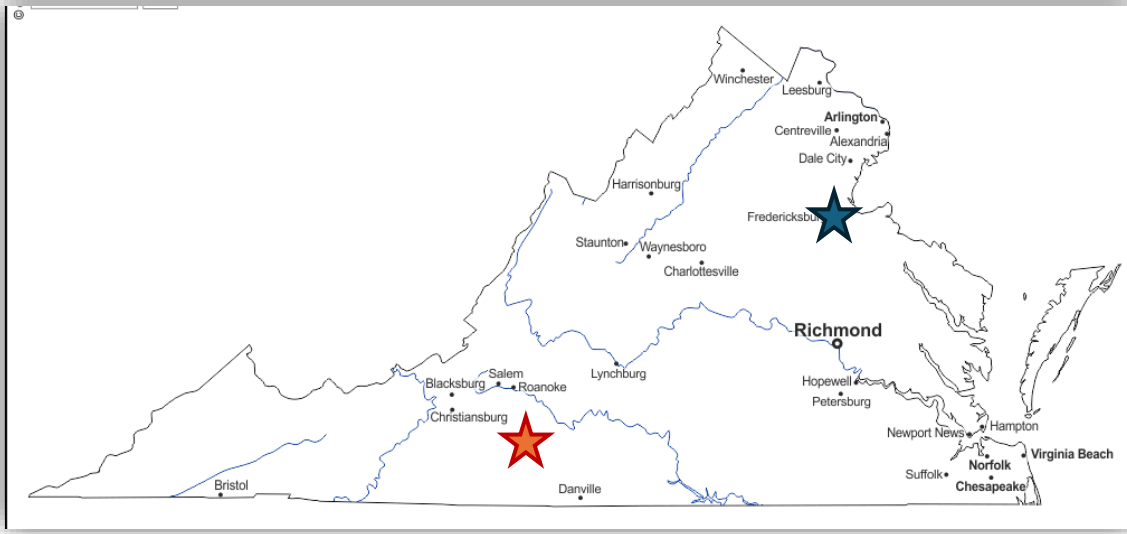


BABY BROWNS & RAIN CLOUDS

A fly fisherman wearing a red cap and dark clothing is wading in a river, casting a line. The river is surrounded by dense green foliage, and the scene is misty or rainy, with rain clouds visible in the background.

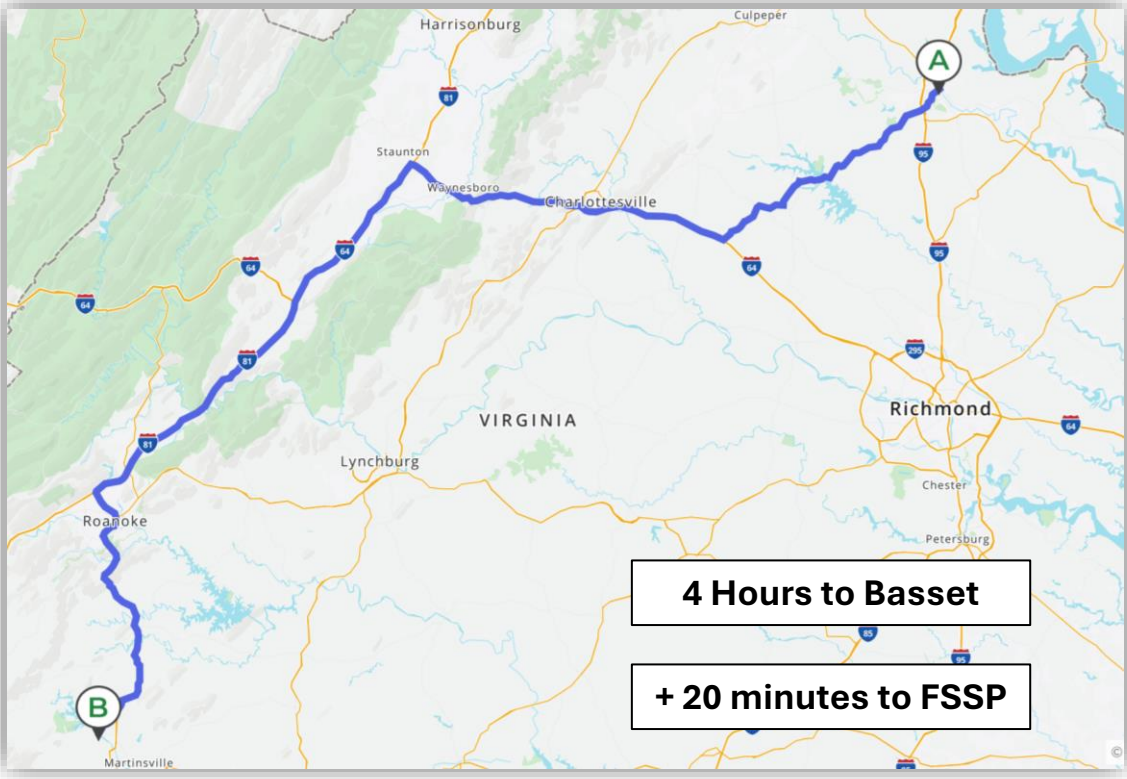
Smith River DIY Wade Trip Fishing Report

