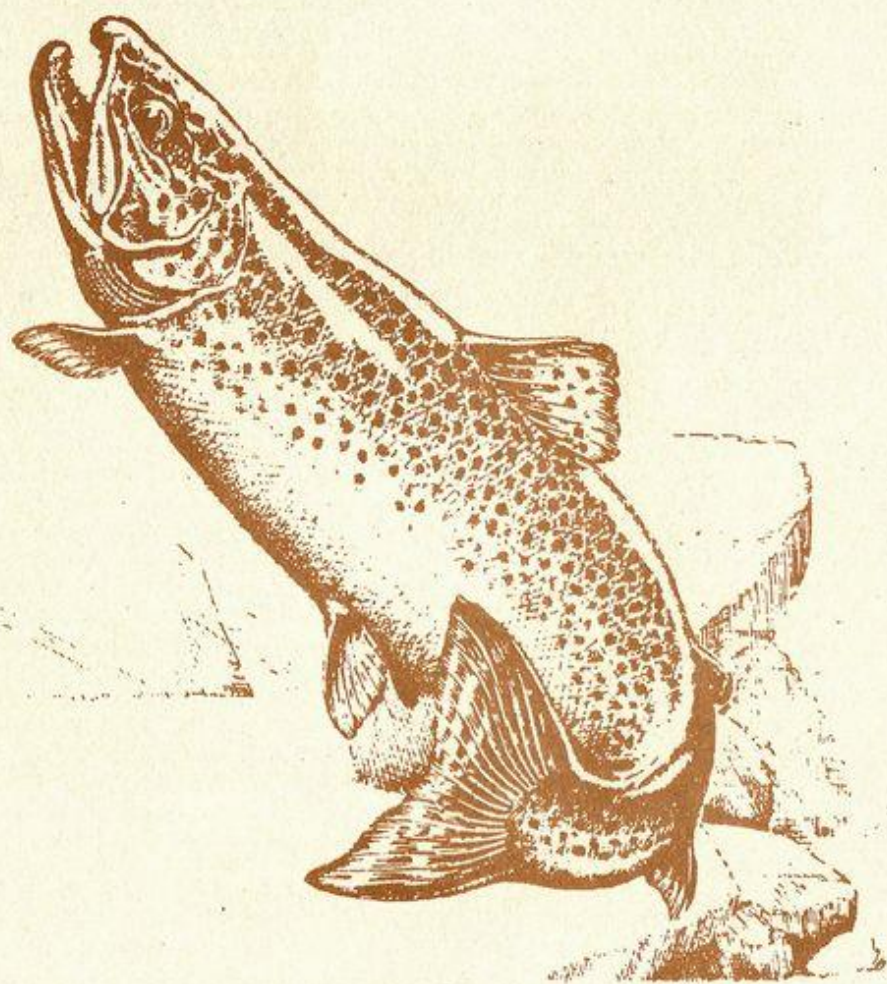


**Fly Fisherman's Guide
to Big Hunting Creek**



Compliments of
Friends of Big Hunting Creek



This "Guide" to Big Hunting Creek has been prepared to familiarize visiting anglers with various features of the stream within the boundaries of Catoctin Mountain Park and Cunningham Falls State Park.

THE STREAM

Big Hunting Creek has played a prominent role in the development of recreational trout fishing in Maryland. The stream has long been popular among fly fishermen. It is the birth place of the **Brotherhood of the Jungle Cock**, an organization dedicated to helping young people understand and appreciate the sport of angling and the resources upon which it depends. Big Hunting Creek was the first in the State to be designated as a **Fly Fishing Only** stream. Later it became Maryland's first **Catch and Return** trout stream.

Originating from mountain-top springs, Big Hunting Creek flows down the east slope of the Catoctin Mountains, crosses under Route 77, and spills over **Cunningham Falls**, to enter **Hunting Creek Lake** where it is joined by **Hauver Branch**. Leaving the Lake, the stream resumes its journey, tumbling and gliding past **Whiskey Still Creek**, the **Joe Brooks Memorial** and **Catoctin Mountain Park Visitor Center**. At **Camp Peniel**, it again crosses under Route 77 and continues its descent, rushing past **Bear Branch** and through the **Gorge** to enter **Frank Bentz Memorial Lake**.

Throughout its course from above the Falls to **Frank Bentz Lake**, the stream is never far from Maryland Route 77. Along the roadway, anglers will find parking areas and numerous pull-offs where they may leave their cars.

TROUT OF BIG HUNTING CREEK

Anglers will find brook, brown and rainbow trout in Big Hunting Creek. All three species spawn in the stream. Brookies and browns that rise to artificial flies are typically stream bred fish as are some of the rainbows. Rainbows are the only species currently stocked in Big Hunting Creek; approximately 1,500 are raised and stocked by the Potomac Valley Fly Fishermen and the Maryland Fly Anglers. Stocked fish soon adapt to the stream environment and many of them hold over from year to year.

