Joal Henke's
CREATIVITY TEAM



CABIN COUNTRY SERIES

Fly Fishing Near Murphy, NC

The Cabin Guest Guide to Trout Water Within About an Hour

Rivers and creeks in Cherokee County, Hayesville, north Georgia and the Nantahala Gorge. Where to fish, what the rules are and what to throw.

October 2026 Edition
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An unofficial guide for general information only. Not affiliated with any state wildlife agency or any shop named inside. Rules, seasons and stocking dates change. Confirm with the state agency before you fish.

How to use this guide

BOTTOM LINE **Most of this water sits within 30 minutes of Murphy. The Georgia streams and the Nantahala Gorge sit near the one hour mark.**

You are staying in trout country. This guide groups the water by how far you drive from Murphy. Pick the group that fits your day.

CLOSE
IN AND AROUND MURPHY

About 20 minutes or less
The Hiwassee, the Valley River and the Cherokee County creeks.

EAST
TOWARD HAYESVILLE

About 30 minutes
Fires Creek and the Hiwassee tailwater below Chatuge Dam.

FARTHER
ABOUT AN HOUR

North Georgia and the Nantahala
Hiawassee, Young Harris and Blairsville, then the Nantahala Gorge.

Drive times are our estimates, not measured. Check your map before you leave.

North Carolina trout rules in brief

- **Hatchery supported.** Closed March 1 through the first Friday in April. Opens at 7 a.m. the first Saturday in April. Seven fish a day, bait allowed, no size limit.
- **Delayed harvest.** From October 1 until the Friday before the first Saturday in June, you keep no trout. Use single-hook artificial lures only and carry no bait. After that, harvest opens with a seven fish limit.
- **Wild trout.** Open year round. Single-hook artificial lures only. Four fish a day, 7 inches or longer.
- **Special regulation.** Each water posts its own rules on a sign. Read the sign.

Look for the sign. If the class here differs from the sign at the water, follow the sign.

Oct 1
Delayed harvest catch and release starts on Fires Creek and the Nantahala

Apr
Hatchery supported waters reopen the first Saturday in April

2 states
North Carolina and Georgia licenses both matter on this map

Year round
Wild trout waters stay open



THE FISH

Brook trout

Wild brook trout live in small, cold headwaters in the southern mountains. Wet your hands before you touch one.

CLOSE TO

Murphy

In and around Murphy

The Hiwassee and the Valley River run through town. Small creeks feed them.

5 to 10 MIN
FROM MURPHY (EST.)

RULES CLASS
Wild and privately stocked

Hiwassee River THROUGH MURPHY

WHERE The river starts below the Lake Chatuge dam near Hayesville and runs west through Murphy. The best sections sit just below the dam and off State Route 64 and Fires Creek Road. Roadside bridge crossings give access.

THE FISH The state does not stock this section. It holds wild trout and privately stocked fish. Expect fewer fish than the big tailwaters, with good size and plenty of aggression.

THROW Midges in size 20 and smaller. Sulphurs in 16 to 20. Blue-winged olives in 18 to 24. Elk hair or X-caddis in 14 to 20 in spring and fall. Hare's ear, pheasant tail and caddis pupa in 14 to 18 for deeper fish.

THE TRADE Flows can run swift. Watch the water level, and check the posted rules for the stretch you pick.

5 MIN
FROM MURPHY (EST.)

RULES CLASS
Hatchery supported

Valley River IN MURPHY

WHERE From State Route 1359 to the U.S. 19 Business bridge in Murphy.

THE FISH Stocked by the state. The season closes March 1 and reopens at 7 a.m. the first Saturday in April.

10 to 20 MIN
FROM MURPHY (EST.)

RULES CLASS
Hatchery supported

Davis, Hyatt and Junaluska creeks CHEROKEE COUNTY

WHERE Davis Creek runs from the Bald and Dockery creek confluence to Hanging Dog Creek. Hyatt Creek runs from Big Dam Branch to the Valley River. Junaluska Creek runs from Ashtum Creek to the Valley River.

THE FISH Small stocked water. Hanging Dog Creek is not classed on the local source we used, so read its sign.

20 MIN
FROM MURPHY (EST.)

RULES CLASS
Special regulation

Appalachia Reservoir SPECIAL REGULATION

RULES Three trout a day. No minimum size, but only one trout may be longer than 14 inches. No bait limits. No closed season.

Sources: FlyFishingNC, Cherokee County trout streams. The Angler's Destination, Hiwassee River. NCWRC trout classes.

EAST OF

Murphy

Fires Creek and Hayesville

The Nantahala National Forest holds the best creek fishing in this guide.

30 MIN
FROM MURPHY (EST.)

RULES CLASS
Delayed harvest and hatchery supported

Fires Creek NANTAHALA NATIONAL FOREST

WHERE About 16 miles east of Murphy off U.S. 64. Forest Service Road 340 follows the creek. The Fires Creek Picnic Area sits near two miles upstream of the National Forest boundary.

THE WATER A freestone creek with fast pocket water, short riffles and deep plunge pools. It holds wild rainbows, some wild browns and stocked fish. Its tributaries, Little Fires Creek and Long Branch, hold wild fish too.

RULES A delayed harvest section runs October 1 to the first Saturday in June. A hatchery supported section is closed in March. Read the signs at the creek.

SEASON Spring is best. Summer water can run too warm. Fall favors browns, mostly low in the creek. Winter is slow but fish sit in pools on warm days.

THE TRADE A deep gorge about three miles above the picnic area is hard to fish. Most anglers stay below it.

30 MIN
FROM MURPHY (EST.)

RULES CLASS
Wild and privately stocked

Hiwassee tailwater BELOW CHATUGE DAM

WHERE Cold water below the Lake Chatuge dam near Hayesville. This is the top of the river you pass in Murphy.

THE TRADE Flows can run swift. Wade with care and check the water level first.

Lake Chatuge HAYESVILLE, NC AND HIAWASSEE, GA

THE RULE The lake sits in both states, so both states' fishing rules apply. It is a warmwater lake. The fish are bass and panfish, not trout.

Sources: Perfect Fly, Fires Creek. Hiwassee River Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Clay County Tourism. The Angler's Destination.



THE FISH

Rainbow trout

Rainbows make up most of the trout in this region. Use a net with rubber mesh and keep the fish in the water.

SOUTH IN

Georgia

Hiawassee, Young Harris and Blairsville

A short drive over the state line puts you on stocked Georgia water.

Georgia trout streams are open year round. Stocking runs on a set schedule. These waters are in Towns and Union counties.

Water	County	Stocking	Season
Hiawassee River	Towns	Twice a month until July 4, then monthly	April to Labor Day
Brasstown Creek	Towns and Union	Four times	March to August
Nottely River	Union	Weekly until July 4, then twice a month	April to fall
Soapstone Creek	Towns	Weekly until July 4, then twice a month	April to fall
Swallow Creek	Towns	Twice a month	April to Labor Day
Tallulah River	Towns	Weekly to July 31, then twice before Labor Day and once in fall	April to fall
Cooper Creek	Union	Weekly to July 31, then twice before Labor Day and once in fall	April to fall
Wolf Creek	Union	Weekly until July 4. None after	April to fall

Source: Georgia Wildlife Resources Division, 2026 Trout Stocking Frequencies, and Georgia eRegulations. Stocking tables list more waters. This table lists the ones nearest Murphy.

How to use the table

- **Drive.** Plan on 40 to 60 minutes from Murphy to these streams. This is our estimate.
- **Timing.** Stocked trout are easiest after a stocking and in cool months. Check the weekly Georgia stocking report.
- **Rules.** