, so adhere to all no trespassing signs and keep the peace. Just remember next time you are up on vacation and



tired of looking at airbrushed t-shirts, line up your rod and give this one a try.

When and What: This river fishes best in the cooler months of spring and fall with winter fishing being ok. Summer brings warm water temps and more lethargic fish. The spawning lake fish are tough to find, but generally November to February is your best shot. For flies bring a box of nymphs in a variety of patterns and sizes, as well as a selection of streamers. Enjoy.

Directions: From Asheville follow US 74 East into the town of Chimney Rock. From Hendersonville follow US 64 East until the US 74/64 intersection. Turn right toward Chimney Rock. Fish at public access points only.

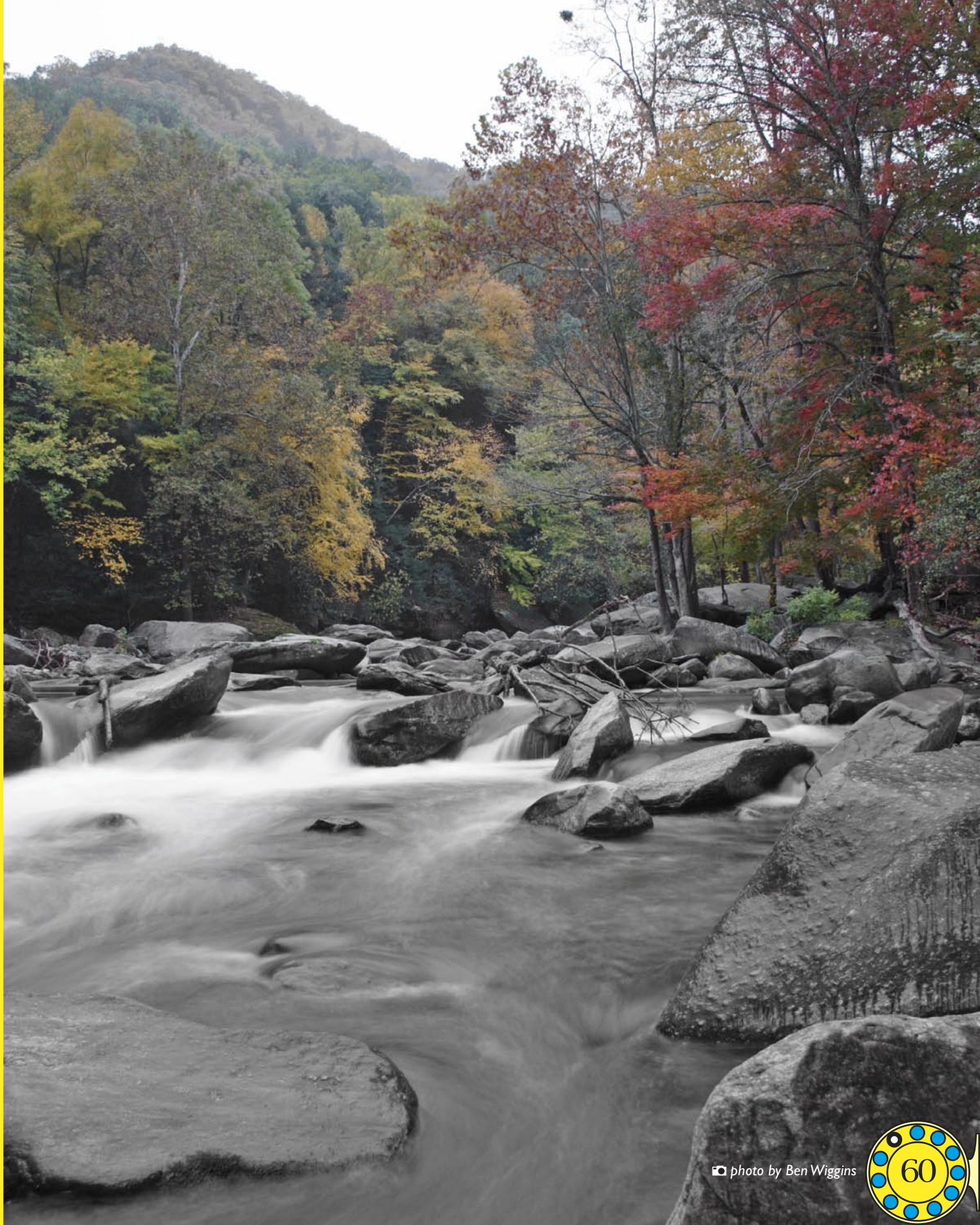
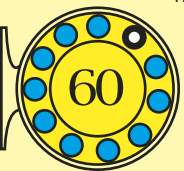


photo by Ben Wiggins





Upper Rocky Broad • by Ben Wiggins



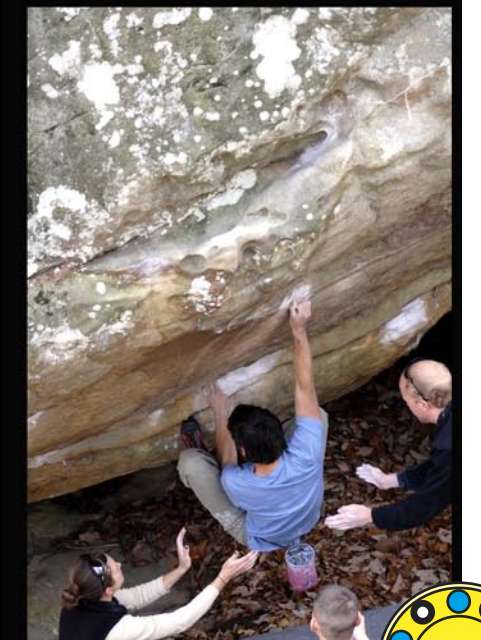
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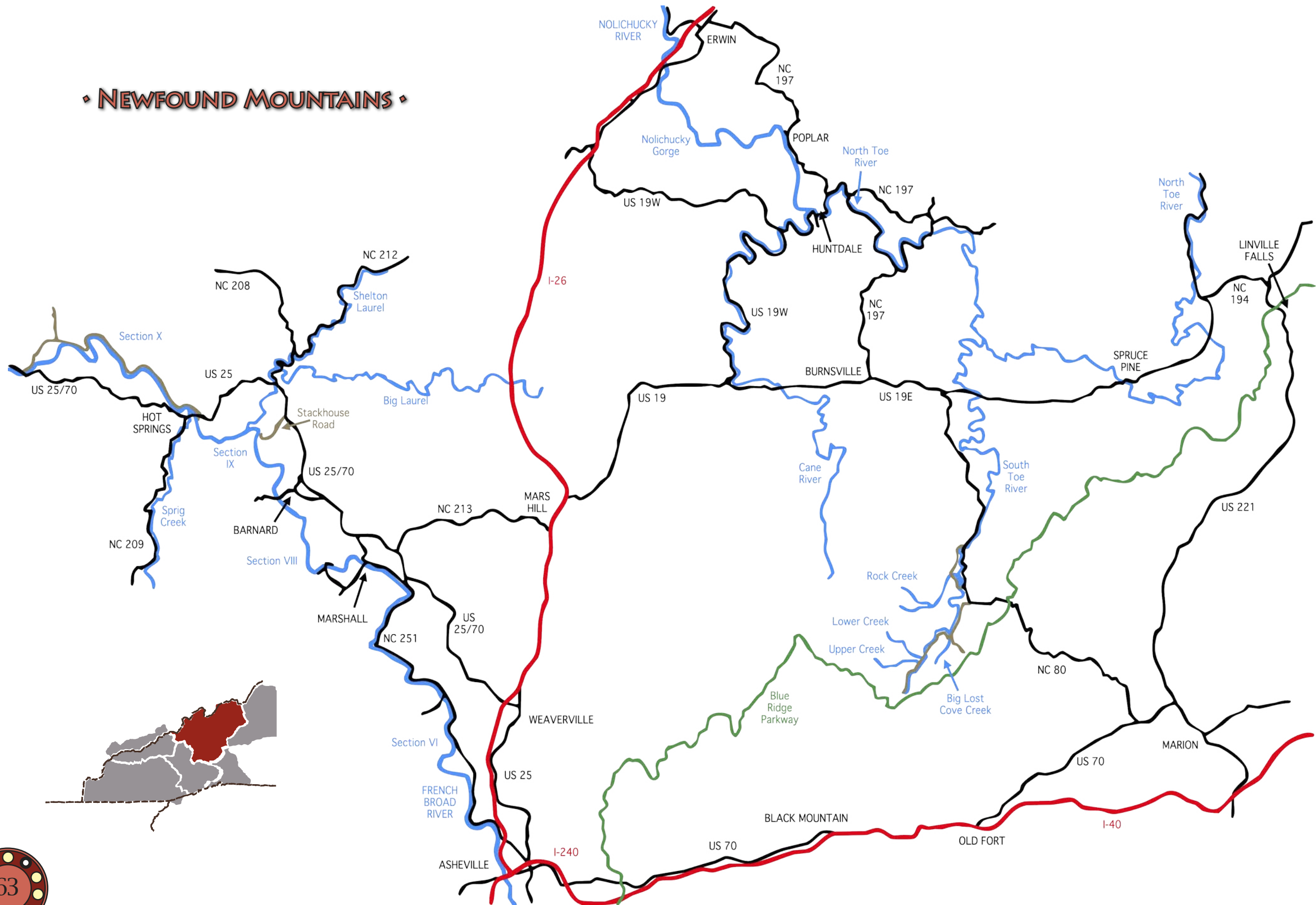
• NEWFOUND MOUNTAINS •



📷 Mystery Creek • © Leland Davis

📷 French Broad River Valley • © Leland Davis

◆ NEWFOUND MOUNTAINS ◆





FRENCH BROAD SECTION VI

For easy access to Smallmouth fishing look no further than Section 6. This stretch of river has more wade friendly water than any other in the area. Not only is it easy to get in this section of river, it is easy to get to it as well. Less than a 15 minute drive from Asheville, Section 6 has “after work get away” written all over it. Float fishing is available but requires heavy abuse of gear for those rowing full size boats. Personal pontoons maybe a better option for anglers wanting to cover more water than they can walk. Wade fishermen should



use caution when moving around in the river. Uneven ledges can quickly drop off and leave your hat floating and you wet. Wear felt sole wading shoes with studs, and for those not steady on their feet the use of a wading staff is advised. The key to fishing any section of the French Broad is water clarity and water level. Gin clear low water makes for the best fishing. Off color is so-so. If it is muddy or over 1,500 cfs don't bother.

When and What: Late Spring through early fall offer warm water temps and active fish. Winter fishing is non existent. Fly selection should include crayfish patterns, baitfish imitations such as Clousers and Wooly Buggers, and popping bugs for summer.

Directions: From the I-26/I-240/US 19 intersection near down town Asheville, follow I-26 west to the UNC-Asheville exit. Take the exit and turn left at the bottom of the ramp. This is Riverside Drive. From here follow Riverside for 6.7 miles until you begins to see gravel pullouts on your left. These—along with three different county parks—will provide access to the river.

Regulations: North Carolina General Freshwater





Photo © J.E.B. Hall

Section VIII is a great place to fish from a boat. That's probably because floating is the primary way anglers have of accessing this stretch of river. The streambed is comprised mainly of bedrock ledges and is easily waded in some stretches for anglers tired of being confined to the boat. Make sure to plan on a full day trip for this stretch and bring plenty of cold beverages to beat the summer heat.

When and What: Summertime is prime time for Section VIII, and the hottest, brightest days often fish the best. Fly selection should consist of a variety of baitfish patterns, crayfish imitations and damsel dries. Bring some poppers and divers for surface action and you are ready to go.

Directions: From the town of Marshall, cross the river and follow Bailey Branch Rd. to Bear Creek Rd. Turn right on Bear Creek and continue until you encounter a bridge crossing the river. Turn right across the bridge and turn right back upstream. The put in is located just downstream of Redmond Dam. For the take, out follow Hwy. 25/70 towards Hot Springs about 4



Fish Photos Courtesy of Walker Parrott

miles from the hwy 281/25/70 intersection in Marshall. Turn left onto SR1151. This road will wind downhill to the river. Access is located in a small river park to the left before crossing the French Broad.





Photos © Leland Davis

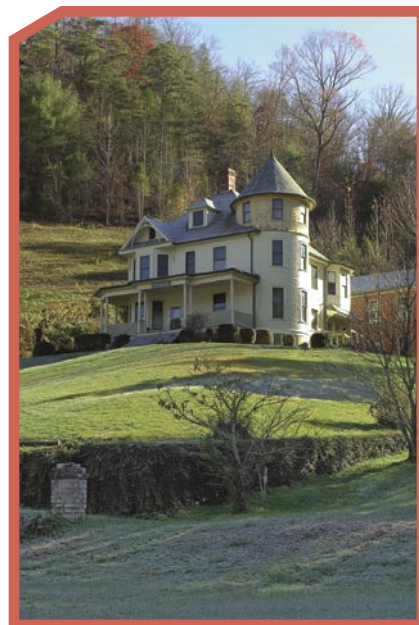
Section 9 is possibly the most recreation-ally used section of the French Broad. Most of the visitors are whitewater rafters, and the remainder are kayakers and open canoe enthusiasts. Fishermen make up the smallest portion of users on this section of water due to the limited access and whitewater. However, the few miles of flat water between Stackhouse Road and Hot Springs offer excellent wade fishing opportunities and are definitely worth a visit during the low water periods of summer. To reach the best fishing, walk along the railroad tracks downstream. Once you reach a section of water you find appetizing, hop in and start fishing.

As an added bonus, this section of river holds a healthy population of Carp which tail through

the moss and grass like Redfish in a tidal marsh.

When and What: Section 9, like lemonade, is best enjoyed during summer. For flies bring your standard Smallmouth box with popping bugs for hot days. Throw in some Prince Nymphs tied on heavy hooks and some small Crazy Charlies for the Carp and you've got it covered.

Directions: From the I-26/25/70 Intersection near Weaverville, follow 25/70 towards Hot Springs for 19.5 miles to Stackhouse Road. Take a left onto Stackhouse Road. This road will wind down a very steep grade and dead end at an access point. Fish up or downstream from here. Use extreme caution if hiking the railroad tracks as trains run constantly through the French Broad Gorge.



The Hunter Banks Company is a full service fly shop offering professionally guided float and wade trips for trout in Western North Carolina and East Tennessee. Being the oldest fly shop in the Asheville area and having the largest fly inventory for Western North Carolina, the Hunter Banks Company offers the most comprehensive service in the area.

Our guides are the best in their field and are known to spend their off days fishing the streams they guide and testing their newly tied patterns. In a sense, our guides love doing their homework. They are also fully licensed and insured.

No matter where your interest may lie, we offer a range of trips and packages to suit your fishing and lodging needs. These include:

- Wade fishing trips in Western North Carolina and Eastern Tennessee
- Float trips on the Watauga, South Holston, and Tuckasee Rivers
- Smallmouth Bass Trips on the French Broad and Nolichucky Rivers
- Group and Corporate Outings
- One Day Fly Fishing Schools
- Beginner and Intermediate Fly Tying Classes
- 1/2 and Full Day Instructional Trips for the Novice Angler

If you are going to be in the area, stop in and make yourself at home. Come check out the latest fly fishing gear or share a good fishing story with us.

We are located off of I-240 on Exit 4-C in downtown Asheville, across from the new Asheville Chamber Of Commerce. If you are not sure exactly where we are located, give us a call at 1-800-227-6732 or visit us on the web for more directions.

The Hunter Banks Company
"Asheville's Premier Fly Shop"

29 Montford Ave.
Asheville, NC 28801

800-227-6732 828-252-3005

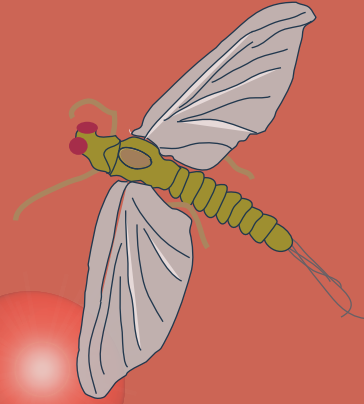
web: www.hunterbanks.com
email: staff@hunterbanks.com



Located in Madison County, the Big Laurel—or as the locals call it, the Shelton Laurel—offers up some great Delayed Harvest action with a larger stream bed than other nearby Asheville DH stretches. The lower gorge of the river is also home to a population of Smallmouth Bass and the occasional big trout. The Delayed Harvest section features deep bedrock and sand runs interspersed with some nice freestone pocket water. A longer rod can help you make better drifts across some of the deeper pools on this one for sure. The best trout fishing is of course in the DH section, which runs from the intersection of 25/70 and Hwy. 208 up to where 208 makes a left towards TN. Be mindful of landowners on this stretch and obey the no trespassing signs. The Shelton Laurel proper, which is upstream of the DH section, offers Hatchery Supported fishing

but is difficult to fish due to poor access. The lower gorge is accessed from a parking area located just downstream of the aforementioned 25/70/208 intersection. A well maintained trail runs the length of the river all the way down to the French Broad. Be careful wading in the lower stretch, as the stream bed is much steeper and has some whitewater in it. This gorge can make for a fun summertime trip when Delayed Harvest has ended and you are looking for something different to beat the heat and the crowds. With a 30-40 min drive from most of Asheville, this can be a great before or after work adventure as well.

When and What: The Delayed Harvest section fishes best during Delayed Harvest season from October 1st to the first Saturday in June. The lower gorge is



best from May through September. For the DH section bring an assortment of bead heads in sizes 12-18. Rubber legged ones with flashbacks are even better. Egg patterns and San Juans always seem to have their place, and a small assortment of basic dries will take care of you for those spring evenings when a hatch comes off. Don't forget the streamer box as this is an excellent streamer fishery during higher water periods. You also might pick up one of those stray smallies that occasionally come out of nowhere and have you convinced you have hooked a trophy Brown. The lower gorge requires a different fly assortment. Larger streamer flies for Smallmouth such as Clousers', Decievers, and an assortment of crayfish patterns should fit the bill for all species found in this section.

Directions: From the 25/70/I-26 Intersection near Weaverville, follow 25/70 towards Hot Springs for 21.2 miles to the

25/70 and Hwy. 208 intersection. The Delayed Harvest stretch begins at the bridge crossing over the Laurel at this intersection and continues upstream for 3.5 miles to the confluence of the Little Laurel River and the Shelton Laurel. The parking for the gorge is the large gravel pull off just before you reach the intersection. The trail leaves from the bottom end of the parking area and is always on river left.

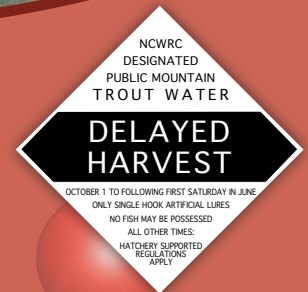




Photo by Ben Wiggins



NCWRC
DESIGNATED
PUBLIC MOUNTAIN
TROUT WATER
NO LURE RESTRICTIONS

**HATCHERY
SUPPORTED**

MINIMUM SIZE - NONE DAILY LIMIT - 7 FISH
SEASON - FIRST SATURDAY IN APRIL
TO LAST DAY OF FEBRUARY

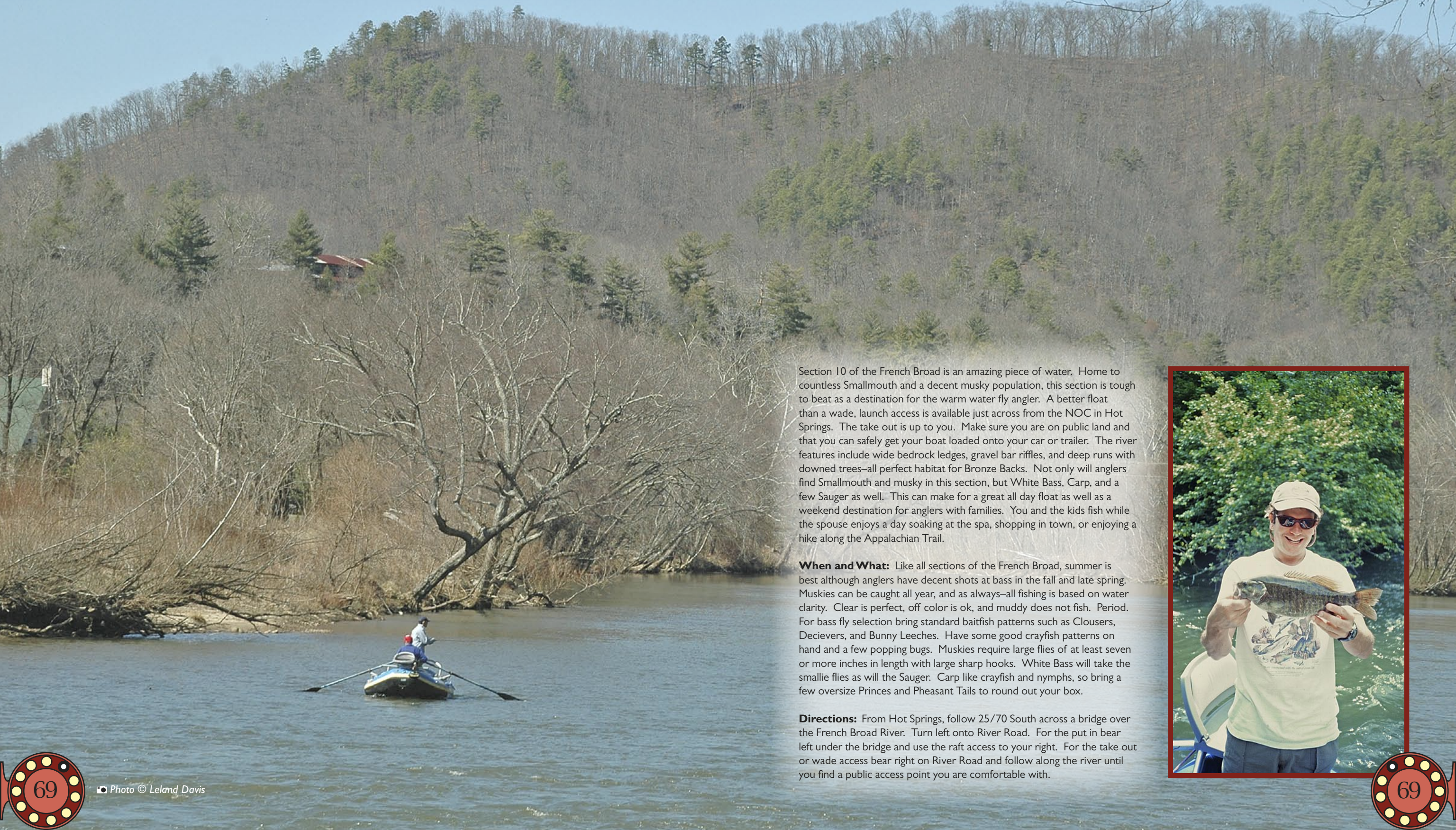
Spring Creek is a small mountain stream that winds its way through the Madison County hills down into the town of Hot Springs. This stream has limited access, and all property boundaries and trespassing signs should be respected at all times. Though the access is tough, the fishing can be quite enjoyable and makes for a great exploratory trip for local fly anglers. For the fly fisherman on vacation in Hot Springs it can make for a quick and easy fish, while the others in his or her group enjoy the spa or a raft trip on the French Broad.

When and What: Spring Creek fishes best during the late spring just after Hatchery Supported season opens but before the heat of summer. Fly boxes should include a few basic dries, a selection of bead heads, and an assortment of large Stonefly imitations.

Directions: From Hot Springs, follow Hwy. 209 South for several miles until the road returns to creekside at the top of the gorge. Fishing access is available where NC wildlife regulations signs are posted only.



Photos © Leland Davis



Section 10 of the French Broad is an amazing piece of water. Home to countless Smallmouth and a decent musky population, this section is tough to beat as a destination for the warm water fly angler. A better float than a wade, launch access is available just across from the NOC in Hot Springs. The take out is up to you. Make sure you are on public land and that you can safely get your boat loaded onto your car or trailer. The river features include wide bedrock ledges, gravel bar riffles, and deep runs with downed trees—all perfect habitat for Bronze Backs. Not only will anglers find Smallmouth and musky in this section, but White Bass, Carp, and a few Sauger as well. This can make for a great all day float as well as a weekend destination for anglers with families. You and the kids fish while the spouse enjoys a day soaking at the spa, shopping in town, or enjoying a hike along the Appalachian Trail.

When and What: Like all sections of the French Broad, summer is best although anglers have decent shots at bass in the fall and late spring. Muskies can be caught all year, and as always—all fishing is based on water clarity. Clear is perfect, off color is ok, and muddy does not fish. Period. For bass fly selection bring standard baitfish patterns such as Clousers, Decievers, and Bunny Leeches. Have some good crayfish patterns on hand and a few popping bugs. Muskies require large flies of at least seven or more inches in length with large sharp hooks. White Bass will take the smallie flies as will the Sauger. Carp like crayfish and nymphs, so bring a few oversize Princes and Pheasant Tails to round out your box.

Directions: From Hot Springs, follow 25/70 South across a bridge over the French Broad River. Turn left onto River Road. For the put in bear left under the bridge and use the raft access to your right. For the take out or wade access bear right on River Road and follow along the river until you find a public access point you are comfortable with.





What's in a name? A lot, I suppose. In this case what I am properly calling the North Toe, many anglers call the Nolichucky. In part they are correct because on the map the North Toe does become the Nolichucky after its confluence with the Cane River. No matter what you call it, the North Toe offers anglers fantastic fishing for Smallmouth on the fly. The river features a wide open river bed strewn with large boulders and bedrock ledges that appears to have been created just for Smallmouth fishing. Wade access is limited however, and some sort of watercraft can dramatically open up sections of river. There are very few places to launch a full size drift boat or raft, and the sections that are most accessible to larger boats get fished more. One or two man

pontoons seem to fit the bill nicely here and are much easier to drag up or down steep overgrown embankments. The two most popular floats are Pigeon Roost Creek to Hunt Dale, and Hunt Dale down to Poplar. The access points from Pigeon Roost to Hunt Dale are crude pullouts. The Poplar access point is much better and somewhat maintained. The section downstream from Poplar is known as the Nolichucky Gorge and contains class IV whitewater. It also crosses the state line into Tennessee. Only anglers with experience rowing serious whitewater should float this section. Wade access to the gorge is via railroad tracks on river right at Poplar, switching to river left immediately. This is also not advised due to frequent train traffic through the gorge. Other

floats are available on the river upstream given you respect posted signs and ask permission from locals when in doubt. I have found most folks in the area can be quite friendly as long as you are patient and treat them with respect. As a bonus, the North Toe also contains a few very sizable trout, musky, and loads of Red Eye Rock Bass. Like other Smallmouth rivers in the area, stream flow and sediment are major factors. Fishing is generally good at flows below 1,400 cfs on the TVA Nolichucky gauge. Below 700 cfs floating becomes a chore in a full size drift boat or raft. Clarity is luck of the draw. If there have been locally heavy storms don't expect a clear river. A few days of no rain and the aforementioned water levels and you should be good to go.



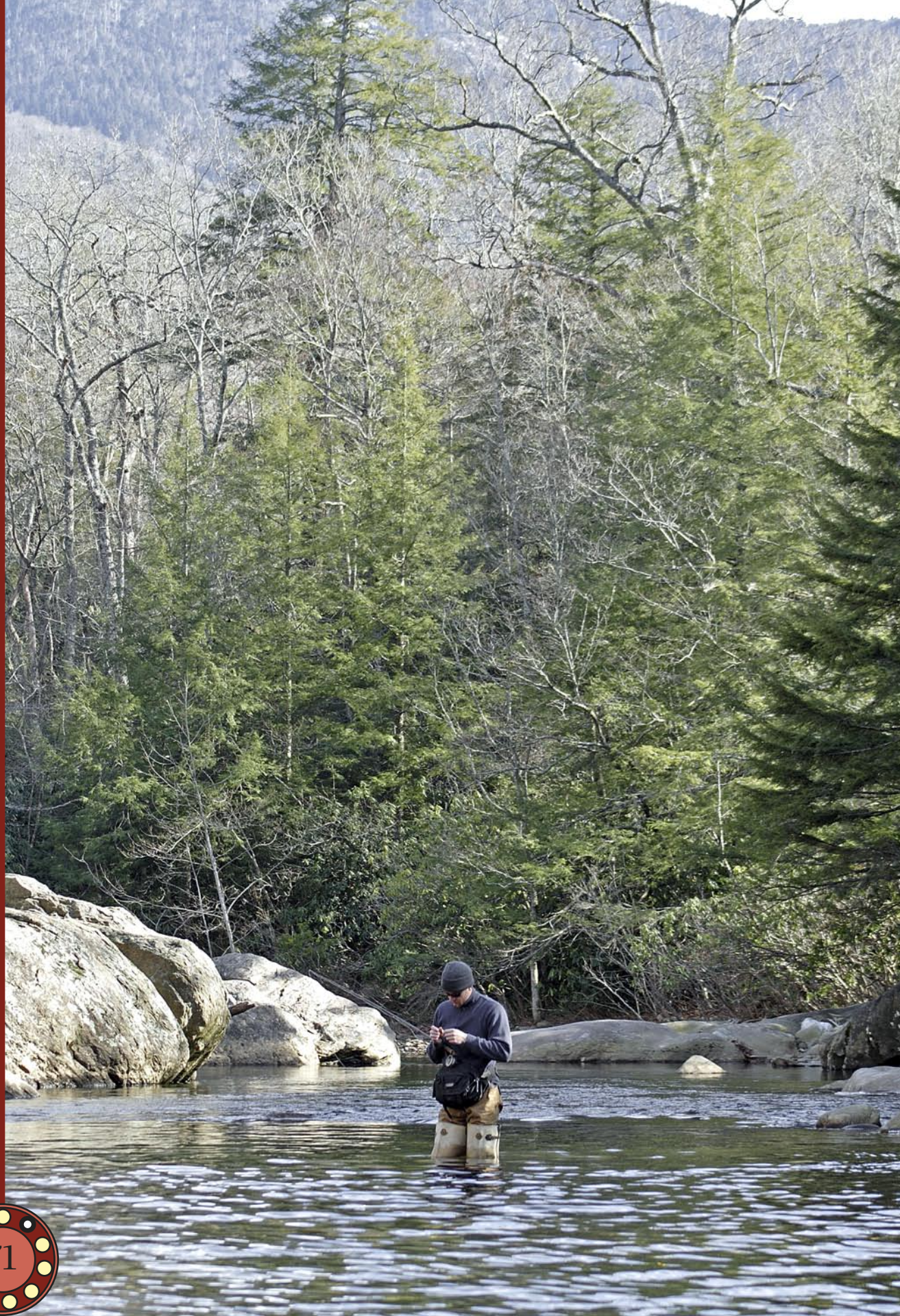
Photos © J.E.B. Hall



When and What: Prime time is from May through September. Any time before or after that can be iffy at best due to weather and water temps. For fly selection, bring your standard Smallmouth kit complete with lots of crayfish patterns, Clouser's, and surface flies. Fish on this river seem to love Chartreuse, so make sure to bring lots of streamers and surface flies containing this color.

Directions: From the 19/23/1-26 intersection near Mars Hill, follow 19 for 11.4 miles to 19W. Take a left onto 19W. Follow 19W for 14.7 miles. At this intersection bear right just before a bridge over the Cane. Continue for 3.8 miles until you reach a bridge crossing the North Toe. Cross the bridge. Take a left, and there will be put in and takeout access immediately on the left via gravel pullouts. Take a right and continue for 2.8 miles for the Pigeon Roost Creek access point. To reach the Poplar access point take the right and only go 1.3 miles, making a left across the railroad tracks and continue for 4.1 miles and make another left into the forest service access area.

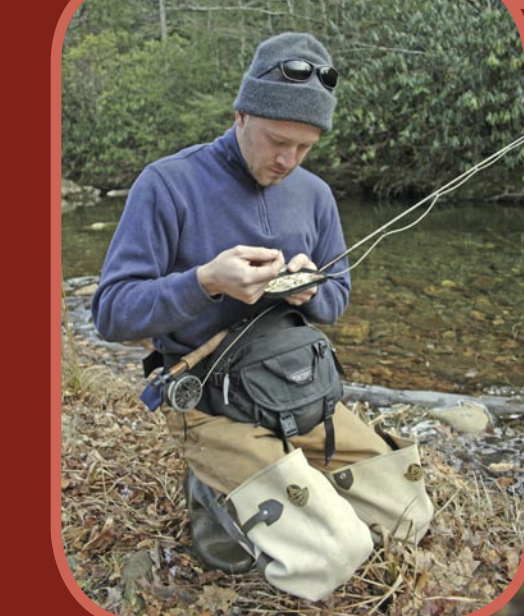
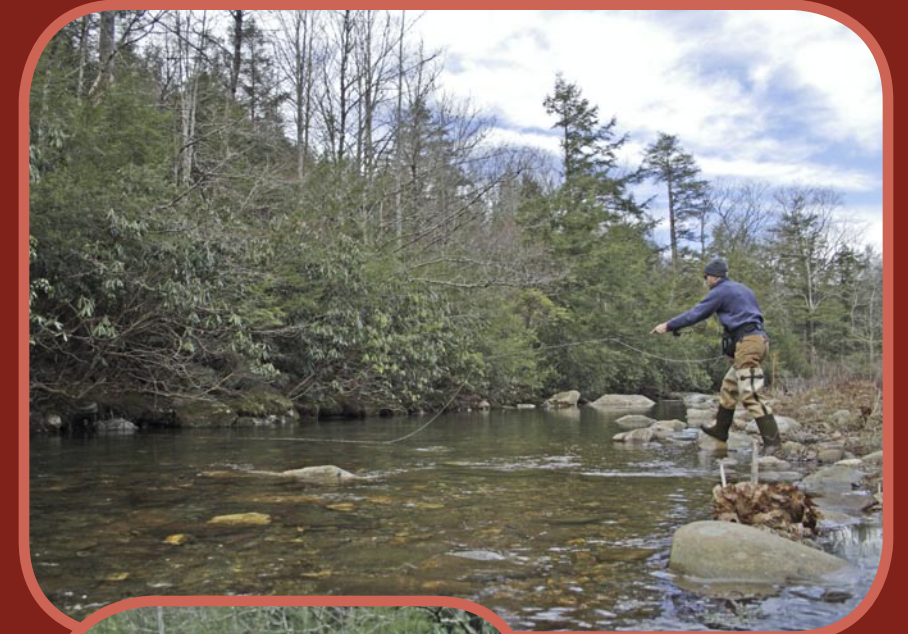




The South Toe is truly an NC trout fishing gem. Draining the northern slopes of Mt. Mitchell, this beautiful freestone stream offers the angler excellent Wild Trout fishing coupled with easy access and convenient camping. The fishing on this particular stretch is reminiscent of the Davidson below the hatchery, with the average fish ranging between six and ten inches. The lower reaches of the river are surprisingly flat and open and feature pocket water mixed with some larger pools. As you continue upstream however, the gradient increases and the stream banks narrow—forming a more typical mountain trout stream. With this change in elevation and stream morphology also comes a change in fish species. Rainbows and Browns inhabit the lower river, and Brook Trout the far upper reaches. Several small streams form the South Toe and can make for alternative trips in the same area. Black Mountain Campground can make for an excellent base camp to access the water in this drainage, but it's only open spring through fall. Fortunately for the angler, this is the best time to fish.

When and What: Late March to early November is prime time on this one. Winter's chill holds a firm grip on this stream, and things seem to become dormant once it turns cold. The forest service also closes the upper part of the road during the winter months, which greatly reduces access. Spring brings fair hatches and the best fishing. Come prepared with parachute Mayfly imitations, Caddis, and small dry Stoneflies to match up with what is happening that day. A variety of bead heads will cover most subsurface work, but make sure that you bring some non beaded ones for days when the fish are being persnickety. Summer means terrestrials and low water as well. Small ants and well tied beetles matched up with 6x or 7x fluorocarbon will fit the bill here. Fall brings cooler temps and better water levels. October usually means Caddis in NC, and the South Toe is no exception. Elk hair versions work fine, and more realistic creations are even better.

Directions: From the intersection of hwy 70 and Hwy. 221 in Marion, follow US 70 West for 2 miles to NC 80. Turn right onto 80 and continue for 13.9 miles to FSR 472. Turn left onto 472. Fishing begins as soon as you reach trout water designation signs.