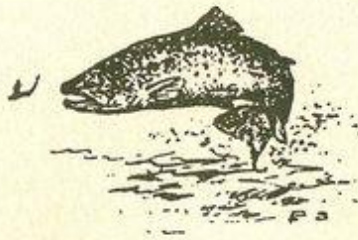
Rainbows are the most abundant of the trout found in Big Hunting Creek; brookies are the least abundant. The rainbows, browns and an occasional brook trout will be found throughout the stream from the falls to the foot of the mountain. Above the falls, the stream holds browns and a few brook trout.

FISHING REGULATIONS

Big Hunting Creek and its tributaries within Cunningham Falls State Park and Catoctin Mountain Park are subject to the following special Catch and Return fishing regulations. *

- o A Maryland fishing license and trout stamp are required when fishing the stream
- o A person may **NOT** have any trout in his/her possession while fishing the stream.
- o **ALL** trout caught must be released.
- o A person may **NOT** use or possess any natural bait, baitfish, fishbait, scents or natural or synthetic devices capable of catching fish, except artificial flies or streamers.
- o Only artificial flies and streamers constructed in a normal fashion using natural and/or synthetic materials on a single hook with the components wound on or about the hook.
- o A person may fish only with conventional fly fishing tackle (fly rods, fly reels, and fly line with a maximum of 18 feet of leader or monofilament line attached). The use of spinning, spincast, and casting reels is prohibited.
- o Fly fishing is permitted throughout the year.

* (Consult the Maryland Sportfishing Guide for specific details).



HELP PROTECT THIS RESOURCE

Care And Concern -

Big Hunting Creek is a very special place!

To preserve its beauty and bounty:

- o Leave the stream, and the places you visit, as clean as they were when you arrived . . . or cleaner.
- o Do **NOT** disturb the log jack-dams and wing-deflectors which have been placed in the stream to protect the banks and to create a better environment for trout.
- o Do **NOT** use the stream as a wading pool or the stream banks as a picnic area. Facilities for swimming, wading and picnicking are available at other locations in both Catoclin Mountain Park and Cunningham Falls State Park.

Handle Trout Carefully -

To assure that trout you hook will survive after they are released:

- o Use only barbless hooks, or hooks with barbs pinched down.
- o Land trout as quickly as possible so they do not become exhausted.
- o When releasing trout, **avoid handling** them if possible; if it is necessary to handle a trout to release it, wet your hands before you pick up the fish; avoid squeezing it or touching its gills.
- o Remove hooks gently; use forceps or hemostats.

Respect Your Fellow Angler -

Many fly fishermen visit Big Hunting Creek each year. To increase everyone's enjoyment and chance of fly-fishing success:

- o Avoid wading in the stream.
- o Keep a reasonable distance between yourself and other anglers.
- o Stay well back from the bank as you walk along the stream.

FLY HATCHES

A variety of aquatic insects inhabit Big Hunting Creek including, among others, a number of mayfly, caddisfly and stonefly species. Several species of **Little Black Stoneflies** will be found emerging in the fall and winter. During late February and early March, **Early Brown Stoneflies** will appear. Both the little Black Stonefly and the Early Brown Stonefly may be active even when snow is on the ground. From mid-May through June, two large stoneflies, and one of intermediate size, will be seen emerging from the stream. The Eastern equivalent of the **Salmonfly** of western streams, the **Giant Black Stonefly** is one of the large stoneflies inhabiting the stream; the **Big Brown Stonefly** is the other. Although the **Yellow Sally** is the smaller of three stoneflies hatching in the spring, it emerges in greater numbers.

