

2026Q3

The Quarter Pole



Quarterly Newsletter of the Derby City Fly Fishers

INTRODUCTION

Fall Fly Fishing in Gatlinburg, Tennessee

Each issue of *The Quarter Pole* will have a (1) **seasonal** and (2) **topic** focus. This issue is focused on the unique Autumn fly fishing opportunities in beautiful Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Visitors flock to Gatlinburg each Fall to enjoy the bright Autumn foliage, but often overlook the fantastic urban fishery running through the middle of town and the surrounding areas.

Check out all past issues at the **DCFF Website Newsletter Archives** link [HERE](#) to access prior editions. Also, let us know if you like the newsletter focus and format, or if you have some suggestions to improve the publication. We want to hear from you!

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THE QUARTER POLE HOT TIP

Catching Trout when the Autumn Leaves are Falling

Autumn leaves can create a stunningly beautiful backdrop for any outdoor adventure. The big problem for fly-fishing enthusiasts, however, is having all those colorful leaves floating in and on the water being fished. Two primary problems arise once the Autumn leaves start to clog your favorite trout stream:

- Getting a fish to notice your fly among the mass of brightly colored leaves, and
- Presenting your fly naturally among all those leaves floating in and on the water.

These six easy tips will help you catch trout when the Autumn leaves start falling:

1. Avoid windy conditions to be on the water when fewer leaves are falling. Early morning and late afternoon are typically less windy in the Fall. Avoid fishing when the weatherman predicts windy conditions and use natural wind breaks to your advantage even when there is only a light breeze.
2. Use fly patterns with colors that stand out against the primary tint of the leaves drifting in the water. Tan, yellow, brown, and even red patterns tend to blend together with a backdrop of similarly colored leaves. Trout are sight feeders, so sometimes opting for simple black or white fly patterns will provide the best

contrast in leaf choked waters.

3. Read the water and note how most of the leaf debris is being concentrated by the current. Find and fish just outside any "leaf seams" where your fly is drifting in water near (but not in) heavy leaf concentrations.
4. Shorten your drifts. Leaves in the water are already altering any natural water flows – so your drift in these conditions does not need to be perfect. The shorter your planned drift, however, the less opportunity leaves have to ruin your presentation.
5. Leaves in the water also typically indicate the trout are probably keying in on an abundance of terrestrials (ants, worms, beetles, and bugs) rather than their normal aquatic insect fare. Start by switching between a good variety of terrestrial patterns to find what is working best that day.
6. When all else fails, pick out a good streamer pattern. Cast your streamer and work it directly upstream against the flow of leaves. If it gets fouled during the retrieve, a sharp line strip or rod twitch will often clear the debris so you can continue the retrieve.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The Fall Transition



As summer winds down, I would like to thank all our members, volunteers, instructors, and supporters for another outstanding summer season. From club outings to casting clinics, our members continue to demonstrate what makes Derby City Fly Fishers such a special

organization. As the weather begins to change, we can also look forward to gathering again for our indoor General Membership Meetings (GMMs) at Bass Pro Shops in Clarksville, Indiana. Please check out the club calendar for dates and meeting information on the DCFF web site. These meetings are an excellent chance to reconnect after a busy summer, learn something new about the sport from fellow anglers, and hear updates on all your club activities. I encourage all members (especially our new members) to attend all our General Membership Meetings (GMMs).

Planning is in full swing for our 2027 Kentuckiana Fly Show to be held on Saturday January 16 at Paroquet Springs Conference Center in Shepherdsville, Kentucky. Our first DCFF Fly Show Committee planning meeting of the season was held on Monday, August 10. Future planning meetings will continue at least monthly until January. The Fly Show remains the most important annual event for the club, helping introduce new people to fly fishing while also supporting the mission of Derby City Fly Fishers. Please consider volunteering this year as we can certainly use the help.

