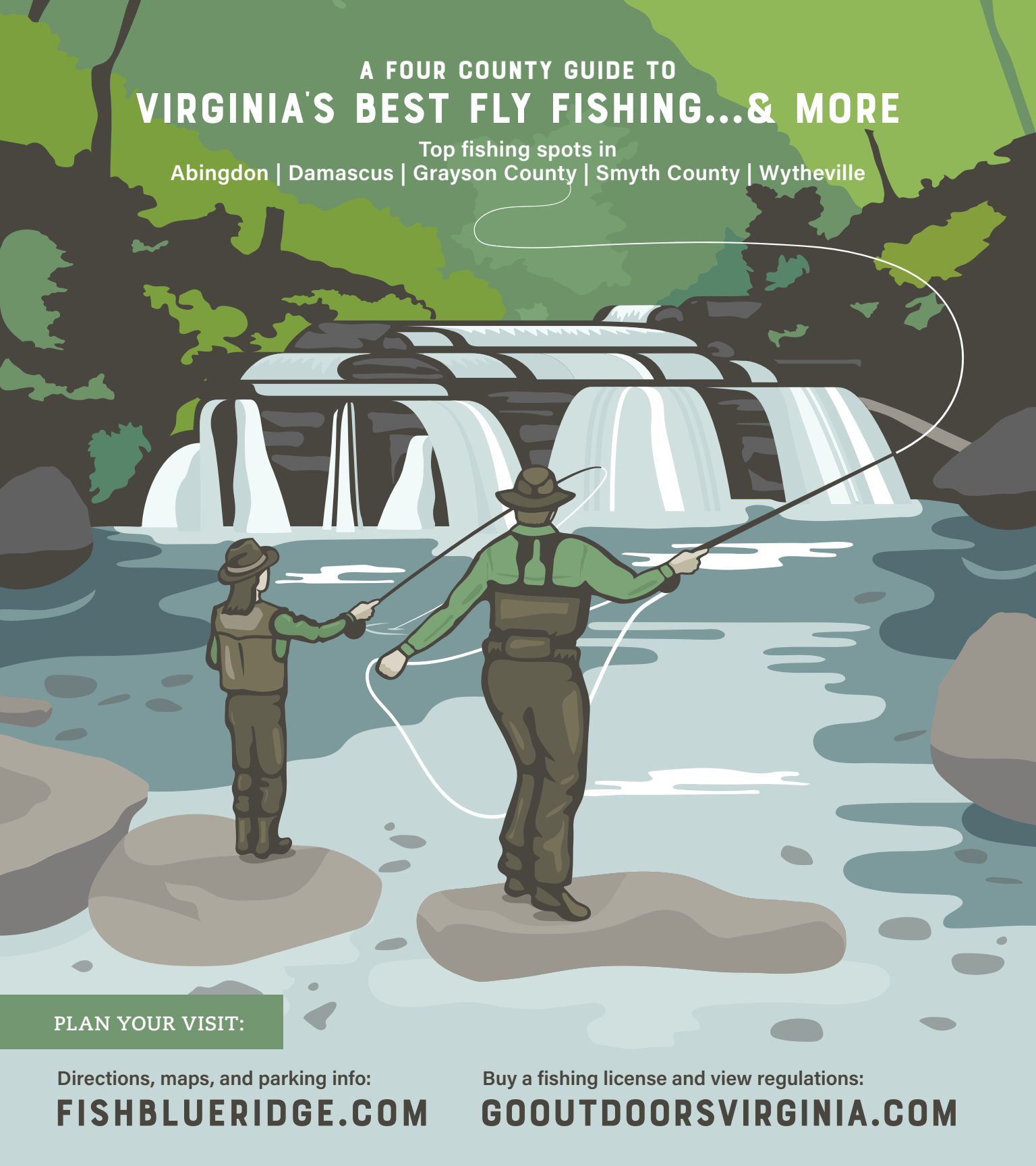


# A FOUR COUNTY GUIDE TO VIRGINIA'S BEST FLY FISHING...& MORE

Top fishing spots in  
Abingdon | Damascus | Grayson County | Smyth County | Wytheville



PLAN YOUR VISIT:

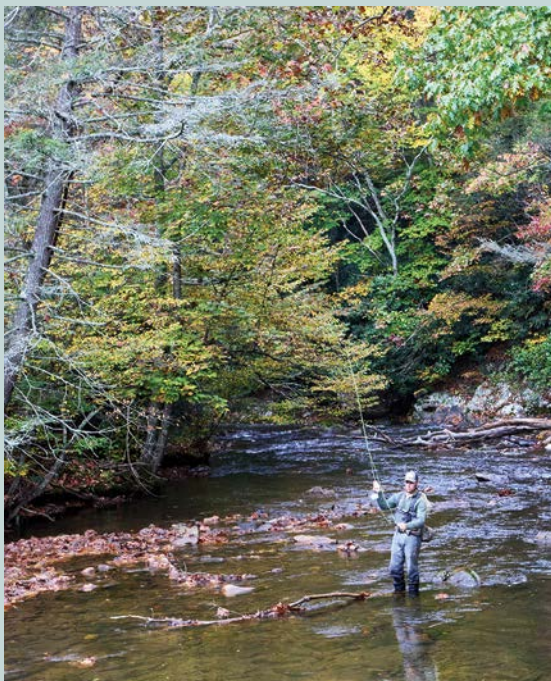
Directions, maps, and parking info:

**FISHBLUERIDGE.COM**

Buy a fishing license and view regulations:

**GOOUTDOORSVIRGINIA.COM**





WELCOME TO THE:

# BLUE RIDGE HIGHLANDS OF VIRGINIA,

home to the best and most diverse freshwater fishing in the state. New to fishing? Not to worry, this four-county area has plenty of options for anglers young and old, experienced and just testing the waters. You'll find stocked ponds, float trips, and cold-water wading opportunities galore. And the famed South Holston tailwater in Tennessee is just a short drive away!

## *Important information on Fishing Regulations in Virginia*

The information in this guide is not meant to replace official information provided by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources. Before fishing in Virginia, be sure to read up on fishing regulations and apply for all valid fishing licenses at [gooutdoorsvirginia.com](http://gooutdoorsvirginia.com).

*Articles by Matt Reilly, with additional contributions by John Ross.*

VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS

Take Whitetop Laurel near Damascus, VA for example, 10 miles of first class pools and pocketwater known for rainbows and browns with a few brookies mixed in. An old railroad bed, the Virginia Creeper Trail, follows its route and has been converted to a hiking, biking, and horse trail. If you listen carefully, you might hear the ghost of a steam engine chuffing as it pulled a Norfolk & Western freight train up this mountain grade. Bring your bike to access sections of the stream that seldom see anglers. Easily reached on US 58, the half-mile below Creek Junction is perfect for wheelchair users.

If you're hankering for smallmouth in the three to five pound class, the North Fork of the Holston at Saltville may be to your liking. A long-ago environmental tragedy has ironically paved the way for ecotourism in Saltville. From 1950 to 1972, Olin Chemical discharged mercury into the river, which at the time was not illegal. The resulting decades of catch-and-release only fishing means that the river offers anglers the best opportunity in Virginia to connect with a three-pound plus smallmouth. Float it in a kayak and cast poppers under the trees or wade the riffles swinging big streamers.

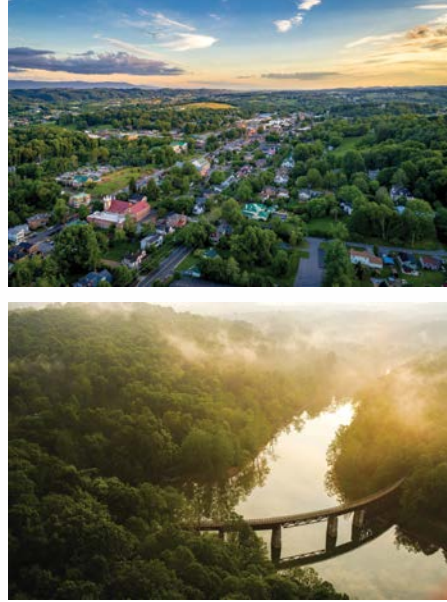
Not far along Interstate 81, you'll come to Hidden Valley Lake, outside Abingdon. This 61-acre Department-owned impoundment is in the Hidden Valley Wildlife Management Area in Washington County. Hidden Valley Lake supports self-sustaining populations of largemouth bass, bluegill, redbreast sunfish, and black crappie. Channel catfish and northern pike are stocked. This pristine, high-elevation lake is just as popular for hikers, rock climbers, and wildlife photographers!

Families have plenty of opportunities to share the joy of fishing with young children, at places like Rural Retreat Lake and Trout Pond near Wytheville. The lake has a boat ramp, ample shoreline fishing, picnic shelters, campgrounds, and a concession that sells food, bait, and tackle, plus the Wythe County Parks and Recreation Department operates a swimming pool adjacent to the lake!

Looking for an undiscovered gem, in a spectacular mountain setting? Head to Fox Creek in Grayson County. This freestone valley stream flows along Rt. 603 and joins Rt. 16 just north of Troutdale. The Appalachian Trail crosses this stream at Fox Creek Horse Camp, a great place to set up camp, explore the wilderness of Mount Rogers National Recreation Area, and fry up a fresh trout over your campfire.