22 – 25 July, 2026



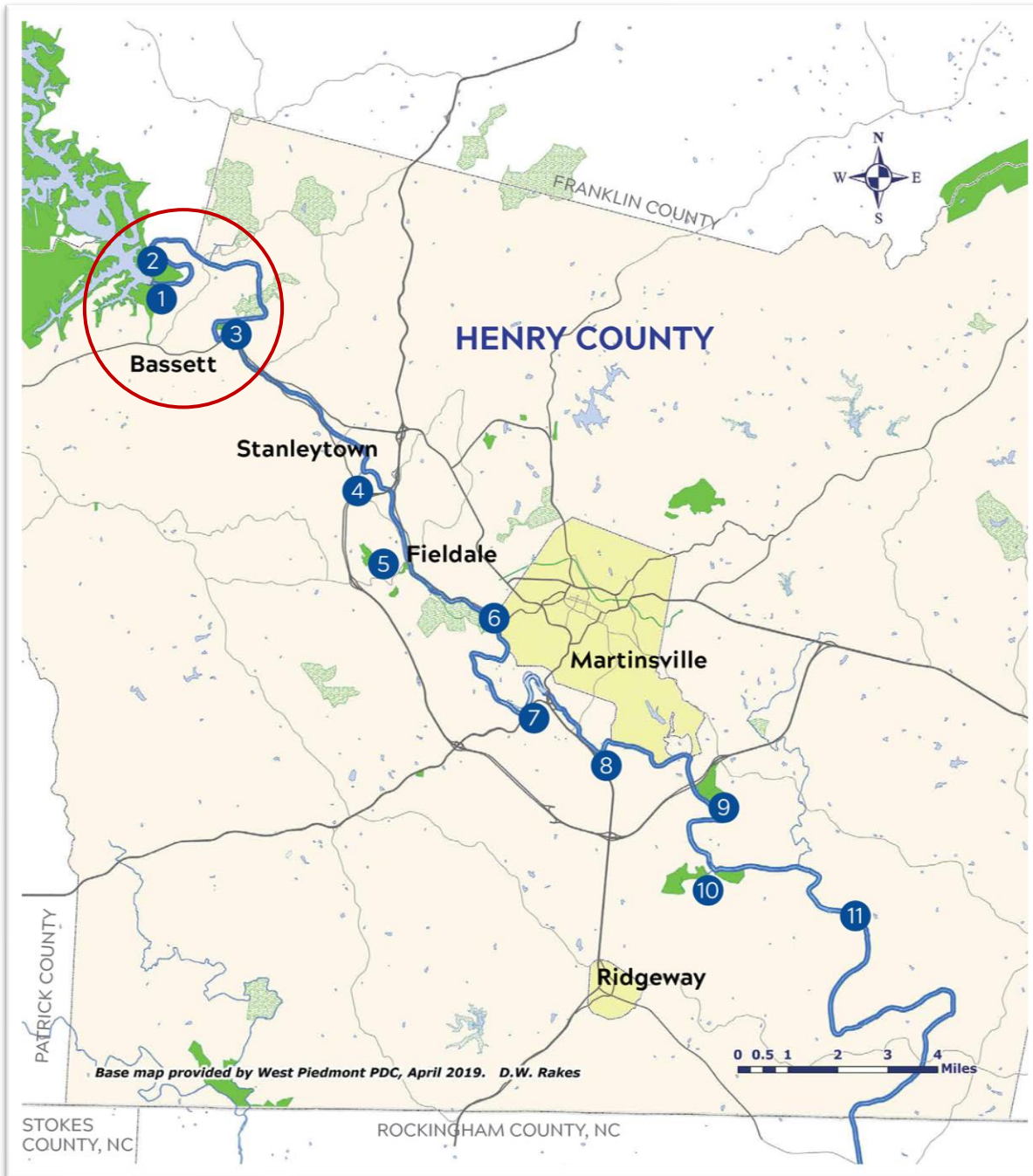
SMITH RIVER TRIP

- **Bassett / Fairy Stone State Park**
- **4 Hour + Drive from FXBG**
- **Camped at Fairy Stone State Park**
- **DIY wade fishing (no guides)**
- **5 Falmouth Flats anglers**



SMITH RIVER

- ~ 45 miles long (39 miles in VA)
- From Philpot Dam to Dan River (N.C.)
- Consistent cold water from dam
- Our focus area was near Bassett