Photos by Ben Wiggins

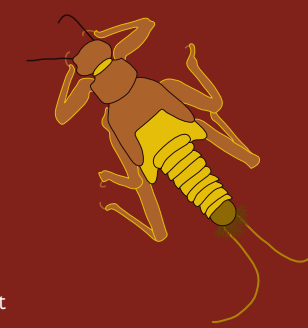




Photo by Ben Wiggins

Rock Creek is a wonderful stream that seems to be often overlooked by anglers fishing the South Toe drainage. This stream is not only a great place to fish but an excellent hike as well. Deep plunge pools interspaced by small boulder gardens await the angler and provide excellent hiding places for small Rainbows and Brook Trout. This is a great place to fish in summer and sees little traffic other than the occasional local angler out for a close-to-home fish. Do not fish until both sides of the stream are on public lands. River left on the lower end of the stream is private, so in the name of access please hike just a bit further and keep everyone happy. Next time you're in Burnsville for work or for pleasure keep this little gem in mind and "rock" on.

When and What: April to October will find active and hungry fish on Rock Creek. Bring a box with selection of basic dry flies and an assortment of nymphs to be fished both as

droppers and on their own. Don't forget some hoppers and beetles for the hot months, and you'll be ready to "rock!"

Directions: Form the 19E/80 Intersection near Burnsville follow 80 South for

11 miles. Turn right on State Rd. 1159 just before a sharp turn in Hwy. 80. In 0.9 miles turn right. In 0.75 miles turn left onto FSR 5521. Drive as far as you can and begin walking until you are on USFS property.

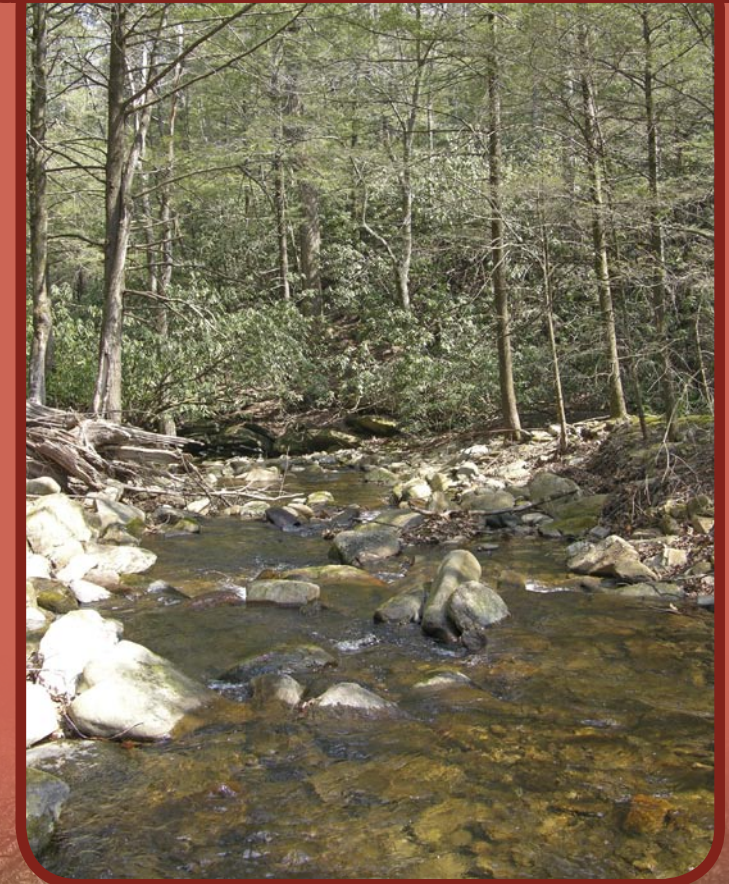


Photo © J.E.B. Hall

Big Lost Cove Creek is a great alternative for South Toe anglers not looking to venture far from the campground or the car. This high country micro-stream offers excellent fishing for small eager fish amongst a beautiful mossy boulder garden. The stream is small enough that some anglers may find that waders are not even necessary, so lace your boots up tight and get ready to rock hop your way to small stream bliss.

When and What: Like other high mountain streams, late spring through early fall offers the best shot at good fishing, with winter being dormant. For flies, dries and droppers will do the trick most of the time. Bring some beetles and ants for summer, and you're ready.

Directions: From the intersection of hwy 70 and hwy 221 in Marion, NC follow US 70 west for 2 miles to NC 80. Turn right onto 80 and continue for 13.9 miles to FSR 472. Turn left onto 472. Follow 472 for 2.3 miles to FSR 2074. Turn left. Lost Cove is less than 0.1 miles from this turn.



Photos © J.E.B. Hall

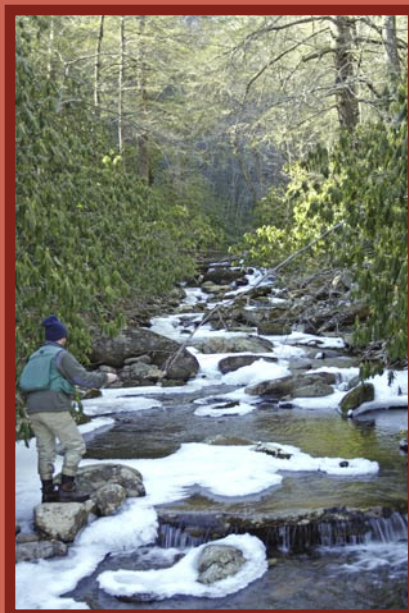


65 • UPPER AND LOWER CREEKS

A nice alternative to fishing the South Toe River is a trip to visit the small stream duo of Upper and Lower Creeks. Located in very close proximity to one another along FSR 472, these small high elevation streams can make for an excellent day trip for anglers in search of small Rainbows and native Brookies. Both feature short hikes, beautiful mountain scenery and excellent fishing. The close proximity of the streams will also allow anglers to sample both easily within a day.

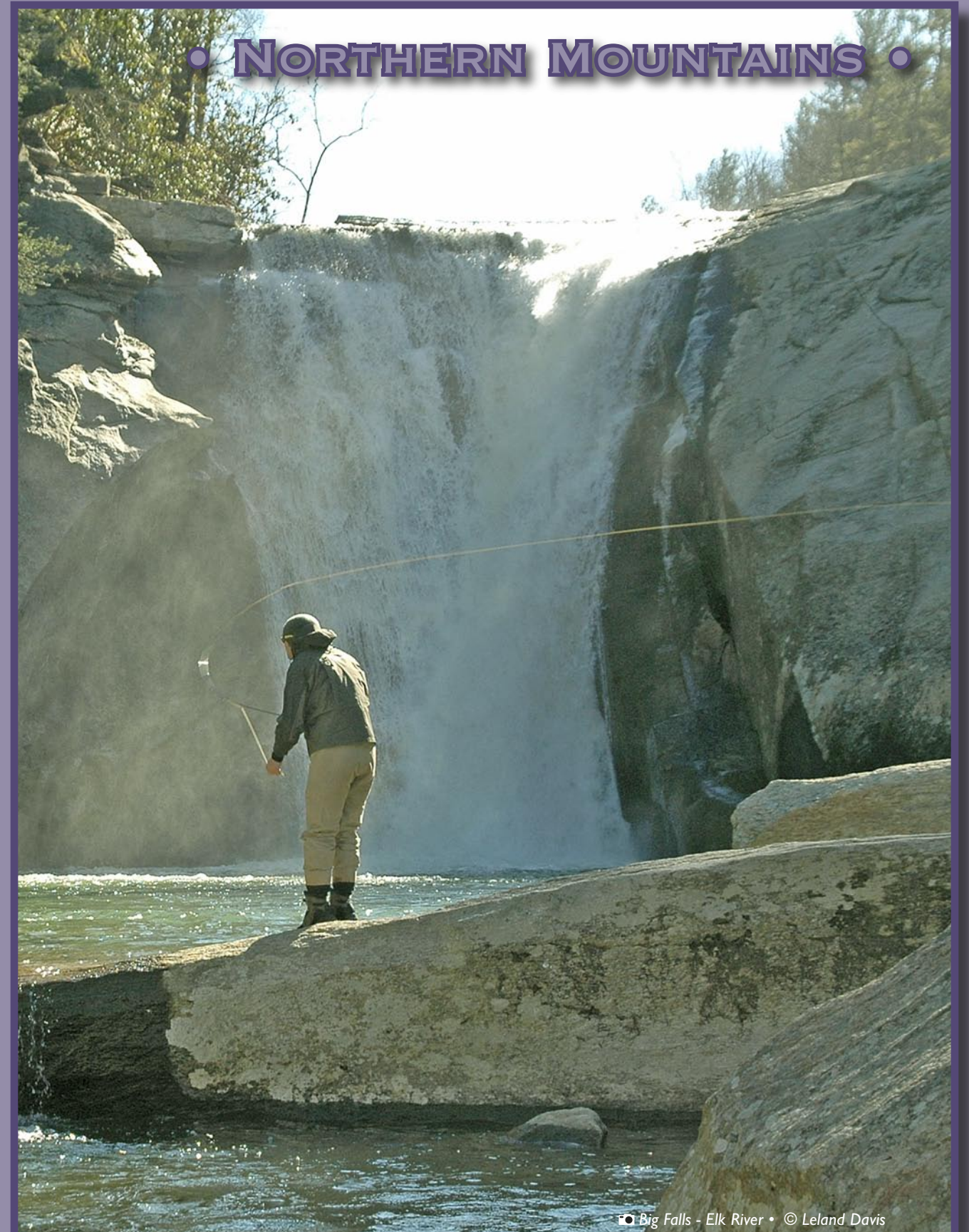
When and What: Mid April to mid October is the time to visit Upper and Lower. Anglers should bring along an assortment of basic dries such as Elk Hair Caddis and Parachute Adams, as well as some bead heads for droppers. Keep fly selection simple as the fish in these streams are generally opportunistic and eager to please.

Directions: From the intersection of Hwy. 70 and Hwy. 221 in Marion, follow US 70 west for 2 miles to NC 80. Turn right onto 80 and continue for 13.9 miles to FSR 472 on the left. Continue on 472 for 4.6 miles for Lower Creek and 4.8 miles for Upper Creek.



Photos by Ben Wiggins

• NORTHERN MOUNTAINS •



Big Falls - Elk River • © Leland Davis

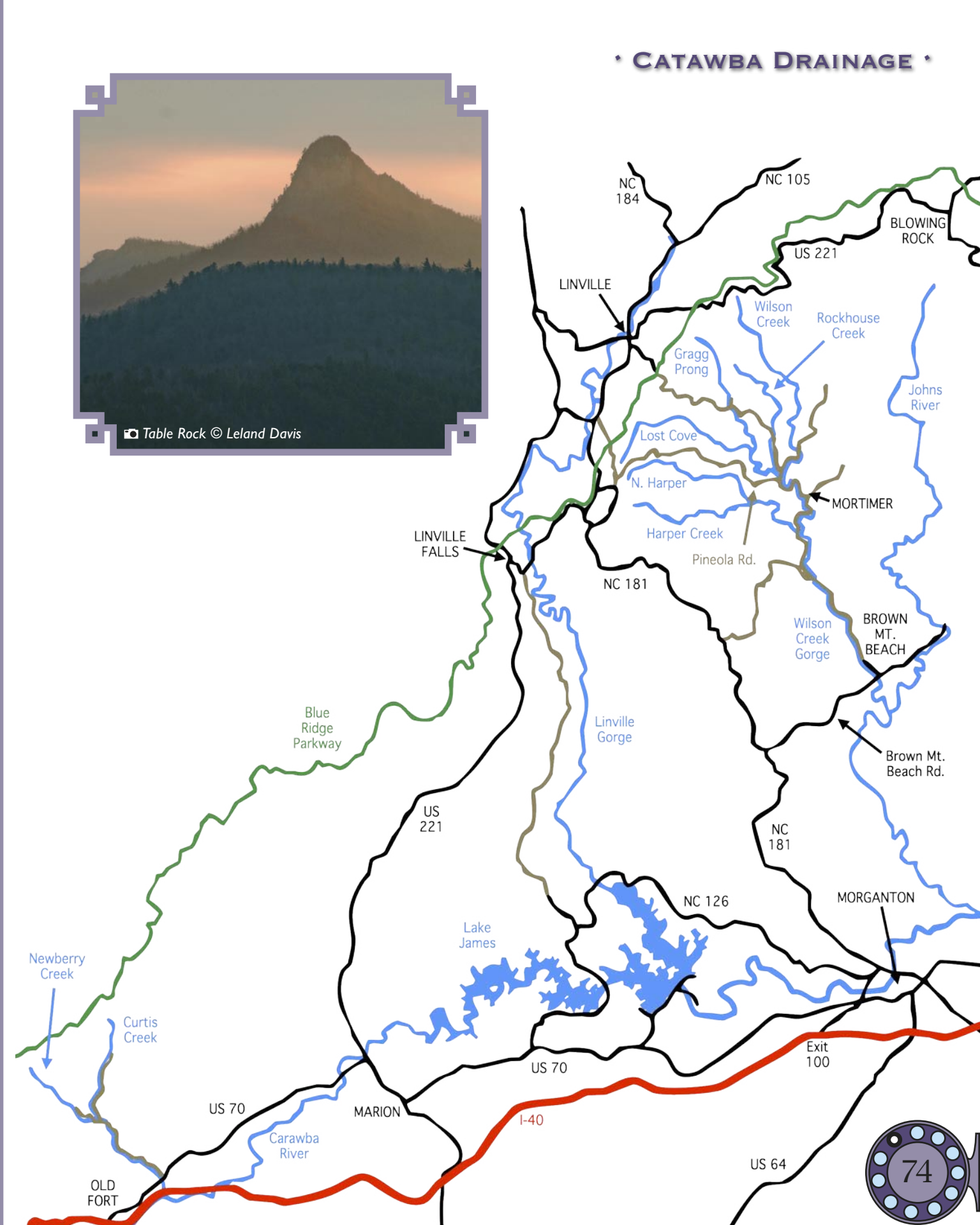
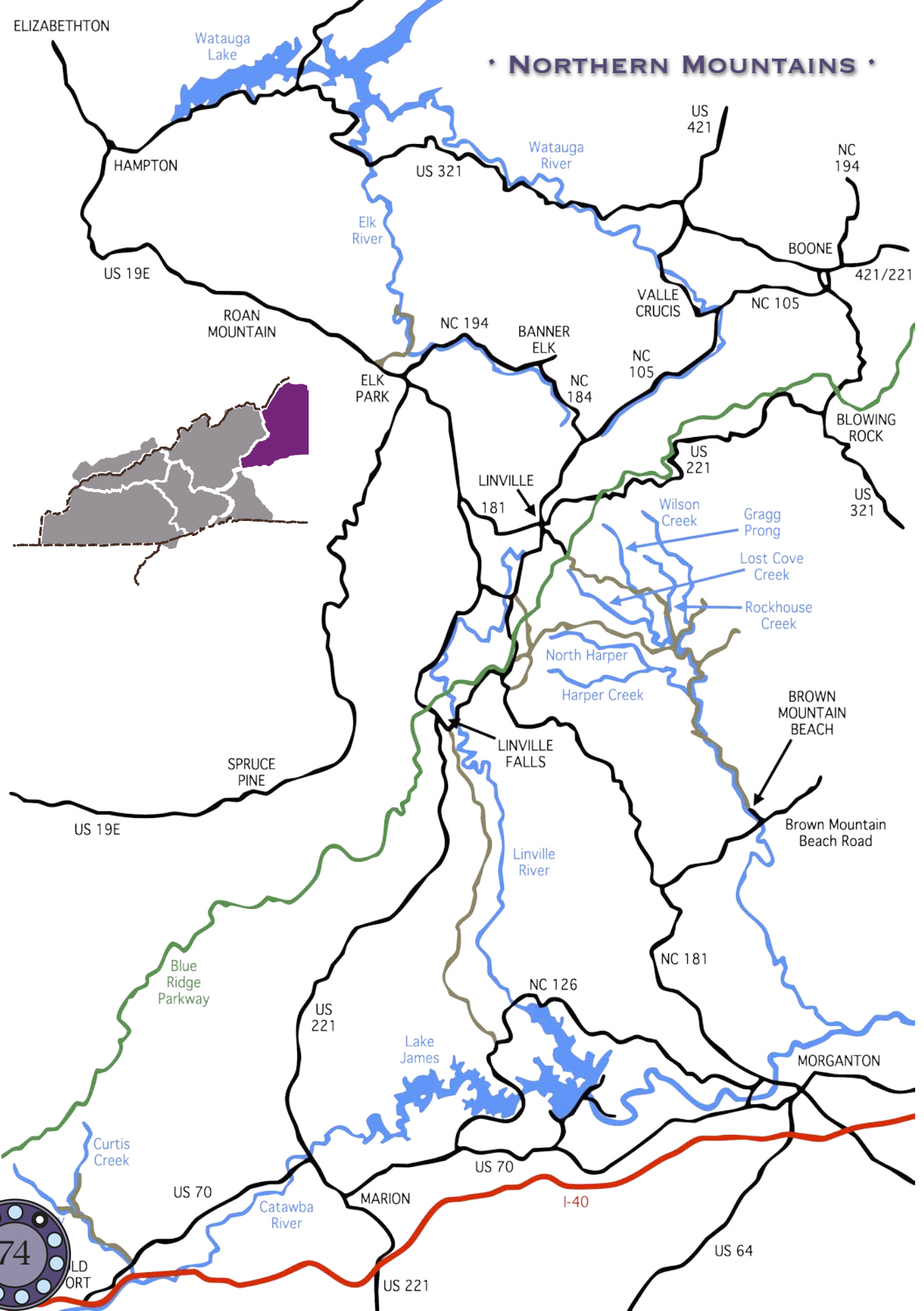




Photo © J.E.B. Hall



Looking for a quick afternoon fish close to Asheville or Marion? Want a stream that offers both stocked fish and great wild trout fishing? Look no further because Curtis Creek is your stream. Located just a few minutes out of Old Fort, Curtis Creek is a roadside gem. The lower half of the stream offers Delayed Harvest fishing amongst fast riffles interspersed with shallow ledge pools. Although the section is short, there are several pull-offs that offer access via short kudzu choked trails, and it's rarely crowded on weekdays. This stretch is also home to two handicap accessible areas where anglers with disabilities can access fishing from piers. The Wild Trout section located further upstream is great too. Make sure when fishing either area that you are on public land. Property owners in this area are difficult and very unfriendly. A slip up can cost you a ticket. When fishing the Wild section, start above the visibly marked boundary

along the gravel road. Fishing stays fairly consistent upstream through the campground and beyond until the creek becomes too small to fish.