You'll find plenty of shopping, dining, and nightlife in our gateway communities, plus a range of lodging, from unique vacation rentals to historic hotels.



## ABINGDON VIRGINIA

[visitingabingdonvirginia.com](http://visitingabingdonvirginia.com)



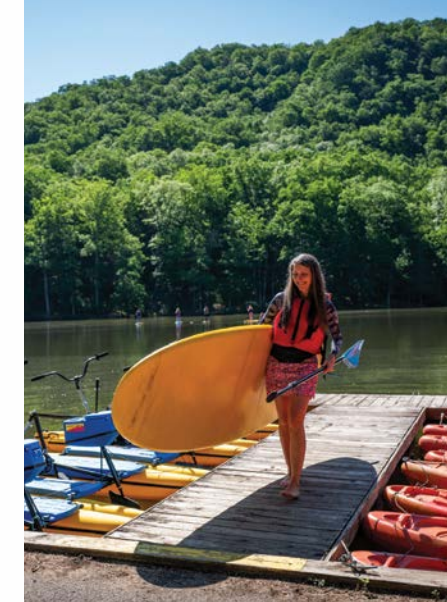
## DAMASCUS VIRGINIA

[visitdamascus.org](http://visitdamascus.org)



## GRAYSON CO. VIRGINIA

[graysoncountyva.com](http://graysoncountyva.com)



## SMYTH CO. VIRGINIA

[visitsmythcountyva.com](http://visitsmythcountyva.com)



## WYTHEVILLE VIRGINIA

[visitwytheville.com](http://visitwytheville.com)



Abingdon, Virginia, is a charming small town in the picturesque Blue Ridge Mountains. This quaint community offers a peaceful retreat from the hustle and bustle of life. Abingdon is known for its beautiful outdoor recreation opportunities, particularly fishing.

The nearby South Holston River is a world-renowned destination for fly fishing, with plenty of trout and other fish species to catch. Visitors can also explore the town's historic downtown, home to many local shops, restaurants, and cultural attractions. Whether you're a fishing enthusiast or simply seeking a peaceful natural escape, Abingdon is the perfect destination.

Although Damascus gets a lot of attention for its trails, one of its best-kept secrets is its abundant fishing access. Whitetop Laurel, Tennessee Laurel, and Beaverdam Creek all converge in town, then join the South Fork of the Holston River just downstream. These streams drain from Mount Rogers National Recreation Area and Cherokee National Forest, offering a wide range of fishing options, from the roadside to remote.

Whitetop Laurel has several miles of stocked trout waters and special regulation waters where anglers can find brook, brown, and rainbow trout. Nearby are South Holston and Watauga Lakes where anglers can find black bass, crappie, walleye, sunfish, and catfish.

Grayson County is the ultimate destination for outdoor adventure! We are home to the two highest peaks in Virginia, Mt. Rogers and Whitetop Mountain, as well as home to the second oldest river in the world, the New. Two state parks, the New River Trail and Grayson Highlands, call Grayson County home.

We also have creeks, rivers and streams around every bend that are full of colossal fish, rock bluffs and boulders that will challenge even the most experienced rock climbers, and a river through the middle of the county that will have you itching to kick back and relax on its banks.

Discover Virginia's highest peaks, wildest adventures, and friendliest small towns in Smyth County, Virginia. Whether you're riding the Back of the Dragon, fly-fishing in our tumbling streams, or exploring Mount Rogers National Recreation Area, you'll find plenty of adventure in Smyth County.

If you're looking for authentic Appalachian culture, don't miss Virginia's official bluegrass music series, Song of the Mountains, plus one-of-a-kind attractions like the Museum of the Middle Appalachians and Blue Ridge Discovery Center. Come see why Smyth County is your gateway to fun in the mountains.

Ideally located at the crossroads of Interstates 81 and 77, Wytheville is the perfect basecamp for your adventure. Premier outdoor experiences surround you in every direction with hiking trails weaving through the mountains while fisherman and kayakers float the nearby creeks and rivers.

The charming downtown is home to craft breweries, specialty shopping, galleries, antiques, and live entertainment. With a variety of lodging at every price point, more than 70 restaurants, a multitude of attractions and a generous helping of Southern charm, you'll discover why Wytheville is a family-favorite destination. Wytheville... There's Only One!