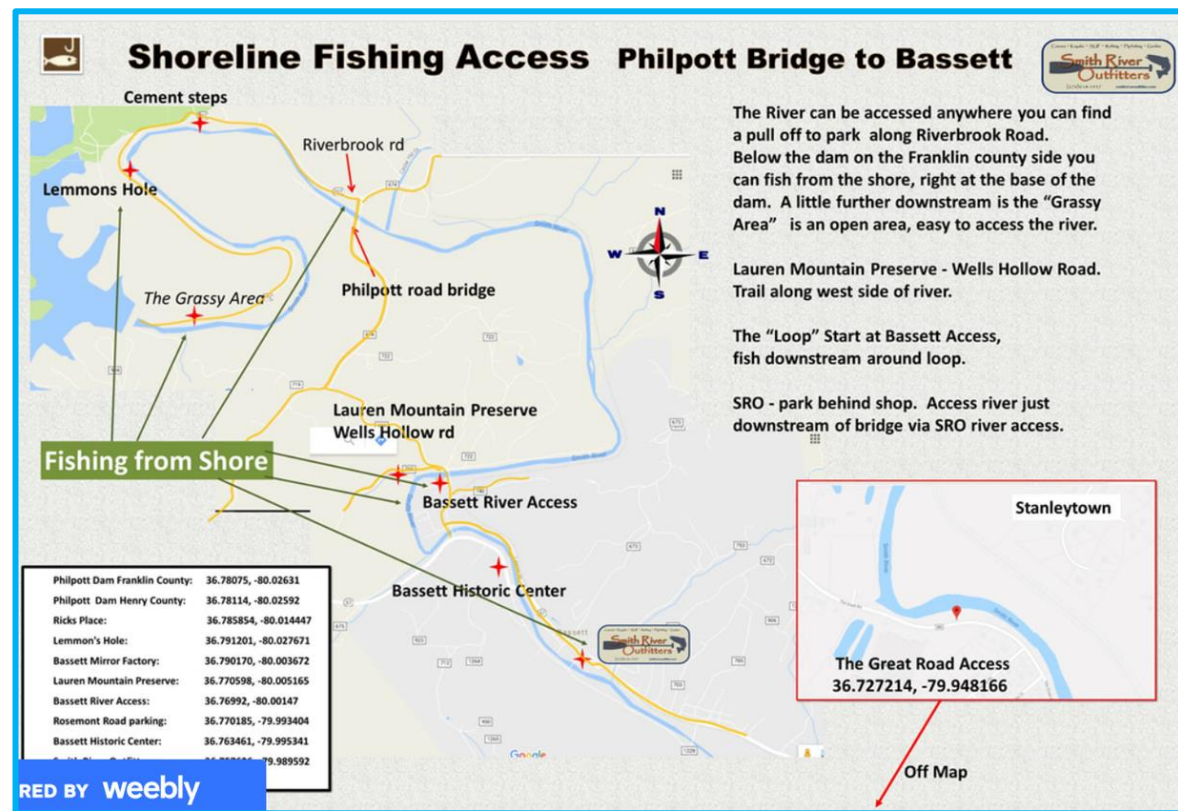