When and What: The Delayed Harvest stretch—like all others—fishes best during Delayed Harvest season from October until June. For the Wild Trout section, spring months are best with early fall a close second. Summer can be good as well if water levels remain at a higher level. Fly selection is basic for both stretches. Delayed Harvest fish will take bead head nymphs, flashy streamers, and any number of dries when feeding on the surface. Wild Trout require a slightly more subtle approach but aren't particularly picky. An assortment of basic dries such as Elk Hair Caddis and Adams will do for surface action. Pheasant tails and Princes will work down below.

Directions: From I-40, take the Parker Padgett Road exit and follow SR 1246 (Parker Padgett Road) north for almost 1.1 miles to an intersection with Hwy. 70.

Go straight through the intersection onto SR 1227. This road parallels Curtis Creek. Only fish in areas open to the public and obey all no trespassing signs.

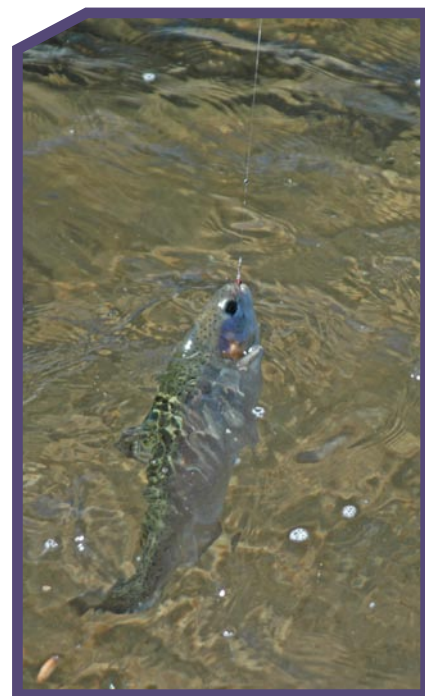
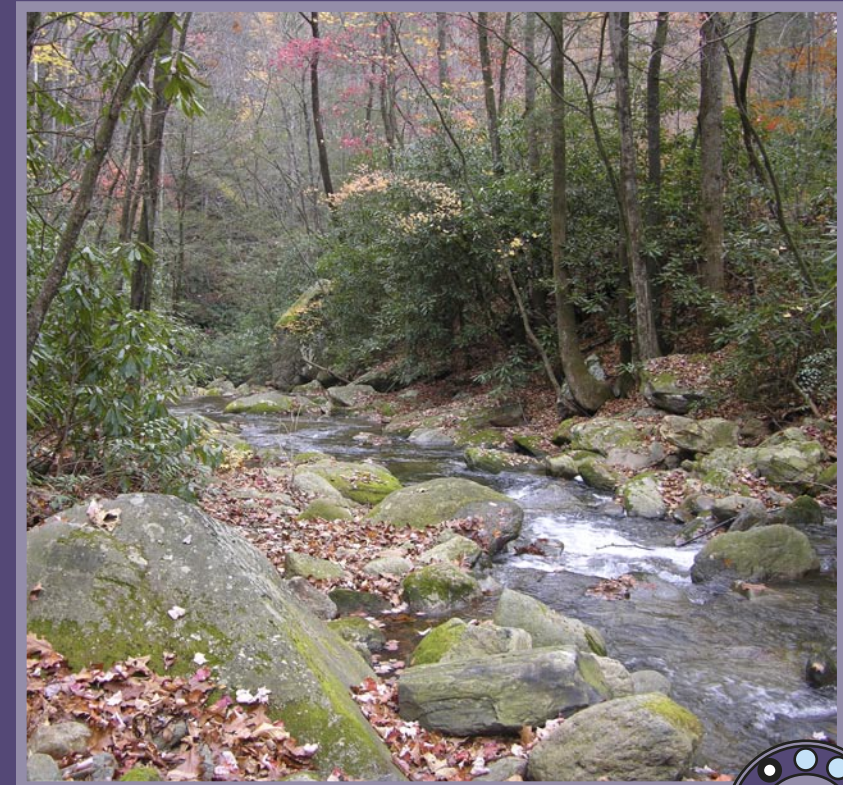


Photo © Leland Davis

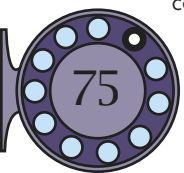
Newberry Creek is a gorgeous wild Brook Trout stream that is an easy drive from Asheville. Flowing into the ever popular Curtis Creek, Newberry could make for an excellent alternative when the Delayed Harvest waters of Curtis are crowded and fished out. The streambed is comprised of large mossy boulders, steep pocket water, and deep plunge pools. Anglers who have any difficulty wading or are not sure on their feet should avoid Newberry Creek due to the harsh river bottom. A slip here could mean serious injury far from a phone. Despite its difficult wading, Newberry is a wonderful Brookie hatchery and can even have a noticeable hatch from time to time. Be aware that the lower mile or so is private property and should be avoided at all times. Streamside residents are unfriendly to anglers and confrontations are not advised.

When and What: Newberry is typical of all WNC Brook Trout streams in that it fishes best from late spring to early fall. Take along some big bushy dry flies for surface work as well as few bead heads for the plunge pools. Terrestrials are always a good bet for summer and should be part of any angler's fly arsenal.

Directions: From I-40, take the Parker Padgett road exit and follow SR 1246 (Parker Padgett Road) north for almost 1.1 miles to an intersection with Hwy. 70. Go straight through the intersection onto SR 1227. Continue on 1227 for 3.8 miles and turn left onto Newberry Creek. Continue up Newberry Creek past all private property until reaching a Forest Service/Wildlife gated access road. Park nearby—but not in front of—the gate and fish up from there.



Photos © J.E.B. Hall





The Catawba River below Lake James is North Carolina's mystery tailwater. Semi-unpredictable releases, very limited wade access, and a fairly lengthy float all prevent anglers from exploring the full potential of this fishery. Typically, this stream is a locals-only affair due to the fact that you would have to live there to fully understand how to fish it. The river itself is home to not only trout, but also some nice Smallmouth and a few Muskies. Visiting anglers throwing large streamers could potentially have a very exciting mixed bag. The river features are very mild and are comprised of slow deep pools and slower riffles. Once past the put-in, anglers will find themselves feeling far from civilization as the river winds its way through miles of wooded bottomland. If floating this stretch, make sure you have a proper release and leave plenty of time to reach the take out. No one likes being stuck in the dark.

When and What: The Catawba fishes all year, but is closed during the month of March due to its Hatchery Supported designation. Bring lots of streamers for this one—heavy, flashy, and in a variety of colors and styles. Anglers should also bring along a sink tip or two for deep work. Throw your normal trout fly boxes in the boat, and you should have it covered.

Directions: Take exit 100 from I-40 and head North 1.9 miles to the junction with US 70. Go straight through 70 to a bridge crossing the Catawba River. Just before crossing the bridge, turn right into a large county park. This is the take out for float fishing. For the put in, Return to 70 and follow 70 west for just under 9 miles. Turn right onto SR1233 toward Bridgewater. Follow 1233 for 2.7 miles and turn right onto SR1223. The put in is located just downstream from the powerhouse and substation found on your left.

Photos © Leland Davis



Photo © Leland Davis

Linville Gorge is like nowhere else in WNC. Huge rock faces stand watch over its deep canyon, and large granite boulders line the streambed. It could be a scene out of Yosemite Valley instead of Burke County. With no roadside access, the only way to reach the river in the gorge is by hiking one of many steep trails that wind precipitously down from the high ridges above. Once in the gorge, anglers should take care in wading and crossing the river. The large boulders that create the river bottom also create dangerous rapids and sieves. A slip into one of these areas could cost you your life. If you are looking for a slightly tamer section to fish, try accessing the few miles between Linville Falls and Babel Tower. This section is relatively calm with only a few tall ledges and falls. The lower sections of river are a good deal flatter and safer too, but a bit harder to reach. What is your reward for entering such a remote gorge? The answer is fishing with

views that can make even the most experienced fisherman blow a cast or two. When not looking up, anglers will find Browns and Rainbows scattered throughout the gorge, hiding amongst the granite. Linville can make for a weekend trip as well as a long day. More adventurous anglers could even try to fish the whole thing, an endeavor that would surely take at least four or five days.

When and What: Regulations on this river are technically Hatchery Supported No Closed Season, but fishing is best Spring through Fall. Fly selections should include large Stonefly nymphs, big ugly streamers, and a variety of other sub-surface creations for exploring Linville's deep pools. Bring some dry flies consistent with local hatches on other streams for the lower reaches of the gorge as well. Last but not least, bring a camera. You will definitely want it on this trip, whether you catch fish or not.

Directions: From Marion, follow 221 north to Linville Falls. Turn right onto 183 and follow the signs to Linville Falls. This sounds redundant, but one is a town and the other a river feature. Once on the dirt road to Linville Falls, anglers can access the river from the falls parking lot or continue on down the dirt road and park at any number of trailheads such as Babel Tower or Conley Cove. This dirt road is very rough and should be driven with care.





Wilson Creek is a trout stream that appears to have been imported from the Sierra Nevada of California. Its lower reaches flow through granite gorges that feature open bedrock stream banks and long deep pools. In this stretch, hatchery fish await anglers who are willing to look past the crowds of swimmers and tourists to find solitude amongst the rocks. During warmer months this could pose a challenge, as the lower stretches of Wilson Creek are taken over by an almost overwhelming number of folks looking to beat the heat by taking a dip. This lower gorge is also heavily fished with conventional methods and can be fished out rather quickly. On the right day with the right fly and the right light it is still an amazing place to fish. The upper reaches of Wilson require anglers to drive a bit further upstream and past large stretches of private property. Remember to only fish areas that are designated public mountain trout water and avoid all areas marked no trespassing.

When and What: The lower gorge of Wilson Creek fishes best in Spring and Fall. Winter can fish OK, given a warm day and willing fish. Remember that all Hatchery Supported sections are closed during March and re-open the first Saturday in April. All higher up stretches fish best Spring through Fall. Fly boxes should include large heavy nymphs and flashy streamers for the lower sections, and a variety of basic dries and nymphs for higher up.

Directions: From the 181/126 intersection in Morganton, follow 181 north for 10.8 miles to Brown Mountain Beach Road. Turn right onto Brown Mountain Beach Road and continue for 4.8 miles to a bridge crossing Wilson Creek. Cross the bridge and turn left onto 1328. 1328 parallels Wilson Creek. 1328 eventually will intersect with 90 and a left turn will take anglers higher into the drainage for access points to reach the small Wild section.





Photos © Leland Davis

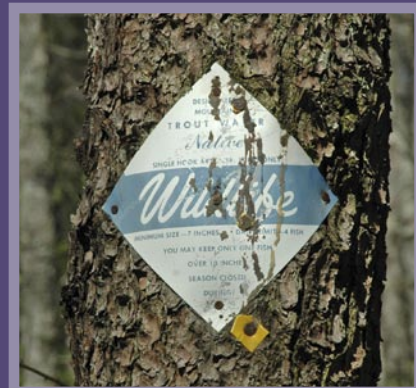
Harper Creek is another high country hike-in gem. This lovely Wild Trout stream should be high on any angler's list, and for the backpacking fisherman probably in their North Carolina top ten. Harper Creek features long boulder gardens that feed into bedrock pools. For anglers who like scenery, Harper is home to a few large waterfalls that drop its crystalline water into deep green pools that are perfect for nymphing or a quick swim in the heat of summer. The trails in and out of the North Harper gorge are steep and rugged, and anglers would be well advised to pack in wading shoes and apparel; roots, rocks and dry leaves seldom mix well with felt soled shoes. In summer, also beware of the ever-present poison ivy along the stream. The Harper watershed seems to be home to a healthy population of the itch causing plant, as well as numerous rattlesnakes and yellow jackets. Don't let any of this change your

mind about planning a trip here, this creek is worth the hike every time.

When and What: The snakes and insects of Harper Creek like warmer weather, and so do the trout. As you probably guessed, April through October is best for this one. Bring your fly box loaded with all your Southeastern freestone favorites such as parachutes and Hare's Ears along with some hoppers and beetles for summer. Keep it simple and fish happy!

Directions: From Linville, follow Hwy. 181 south for 6 miles to SR 1522. Turn left onto 1522 and continue for 1.4 miles. Bear right at Long Ridge Church onto FSR 464 (Pineola Road). Access to North Harper is available via marked pullouts on the right. Lower reaches of the stream can be accessed as follows: From Brown Mountain

Beach along Wilson Creek, follow SR 1328 north for a little more than 5.5 miles. At this point you will cross Harper Creek. After crossing the creek, continue driving for about another 0.6 miles. On your left will be a Harper Creek trailhead. Park here and hike over the ridge into the stream valley. Do not attempt to access Harper where it enters Wilson Creek.

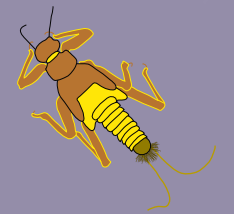
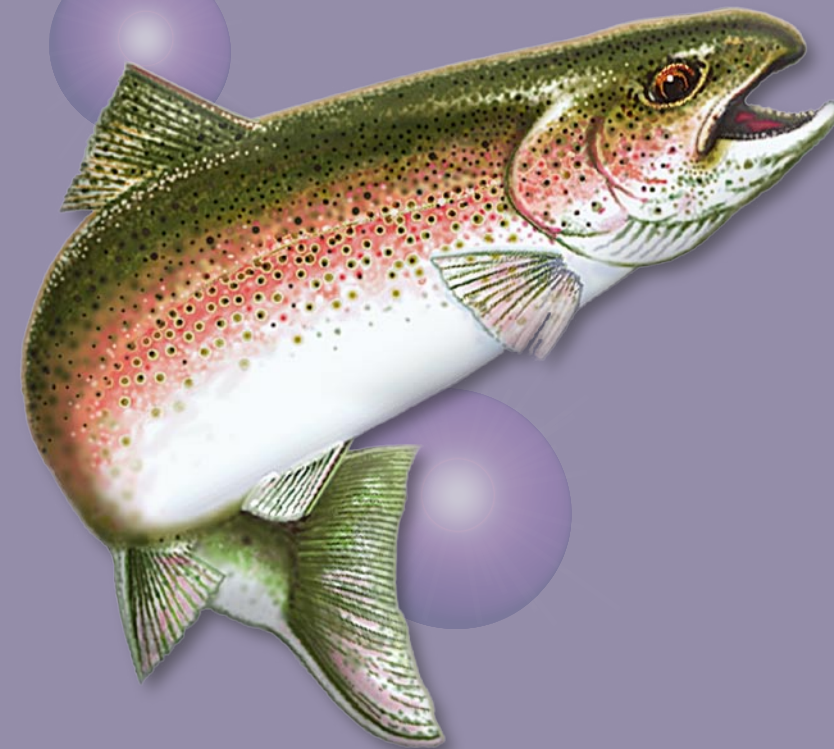
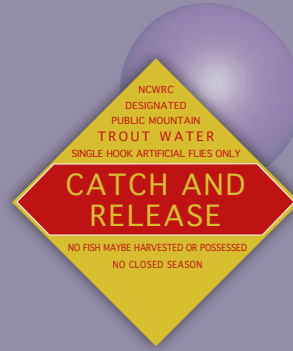


72 • LOST COVE CREEK

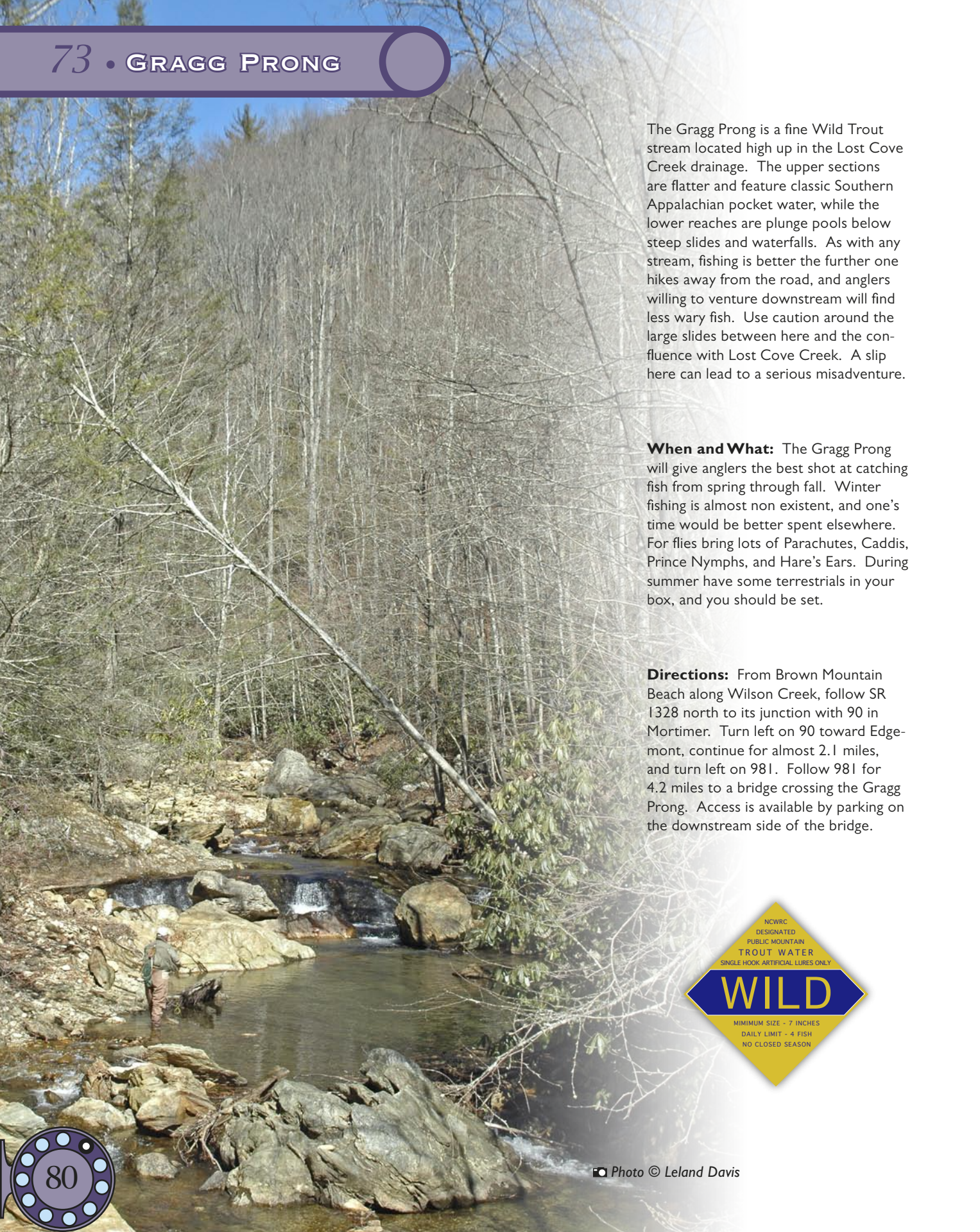
Lost Cove is an amazing stream located high in the Wilson Creek drainage. For anglers who like to hike into beautiful valleys and fish for equally beautiful wild fish, this one may be the best that the high country has to offer. Accessed from Pineola Road, Lost Cove is just a short hike downhill from many well-marked access points. The most scenic one of these is undoubtedly the Hunt Fish Falls Trailhead. Once at stream level, anglers will find long deep pools, gentle boulder gardens, and gin clear water. The fishing is everything you would expect from a stream with this description and is special to say the least. This would be an excellent day trip for anglers staying in or around

the Boone area, as well as Marion. For those looking for a weekend of fishing, Lost Cove is an excellent overnighter or could be combined with a trip into North Harper Creek just to the south.