PROFILE:

# WHITETOP LAUREL CREEK

County:	Washington
Difficulty:	Intermediate
Basecamp:	Damascus/Abingdon
Attractions:	<div><div><input type="checkbox"/> Virginia Creeper Trail</div><div><input type="checkbox"/> Barter Theatre</div><div><input type="checkbox"/> Damascus Brewery</div><div><input type="checkbox"/> Damascus Diner</div></div>



Credit: Bryan Lester

In the southeastern corner of Washington County, from the shadow of Whitetop Mountain, Virginia’s second highest peak, runs one of the Old Dominion’s greatest wild trout streams--Whitetop Laurel Creek.

From its headwaters near the town of Konnarock, Whitetop Laurel flows nearly 30 miles to its rendezvous with the South Fork of the Holston, Beaverdam Creek, and Tennessee Laurel Creek in the town of Damascus, Virginia. A large, freestone mountain trout stream, Whitetop Laurel is home to thriving populations of wild rainbow and brown trout, and receives regular stockings from the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.

On its course, Whitetop Laurel flows through two special regulation, catch-and-release areas totaling five miles apiece, where only single-hooked, artificial lures may be used. Two Category A stocked sections separate the special regulation water, and receive eight stockings during the stocked trout season, running from October 1 to May 31.

Public access abounds on Whitetop Laurel, as much of it traverses the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area--



Credit: Town of Damascus

an inset of the Jefferson National Forest. There are formal access points on Whitetop Laurel at Taylor’s Valley, Creek Junction, and Straight Branch in the National Forest. Roadside access along Rt. 58 near Konnarock provides access to the upper river. The Virginia Creeper Trail, a 33-mile rail trail that runs from the community of Whitetop down the mountain to the town of Abingdon, follows Whitetop Laurel for most of its length, providing additional access to remote portions of the river.

A suite of southern Appalachian insect hatches, including that of the large, pale-yellow green drakes, which hatch in the evenings of late-spring, provide ample dry fly fishing opportunities for fly anglers throughout the late-winter and spring. Though the spring months represent what most would call “prime time” on Whitetop, fishing remains good year-round. Healthy populations of aquatic macroinvertebrates, and larger foodstuffs like crayfish, hellgrammites, and baitfish, make nymph and streamer fishing techniques productive in the absence of hatches.

Though fly anglers likely make up the bulk of those visiting Whitetop Laurel, anglers toting spinning gear are well-suited to trick the creek’s trout with a variety of spinners, small jigs, and crankbaits.

The challenges in fishing Whitetop Laurel come primarily in sometimes-tricky wading, and the sometimes-tight casting quarters amidst a thick understory of rhododendron. Still, as a large stream, the difficulty in fishing this stream is only intermediate.

Suitable hubs for fishing Whitetop Laurel include the nearby town of Abingdon, and the eventual destination of the creek--the outdoor town of Damascus, also known as “Trail Town USA.” Both offer lodging, restaurant, and entertainment options with a healthy local flavor.

In Damascus, several outfitters offer bike rentals and shuttle services to the top of the Virginia Creeper Trail, allowing cyclists to coast downhill along the creek on their way back to town. Main Street Coffee and Cream, offers a comfortable refuel for trail riders, Appalachian Heritage Distillery and the Damascus Brewery just up the road provides some night life.

Travelers have countless dining options in Abingdon, which pair nicely with a trip to see a show at Virginia’s state theater--the Barter Theatre--on Main Street.

One of Southwest Virginia’s premier trout fisheries, Whitetop Laurel Creek is a must-visit for traveling and local anglers alike.



PROFILE:

# SOUTH FORK HOLSTON RIVER

County:	Smyth, Washington
Difficulty:	Intermediate
Basecamp:	Smyth County
Attractions:	<div><div>▣ Grayson Highlands State Park</div><div>▣ Crystal Springs Recreation Area</div><div>▣ The Farmhouse Market</div><div>▣ Highlands Distilling</div></div>



Credit: Virginia DWR

In the eastern corner of Smyth County, in the small farming community of Sugar Grove, several small mountain trout streams and bubbling springs converge on the valley floor to form the South Fork of the Holston River--arguably Virginia’s greatest wild trout resource.

The South Fork--as it is referred to, locally--leaves Sugar Grove and winds through National Forest land before entering Widener Valley and flowing into South Holston Lake. The geology underlying most of the South Fork is limestone, and many springs contribute to its volume, granting a rich water chemistry and a plethora of fish food to the stream, and keeping it cold year-round.

Wild rainbow trout make up the vast majority of the South Fork’s trout population. However, wild brown trout are also plentiful. In fact, Virginia’s state record brown trout came from the South Fork’s waters in 1990. The river is also designated as a Category A stocked trout stream, and receives eight stockings between October 1 and May 31.