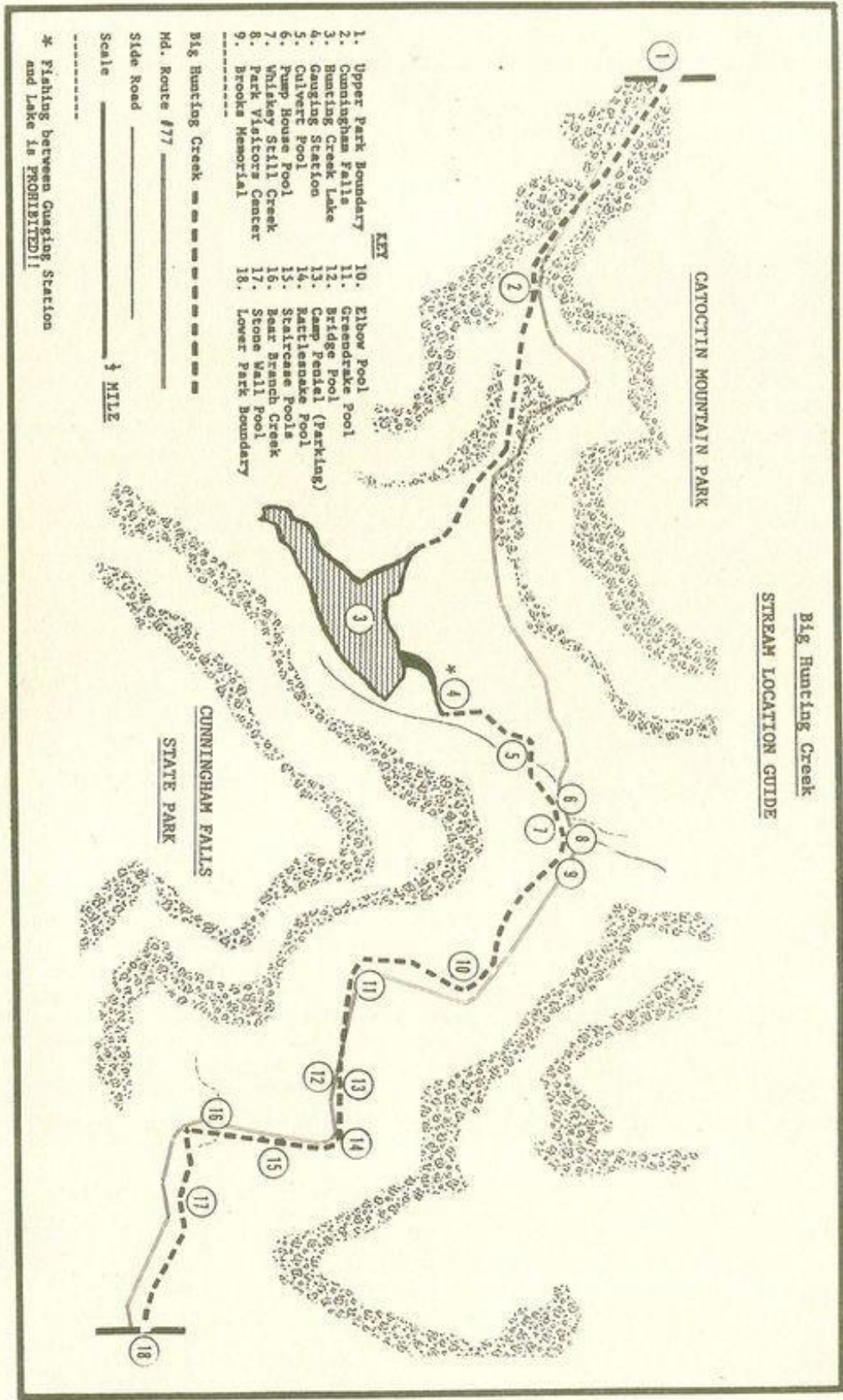
Big Hunting Creek has fair to good hatches of the following mayflies - Blue-wing Duns, Quill Gordons, March Browns, Light Cahills, and Green Drakes. First to appear are the Blue-wing Duns (early April), followed by the Quill Gordons (mid-April), March Browns (late April-early May), Light Cahills (mid-May) and the Green Drakes (late May, early June).

In addition to stoneflies and mayflies, several kinds of case-building caddisflies (stone, stick and leaf-case builders) and free-living caddis such as the green caddis or green rock worm are found in Big Hunting Creek. Various species of caddisflies hatch from the stream throughout the warmer months, from April through September.

FLIES TO TRY

<u>Name of Fly</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Time Of Year</u>
Hornberg	Streamer	6 - 8	Nov. - Apr.
White Marabou	Streamer	6 - 10	Nov. - Apr.
Woolley Bugger	Streamer	6 - 8	Nov. - May
Wooley Worm	Wet Fly	6 - 8	Nov. - Apr.
Honeybug	Nymph	10 - 12	Nov. - May
Gray Muskrat	Nymph	12 - 16	Mar. - May
Hare's Ear	Nymph	10 - 16	Mar. - May
Lt. Blk. Stonefly	Dry Fly	16 - 22	Oct. - Mar.
Adams	Dry Fly	14 - 18	Apr. - Oct.
March Brown	Dry Fly	12 - 14	May - Jun.
Drk. Elk Hair Caddis	Dry Fly	16 - 18	Apr. - Jul.
Lt. Elk Hair Caddis	Dry Fly	16 - 18	May - Sept.
Brown Bivisible	Dry Fly	16 - 20	May - Oct.
Light Cahill	Dry Fly	14 - 16	May - June
Ant	Dry Fly	16 - 20	June - Sept.
Bettle	Dry Fly	12 - 18	June - Sept.

**Big Hunting Creek
STREAM LOCATION GUIDE**



- KEY**
- 1. Upper Park Boundary
 - 2. Cunningham Falls
 - 3. Gauging Creek Lake
 - 4. Gauging Station
 - 5. Culvert Pool
 - 6. Pump House Pool
 - 7. Whiskey Still Creek
 - 8. Park Visitors Center
 - 9. Brooks Memorial
 - 10. Elbow Pool
 - 11. Greendrake Pool
 - 12. Bridge Pool
 - 13. Camp Pentel (Parking)
 - 14. Rattlesnake Pool
 - 15. Startrace Pools
 - 16. Star Branch Creek
 - 17. Stone Wall Pool
 - 18. Lower Park Boundary

Big Hunting Creek -----

Md. Route #77 -----

Slide Road -----

Scale ----- 1/4 MILE

* Fishing between Gauging Station and Lake is PROHIBITED!

REPORT POACHERS!
to
Catoctin Mountain Park
Visitors Center

or
(301) 663-9388
or
(301) 271-7574