

SOME SOURCES FOR FLOW INFORMATION TO MARYLAND TROUT STREAMS

These levels are my estimates of when the wading becomes very difficult (max.) or few trout can be found in the remaining pocket water (min.). The estimates are in cubic feet per second (cfs) for optimum fishing on these streams. At flows above these maxima, one can expect to see less and less surface activity, as the cost for a trout of rising to the surface is more than the energy it usually obtains from a small insect on the surface. At low flows, the trout have 'a full week' to examine any fly or lure you may be using, as well as they can be very spooky in the slow pools. For most fishers, wading sets the limits as to where one can go, so the maxima given are about where the average experienced fisher will experience serious difficulty maneuvering around the stream. Further, the main point is that the flows listed below are only optimum in my experience. One can certainly fish at much higher or lower flows.

The two main web sites to check for water flows are the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) (www.nab-wc.usace.army.mil/nab/index.html) and the US Geological Survey (<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/md/nwis/current/?type=flow>). These have links to the current flows and releases on such rivers as the Savage, North Branch, Youghiogheny, Casselman, Patuxent (Unity & Brighton Dam), Gunpowder (nr. Parkton) and Little Patuxent (Savage) and many others. At a few sites, the USGS also provides stream temperatures(*). The two COE sites for Savage River Dam and Jennings Randolph Dam on the North Branch also give pool level, inflow and outflow information. If a reservoir is near full and you arrive just as a large rain storm is ending, you may find those rivers in full flood. Call 410-962-7687 (Baltimore COE office) for a tape recording of current and projected releases at Savage River Dam and on North Branch @ Jennings Randolph Dam.

Another USGS site well worth checking is <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/md/nwis/rt>. This shows a map of Maryland with dots for the various stations. One can very quickly see where high flows are occurring or where drought is making the flows very low. For those stations that provide temperature data, it is advisable to also review recent temperature fluctuations.

The COE has a web page well worth reviewing before heading to either the N. Branch or lower Savage: <http://www.nab-wc.usace.army.mil/northBranch.html>. It provides projected releases for Savage and Jennings Randolph dams, as well as a table for planned whitewater releases for the current year.

The following list gives the river and the reference USGS reporting station, followed by the optimum flows for wade fishing:

Gunpowder @ Parkton: 25–200 cfs	North Branch @ Luke: 100–400 cfs (##)
Gunpowder @ Glencoe: 50–300 cfs	Savage R @ Barton (upper river): 20–100 cfs*
Patuxent @ Unity: 15–130 cfs	Savage R @ Bloomington: 40–150 cfs*
Patuxent @ Brighton Dam: 30–140 cfs*	Youghiogheny @ Friendsville: 75–500 cfs* (\$\$)
Little Patuxent @ Savage, MD: 35–250 cfs (++)	Casselman R. @ Grantsville gage ht: 1.0–2.8'
North Branch @ Barnum: 80–300 cfs (##)*	Town Cr @ Oldtown: 70–325 cfs

NOTES:

++–Also covers Middle Patuxent Delayed Harvest.

##–For floating these two river sections, the "minimum flows" are at least twice the minima listed above for wade fishing, unless the fisher plans on spending a lot of time pulling or pushing his craft over the rocks.

\$\$–Deep Cr. power plant regularly generates power; the flows typically increase by about 6", so if the flows are already high one must be careful or he will be stranded on the far side of the river for several hours. Conversely, if the flows are low, then the increase will likely benefit the fisher and the trout; wading will still be possible. Call 315-413-2823 for tape recording of projected releases.