While more details will be shared in the coming months, please mark your calendars and tell your boss you will not be working on Friday January 15 because you will be attending an incredibly special afternoon educational seminar conducted by some accomplished fly fishing professionals. DCFF is going all out this year and bringing in at least two real pros, so seating should fill up quickly:

- **George Daniel** is a member of the Fly Fishing Team USA and a two-time Fly Fishing US National Champion.
- **Josh Miller** was a member of the Fly Fishing Team USA from 2016 through 2020 and recently led the US youth team to a gold medal in the 2023 World Championship in Bosnia.

Workshop details and sign-up instructions will be published sometime in November -- so stay tuned!

After you attend one of these Fly Show Seminars and learn some new fishing strategies, you might have all the skills necessary to participate in one of our new 2027 club trips. The trip details are still being worked out, but most will be finalized and published to the DCFF website before the end of this year. These trips are not just for experienced anglers -- but they do require some basic casting, wading, and general fly fishing knowledge. Please see me or one of the Board Members at an upcoming club event or meeting to discuss these trips. Spots fill up very quickly, so now is the time to answer your questions, express an interest, and maybe even get on the trips planning committee for 2027.

New DCFF Trips for 2027 include:

- New River, Meadow Creek, WV
- Elk River, Monterville, WV
- Au Sable River, Grayling, MI
- Kettel Creek, Cross Fork, PA
- Wisconsin Driftless Area
- North Fork South Branch Potomac River Cabins, WV

Fall fishing is just around the corner (or maybe already here) as you read this. Fall ushers in cooler temperatures, changing leaves, and some of the best fishing opportunities of the year. I hope you will find time to enjoy the outdoors and represent our club with pride.

Thank you for your continued support of Derby City Fly Fishers.

Michael Broome
DCFF President

FEATURE ARTICLE

Fall Trout Fishing in Downtown Gatlinburg

When the fall foliage is in full bloom, there are few areas of the country more beautiful than the Great Smokey Mountains area of East Tennessee. Some 10-12 million visitors will visit Gatlinburg, Tennessee each year just between mid-October and mid-November to enjoy the brightly colored scenery and other unique tourist opportunities the town offers as the heat of summer wanes. Most of these visitors with any fishing plans will use Gatlinburg as a jumping off point for a trip into the many pristine rivers and streams in the Great Smokey Mountain National Park. Very few anglers, however, will take advantage of a little-known urban trout fishing adventure hiding in plain sight throughout downtown Gatlinburg.

The West Prong of the Little Pigeon River and its feeder streams (Dudley Creek and Roaring Fork) cut directly through the heart of Gatlinburg past many busy

shops, pedestrian bridges, city parks, and popular restaurants. You can easily access some great looking fly-fishing water within steps of downtown pancake houses or bustling souvenir stores. The best news, however, is that Gatlinburg operates its own trout-rearing facility and stocking program -- making it home to the largest municipally owned and operated trout farm in the United States.

Gatlinburg City Trout Waters:

Tennessee State Resolution 23-445 outlines an agreement between Blount County, the City of Pigeon Forge, and the City of Gatlinburg that delegates water conservation management, recreational use rules and regulations, as well as trout rearing and stocking planning for designated waters to the City of Gatlinburg (among many other specific agreements).