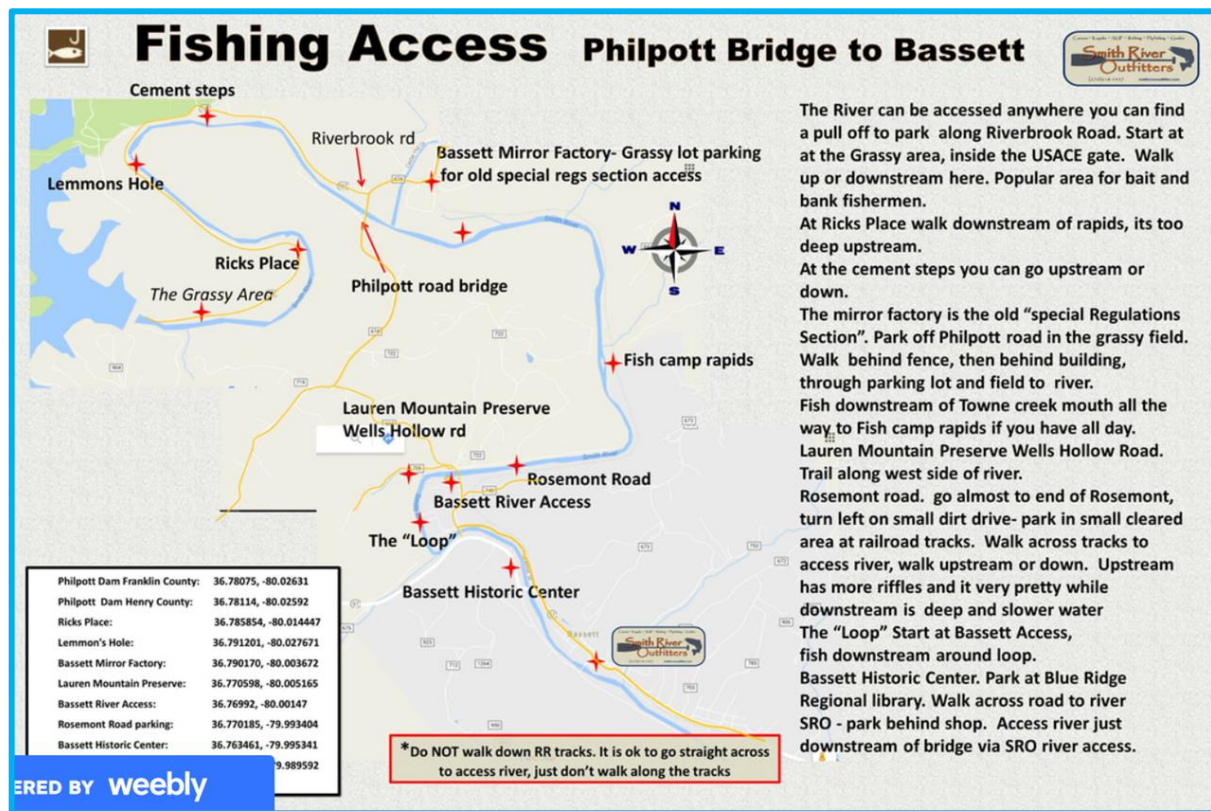
Fishing Sites & Access Points