When and What: With a high elevation beginning and a more northern location, Lost Cove fishes best from the first warm days of spring to the last mild days of fall. Once winter's chill has cooled the water, the fishing cools as well. Fly boxes should be filled with standards such as Parachutes, Caddis, Pheasant Tails and Princes. Bring terrestrials in summer and a few streamers for higher water as well. Now put on your waders and get "lost."



Directions: From Linville, follow Hwy. 181 south for 6 miles to SR 1522. Turn left onto 1522 and continue for 1.4 miles. Bear right at Long Ridge Church onto FSR 464 (Pineola Rd). Lost Cove is accessed via marked pullouts on the left.



The Gragg Prong is a fine Wild Trout stream located high up in the Lost Cove Creek drainage. The upper sections are flatter and feature classic Southern Appalachian pocket water, while the lower reaches are plunge pools below steep slides and waterfalls. As with any stream, fishing is better the further one hikes away from the road, and anglers willing to venture downstream will find less wary fish. Use caution around the large slides between here and the confluence with Lost Cove Creek. A slip here can lead to a serious misadventure.

When and What: The Gragg Prong will give anglers the best shot at catching fish from spring through fall. Winter fishing is almost non-existent, and one's time would be better spent elsewhere. For flies bring lots of Parachutes, Caddis, Prince Nymphs, and Hare's Ears. During summer have some terrestrials in your box, and you should be set.

Directions: From Brown Mountain Beach along Wilson Creek, follow SR 1328 north to its junction with 90 in Mortimer. Turn left on 90 toward Edgemont, continue for almost 2.1 miles, and turn left on 981. Follow 981 for 4.2 miles to a bridge crossing the Gragg Prong. Access is available by parking on the downstream side of the bridge.



Photo © Leland Davis

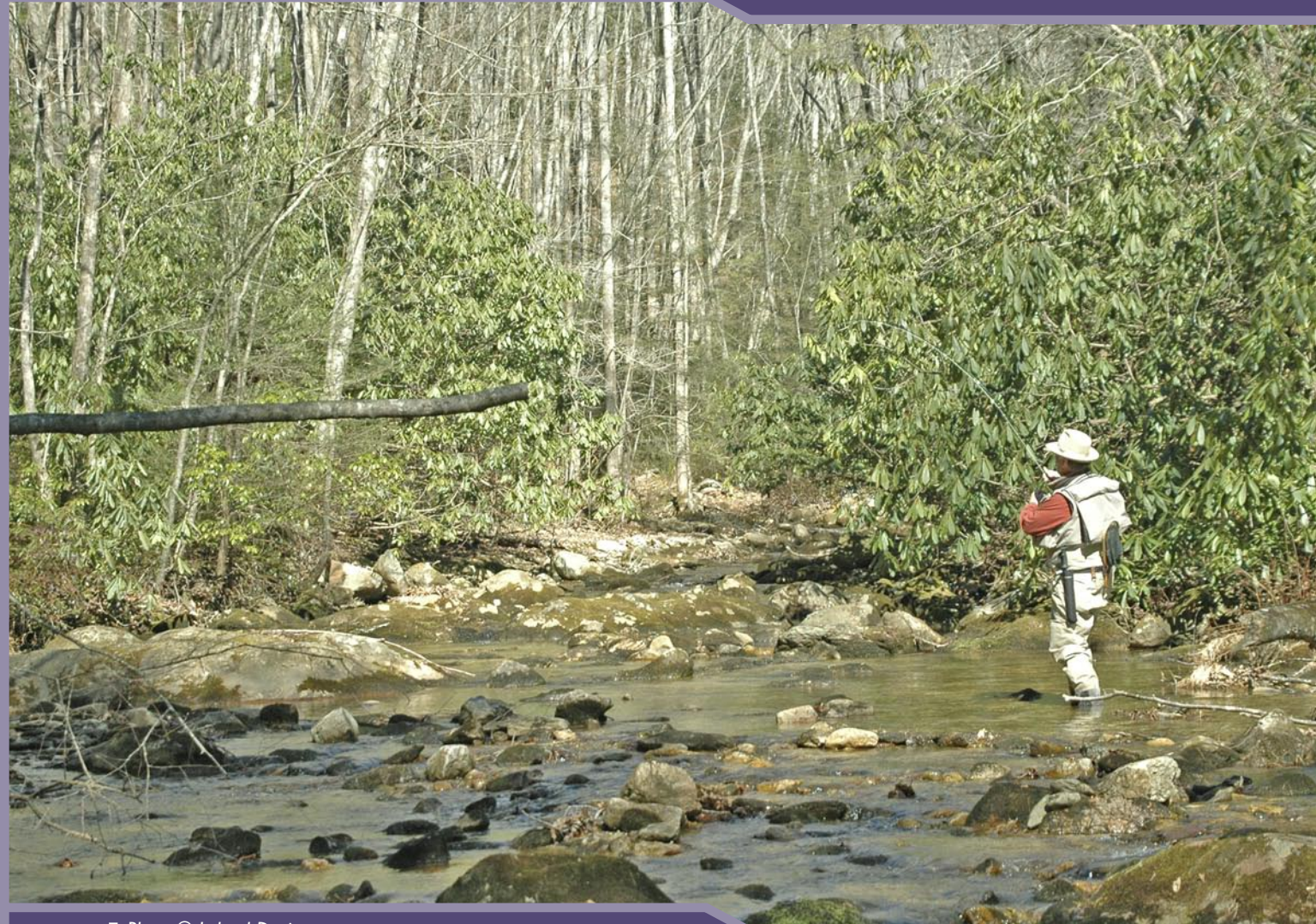


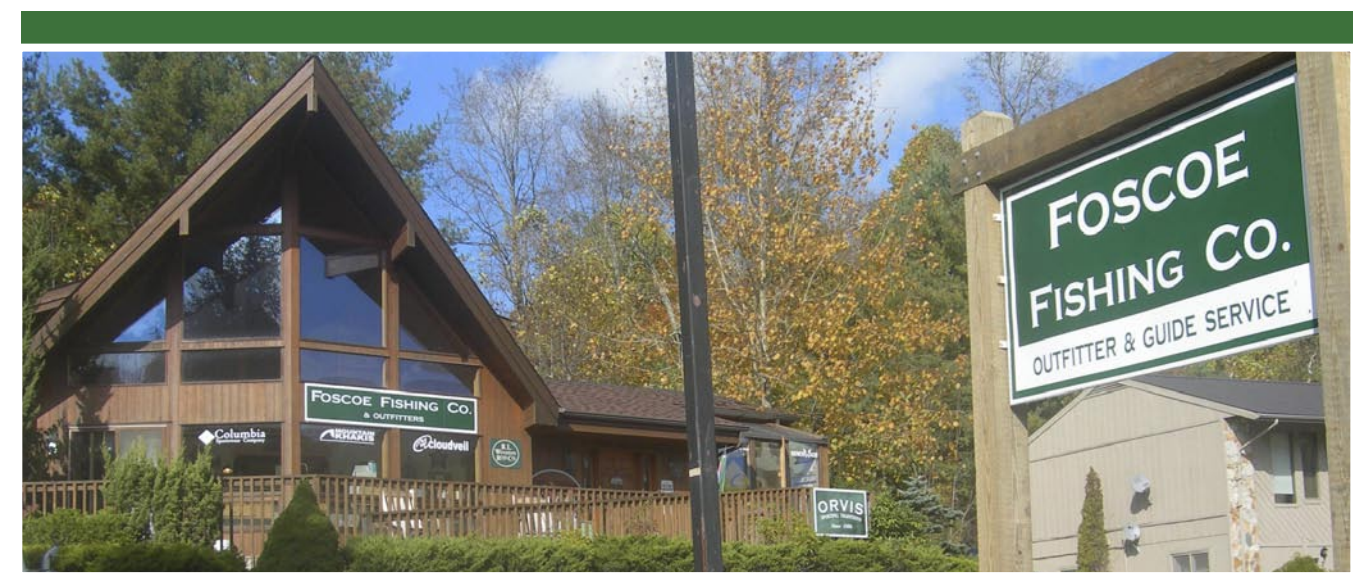
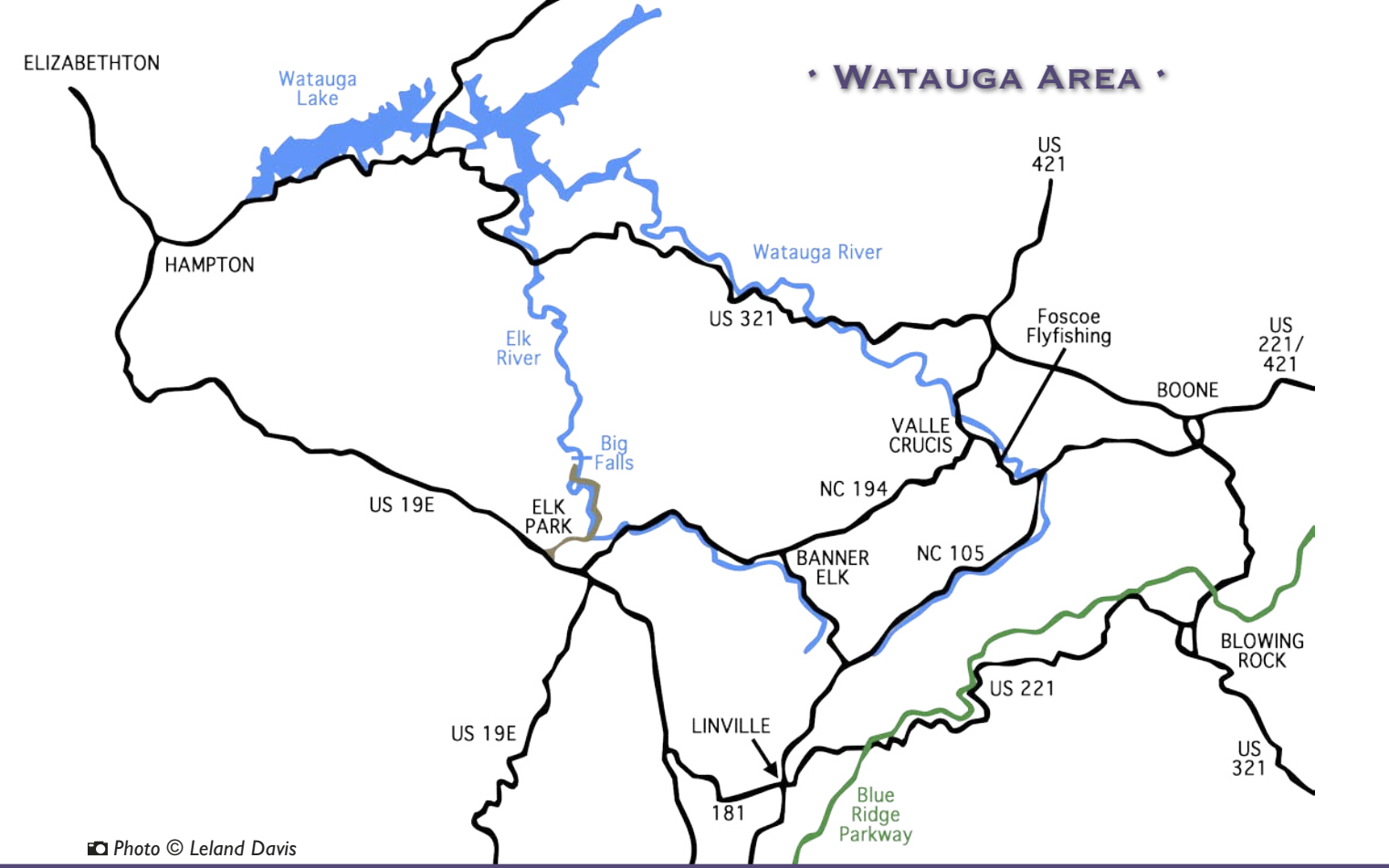
Photo © Leland Davis

Rockhouse creek is an easily accessible small stream in the Wilson Creek Drainage. Unlike North Harper or Lost Cove, Rockhouse is roadside for most of its fishable length and can be accessed from a variety of roadside pullouts. Wading can be tricky in some sections and probably should be referred to as rock hopping rather than wading. The streambed consists of large boulders and small plunge pools with a fairly steep gradient, which is perfect habitat for the small Brook Trout that reside there. Be sure to avoid all private property on the lower end of the stream and stay to the public waters further up.

When and What: Rockhouse is at its best April to October, although a few fish can be caught the rest of the year. Fly selections should be kept pretty basic. On top, fish large attractor dries such as Elk Hair Caddis and Stimulators. Sub-surface go with Pheasant Tails and Hare's Ears.

Directions: From Brown Mountain Beach along Wilson Creek, follow SR 1328 north to its junction with 90 in Mortimer. Turn left on 90 toward Edgemont and continue for almost 2.1 miles and turn left on 981. 981 follows Rockhouse Creek. Fishing begins as soon as you reach public property.





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NCWRC
DESIGNATED
PUBLIC MOUNTAIN
TROUT WATER

**DELAYED
HARVEST**

OCTOBER 1 TO FOLLOWING FIRST SATURDAY IN JUNE
ONLY SINGLE HOOK ARTIFICIAL LURES
NO FISH MAY BE POSSESSED
ALL OTHER TIMES
HATCHERY SUPPORTED
REGULATIONS
APPLY

The Watauga River in Valle Crucis is a nice mid-sized stream flowing through a large open valley. If one imagines the mountains to be a bit taller, it has a striking similarity to a western stream as it makes its way through the fields and pastures of Watauga county. For Boone anglers it can make a great afternoon fish, and for visiting anglers, a nice day trip. The streambed is fairly flat and features deep slow pools mixed with gentle riffles. The fishing can be quite good, and regular stockings by the state make it better during Delayed Harvest season.

When and What: October through May will make for happy anglers on the Watauga. Winter can be quite cold in this part of NC, and some winter days may prove to be tough as water temps dip into the high 30s. Fly boxes should contain San Juans, Woolly Buggers, Glo Bugs, and a variety of bright flashy nymphs. Add your choice of dry flies and cast away.

Directions: From Valle Crucis, follow 194 north less than a mile to a left turn onto Watauga River Road. Access is avail-

able in Valle Crucis via a public park near Mast Store and pull outs along Watauga River Road.





Photo © Leland Davis

NCWRC
DESIGNATED
PUBLIC MOUNTAIN
TROUT WATER
SINGLE HOOK ARTIFICIAL FLIES ONLY

**CATCH AND
RELEASE**

NO FISH MAYBE HARVESTED OR POSSESSED
NO CLOSED SEASON

NCWRC
DESIGNATED
PUBLIC MOUNTAIN
TROUT WATER
NO LURE RESTRICTIONS

**HATCHERY
SUPPORTED**

MINIMUM SIZE - NONE DAILY LIMIT - 7 FISH
SEASON - FIRST SATURDAY IN APRIL
TO LAST DAY OF FEBRUARY



Photo by Ben Wiggins



Photo © Leland Davis



Photo © Leland Davis

For anglers visiting the Banner Elk area, the Elk River can make for a quick and easy fish while others in their group are enjoying the slopes or shopping. Flowing right through town, the Catch and Release section is so convenient, it's sinful. If you are looking for secluded fishing this may not be your spot, but if you can look past the town the surrounding mountains provide a nice view. The fishing in this section is tough due to pressure, but not impossible. The sections near the hospital west of town even remind one of a western spring creek. For those looking to fish something unique and enjoy a spectacular waterfall, the Hatchery Supported stretch is worth a look. Located just outside of Elk Park, this short stretch fishes best after stocking, but can give up a few fish any time. This would make another great place for vacationing anglers to wet a line while the family enjoys hiking trails and views.

When and What: These stretches can be fished all year, with spring and early summer being the best. Remember that the Hatchery Supported stretches close for the month of March. Pack your fly box with everything from Woolly Buggers to tiny midges for this one. Hatchery fish seem willing to take anything with some flash, while the fish in the Catch and Release stretch can be a bit picky.

Directions: For the Catch and Release Section: From Banner Elk, follow 194 West towards Beech Mountain. Access is available at pullouts along the road where state trout water designation signs are posted. For the Hatchery Supported Section: Follow 194 out of Banner Elk to its intersection with 19E. From there turn

right and follow 19E towards Elk Park. Once in Elk Park turn right onto SR 1305 and follow the signs to the Elk River Falls Trailhead.



Not that long ago, flyfishing meant, for the most part, dry flies and trout streams. How times have changed. Today, the term “fly water” encompasses nearly everything from the tiniest, jump-across creeks to the wide-open ocean. Anglers now present flies from the surface into the darkest depths; bluegills, bass, trout (of course), salmon, steelhead, bonefish, stripers, sailfish and bluefin tuna are all fair game. We’ve even heard of a guy chasing giant alligator gar on the fly. These days, any water is fly water.

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on up to the saltwater heavy-weight champion, 16-weight Xi2. Toss in nine two-handed Spey rods, the Z-Axis and SLT rod series (designed to fit specific casting styles), the specialized long-distance-casting TCR series, and well, next thing you know, you’re building 182 different rods.

Our goal with each of these rods is to make it easier for anglers of all abilities, under any conditions, to put the fly closer to the fish.

Of course, accomplishing this goal isn’t easy. It means employing a dedicated (OK, fanatical) team of designers, engineers and materials specialists. It means investing an extraordinary amount of time in the lab and on the water. Our exclusive G5 Technology, which allows us to build the lightest, most responsive rod blanks in the industry, for example, took nearly five years of intensive R&D. And it also means a commitment to quality that can only be satisfied by handcrafting every Sage rod right here on Bainbridge Island, USA.