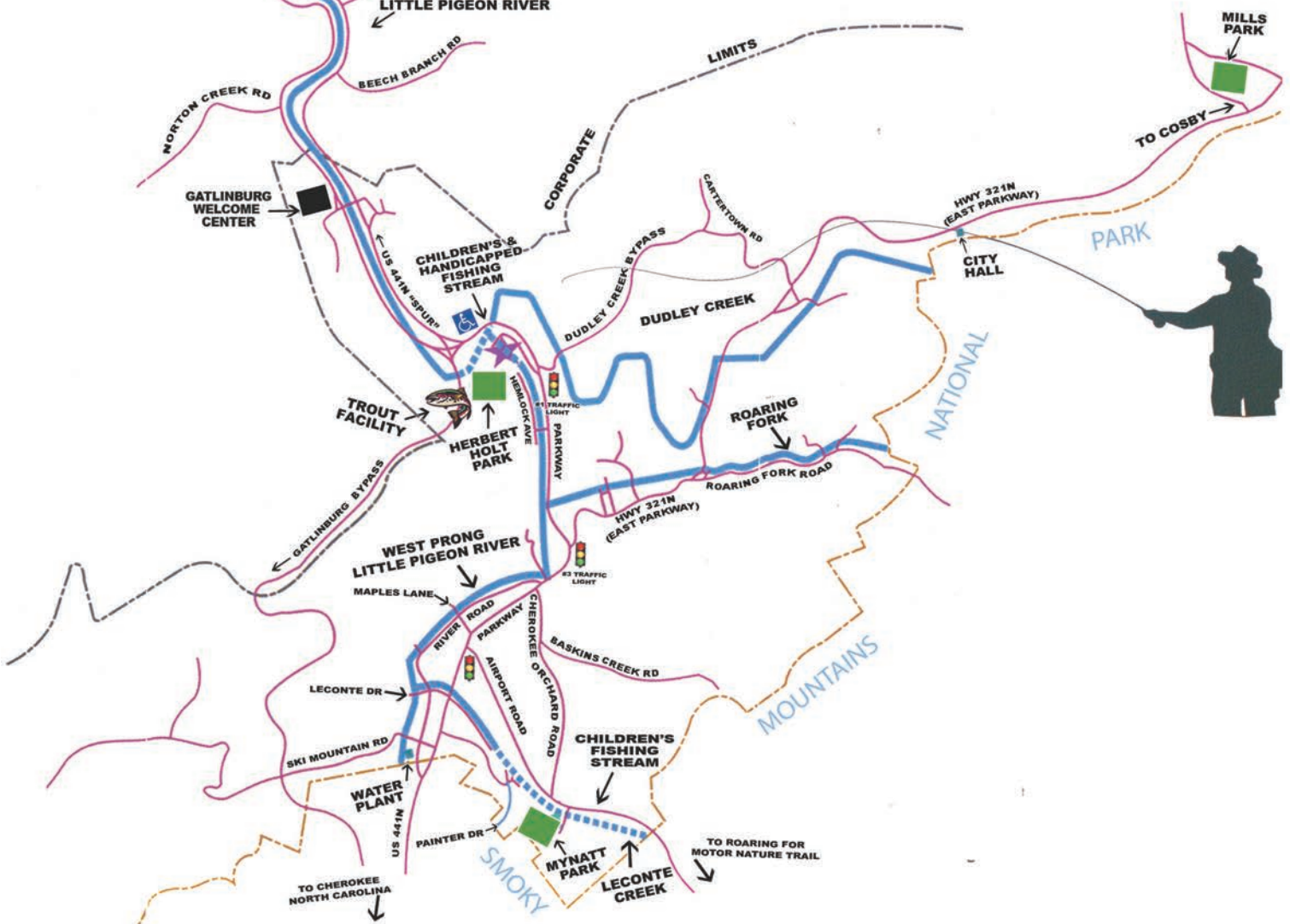


MAP NOT TO SCALE

Fishing in Gatlinburg



MAP LEDGEND	
	General Streams
	Children's Streams Only
	City Parks
	Handicapped Fishing
	Trout Facility



The defined waters managed and regulated by the City of Gatlinburg (see map) are specifically defined as:

- West Prong Little Pigeon River from National Park Boundary downstream to Gnatty Branch,
- Dudley Creek from National Park Boundary downstream to West Prong Little Pigeon River,

- Roaring Fork from National Park Boundary downstream to West Prong Little Pigeon River, and
- LeConte Creek from National Park Boundary downstream to West Prong Little Pigeon River.