- **Easy river access**
- **From road-side pull-outs to large parking areas with shelters & port-a-johns**
- **GPS addresses (lat / longs), road names, & instructions on outfitter map / graphic**

- # **Fishing Sites & Access Points**
- **Easy river access**
 - **From road-side pull-outs to large parking areas with shelters & port-a-johns**
 - **GPS addresses (lat / longs), road names, & instructions on outfitter map / graphic**



Outfitter Maps Available On-Line



SMITH RIVER FISH



Wild Brown Trout



Stocked Rainbows



Smallmouth



Largemouth



Warm-water River fish

Didn't see any

** Some sites state brook & tiger trout as well*

SMITH RIVER

Near Bassett

- 40 – 60' wide
- 2-4' depth with deeper troughs and holes
- Bottom varies – free stone, sandy, silty

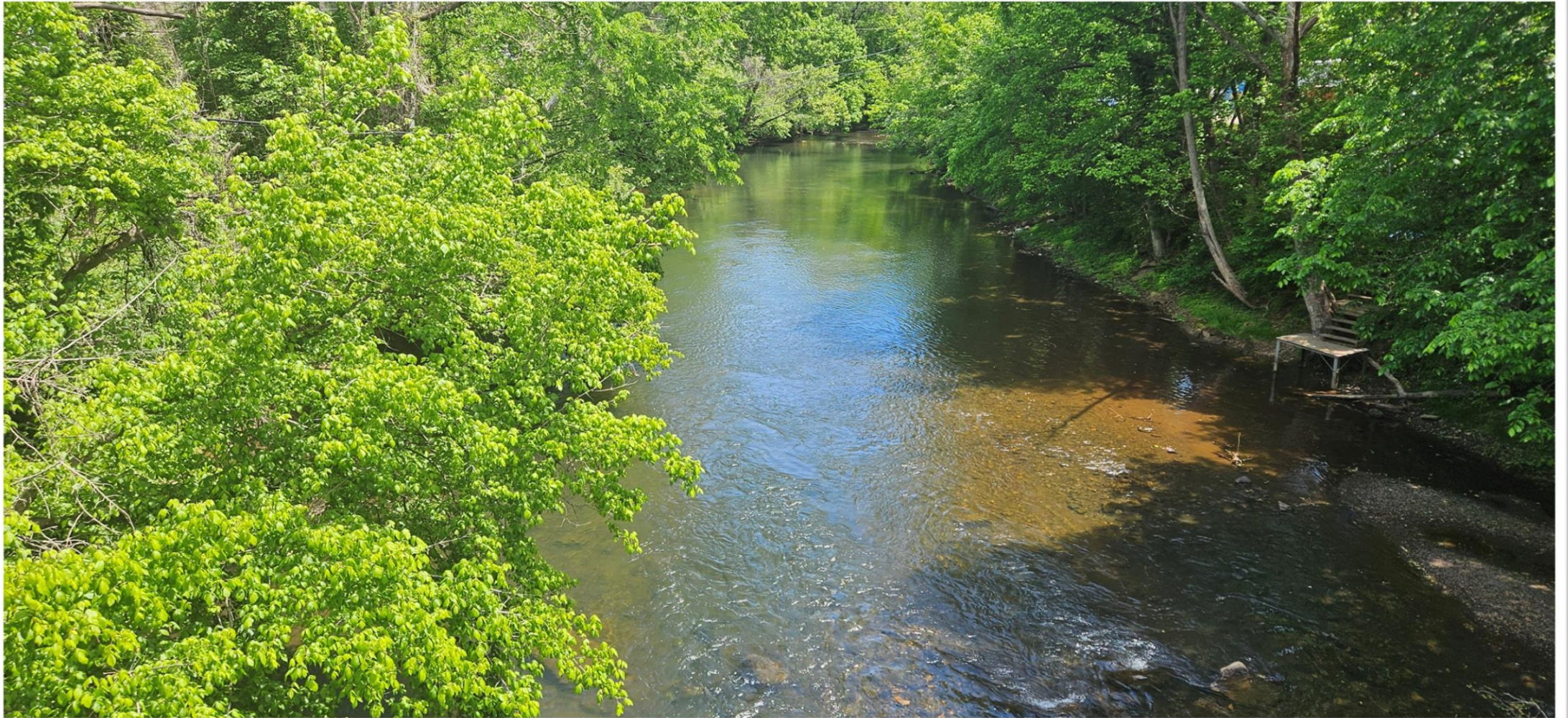
**Wider & Deeper
Near Dam**



SMITH RIVER

Near Bassett

- Tree lined banks
- Some submerged branches / logs
- Water temps high-40s to mid-50s



SMITH RIVER

Near Bassett

- Tailwater (dam controlled): Maintains constant cold water temps
- Bassett Gauge: Depth 1.8-1.9 ft / Flow 185-210 cfs (easily waded) on our trip
- Dam not generating due to scheduled maintenance
 - *One morning of stronger current, reason unknown (prior rain, water dump?)*
 - *If there and you hear to pre-generation alarms, get out of the water*



Fish & Flies



This Trip

Almost all Browns (99%)

6-9" with the occasional 10-12"

Predominantly on top (90%)

Fish & Flies



#18 – 20 BWOs most productive pattern

Interesting because ...



**Midges, Caddis, Sulphurs all hatching,
but trout largely ignored**

and Kevin had some success underneath



Partridge & Green soft hackle

If you wanted to catch fish, don't match the hatch, match what Joe's throwing

Gear



5 wt rod / reel

- *but 4wt (or even 3 wt) would have been fine for our fish*



9' 5X leader / 5X tippet

- *6X tippet might have worked better*



Standard waders and boots

- *Non-leaking waders a bonus*
- *Slick, studs, or felt boots*

A person wearing a wetsuit, helmet, and backpack is wading through a river. In the background, a bridge spans the river, and the surrounding area is densely forested. The scene is overcast and appears to be raining.