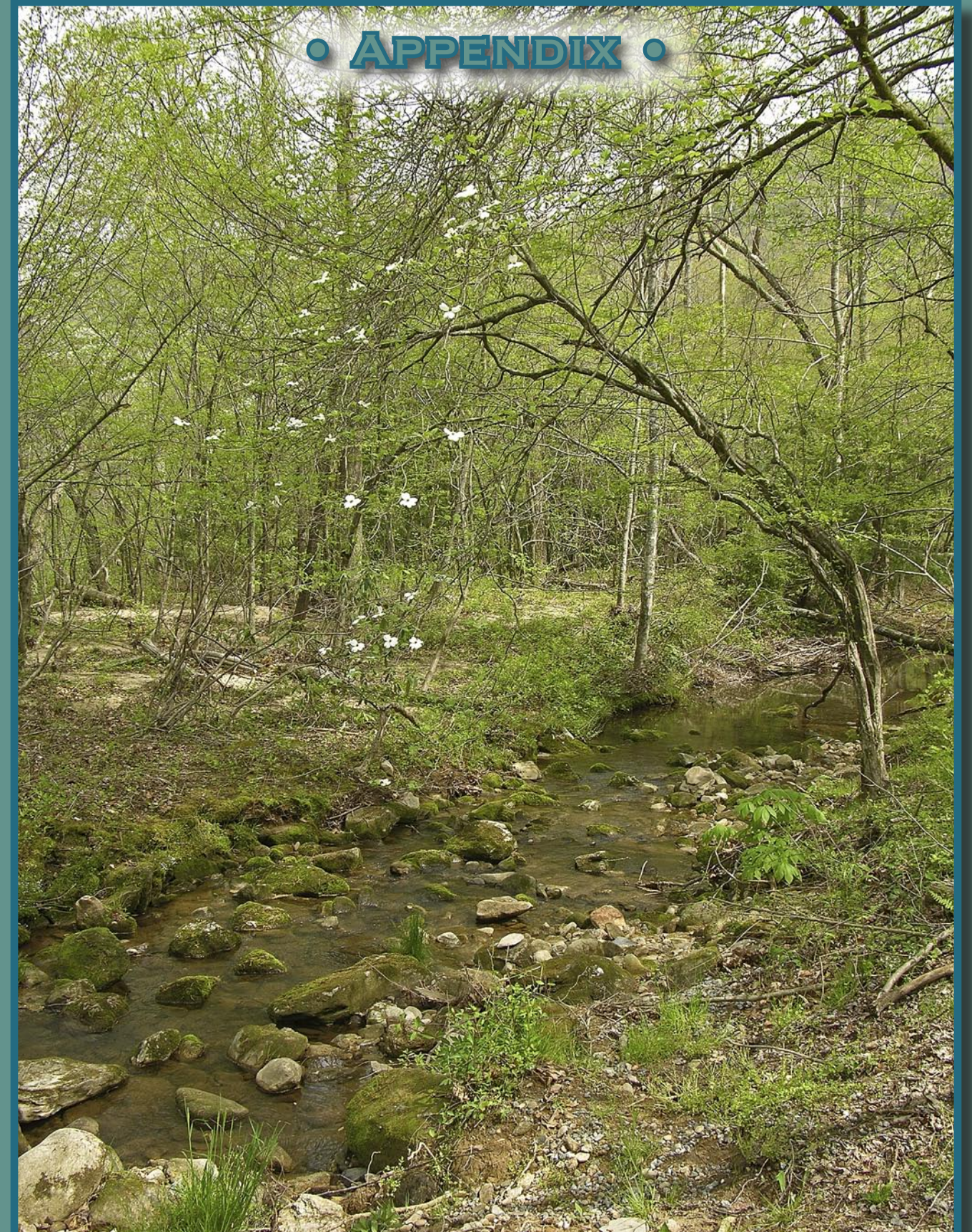
Why do we go to such lengths? At the end of the day (*and the beginning, and the middle...*), we are a company of people who live to fish. Our quest to create equipment that makes time on the water more enjoyable is, as they say, a labor of love. It’s also a great excuse to go fishing. A lot. See you out there.

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APPENDIX



Delayed Harvest

October 1st to 1st Saturday in June, Catch and Release Single Hook Artificial Lures Only.
1st Saturday in June to October 1st, use Hatchery Supported Regulations.
Delayed Harvest is where it's at for anglers looking to catch numbers of fish and beginners looking to work on their skills.

Hatchery Supported

1st Saturday in April to last day in February, No bait or lure restrictions. Limit 7 fish per angler.
No size limit. March 1st to 1st Saturday in April closed to fishing.
Most trout streams designated Hatchery Supported, are not the best fly fishing waters.
Those listed in this book offer exceptional fishing.

Wild Trout

No closed season. Single hook artificial lures only.
Limit of 4 fish, minimum of 7 inches in length.
Most high elevation streams away from roads and private property have populations of wild trout.
Remember all fish here are naturally reproducing fish and should be treated with extra care.

Catch and Release Fly Fishing Only

No closed season. No fish may be possessed.
Fly fishing with single hook flies only. Dropper flies ok.
This regulation is great for the fly angler but can create quite the crowd due to the inviting name.

Wild Trout Natural Bait

No closed season. Single hook artificial lures or single hook natural bait only.
Limit of 4 fish, minimum of 7 inches in length.
Wild Trout Natural Bait is a bit ridiculous.
Lucky for us only a handful of streams carry this designation.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

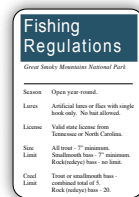
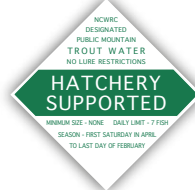
Single hook artificial lures only.
Limit of 5 fish, minimum of seven inches in length.
The classic Park regulations.
Check with the ranger station to find out about what feeder streams are open to fishing.

NC General Freshwater

Refer to NC regulations digest.
A wide variety of changing regulations that leave streams open to pretty much anything.

TN Trophy Smallmouth

Anglers can keep one small mouth of 20 inches or more. Awesome!



Reach #	Reach Name	Region	Regulations	Pg.
26	Upper Nantahala	Southwest	Delayed Harvest	33
29	Upper Tuckasegee	Southwest	Delayed Harvest	36
35	North Mills River	Balsams	Delayed Harvest	42
41	Little River	Balsams	Delayed Harvest	48
45	East Fork French Broad	Balsams	Delayed Harvest	51
52	Green River	Eastern	Delayed Harvest	58
58	Big Laurel	Newfound	Delayed Harvest	67
66	Curtis Creek	Northern	Delayed Harvest	75
75	Watauga River	Northern	Delayed Harvest	82
23	Santeetlah Creek	Southwest	Hatchery Supported	31
25	Lower Nantahala	Southwest	Hatchery Supported	32
40	Musky Mile	Balsams	Hatchery Supported	47
44	West Fork French Broad	Balsams	Hatchery Supported	50
47	West Fork Pigeon	Balsams	Hatchery Supported	53
51	North Pacolet	Eastern	Hatchery Supported	57
53	Big Hungry River	Eastern	Hatchery Supported	59
54	Rocky Broad	Eastern	Hatchery Supported	60
59	Spring Creek	Newfound	Hatchery Supported	68
68	Catawba River	Northern	Hatchery Supported	76
69	Linville River	Northern	Hatchery Supported	76
70	Wilson Creek	Northern	Hatchery Supported	77
22	Slickrock Creek	Southwest	Wild Trout	30
24	Snowbird Creek	Southwest	Wild Trout	31
30	Panthertown Creek	Southwest	Wild Trout	37
31	Whitewater River	Southwest	Wild Trout	38
33	South Mills River	Balsams	Wild Trout	40
34	Bradley Creek	Balsams	Wild Trout	41
36	Looking Glass Creek	Balsams	Wild Trout	43
38	Avery Creek	Balsams	Wild Trout	44
42	Courthouse Creek	Balsams	Wild Trout	49
46	Middle Prong Pigeon	Balsams	Wild Trout	52
48	Little East Fork Pigeon	Balsams	Wild Trout	54
49	Yellowstone Prong	Balsams	Wild Trout	55
50	East Fork Pigeon	Balsams	Wild Trout	56
63	Rock Creek	Newfound	Wild Trout	72
64	Big Lost Cove Creek	Newfound	Wild Trout	72
65	Upper and Lower Creeks	Newfound	Wild Trout	73
67	Newberry Creek	Northern	Wild Trout	75
71	Harper / North Harper	Northern	Wild Trout	78
73	Gragg Prong	Northern	Wild Trout	80
74	Rockhouse Creek	Northern	Wild Trout	80
37	Upper Davidson	Balsams	Catch & Release Fly Fishing Only	44
39	Lower Davidson	Balsams	Catch & Release Fly Fishing Only	46
62	South Toe River	Newfound	Catch & Release Fly Fishing Only	71
72	Lost Cove Creek	Northern	Catch & Release Fly Fishing Only	79
76	Elk River	Northern	Catch & Release Fly Fishing Only	83
32	Thompson River	Southwest	Wild Natural Bait	39
43	North Fork French Broad	Balsams	Wild Natural Bait	50
27	Little Tennessee River	Southwest	NC General Freshwater	34
28	Lower Tuckasegee	Southwest	NC General Freshwater	35
55	French Broad Section VI	Newfound	NC General Freshwater	64
56	French Broad Section VIII	Newfound	NC General Freshwater	65
57	French Broad Section IX	Newfound	NC General Freshwater	66
60	French Broad Section X	Newfound	NC General Freshwater	69
61	North Toe / Nolichucky	Newfound	NC General Freshwater	70
13	Pigeon River	TN Smokies	TN Trophy Smallmouth	22

BROWN TROUT

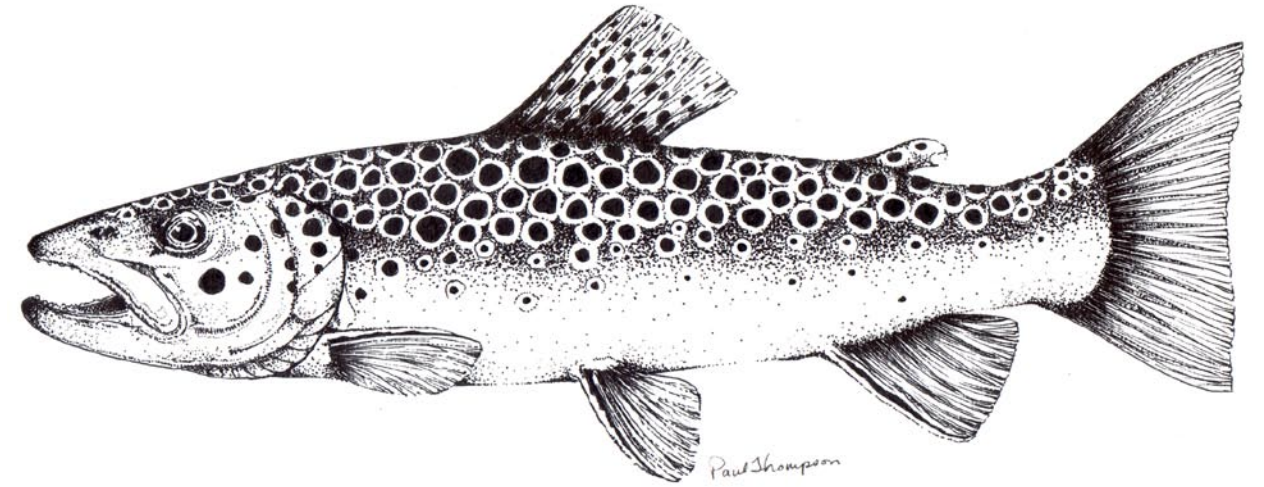
Scientific Name: *Salmo trutta*

What to Look For:

Brown trout vary in color from yellowish brown to dark brown with golden yellow sides. On the sides of the fish you will find dark spots circled with white or light yellow. Red spots are also common.

Where do they come from:

Brown Trout are native to Europe and western Asia. They were introduced to the US in the late 1800's. This fish is closely related to the Atlantic Salmon.



BROOK TROUT

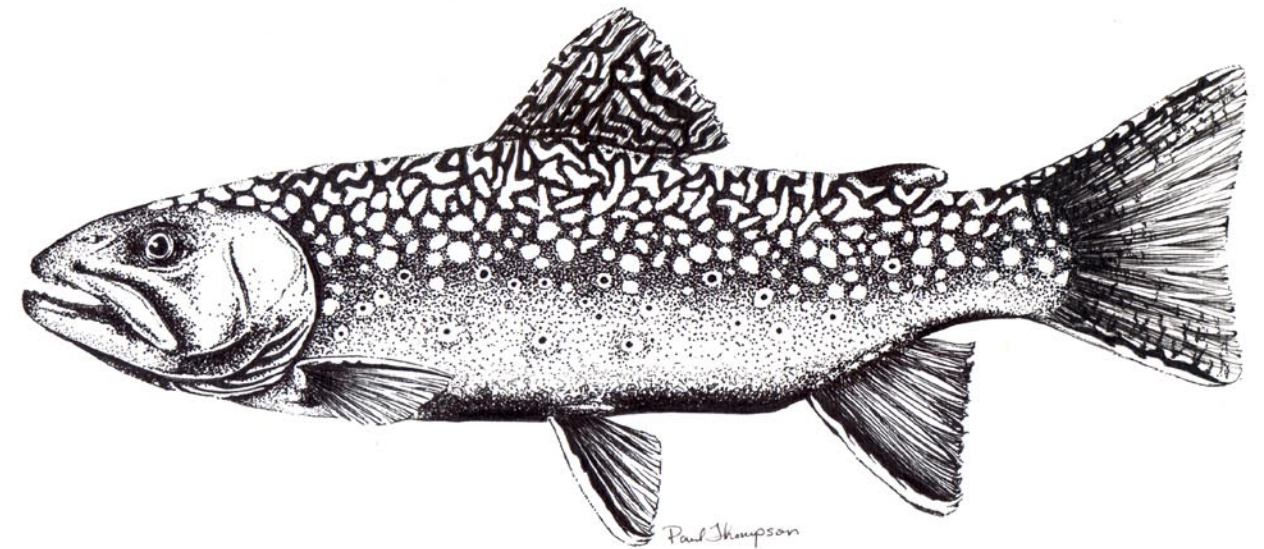
Scientific Name: *Salvelinus fontinalis*

What to Look For:

The brook trout is deep green, with red spots on its sides. The belly of the fish can range from light pink to bright orange. It has squiggly lines along its back and white edges on its fins and tail. Fins are typically light pink to bright orange in the center. Brook trout are very soft to the touch.

Where do they come from:

The Brook Trout is our only native trout. Actually it isn't a trout at all. It is a member of the Char family and is more closely related to Artic Char, Lake Trout, and Dolly Varden than it is Browns or Rainbows.



RAINBOW TROUT

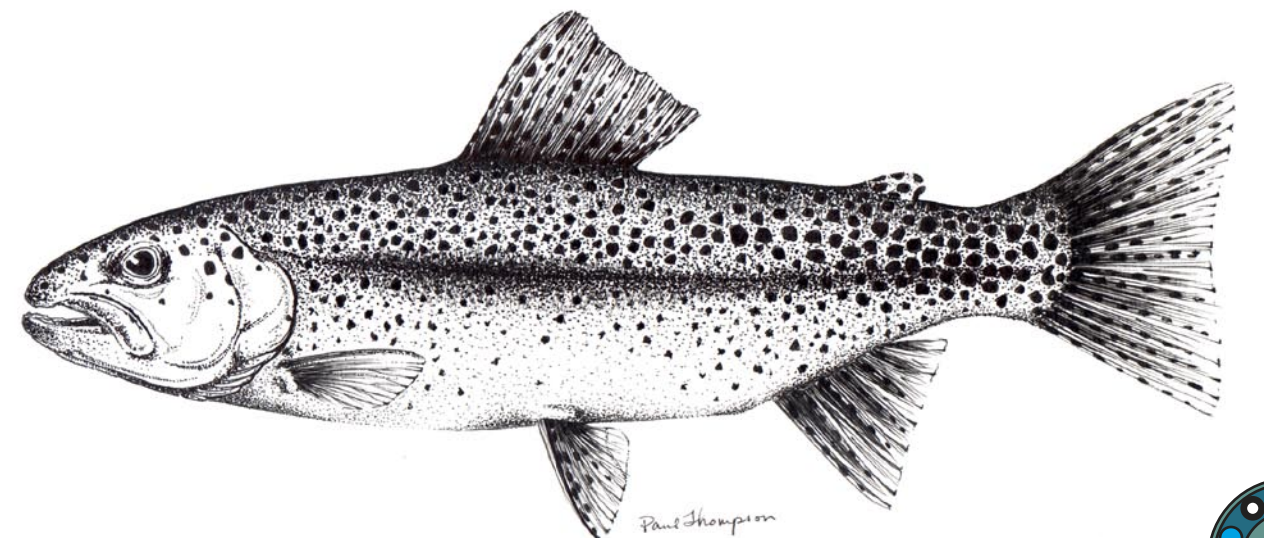
Scientific Name: *Oncorhynchus mykiss*

What to Look For:

Rainbows have an olive green back, chrome sides, and a white belly. The sides are marked with a large lateral stripe that varies in color from pink to dark red. The entire fish is covered in dark spots.

Where do they come from:

Rainbows come from the Pacific Northwest, British Columbia and Alaska. Introduced about the same time as Brown Trout, these aggressive fish live in almost every trout stream in NC.



· AVAILABLE SPECIES BY REGION ·

This handy chart makes for a great way to see what fish are available in each region. This is great to use when planning weekend or multi-day adventures to pursue your favorite critters. You can see what's available for you to slip out and catch in the region you're traveling to for that family vacation coming up, or for a full-fledged fishing trip, choose a fish and then pick which region has the most, pack the car, and head out.