Public access on the South Fork is primarily limited to the upper half of the river. A four-and-a-half-mile-long special



Credit: Mount Rogers Regional Partnership

regulation area--where only single-hook, artificial lures may be used--spans from the stream’s intersection with the National Forest boundary just downstream of Sugar Grove to about 100 yards above a concrete spill-over dam at Buller Fish Hatchery. Parking exists roadside, at a small parking lot near an Appalachian Trail crossing, and at the head of an angler access trail that traverses what is known as “The Gorge.”

Another parking lot at the bottom of The Gorge provides access to the lower portion of the angler access trail, and to a short section behind the spill-over dam that’s managed as a put-and-take fishery.

The Buller Fish Hatchery property also provides anglers access to another short, mile-long special regulation section that is managed as catch and release.

Below the fish hatchery is a patchwork of private land and public roadside access to multiple stocked trout sections and undesignated water full of wild trout.

Spring on the South Fork, and on most other area streams, could be considered prime time due to healthy hatches of caddisflies and mayflies. However, the stream’s spring influence keeps it colder in the summer and warmer in the winter than most area streams, and fishing can be fantastic during both these seasons.

Though wading can be tough in places, the lower-gradient nature of the river makes it easier to navigate than nearby Whitetop Laurel. Casting obstacles for the fly angler are also generally less threatening, making the South Fork an easy to intermediate fishing destination.

The lively town of Marion is an excellent hub for fishing the South Fork, providing quick access to the headwaters as well as the middle reaches of the stream. An array of local restaurants, including the Wooden Pickle and Moon Dog Brick Oven, provide excellent food and night life following a day on the river.

Marion is also poised within striking distance of Southwest Virginia’s crown jewel--Grayson Highlands State Park and Mount Rogers--the state’s highest peak. The nearby town of Wytheville also offers recreational opportunities in the form of Crystal Springs Recreation Area--an 1800-acre town property cut by over 12 miles of trail for hiking and mountain biking alike. The property also provides access to Venrick Run, a small mountain stream finned by wild rainbow and brook trout.

With an abundance of fish and public water, the South Fork of the Holston is high quality fishery that should be on any traveling trout angler’s list.



PROFILE:

# HUNGRY MOTHER LAKE

County:	Smyth
Difficulty:	Easy
Basecamp:	Smyth County
Attractions:	<div><div><div></div><div>Hungry Mother State Park</div></div><div><div></div><div>The Lincoln Theatre</div></div><div><div></div><div>The Wooden Pickle</div></div><div><div></div><div>36° Fifty Brewing</div></div></div>



Credit: Smyth County Tourism

**Just a few miles from I-81 and the bustling town of Marion, boxed in by rugged mountain ridges, sits one of the Old Dominion’s oldest and favorite state parks--Hungry Mother State Park.**

The Park’s glimmering heart is Hungry Mother Lake, one of Virginia’s most beautiful, diverse stillwater fisheries.

According to legend, before America won its independence from Britain, Native Americans raided several settlements along the upper New River in southwest Virginia. Many died, but some survivors, including a mother, Molly Marley, and her small child, were captured and transported to a Native camp. One day, the two escaped captivity and fled into the surrounding mountains unequipped for survival, foraging for sustenance and seeking help and safety. After several days in the bush, Molly succumbed to starvation. Her child continued along, stumbling along a creek bottom until help was found, exhausted, and with only the strength to utter the words “hungry mother.” Molly was found dead shortly at the foot of the mountain.

In their honor, the mountain was named Molly’s Knob; and the creek, Hungry Mother Creek. In 1933, the Civilian Conservation Corps dammed the creek to form 108-



Credit: Virginia State Parks | Hungry Mother

acre Hungry Mother Lake, and the surrounding land was designated as Hungry Mother State Park.

Today, the state park is a rich and peaceful destination for anglers and outdoor enthusiasts, alike.

Anglers will find a beautiful mountain reservoir full of a wide array of sport fish to target. Healthy populations of all three species of black bass--smallmouth, largemouth, and spotted--await the angler, though largemouth bass are the dominant species. Great numbers of bluegill and black crappie will keep panfish anglers busy, and channel catfish are regularly stocked to maintain a fishable population. The lake also offers anglers the opportunity to catch walleye, hybrid striped bass, and musky in a small lake setting.

Recent surveys by VDWR biologists indicate that all of the sport fish populations are strong and show a great size structure, thanks largely to a forage base of alewives.

Hungry Mother Lake is one of the largest impoundments located entirely within a Virginia State Park, and it has that fact to thank for the numerous amenities it features.