The City of Gatlinburg establishes the regulations and restrictions for fishing in these city managed waters. These

fishing rules, regulations, and permits are independent of any State or National Park requirements (except where specifically noted). Bottom line – when fishing in City of Gatlinburg managed waters, the Gatlinburg rules and regulations usurp any State or National Park requirements.

these areas truly offer a distinctly “urban” fishing environment. If you have never tried urban fly-fishing -- don’t judge it until you have, especially in a well-stocked fishery such as Gatlinburg proper.

If the “urban” fishing experience is definitely not your preference, the stretch of road north of the Welcome Center up to the Gnatly Branch boundary near Pigeon Forge flows along the US 441N Spur with plenty of nice pullouts for easy stream access – and no “urban” hustle and bustle to deal with. This secluded section is, in fact, part of the Great Smokey Mountain National Park -- but the water is maintained and managed by Gatlinburg (and city fishing regulations apply). Many experienced anglers will also fish Gatlinburg city water as a “warm-up” day, with easy access and a dependable action, before venturing into the Great Smokey Mountain National Park in search of more elusive wild trout.

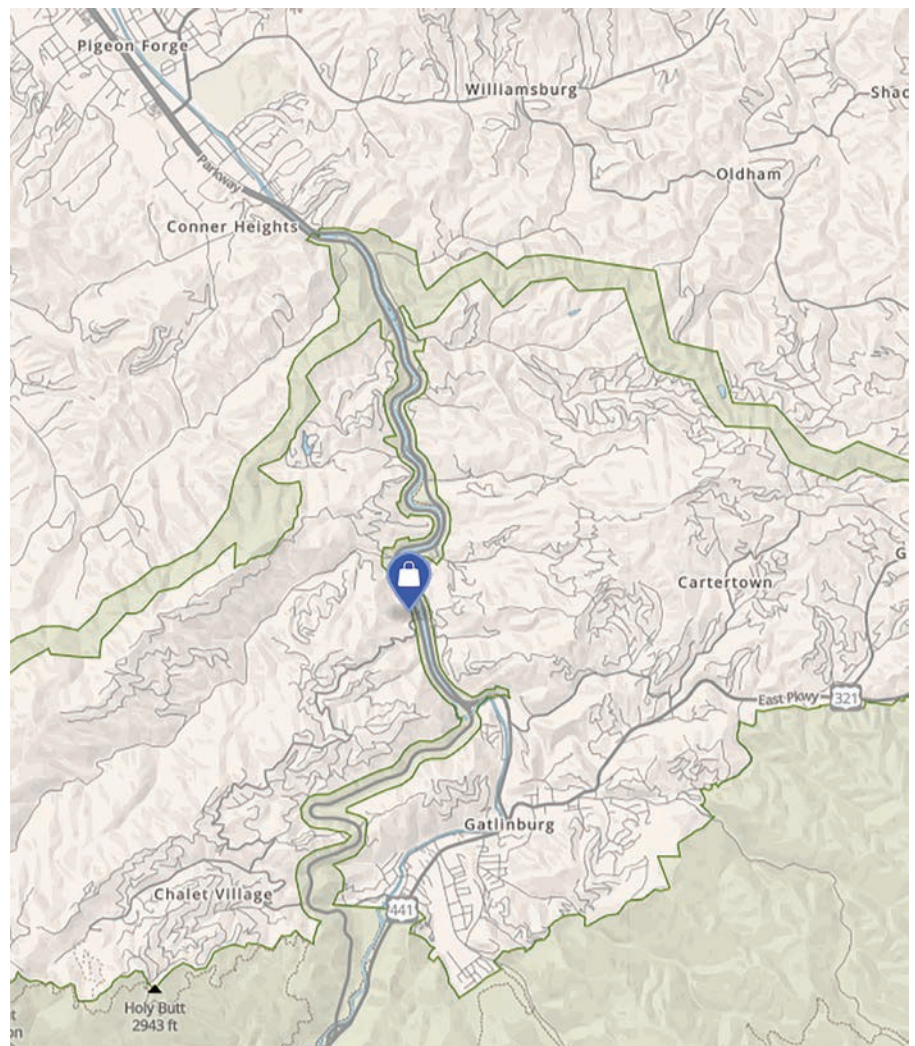


The Trout Hatchery:

The City of Gatlinburg runs its own trout-rearing facility at Herbert Holt Park, and the fish raised there are what keep the downtown fishery full of healthy and hungry trout. Rainbow trout are stocked into city-managed water every Thursday, which is also the one day each week when fishing is never permitted inside city limits. By Friday morning the freshly stocked rainbows have dispersed through the urban channels -- often holding under bridges, along retaining walls, and in the pocket water created by culverts and low walls. The stocked trout population and easy access offer consistent year-round action for beginners, families, and seasoned anglers alike.

Urban Angling Experience:

Inside the city, the primary trout water is the West Prong of the Little Pigeon River (south of the Gatlinburg Welcome Center), along with Dudley Creek and Roaring Fork. All three flow directly through or alongside downtown, so



GATLINBURG TROLLEY ROUTES



You can board Trolleys at many locations throughout the City – anywhere you see the Street Trolley sign. The Gatlinburg Trolleys are identified by route signs posted on each Trolley. Trolleys are handicap accessible. Alternate formats are available upon request. Complimentary paratransit services available if found eligible. For Trolley information, use the [Visit Gatlinburg](#) app or visit [GatlinburgTrolley.org](#).

*This service is partially funded under a grant contract with the State of Tennessee, Department of Transportation.

BLUE East Parkway, Community Center, Rocky Top Sports World, Library, Mass Transit Center at Ripley's Aquarium of the Smokies	RED River Rd., Ski Mountain Rd., Parkway from Traffic Light #10 to Traffic Light #8, Convention Center, Airport Rd. Park Vista Hotel, Cherokee Orchard Rd., Baskins Creek Rd., Wolis Ln., Mass Transit Center at Ripley's Aquarium of the Smokies	PURPLE North Parkway, Spur Welcome Center Park and Ride, Mass Transit Center at Ripley's Aquarium of the Smokies	YELLOW APR - OCT: DAILY; NOV & DEC: ONLY MON-SAT Departs from Mass Transit Center at Ripley's Aquarium of the Smokies to the Great Smoky Arts and Crafts Community. Runs approx. once an hour, 10:30 am - 6:00 pm.	REGULAR SCHEDULE (May 1 st through October 31 st) 8:30 AM - midnight WINTER SCHEDULE (November 1 st through April 30 th) 10:30 AM - 10:00 PM
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Getting Around:

Easy access to many sections of fishable water are readily available from almost any downtown starting or dropoff location. Getting around downtown by foot from spot to spot is also fairly easy. Auto traffic and parking congestion, however, make moving from spot to spot via vehicle very difficult. Gatlinburg's free trolley can help solve these downtown traffic and parking problems.

The trolley runs throughout downtown and into nearby areas at no cost, which means a member can park once, ride to a stretch of the West Prong or Dudley Creek, fish it, hop back on, and work through several widely dispersed access points over the course of a day without ever moving the car. Parking a car (for free) at Herbert Holt Park is a common starting point for many experienced urban anglers planning to use the trolley system for a day of fishing. This is an easy way to beat both the traffic

and the parking squeeze that otherwise define a common busy day in Gatlinburg.



1-Day Gatlinburg Trout License (097)**\$11.00**

This license is the only requirement for residents or nonresidents to fish for one day in Gatlinburg. {Streams closed Thursdays due to stocking} For information on fishing in the Gatlinburg area, contact the Gatlinburg Chamber of Commerce at 1.800.568.4748 or the Gatlinburg trout facility at 865-436-7549

1-Day Gatlinburg Trout Permit (099)**\$3.00**

Required for both residents and nonresidents ages 13-64 {Streams closed Thursdays due to stocking}. Required in addition to your base license to fish in Gatlinburg waters. For information on fishing in the Gatlinburg area, contact the Gatlinburg Chamber of Commerce