Hatchery vs. Wild

HT = Hatchery Trout
WT = Wild Trout



Trout Species

Brk = Brook Trout
Brn = Brown Trout
Rbw = Rainbow Trout

#	Reach Name	Reg.	Species	Pg.
9	Raven Fork	1	WT (Brk)	18
10	Straight Fork	1	WT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	18
1	Twentymile Creek	1	WT (Brn, Rbw)	12
2	Eagle Creek	1	WT (Brn, Rbw)	12
3	Hazel Creek	1	WT (Brn, Rbw)	13
4	Forney Creek	1	WT (Brn, Rbw)	14
5	Noland Creek	1	WT (Brn, Rbw)	15
6	Deep Creek	1	WT (Brn, Rbw)	16
7	Oconaluftee River	1	WT (Brn, Rbw)	17
8	Bradley Fork	1	WT (Brn, Rbw)	17
11	Big Creek	1	WT (Brn, Rbw)	19
12	Cataloochee Creek	1	WT (Brn, Rbw)	20
14	Cosby Creek	2	WT (Brn, Rbw)	23
15	Porters Creek	2	WT (Brn, Rbw)	23
16	Greenbrier	2	WT (Brn, Rbw)	24
17	West Prong	2	WT (Brn, Rbw)	25
18	Elkmont	2	WT (Brn, Rbw)	25
19	Little River	2	WT (Brn, Rbw)	26
20	Tremont	2	WT (Brn, Rbw)	27
21	Abrams Creek	2	WT (Brn, Rbw)	28
13	Pigeon River	2	Smallmouth Bass	22
23	Santeetlah Creek	3	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	31
25	Lower Nantahala	3	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	32
26	Upper Nantahala	3	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	33
29	Upper Tuckasegee	3	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	36
30	Pantherstown Creek	3	WT (Brook)	37
22	Slickrock Creek	3	WT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	30
32	Thompson River	3	WT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	39
24	Snowbird Creek	3	WT (Brk, Rbw)	31
31	Whitewater River	3	WT (Brn, Rbw)	38
28	Lower Tuckasegee	3	Smallmouth Bass	35
27	Little Tennessee River	3	Smallmouth, Musky	34
35	North Mills River	4	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	42
41	Little River	4	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	48
44	West Fork French Broad	4	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	50
45	East Fork French Broad	4	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	51
47	West Fork Pigeon River	4	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	53
49	Yellowstone Prong	4	WT (Brook)	55

#	Reach Name	Reg.	Species	Pg.
50	East Fork Pigeon River	4	WT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	56
46	Middle Prong Pigeon River	4	WT (Brk, Rbw)	52
33	South Mills River	4	WT (Brn, Rbw)	40
34	Bradley Creek	4	WT (Brn, Rbw)	41
36	Looking Glass Creek	4	WT (Brn, Rbw)	43
37	Upper Davidson	4	WT (Brn, Rbw)	44
38	Avery Creek	4	WT (Brn, Rbw)	44
39	Lower Davidson	4	WT (Brn, Rbw)	46
42	Courthouse Creek	4	WT (Brn, Rbw)	49
43	North Fork French Broad	4	WT (Brn, Rbw)	50
48	Little East Fork Pigeon	4	WT (Brn, Rbw)	54
40	Musky Mile	4	Musky	47
51	North Pacolet	5	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	57
52	Green River	5	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	58
53	Big Hungry River	5	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	59
54	Rocky Broad River	5	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	60
58	Big Laurel	6	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	67
59	Spring Creek	6	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	68
63	Rock Creek	6	WT (Brk, Rbw)	72
64	Big Lost Cove Creek	6	WT (Brk, Rbw)	72
65	Upper and Lower Creeks	6	WT (Brk, Rbw)	73
62	South Toe River	6	WT (Brn, Rbw)	71
55	French Broad Section VI	6	Smallmouth, Musky	64
56	French Broad Section VIII	6	Smallmouth, Musky	65
57	French Broad Section IX	6	Smallmouth, Musky	66
60	French Broad Section X	6	Smallmouth, Musky	69
61	North Toe River	6	Smallmouth, Musky	70
66	Curtis Creek	7	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	75
68	Catawba River	7	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	76
69	Linville River	7	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	76
70	Wilson Creek	7	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	77
75	Watauga River	7	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	82
76	Elk River	7	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	83
67	Newberry Creek	7	WT (Brook)	75
72	Lost Cove Creek	7	WT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	79
71	Harper/N. Harper	7	WT (Brk, Rbw)	78
73	Gragg Prong	7	WT (Brk, Rbw)	80
74	Rockhouse Creek	7	WT (Brk, Rbw)	80

· REACHES BY SPECIES AVAILABLE ·

This chart is great if you know what kind of fish you are looking for - just choose what you like to fish for and find a stream to match in a region you can get to. It is especially handy if you are on a quest to only fish for one particular species. All of these rivers contain a variety of fish, but this chart highlights the species you will most likely encounter in a day's outing on a particular stretch of river.

Hatchery vs. Wild

HT = Hatchery Trout
WT = Wild Trout

Trout Species

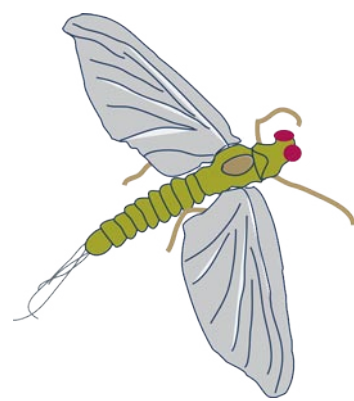
Brk = Brook Trout
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Rbw = Rainbow Trout

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25	Lower Nantahala	3	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	32
26	Upper Nantahala	3	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	33
29	Upper Tuckasegee	3	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	36
35	North Mills River	4	HT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	42
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32	Thompson River	3	WT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	39
50	East Fork Pigeon River	4	WT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	56
72	Lost Cove Creek	7	WT (Brk, Brn, Rbw)	79
24	Snowbird Creek	3	WT (Brk, Rbw)	31
46	Middle Prong Pigeon River	4	WT (Brk, Rbw)	52
63	Rock Creek	6	WT (Brk, Rbw)	72
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71	Harper/N. Harper	7	WT (Brk, Rbw)	78
73	Gragg Prong	7	WT (Brk, Rbw)	80
74	Rockhouse Creek	7	WT (Brk, Rbw)	80

#	Reach Name	Reg.	Species	Pg.
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2	Eagle Creek	1	WT (Brn, Rbw)	12
3	Hazel Creek	1	WT (Brn, Rbw)	13
4	Forney Creek	1	WT (Brn, Rbw)	14
5	Noland Creek	1	WT (Brn, Rbw)	15
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57	French Broad Section IX	6	Smallmouth, Musky	66
60	French Broad Section X	6	Smallmouth, Musky	69
61	North Toe River	6	Smallmouth, Musky	70
40	Musky Mile	4	Musky	47



MAYFLIES

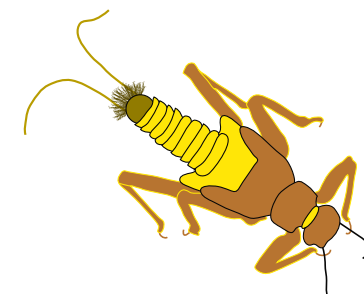


Scientific Order: Ephemeroptera

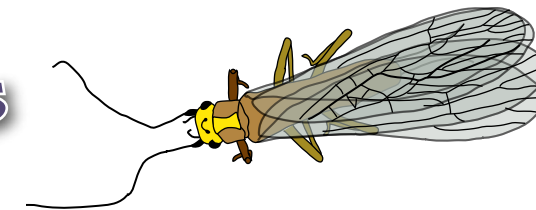
Description: Mayflies are what many people think of when they think about aquatic insects. By far the most graceful and unique of all the insects mentioned here, mayfly hatches are a sight to behold. Mayfly nymphs can be found hiding in a variety of stream structures from rocks to logs, and even burrowed in the silt lining the banks. The adults are beautiful angelic creatures whose time is extremely limited and often ends within 24 hours of hatching. The common names of mayflies often stand out a bit more than they do for other insects and also often end up in the fly angler's daily conversation.

Patterns:

- Nymphs:** Pheasant Tails, Hare's Ears
- Dries:** Adams, Light Cahills, Blue Wing Olives, Hendricksons, Quill Gordons, etc.... in traditional, parachutes, or post modern.



STONEFLIES

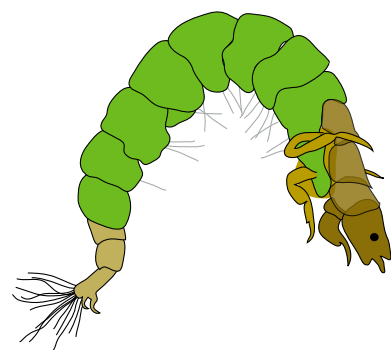


Scientific Order: Plecoptera

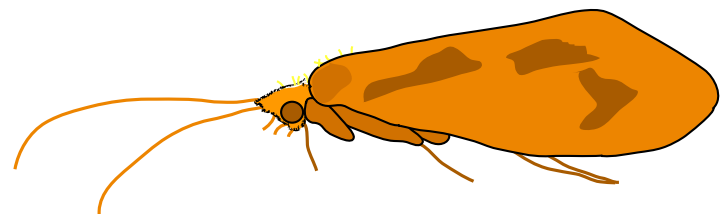
Description: "Big, mean, and not so important" best describes the stonefly in the world of trout fishing in the southeast. Although there are a ton of patterns out there, the stonefly is actually the least important of the three most commonly thought-of aquatics. Don't get me wrong, I don't want you to never tie another stonefly pattern; just be aware that these critters make up a small portion of your quarry's diet. Stoneflies are often seen clinging to rocks and logs deep in the river and rarely end up drifting through the water column. Most anglers see their casings on logs, rocks, and bridge pilings just above the water's surface. The adults usually emerge late in the day or at night, and the angler fishing gentleman's hours may never see a true hatch.

Patterns:

- Nymphs:** Copper John's, Prince Nymphs, and a wide variety of large, leggy and realistic creatures can be concocted or copied.
- Adults:** Stimulators, Yellow Sallies, etc...



CADDIS FLIES

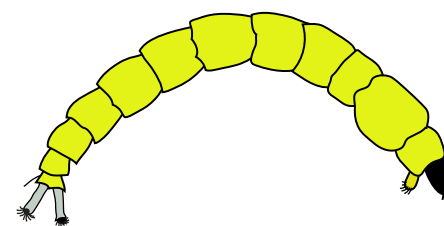


Scientific Order: Trichoptera

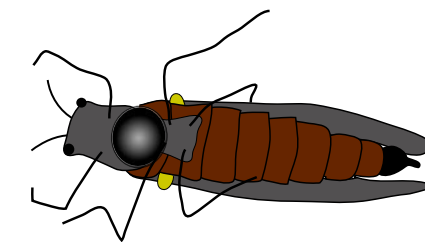
Description: Caddis are one of the most important insects for trout. Although they are not as sexy as mayflies, caddis have a unique life cycle all their own and make for a very interesting study. Caddis begin their lives as larva—or little green to tan worms—living on subsurface river structures. Some live in the open while many build tiny houses, called cases, to live in. Some make cases from tiny pebbles and others from leaves and sticks. After a while they grow up, free themselves from their cases, and emerge as pupae. These pupae sometimes take a while to grow into adults and tumble deep in the river. Soon they make their way skyward, and after shedding their shucks begin to buzz around like tiny helicopters.

Patterns:

- Larvae:** Any green caddis lava, peeking caddis, etc.....
- Pupae:** ESP's are the most common but the sky is the limit.
- Adults:** Elk Hair Caddis are the old standby and modern tiers have come up with a plethora of others.



MIDGES

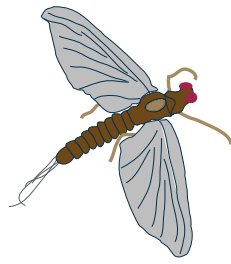


Scientific Order: Diptera

Description: Midges are an ever present and important part of a trout's diet in WNC. Often times they are the cause of multiple rise forms that anglers see in a slick pool and can never figure out what those fish are eating. Despite their small size, midges are very abundant and can be seen hovering over almost any stream on almost any outing. The larva are tiny and range in color from olive to black to red and anywhere in between. The adults have the appearance of a mosquito and have a diverse color range as well.

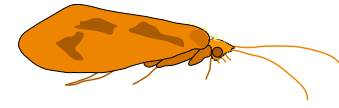
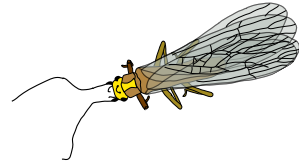
Patterns:

- Larva:** WD-40's, Zebra Midges, Miracles, the list is almost infinite.
- Adults:** Anything that floats and is size 20 to 32.



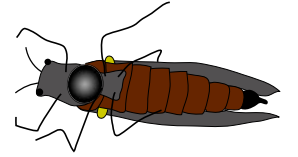
INSECT HATCH GUIDE

- = Somewhat Present
- = Moderately Present
- = Very Present



INSECT HATCH GUIDE

- = Somewhat Present
- = Moderately Present
- = Very Present



Insect Type	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Mayflies (Blue Winged Olive)												
Mayflies (March Brown)												
Mayflies (Blue Quills)												
Mayflies (Red Quills)												
Mayflies (Hendricksons)												
Mayflies (Cahills)												
Mayflies (Brown Drakes)												
Mayflies (Yellow Drakes)												
Mayflies (Green Drakes)												

Stoneflies (small, dark)												
Stoneflies (Yellow Sallies)												
Stoneflies (Green Sallies)												
Stoneflies (giant, dark)												
Stoneflies (golden)												

Caddis (grey-black)												
Caddis (tan-brown)												
Caddis (Mother's Day)												
Caddis (October)												

Midges (all colors)												
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• FLY SELECTION •

Here are a few sample fly selections for the four main types of fishing mentioned in this book. Your fly box should have multiples of each in a variety of sizes, colors, and styles.

WILD TROUT



These are fairly standard patterns and work on almost any trout stream in WNC:

Dries: Elk Hair Caddis, Parachute Mayfly Patterns, Stimulators, CDC Emergers, and Midges

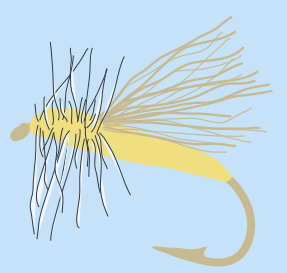
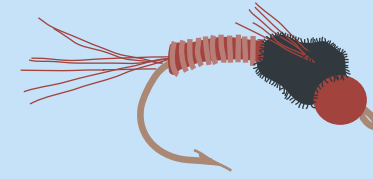
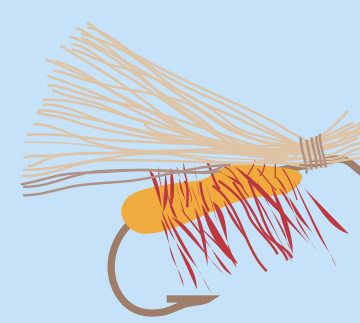
Nymphs: Pheasant Tails, Hare's Ears, Prince Nymphs, Giant Stones, Copper Johns and Midge Larva

Streamers: Woolly Buggers, Zonkers, and Sculpins.

SMALLMOUTH BASS

This box can be kept basic or made into the most complex selection you own.

Baitfish Imitations such as Clousers and Woolly Buggers, Poppers, Divers, and Crayfish Patterns.



HATCHERY TROUT

These patterns are the same as for wild fish but with the addition of a few bright and strange creations.:

Dries: Elk Hair Caddis, Parachute Mayfly Patterns, Stimulators, CDC Emergers, and Midges

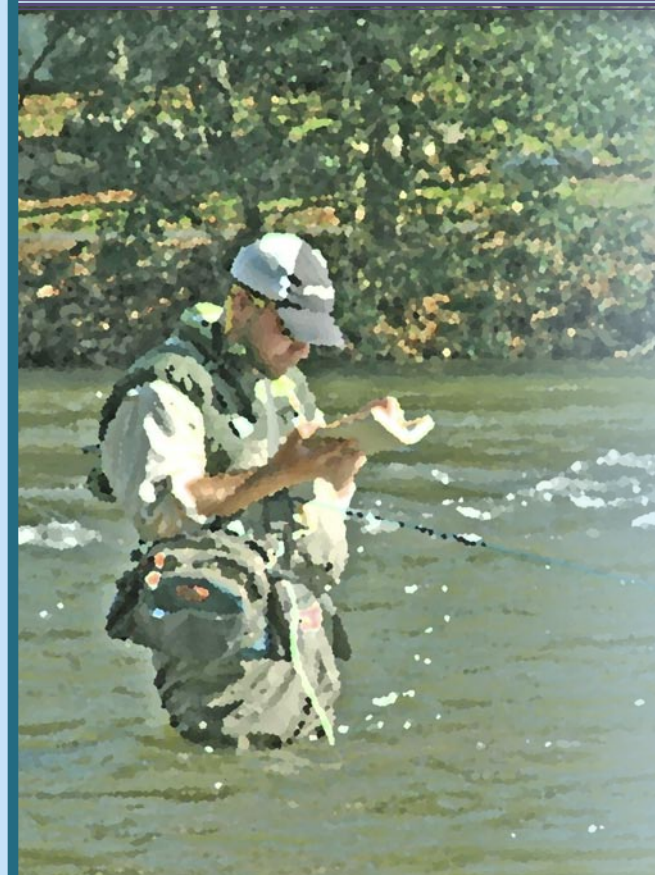
Nymphs: Pheasant Tails, Hare's Ears, Prince Nymphs, Giant Stones, Copper Johns and Midge Larva. Also San Juan Worms and Egg Patterns

Streamers: Woolly Buggers, Zonkers, and Sculpins.



MUSKY

Big and mean with lots of motion!!



♦ MOUNTAIN FLY TIERS ♦

Names like Bob Clouser, Joe Brooks, Fran Betters, Carrie Stevens, and Dan Bailey are all indicative of great and innovative fly tiers. But in the Southern Appalachian Mountains it's names like Fred Hall, Jack Cabe, Don R. Howell, and Cap Wiese that dictate quality and innovative fly tying. We all know that the Cahill originated in the Catskill Mountains of New York, and that the Clouser Minnow started on the Potomac River, but what about the Tellico, or the Female Adams, or the Deer Hair? It's hard to believe, I know, but all three of these famous patterns had their origin here in the Smoky Mountains.

Prior to 1950, most all of the fishing and tying that was done in this region was for subsistence, not sport. Materials were scarce, and tiers often used what they could find or kill. My father and uncle ran trap lines as kids to gain fly tying material.

In one desperate attempt to get some fur for dubbing, they even tried to skin a skunk. Thread and dubbing was obtained from old worn out clothing, hair was often times clipped off of the livestock, or mottled feathers from chickens were picked up to tie with. It was not until the late 1950s that commercial fly tying materials would become available to the tiers of the area. This access was mainly through mail order catalogs. Therefore the early tiers tied only the flies that they knew produced fish, and only enough flies for them to fish with.

Very little is know about the tiers prior to the early 1940s except that their flies and creations live on today in the boxes of many knowledgeable local anglers. Most of their creations were passed down from one generation to the next verbally without much written documentation.

The first written article about fly tying in the region was written in 1880 by Charles Orvis; He described a Cherokee fly "as being made from thin strips of deer hair reverse tied so that the points of hair faced the eye of the hook, so that every little movement made it look alive." In addition to being the first users of deer hair, the Cherokee Indians are also believed to be the creators of the Yallar Hammer wet fly, as well as the Blackbird fly.

Flies that worked were closely guarded secrets that were passed down from generation to generation. While no one is exactly sure of their origin, or exactly how the original was tied, a lot of flies can be traced back all the way to the mid to late 1800's. The Woodduck Nymph, Ginger Quill, and Palmer, all have long out lived there creators but are still as effective today as they ever were. It was not

Photo © J.E.B. Hall



until the mid 1950's that the region saw outside influences in tying. It was also during this time frame that tiers started making detailed notes about what they tied and the materials used to tie certain flies. A few tiers like Dwight and Don Howell, Jake Cabe, Fred Hall and Cap Wiese managed to be recognized outside of the region. The late Fred Hall from Bryson City is credited with a lot of the patterns that have become known throughout the country. Fred's three most valuable contributions were the Female Adams, Adams Variant, and the Thunder Head. The late Jack Cabe gave us the Cabe's Hopper. The Rev. Edwin F. Dalstrom gave us the Tellico nymph and the Smokey Mountain Forked Tail. The late Don Howell, popularized the Sheepfly which was designed by Newland Saunders, and

left behind several patterns of his own, like the Hot Creek Special, The Bug and the Modified Secret Weapon. Eddie George left us the George's Nymph. While these tiers had the foresight to record their patterns or their patterns became so famous that they were tied across the country, many traditional patterns of the region still remain nameless and lack the history to know who created them or why.

Today Roger Lowe, Walter Babb and Kevin Howell are carrying on the tradition of Southern Appalachian Fly Tiers. Roger owner of Lowe's Fly Shop, is a fly designer for Riverborn Fly Company based out of Idaho and has created flies like the Horse Hair Nymph. Kevin is a Signature Fly Designer for Umpqua Feather Merchants,

the largest fly tying operation in the world, and is owner of Davidson River Outfitters in Pisgah Forest, NC. Kevin's contributions include the Kevin's Stonefly, Howell's Big Nasty, Howell's Stonymite and Howell's Ole Hellgy. Walter Babb is employed by Little River Outfitters in Townsend TN, where he ties flies and teaches fly tying. Walter is also one of the top bamboo rod manufactures in the country.

We will probably never know the name of the Cherokee Indian that shot that first Flicker with his blow gun, and wrapped its bright yellow feather around a hook. We do know that he left behind a legacy for fishing Yallar colored flies in Smokey Mountains and started a long tradition of fly tying in the Southern Appalachian Mountains.

Photo © Leland Davis

FLOATING AND CAMPING BY REGION

These tables can aid in planning your trip by helping you find a float or hike-in stretch, and by showing you what types of camping are available at the various rivers.

Camping Designations

H = Hike in Camping
B = Boat in Camping



C = Campground
P = Primitive (at car or nearby)
N = No Camping

#	Reach Name	Chap.	Float	Camp	Pg.
1	Twentymile Creek	1	no	H	12
2	Eagle Creek	1	no	H, B	12
3	Hazel Creek	1	no	H, B	13
4	Forney Creek	1	no	H, B	14
5	Noland Creek	1	no	H	15
6	Deep Creek	1	no	H, C	16
7	Oconaluftee River	1	no	C	17
8	Bradley Fork	1	no	H, C	17
9	Raven Fork	1	no	H	18
10	Straight Fork	1	no	P	18
11	Big Creek	1	no	H, C	19
12	Cataloochee Creek	1	no	H, C	20
13	Pigeon River	2	yes	N	21
14	Cosby Creek	2	no	C	23
15	Porters Creek	2	no	H	23
16	Greenbrier	2	no	H	24
17	West Prong	2	no	N	25
18	Elkmont	2	no	H, C	25
19	Little River	2	no	N	26
20	Tremont	2	no	H	27
21	Abrams Creek	2	no	H, C	28
22	Slickrock Creek	3	no	H, B	30
23	Santeetlah Creek	3	no	C	31
24	Snowbird Creek	3	no	H, P	31
25	Lower Nantahala	3	yes	C	32
26	Upper Nantahala	3	no	P	33
27	Little Tennessee River	3	yes	P	34
28	Lower Tuckasegee	3	yes	N	35
29	Upper Tuckasegee	3	yes	N	36
30	Panthertown Creek	3	no	H	37
31	Whitewater River	3	no	N	38
32	Thompson River	3	no	H	39
33	South Mills River	4	no	H	40
34	Bradley Creek	4	no	H, P	41
35	North Mills River	4	no	C	42
36	Looking Glass Creek	4	no	N	43

#	Reach Name	Chap.	Float	Camp	Pg.
37	Upper Davidson	4	no	P	44
38	Avery Creek	4	no	N	44
39	Lower Davidson	4	no	C	46
40	Musky Mile	4	yes	N	47
41	Little River	4	no	N	48
42	Courthouse Creek	4	no	P	49
43	North Fork French Broad	4	no	N	50
44	West Fork French Broad	4	no	N	50
45	East Fork French Broad	4	no	N	51
46	Middle Prong Pigeon River	4	no	H, P	52
47	West Fork Pigeon River	4	no	C	53
48	Little East Fork Pigeon	4	no	H	54
49	Yellowstone Prong	4	no	H	55
50	East Fork Pigeon River	4	no	H	56
51	North Pacolet River	5	no	N	57
52	Green River	5	no	C	58
53	Big Hungry River	5	no	N	59
54	Rocky Broad River	5	no	C	60
55	French Broad Section VI	6	yes	C	64
56	French Broad Section VIII	6	yes	N	65
57	French Broad Section IX	6	yes	C	66
58	Big Laurel Creek	6	no	N	67
59	Spring Creek	6	no	N	68
60	French Broad Section X	6	yes	C	69
61	North Toe / Nolichucky	6	yes	N	70
62	South Toe River	6	no	C	71
63	Rock Creek	6	no	C	72
64	Big Lost Cove Creek	6	no	C	72
65	Upper and Lower Creeks	6	no	C	73
66	Curtis Creek	7	no	N	75
67	Newberry Creek	7	no	N	75
68	Catawba River	7	yes	N	76
69	Linville River	7	no	H	76
70	Wilson Creek	7	no	C	77
71	Harper / North Harper	7	no	H	78
72	Lost Cove Creek	7	no	H	79
73	Gragg Prong	7	no	H	80
74	Rockhouse Creek	7	no	P	80
75	Watauga River	7	no	N	82
76	Elk River	7	no	N	83

FLOATABLE REACHES

#	Reach Name	Chap.	Pg.	#	Reach Name	Chap.	Pg.
13	Pigeon River	2	xx	55	French Broad Section VI	6	xxx
25	Lower Nantahala	3	xx	56	French Broad Section VIII	6	xxx
27	Little Tennessee River	3	xx	57	French Broad Section IX	6	xxx
28	Lower Tuckasegee	3	xx	60	French Broad Section X	6	xxx
29	Upper Tuckasegee	3	xx	61	North Toe / Nolichucky	6	xxx
40	Musky Mile	4	xx	68	Catawba River	7	xxx

REACHES BY AVAILABLE CAMPING TYPE

Hike-In Camping

#	Reach Name	Chap.	Camping	Pg.
1	Twentymile Creek	1	H	12
2	Eagle Creek	1	H, B	12
3	Hazel Creek	1	H, B	13
4	Forney Creek	1	H, B	14
5	Noland Creek	1	H	15
6	Deep Creek	1	H, C	16
8	Bradley Fork	1	H, C	17
9	Raven Fork	1	H	18
11	Big Creek	1	H, C	19
12	Cataloochee Creek	1	H, C	20
15	Porters Creek	2	H	23
16	Greenbrier	2	H	24
18	Elkmont	2	H, C	25
20	Tremont	2	H	27
21	Abrams Creek	2	H, C	28
22	Slickrock Creek	3	H, B	30
24	Snowbird Creek	3	H, P	31
30	Panthertown Creek	3	H	37
32	Thompson River	3	H	39
33	South Mills River	4	H	40
34	Bradley Creek	4	H, P	41
46	Middle Prong Pigeon River	4	H, P	52
48	Little East Fork Pigeon	4	H	54
49	Yellowstone Prong	4	H	55
50	East Fork Pigeon River	4	H	56
69	Linville River	7	H	76
71	Harper / North Harper	7	H	78
72	Lost Cove Creek	7	H	79
73	Gragg Prong	7	H	80

Campground Available

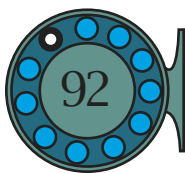
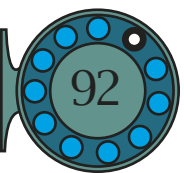
#	Reach Name	Chap.	Camping	Pg.
6	Deep Creek	1	H, C	16
7	Oconaluftee River	1	C	17
8	Bradley Fork	1	H, C	17
11	Big Creek	1	H, C	19
12	Cataloochee Creek	1	H, C	20
14	Cosby Creek	2	C	23
23	Santeetlah Creek	3	C	31
25	Lower Nantahala	3	C	32
35	North Mills River	4	C	42
39	Lower Davidson	4	C	46
47	West Fork Pigeon River	4	C	53
52	Green River	5	C	58
54	Rocky Broad River	5	C	60
55	French Broad Section VI	6	C	64
57	French Broad Section IX	6	C	66
60	French Broad Section X	6	C	69
62	South Toe River	6	C	71
63	Rock Creek	6	C	72
64	Big Lost Cove Creek	6	C	72
65	Upper and Lower Creeks	6	C	73
70	Wilson Creek	7	C	77

Primitive Camping

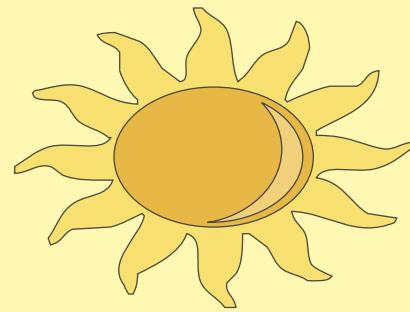
#	Reach Name	Chap.	Camping	Pg.
10	Straight Fork	1	P	18
24	Snowbird Creek	3	H, P	31
26	Upper Nantahala	3	P	33
27	Little Tennessee River	3	P	34
34	Bradley Creek	4	H, P	41
37	Upper Davidson	4	P	44
42	Courthouse Creek	4	P	49
46	Middle Prong Pigeon River	4	H, P	52
74	Rockhouse Creek	7	P	80

Boat-In Camping

#	Reach Name	Chap.	Camping	Pg.
2	Eagle Creek	1	H, B	12
3	Hazel Creek	1	H, B	13
4	Forney Creek	1	H, B	14
22	Slickrock Creek	3	H, B	30



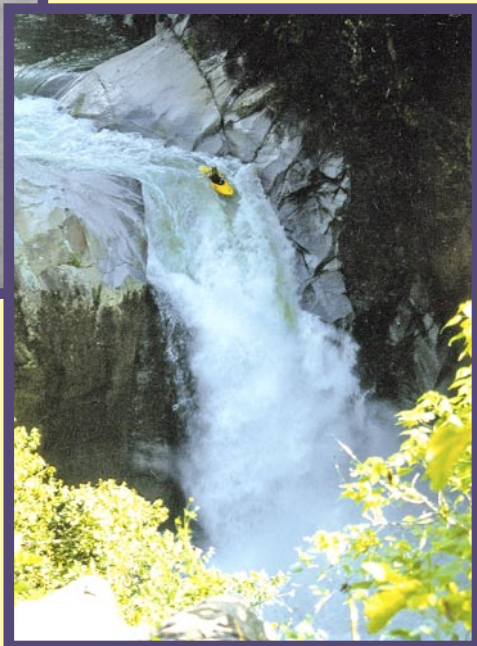
◦ FROM THE AUTHOR ◦



I have spent most of my life fishing in the mountains of Western North Carolina. From the time I could hold a rod, fishing has been an obsession—occupying much of my time. Growing up here I have formed a special attachment, not only to the streams and the fish, but to the people, the mountains and the culture. When asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, I answered “a professional fisherman.” That was back in the eighth grade. Today I am a full time fishing guide and author. This book is not only a tool for you to use in finding new



stretches of river to fish, but an extension of my love of this area and an opportunity for me to share my knowledge with others. This has been a long and exciting process, and I look forward to having you all use and enjoy this book.



◦ ABOUT THE AUTHOR ◦

J.E.B. Hall was born in Sylva, NC in 1978 but grew up near the town of Bryson City. His roots go deep into the Smoky Mountains, and his family heritage is that of the humble and hard working people that settled the Hazel Creek and Little Tennessee River Valleys. These days you will find J.E.B. guiding fly fishing both locally and in the remote wilderness of Western Alaska. When not looking for fish, J.E.B. is a southeastern steep creek kayaking technician and frequently travels all over North America looking for scary whitewater.

◦ COLOPHON ◦

Author:

Software
 Text: MS Word
 Directions: National Geographic TOPO!

Hardware
 iMac G4 1.33 ghz
 w/ 512 MB RAM
 OS X 10.4.9

Photography
 Nikon Coolpix 8700
 w/ SimpleTech CompactFlash 1.0 GB

Photography, Graphics, and Layout

Software
 Text: MS Word
 Maps: National Geographic TOPO!
 and Adobe Photoshop CS.
 Graphic Elements: Adobe Illustrator CS

Photo Post Processing: Adobe Photoshop CS
 Book Layout: Adobe Indesign CS

Hardware
 Scanning: PowerMac G4 dual 450 mhz
 w/ 1 GB RAM
 Umax Astra 2400S
 Polaroid SprintScan35

Graphics & Layout: PowerMac G5 dual 1.8 ghz
 w/ 2 GB RAM
 OSX 10.4.9

Storage: External USB 2.0 320 GB
 Western Digital Caviar

Photography (Leland Davis)
 Nikon D70
 Lexar Pro 2 GB 80x Compact Flash
 Sigma 24-135 f2.8-4.5
 Nikon 80-200 f2.8

Project Digital Size: 14GB



• REACH INDEX •

#	Reach Name	Chapter	Pg.	#	Reach Name	Chap.	Pg.
21	Abrams Creek	2	28	40	Musky Mile, French Broad	4	47
38	Avery Creek	4	44	25	Nantahala, Lower	3	32
11	Big Creek	1	19	26	Nantahala, Upper	3	33
53	Big Hungry River	5	59	67	Newberry Creek	7	75
58	Big Laurel Creek	6	67	5	Noland Creek	1	15
64	Big Lost Cove Creek	6	72	61	Nolichucky River	6	70
34	Bradley Creek	4	41	43	North Fork French Broad	4	50
8	Bradley Fork	1	17	71	North Harper Creek	7	78
12	Cataloochee Creek	1	20	35	North Mills River	4	42
68	Catawba River	7	76	51	North Pacolet River	5	57
14	Cosby Creek	2	23	61	North Toe River	6	70
42	Courthouse Creek	4	49	7	Oconaluftee River	1	17
66	Curtis Creek	7	75	51	Pacolet River, North	5	57
39	Davidson, Lower	4	46	30	Panthertown Creek	3	37
37	Davidson, Upper	4	44	13	Pigeon River	2	22
6	Deep Creek	1	16	50	Pigeon River, East Fork	4	56
2	Eagle Creek	1	12	48	Pigeon, Little East Fork	4	54
45	East Fork French Broad	4	51	46	Pigeon River, Middle Prong	4	52
50	East Fork Pigeon River	4	56	47	Pigeon River, West Fork	4	53
76	Elk River	7	83	15	Porters Creek	2	23
18	Elkmont	2	25	9	Raven Fork	1	18
4	Forney Creek	1	14	63	Rock Creek	6	72
45	French Broad, East Fork	4	51	74	Rockhouse Creek	7	80
40	French Broad, Musky Mile	4	47	54	Rocky Broad River	5	60
43	French Broad, North Fork	4	50	23	Santeetlah Creek	3	31
44	French Broad, West Fork	4	50	55	Section VI, French Broad	6	64
55	French Broad Section VI	6	64	56	Section VIII, French Broad	6	65
56	French Broad Section VIII	6	65	57	Section IX, French Broad	6	66
57	French Broad Section IX	6	66	60	Section X, French Broad	6	69
60	French Broad Section X	6	69	22	Slickrock Creek	3	30
73	Gragg Prong	7	80	24	Snowbird Creek	3	31
52	Green River	5	58	33	South Mills River	4	40
16	Greenbrier	2	24	62	South Toe River	6	71
71	Harper Creek	7	78	59	Spring Creek	6	68
3	Hazel Creek	1	13	10	Straight Fork	1	18
69	Linville River	7	76	32	Thompson River	3	39
48	Little East Fork Pigeon	4	54	61	Toe River, North	6	70
19	Little River	2	26	62	Toe River, South	6	71
41	Little River	4	48	20	Tremont	2	27
18	Little River – Elkmont	2	25	28	Tuckasegee, Lower	3	35
20	Little River, Mid. Prong-Tremont	2	27	29	Tuckasegee, Upper	3	36
16	Little Pigeon, M. Prong-Greenbrier	2	24	1	Twentymile Creek	1	12
17	Little Pigeon, West Prong	2	25	65	Upper Creek	6	73
27	Little Tennessee River	3	34	37	Upper Davidson	4	44
36	Looking Glass Creek	4	43	26	Upper Nantahala	3	33
72	Lost Cove Creek	7	79	29	Upper Tuckasegee	3	36
39	Lower Davidson	4	46	75	Watauga River	7	82
25	Lower Nantahala	3	32	44	West Fork French Broad	4	50
65	Lower Creek	6	73	47	West Fork Pigeon River	4	53
28	Lower Tuckasegee	3	35	17	West Prong	2	25
16	Mid. Prong Lit. Pig. – Greenbrier	2	24	31	Whitewater River	3	38
46	Middle Prong Pigeon River	4	52	70	Wilson Creek	7	77
33	Mills River, South	4	40	49	Yellowstone Prong	4	55
35	Mills River, North	4	42				