For shore-bound anglers, the park maintains a handicap-accessible fishing pier, and additional bank access comes in the form of a hiking/mountain biking trail that traces

the six miles of shoreline, and several pull-offs along Route 16 as it enters the park. The park rents canoes, kayaks, paddleboards, paddleboats, and Jon boats from Memorial Day through Labor Day. And a concrete boat ramp on the southeastern arm of the lake grants private boaters access for a \$7 park entry fee.

The 2,180-acre state park offers multiple campgrounds, rental cabins, picnic areas, a beach, a playground, and food concessions to visitors. And the visitor center provides interpretive displays and serves as a base for interactive programs that are held throughout the summer months, making the lake a great family destination.

After spending a day in the park, the short drive back into the town of Marion may come as a surprise. Enjoy dinner at one of the many local restaurants downtown, and then catch a show at the Lincoln Theater—built in 1929, and one of the last remaining Mayan Revival style theaters in the world.

Hungry Mother Lake is a gem hidden in the mountains of Smyth County. Its impressive diversity of sport fish and overall health make it a must-visit fishery for anglers, and the amenities of Hungry Mother State Park and nearby Marion enrich the experience.



PROFILE:

BIG

WILSON

CREEK

County:	Grayson
Difficulty:	Intermediate/hard
Basecamp:	Grayson County
Attractions:	<div> <div>▣ Blue Ridge Discovery Center</div> <div>▣ Grayson Highlands General Store &amp; Inn</div> <div>▣ Fox Creek General Store &amp; Restaurant</div> <div>▣ Historic 1908 Courthouse</div> </div>



Credit: Travis Proffitt

Often referred to by such glamorous titles as “The Mountain Empire,” the Virginia Highlands region features some of the state’s most rugged and breathtaking scenery.

The once-volcanic Mount Rogers--Virginia’s highest peak--is perched at the pinnacle, and Grayson Highlands State Park provides visitors access to miles of hiking trails and trout streams within this unique landscape. Big Wilson Creek, flowing off the eastern slope of Mount Rogers towards the New River in the valley below, is the primary artery--a mountain trout angler’s paradise.

Big Wilson Creek begins at nearly 5,000 feet in elevation as a small trickle of water gathering at the foot of Wilburn Ridge, but it rapidly gains volume as tributaries like Quebec Branch, Wilburn Branch, and Little Wilson Creek join it. These streams--and all of the streams within Grayson Highlands State Park--are managed under special regulations, where only single-point, artificial lures may be used, and no fish under the nine-inch minimum size may be kept.

In its headwaters in the Park, Big Wilson is a small, high-gradient mountain stream holding an abundance of native



Credit: Travis Proffitt

brook trout and wild rainbow trout, but it’s not without its challenges. Boulder hopping and bushwhacking through rhododendron thickets is a requirement. This is the place for cropped 3- and 4-wt. fly rods and short roll and bow-and-arrow casts. A selection of attractor dry flies and nymphs will take fish most of the year, though access to the Park can be intermittent throughout the winter months due to weather.

Access to the upper drainage exists via a short hike on the Wilson Creek Trail, which leaves the Hickory Ridge Campground within the State Park. Access to the lower portion of the stream within the State Park (and Little Wilson Creek within the Little Wilson Creek Wilderness Area) can be had via Route 817 from Route 58 and short hikes upstream along the Big Wilson Creek and Little Wilson Trails, respectively.

As Big Wilson exits the Park, it spreads out and loses some gradient as it makes the trek towards its confluence with the New River in Mouth of Wilson. Here, it’s maintained as a Category A stocked trout stream, stocked by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources with rainbow and brown trout eight times during the October 1 to May 31 stocked trout season. There is roadside access to the stream from Route 817, down Route 58 through the community of Volney.



While exploring the length of Big Wilson Creek, the uniqueness of the Virginia Highlands and Blue Ridge landscape will become evident. For a deeper dive into the region’s natural history, the Blue Ridge Discovery Center in Troutdale is an interesting side-trip. The organization’s physical centerpiece is a recently-renovated, 17,000-square-foot, bark-sided historic girls’ schoolhouse originally constructed in 1925. Today it houses classrooms, a library and chapel, and countless researchers, artists, and school groups that visit to explore the Blue Ridge Ecoregion. Tours of the facility and the surrounding trails and example native habitats are available upon request. Visit [www.blueridgediscoverycenter.org](http://www.blueridgediscoverycenter.org) for upcoming naturalist rallies, programs, and volunteer opportunities.

For a bite to eat while navigating the remote, winding mountain roads of Grayson County, consider a stop-in at the Grayson Highlands General Store and Inn, and take advantage of their Amish deli and grill. For more commercial food and lodging options, consider the nearby town of Independence down Route 58.

A trip the Virginia Highlands is incomplete without a trip to Grayson County and the region’s highest elevations. Thankfully, there are streams full of eager wild trout to take anglers right to the top.