And don't forget wet weather jacket & extra clothes

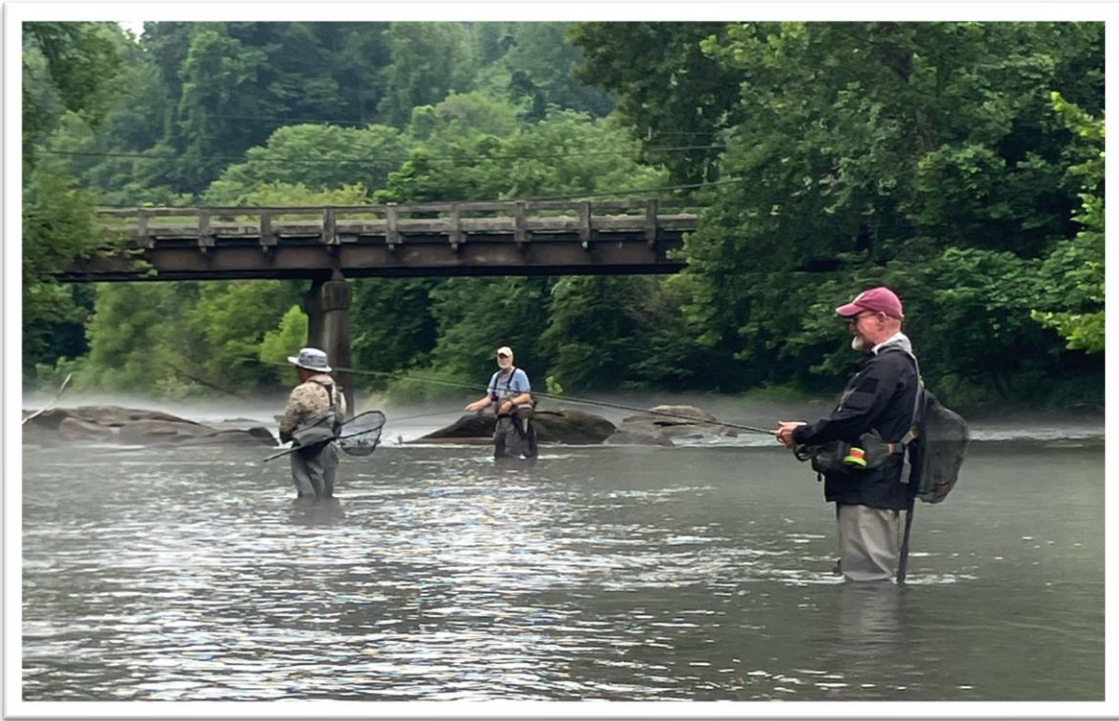
Forecast

Afternoon Shower Wednesday
Clear remainder of the week

Actual

Rain off-and-on each day
Steady rain every night

Fishing the Smith



We tended to fish together.

Rarely felt crowded due to the number of fish in the water

Fishing the Smith



Rolling mist throughout the day ... a unique fishing experience

Fishing the Smith



Not constant action, but pretty close

8-15 fish to hand + rodeos + missed strikes + refusals = good days

Fishing the Smith



Smaller fish . . . We traded size for numbers by fishing the small water

**When considering gear, remember,
there are bigger fish there**



**Taken by a spin fisherman at Grassy ~ 100 yards from where we fished
(15 minutes before John got there)**

Camping at Fairy Stone State Park

Small (48 sites), well maintained campground

20 minute drive from Campground to Bassett (fishing)

\$37 (+ tax & fees) per night per site / Up to two tents per site



RV and Tent Campsites

Water & electrical hook ups at all sites

Pic-nic tables & fire rings at all sites



Bath House

Flush toilets, hot showers, dish wash station

No laundry facilities here

Camping at Fairy Stone State Park



**Cot tent with rain cover
on hard top pull-in**

Site 12 – 2 x sleeping tents



**Standard tent on raised
crushed gravel pad**

Site 15 – sleeping tent & mess tent



**Mess Tent (screen room)
over pic-nic table**

Site 46 – 2 x sleeping tents

We had three sites

A Comment about the Mess Tent (screen room)



Absolutely Indispensable

A dry place to cook, eat, and get together morning and evenings

Smith River DIY Wade Trip - Anglers' Review



Positives

- + Drive up stream access
- + Penty of fish
- + Top Water action
- + Economy trip
(campsites, camp meals)



Negatives

- Size of Fish
- Driving Distance (4 + hours)
- Limited amenities in Bassett
(1 restaurant, but it was good)

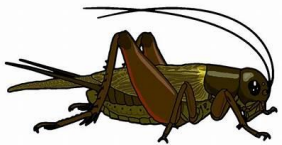
Additional Anglers' Comments

- **Regardless of forecast, bring wet weather gear.**
- **Screen Room: Bring it! Allocate campsite space.**
- **Reserve campsites early to get all sites together**



Additional Anglers' Comments

- **DIY float (kayak) with self-shuttle is a possibility.**
 - **Rated as Class I-II rapids**
 - **6.4 miles from Dam launch to Bassett take-out**
 - **May have to wade some stretches in low water**
- **If noise sensitive, brings ear plugs for campground (insects, frogs, rain).**





QUESTIONS / COMMENTS