

**TR 73-26**

6000A

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Fisheries Division

Technical Report: 73-26

October, 1973

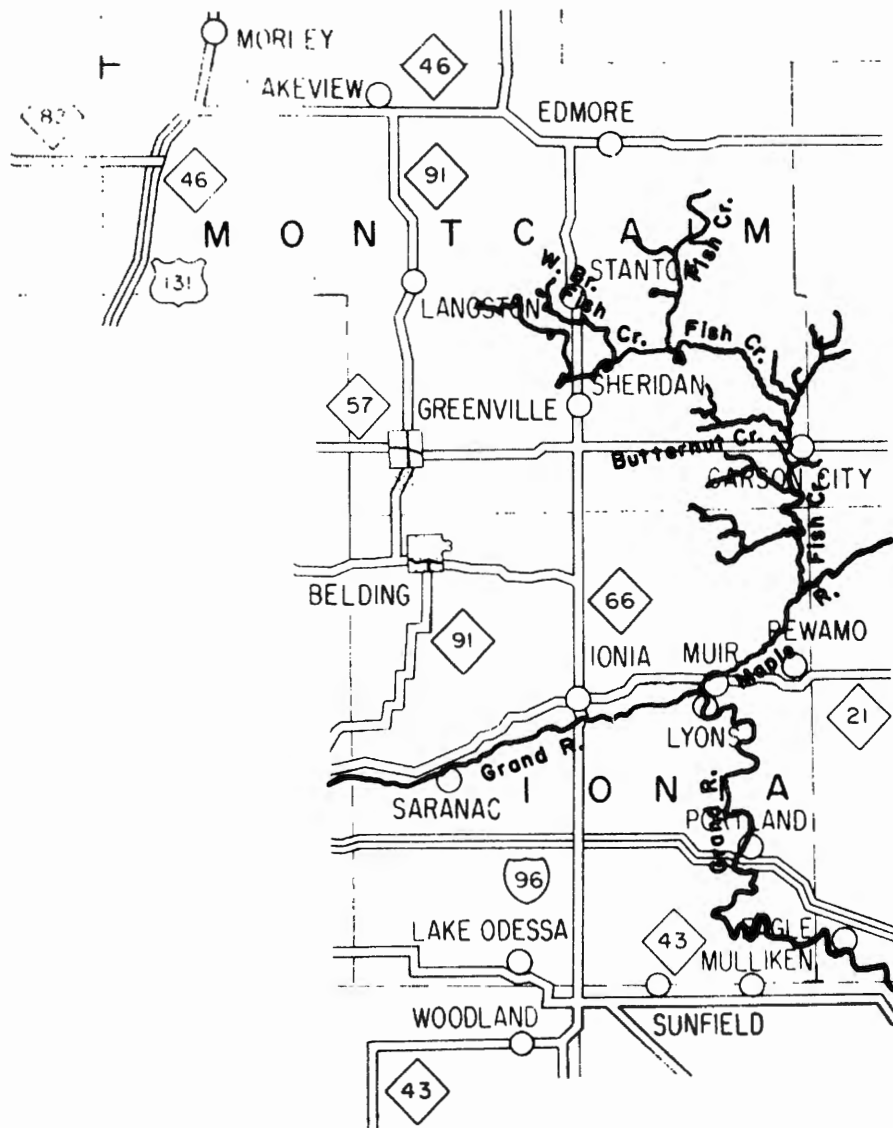
SERIES: THE TROUT STREAMS OF MICHIGAN

NO. 13 FISH CREEK

David <sup>SMITH</sup>~~P. Bergeson~~, Inland Fisheries Section

# THE TROUT STREAMS OF MICHIGAN

## "THE FISH CREEK"



SERIES: THE TROUT STREAMS OF MICHIGAN  
NO. 13 FISH CREEK

DAVID SMITH  
~~David P. Bergeson~~, Inland Fisheries Section

Whenever fine trout streams are discussed among Michigan fishing circles, Montcalm County's Fish Creek is certain to be mentioned. Its popularity is based upon its healthy trout population and its proximity to populated areas.

Fish Creek originates in a cedar swamp in northeastern Montcalm County, southeast of Edmore. The stream flows south through farm and pastureland and eventually meets the Maple River below Hubbardston in Ionia County.

Situated in a nutrient rich potato farming area, the cool spring waters of Fish Creek are very fertile yet exhibit the aesthetic qualities of a northern stream. Farmers intensively irrigate their crops along its banks, but its bountiful supply of fresh water springs maintain its level continuously. Although its level fluctuates with rainfall, it never diminishes to the extremely low flows typical of many southern Michigan streams.

Alternating pools and riffles provide excellent trout habitat in the upper stretches above Stanton Road. Good fish cover includes undercut banks, watercress, logs and overhanging tag alders. Stream widths vary from 10 to 30 feet with gravel, rubble, and sand the predominant bottom types. Small minnows and invertebrates such as mayflies, caddis, and stoneflies provide abundant fish food. Stream flow is moderately swift.

Expect good brook trout fishing above McBrides Road at the south boundary of the Bestaburg State Game Area. Below this area to Stanton Road brown trout predominate. Browns between 10 and 14 inches are commonly taken in this area.

Thick tag alders and lowland brush border the streambanks making spin fishing and fly fishing difficult, but the entire stretch is wadeable.

Fishermen can gain stream access at bridges on county roads and from state-owned land on the Vestaburg and Stanton State Game Areas.

From Stanton Road to Carson overhanging brush, watercress, log jams, and undercut banks provide good brown trout cover. The bottom type grades from small gravel to sand and silt downstream. The stream varies from 10 to 50 feet wide and stream flow is moderately swift. Minnows and invertebrates provide plenty of fish food. Sizeable brook trout are sometimes taken in the lower stretches, but downstream from Crystal Road brook trout are uncommon.

This stretch is easily fished with both fly and spinning gear and the stream can be easily waded or floated. Public access is by consent of riparian owners, as well as at bridges, and on state-owned land near Stanton.

In 1964, a fish kill occurred in the north branch affecting an area from Cannonsville Road in Ferris Township to the middle branch in Evergreen Township. Probably arising from a spray rig cleaning operation, the mortality was nearly complete killing large numbers of trout and competitors. In the following years, after replanting the stream, a fabulous fishery resulted.

In 1972, the stream from Colby Road downstream to Carson City was chemically rehabilitated by the Fisheries Division. The past fishing history of this area indicates that it will grow good sized (16-20") browns readily. With competing species removed, this stretch will again become a good producer.

Below the dam at Carson City to its junction with the Maple River, Fish Creek is dominated by large numbers of suckers and creek chubs along with warmwater game species such as smallmouth bass, bluegills, rock bass, black crappies, northern pike, and bullheads.