3-Day Gatlinburg Trout Permit (096)**\$9.00**

Required for both residents and nonresidents ages 13-64 {Streams closed Thursdays due to stocking}. Required in addition to the appropriate fishing licenses. (Persons holding a 1-Day Gatlinburg Trout License are not required to have this permit)
For information on fishing in the Gatlinburg area, contact the Gatlinburg Chamber of Commerce

License and Permit Requirements:

This is the part of a Gatlinburg fishing experience that trips up many visitors, because the rules and regulations are somewhat confusing. We will only discuss non-resident requirements here, for those age sixteen (16) and older, so please do some research on your own if you are a resident of Tennessee or fishing with someone under age-16.

Option #1: Fish in city managed waters with the purchase of just a 1-Day Gatlinburg Trout License (Type 097) and no other TN Fishing License (of any kind) is required.

Option #2: Purchase a 1-Day Gatlinburg Trout Permit (Type 099) or a 3-Day Gatlinburg Trout Permit (Type 096) in conjunction with any qualifying nonresident TN Fishing License, such as the 3-Day Fishing All Species License (Type 078).

Tennessee Nonresident Fishing Licenses

Annual Fishing - No Trout, age 16 and over	\$49.00
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3-Day Fishing - No Trout, age 16 and over	\$20.00
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3-Day Fishing - All Species, including Trout, age 16 and over	\$40.00
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10-Day Fishing - No Trout	\$30.00
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10-Day Fishing - All Species, including Trout, age 16 and over	\$61.00
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Annual Fishing - All Species, including Trout, age 16 and over	\$98.00
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Before choosing either option listed, ask yourself what works best for your planned fishing. Do you plan to stray outside city managed waters for some fishing where a TN license will be required? The costs listed in the charts here are current as of publication – so one option may cost less than another suitable option. Decide how many days you will be fishing, where you might be fishing, then confirm the current permit type numbers and fee schedules because they change often.

Licenses and permits are available at the Gatlinburg Customer Service Center, the Gatlinburg Welcome Center, the Go Outdoors Tennessee online system, and the TWRA On the Go mobile app. Buying online before the trip avoids a line at the counter on the first day of fishing.

Parking Tags:

As noted previously, Gatlinburg city waters often also overlap with Great Smokey Mountain National Park boundaries. Where these overlapping situations exist, the city manages the water, but the National



Parks own the land. You can fish in these overlapping areas under City of Gatlinburg rules and regulations, instead of the more restrictive National Park rules. Also, an entry fee is not required for access to any portion of the Great Smokey Mountain National Park, but you will require a parking tag to park any vehicle on National Park land for more than 15 minutes – this includes land where Gatlinburg City waters overlap (such as along the previously mentioned US 441N Spur north of the Gatlinburg Welcome Center).



You can purchase parking passes at any National Park Visitor Center, but the most convenient location near Gatlinburg is the Sugarlands Visitor Center. No parking pass is required if the vehicle displays appropriate handicap placards or plates. Purchasing a parking pass does not guarantee you will find parking. Parking is first come, first served.

Current tag options listed by the National Park Service are:

- Daily: \$5
- Weekly: \$15
- Annual: \$40

Gatlinburg Fishing Regulations:

No fishing is permitted on Thursday due to weekly rainbow trout stocking. Fishing is only allowed during daylight hours (30 minutes before official sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset). Only one fishing rod is allowed per angler. All multiple hook configurations are prohibited (single hook only). Catch and release only from December 1st through March 31st.



Children Only Sections:

Certain areas are reserved exclusively for anglers twelve (12) and under. Give these sections a wide berth, and anyone bringing children on a trip will want to ask locally which stretches currently qualify, because the designated segments are occasionally reclassified. Currently, the areas restricted are near Mynatt Park and just north of Herbert Holt Park (see map):

- LeConte Creek from Painters Branch upstream to National Park Boundary, and
- West Prong Little Pigeon River from a point 100 yards upstream of the Herbert Holt Park entrance downstream to the Gatlinburg By-Pass Bridge, and
- Dudley Creek from the Highway 441 Bridge downstream to the West Prong Little Pigeon River.