PROFILE:

# RURAL RETREAT LAKE & TROUT POND

County:	Wythe
Difficulty:	Easy
Basecamp:	Wytheville
Attractions:	<div><div>❑</div>Fort Chiswell Animal Park</div> <div><div>❑</div>Seven Sister’s Brewery</div> <div><div>❑</div>1776 Log House Restaurant</div> <div><div>❑</div>The Millwald</div>



Credit: Visit Wytheville

Southwest Virginia’s Mountain Empire is a landscape dominated by steep mountain ridges and countless trout streams and ancient rivers. However, it also offers great stillwater fishing in a handful of Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VDWR)-owned lakes. Rural Retreat Lake, a 90-acre lake in Wythe County near the town of Rural Retreat, is one such.

Rural Retreat Lake is a fertile impoundment, and supports a great diversity of sport fish. America’s favorite, the largemouth bass, is a regular target for visitors to the lake, and good numbers and a growing average size of these fish provide ample angling opportunity. The lake also supports a healthy channel catfish population. Bluegill and black crappie provide panfishing opportunities, though trophy specimens are not common. Over the years, VDWR biologists have stocked musky, northern pike, and hybrid striped bass as predators to help control the panfish populations in the lake and increase their average sizes. Northern pike stocking ceased in 2009, but musky and hybrid striped



Credit: Brownz Eye In The Sky

bass still offer anglers exciting opportunities to catch these predatory fish.

A small, two-acre pond immediately adjacent to Rural Retreat Lake is stocked with trout by the VDWR during the October 1 to May 31 stocked trout season, and a trout stamp is required to fish it during this time.

Boating anglers should be aware that only electric motors are allowed on Rural Retreat Lake. A concrete boat ramp makes launching crafts from bass boats to kayaks easy. For shore-bound anglers, a handicap-accessible fishing pier and ample shoreline access via a hiking trail that circumnavigates the lake provide fishing access.

The Wythe County Parks and Recreation Department owns and operates the property surrounding Rural Retreat Lake, and amenities abound, making the lake a great family fishing destination. The county maintains a campground with both primitive and water/electric hookup sites available, picnic shelters, a nine-hole disk golf course, a swimming pool, and a concession that sells food, bait, and tackle, all of which are open seasonally.

For visitors not wishing to camp on the property itself, the nearby town of Wytheville offers a wealth of lodging and food options. Downtown, the 1776 Log House Restaurant



Credit: Visit Wytheville

is a classic stop that serves up traditional southern fare. For casual, but fine, dining, visit Graze On Main in the historic Bolling Wilson Hotel.

Families touring the area shouldn’t miss a visit to the nearby Fort Chiswell Animal Park, where visitors can get up close and personal with a variety of exotic animals. Guided safari bus tours run daily between the months of May and November, and on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays in the month of April, and self-guided walking tours of the petting zoo are available upon arrival.

Rural Retreat Lake offers warmwater anglers--beginners, families, and enthusiasts, alike--a diversity of opportunities in a stillwater setting rich with amenities and alternative recreational activities.



THE AREA!

Easily accessible via Interstate 81, this four-county area of Virginia is within a day's drive of most of the East Coast! In addition to world-class fishing, you'll find plenty of outdoor recreation, arts & culture, and unique dining and lodging options

Support for Fish Blue Ridge  
provided by  
**VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS**

0 2.5 5 Miles  
Map Created by: Smyth Co. GIS 2023



EXPLORE





# RIVERS AND STREAMS

## 1. Whitetop Laurel Creek

**Fish:** Wild and stocked Rainbow & Brown Trout

Washington County, VA - One of the state’s largest and most beautiful wild trout streams; seven miles are stocked trout waters on private and public lands with an additional five miles of special regulation waters flowing through Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. The special regulation sections are fully accessible facilities with wildlife viewing platforms and streamside wheelchair accessibility.

## 2. North Fork Holston River

**Fish:** Smallmouth Bass, Sunfish

Smyth and Washington Counties - Good numbers of smallmouth bass in several sections of the river. Trophy smallmouth bass were collected in most of the sections sampled.

## 3. Middle Fork Holston River

**Fish:** Smallmouth Bass, Sunfish, stocked Trout

Smyth County, VA - Flows through the middle of downtown Marion, where you can fish from River Bend Park, including a fully-accessible fishing pier.

## 4. South Fork Holston River

**Fish:** Wild Rainbow & Brown Trout, stocked Trout

Smyth and Washington Counties - The South Fork Holston River originates in Smyth County near Sugar Grove, formed by the combination of several coldwater streams. It has DWR special regulation areas as well as stocked trout sections.

## 5. Grayson Highlands State Park

**Fish:** Native Brook & Wild Rainbow Trout

Grayson County, VA - Special regulation trout streams includes Big and Little Wilson Creeks, Quebec Branch, Mill Creek, Wilburn Branch and Cabin Creek.

## 6. Big Wilson Creek

**Fish:** Stocked Trout

Grayson County, VA - The creek is surrounded by mountain laurel and rhododendron, mature hardwoods and large rock outcroppings. It is also a designated stocked trout water.

## 7. New River

**Fish:** Smallmouth Bass, Sunfish, Walleye, Musky, Channel Catfish

Grayson and Wythe Counties - The New River is an ancient river system, possibly the oldest in North America. It offers a variety of fishing opportunities including real trophy fishing potential as well as recreational activities such as floating trips. Part of the New River Trail State Park, it offers a variety of fishing opportunities and recreational activities such as camping, hunting, fishing, hiking and horseback riding.

## 8. Dry Run Creek

**Fish:** Native Brook Trout

Wythe County, VA - Located in the Jefferson National Forest just south of Speedwell, it is a popular fishing destination for native brook trout.

### Additional Fishing Opportunities

## STOCKED TROUT WATERS

Washington County: Brumley Creek, Tennessee Laurel, Green Cove Creek, Valley Creek, Beaverdam Creek

Smyth County: Comers Creek, Cressy Creek, Dickey Creek, Hurricane Creek, Staley Creek

Wythe County: Cripple Creek (Rte 94), Cripple Creek (Ravens), Gullion Fork Ponds, Stoney Creek, West Fork Reed Creek

Grayson County: Elk Creek, Fox Creek, Hale Lake, Helton Creek, Middle Fox Creek

To buy a fishing license, visit Virginia Department of Wildlife at [gooutdoorsvirginia.com](http://gooutdoorsvirginia.com)

# PUBLIC FISHING LAKES

## 9. South Holston Lake

**Fish:** Bass, Walleye, Catfish, Sunfish, Crappie, Trout

Washington County, VA - A 7,580-acre impoundment operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority. The Virginia portion of the reservoir offers anglers more than 1,600 surface acres of water.

## 10. Hidden Valley Lake

**Fish:** Rock Bass, Sunfish, Bluegill, Northern Pike, Walleye

Washington County, VA - A 61-acre impoundment in the Hidden Valley Wildlife Management Area at about 3,500 feet elevation. Bring a kayak or boat and enjoy the serene fishing and wildlife viewing.

## 11. Beartree Lake

**Fish:** Stocked Trout

Washington County, VA - This 14-acre coldwater lake is a designated stocked trout water located in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. It offers a sandy swimming beach, wheelchair accessible fishing docks, and plenty of trailside fishing.

# FEE FISHING AREAS

## 15. Venrick Run

**Fish:** Wild Rainbow Trout

Wythe County, VA - Located in the Crystal Springs Recreation Area near the Big Survey Wildlife Management Area just south of the Town of Wytheville, it is a VDWR special regulated trout water.

## 16. Big Tumbling Creek

**Fish:** Stocked Trout

Smyth and Washington Counties - This public area consists of approximately 7 miles of stream with numerous small waterfalls and large, deep rocky pools. Located within Clinch Mountain Fee Fishing Area. This area offers put-and-take trout fishing with the added advantage that trout are stocked several times weekly during the season.

## 12. Laurel Bed Lake

**Fish:** Smallmouth Bass, Sunfish, Trout

Russell County, VA - A 330-acre lake located at the top of Clinch Mountain at 3,600 feet elevation. Adjacent to Big Tumbling Creek.

## 13. Hungry Mother Lake

**Fish:** Bass, Walleye, Hybrid Striped Bass, Catfish, Musky

Smyth County, VA - A 108-acre impoundment located in Hungry Mother State Park, close to the Town of Marion and I-81. The park offers a mix of primitive and RV camping, cabins and lodge.

## 14. Rural Retreat Lake & Trout Pond

**Fish:** Bass, Sunfish, Catfish, Musky, adjacent Trout Fishing Pond

Wythe County, VA - A 90-acre impoundment located near the town of Rural Retreat. A small adjacent pond is stocked seasonally with trout.

## 17. Cedar Springs Trout Farm on Cripple Creek

**Fish:** Trophy Trout

Wythe County, VA - Private trophy trout fishing in 2.1 miles of sparkling clear Cripple Creek mountain water, stocked with trophy size rainbow, brook, brown and golden trout.



**SMYTH COUNTY TOURISM ASSOCIATION**

121 Bagley Circle, Suite 105  
Marion, VA 24354

# FISH THE BLUE RIDGE



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