Urban Gatlinburg Fishing Etiquette:

The Gatlinburg fishing environment comes with obligations that might not readily come to mind for the typical angler unaccustomed to urban fishing. Give pedestrians and sidewalk traffic plenty of room, and watch your rod tip when walking on crowded streets. Avoid casting near crowds, and clear your backcast. Don't hook a tourist! Pack out all trash, and keep an eye out for kids feeding ducks near the stocked pools.



These fish are heavily pressured – so use barbless hooks where practical and avoid fishing during extreme low flows or unusually warm fall water conditions. Watch your footing on slick rocks, especially where the ducks have been recycling their food – if you know, you know (IYKYK) what I am talking about.

Keep an eye on the sky. Rain can sneak up on you downtown, and East Tennessee weather changes fast. Water flows can rise

quickly to dangerous levels in the narrow downtown channels after just a moderate amount of rain somewhere upstream.



Closing:

Gatlinburg's downtown fishery remains one of the more unusual destinations in American fly-fishing:

- A large working municipal hatchery,
- Regular weekly stocking schedules,
- A year-round abundance of quality trout, and
- All of this in the middle of a popular tourist town!

Pack some simple gear for a quick 1-day adventure on the water mixed in with your other family travel and vacation plans, or make a dedicated 3-day trip to explore the whole urban fishing experience (and maybe take a trip into the National Park on a Thursday when the city water is closed). Gatlinburg is equal parts convenience and opportunity – and that might be reason enough to put it on your fishing calendar this Fall.

Editor's Note: For more information, visit these web links and view the YouTube videos below.

WEBSITES:

[City of Gatlinburg Web Page](#)

[Complete Guide to Fishing in Gatlinburg](#)

YOUTUBE VIDEOS:

[Fishing in Gatlinburg: Things You Should Know](#)

[Fifth Day Fly Fishing: Gatlinburg Video #1](#)

[Fifth Day Fly Fishing: Gatlinburg Video #2](#)

[Fifth Day Fly Fishing: Gatlinburg Video #3](#)

[Lelands Lures: Gatlinburg Lunkers on the Trout Magnet](#)

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT

An Urban Fly Fishing Gear Guide

Very simple equipment is all that you need for fishing Gatlinburg waters.

Rod choice should match your preferred style. A 3-to-5 weight rod covers nearly any situation you will encounter. Many of the stocked rainbow are good sized, so don't go too light on your setups. Also, remember, you are only permitted one rod per angler while on Gatlinburg waters – so don't bring multiple setups to the stream.

Most casting will be short, and accuracy is more important than distance downtown. A standard weight forward floating line to match the rod rating will be your most convenient option. Level line or tapered leaders will both work, and most anglers opt for a slightly shorter leader than normal. Tippet in the 4X to 6X range handles most clear-water presentations, with heavier tippet reserved for streamer fishing. Light presentations matter everywhere in this fishery. Downtown trout see plenty of foot traffic and are no less leader-shy for living next to a pancake house.

Stocked rainbow trout make up the vast majority of the catch in town, with only an occasional brown mixed in. Productive fly patterns include: Pheasant Tail, Hare's Ear, and Prince nymphs for subsurface presentations. Adams, Elk Hair Caddis, and parachute patterns cover hatch-driven dry-fly days. When the autumn

leaves start falling, bring out your Mops and other confidence terrestrial patterns. Woolly Buggers and small Zonkers are worth tying on for the occasional brown and bigger rainbows that hold in deeper pools, particularly after rain pushes extra flow through the system.

Remember, you are limited to a single hook – so don't opt for any multi-fly system. Hopper-Dropper rigs are not permitted on Gatlinburg waters. Trout worms and other scented baits, however, are fair game during Open Season (Apr-1 to Nov-30).

Don't forget the basics. Polarized sunglasses are a must, a wading staff is helpful, at least a lightweight rain jacket will come in handy, and insect repellent (even in late autumn) can save the day. Don't forget to bring your Gatlinburg license or permit (and TN license, if appropriate).

Spring and fall both get strong reviews for comfortable weather and actively feeding fish, though there is genuine disagreement about which produces the better hatches. Early fall (September through October) gets the nod for stable flows and good terrestrial fishing, but you will also experience brief but abundant hatches in the fall. Fishing gets tougher after October passes and the autumn leaves start to fall in quantity.



DCFF MEMBER PROFILE

Jim Bearden

By: **Gus Dattilo**
DCFF Webmaster
webmaster@derbycityflyfishers.com

Jim Bearden hails from Western Kentucky. He retired after a long career in education as a Teacher, School Principal, and eventually in Education Administration. Jim has two daughters, and five grandchildren who have all followed in Jim's path of athleticism. Jim is a former marathon runner, and one of his grandchildren is a ranked Archery Marksman.

Jim currently resides in Louisville with his wife Carrie, and a small, cute little dog named Jackson that will smile at you as he attempts to bite off your finger! Do NOT attempt to pet Jackson -- you have been warned!

Jim, like many of us, transitioned to fly fishing from other traditional fishing styles. In his youth, Jim fished a lot in farm ponds with spinning gear. Jim eventually found spin fishing to be too easy, and looked for a more challenging method. On many a free Sunday afternoon, Jim could be found teaching himself to fish on a fly rod that he made for himself. This was the start of a decades long love of fly fishing and rod building.

Jim started traveling around Kentucky fly-fishing wherever he could, and eventually discovered the Cumberland River where he eventually gave up spin fishing altogether and devoted his time to angling with only a fly rod. Jim claims "Fly Fishing has kept me off of the streets".

Jim retired from Bullett County Schools in 2001 and has not looked back. While he has enjoyed retirement, it has come with some new health challenges. Jim has suffered a stroke, and is also a cancer survivor three times over.

Jim has always preferred donning waders to fish in the winter, noting "the colder, the better". As he has become more "seasoned", however, Jim has cut back on wade fishing but is still focused on improving his fly tying and rod building skills. Asked how many rods he thinks he has built

over his lifespan, Jim stated that he had no real idea -- but quickly listed several dozen that he has made for his children, grandchildren, friends, club members, and at least twenty that he kept for himself. For the record, Jim also had two rods blanks on his workbench a few weeks ago.

Jim has generally focused on building fly rods using rod blanks from R. L. Winston, but he recently also discovered some quality blanks from CTS in New Zealand. Jim has also built some bamboo fly rods, but while he will not say he does not like them -- it is probably safe to say he is also not a fan of bamboo rods. Jim describes the slower action of casting with a bamboo rod as "backcast, go to lunch, let the rod load, then finish the forward cast". He also summarizes the bamboo rod building experience as "time I'll never get back". As for fly reels, currently Jim states that "pound for pound" he prefers Orvis fly reels.



SOUNDING BOARD

Words from the DCFF Board of Directors

Jeff Moore

DCFF Newsletter Director

newsletter@derbycityflyfishers.com

We will continue with the dual seasonal and topic focus in future quarterly editions of the Newsletter. The focus for the upcoming 4th Quarterly edition will be a teaser for the planned speakers and seminars scheduled for the:

2027 Kentuckiana Fly Show

Let us know what topics you would enjoy exploring in future editions.

If you have any feedback on the content or the format of the Newsletter, please let me know. This is your club, and the Newsletter should provide information you want and need. Enjoy the upcoming Fall fishing season, and send us some of your photos!



PHOTO FINISH

A Picture is Worth A Thousand Words

Waterfalls Lodge
Spanish, Ontario, Canada
June-2026



Waterfalls Lodge, Canada
(Cont)



**New River
Meadow Creek, West Virginia**
June-2026



**Proud to be an
Eating and Drinking Club ...**



... with a Serious Fly Fishing Problem !!!



The End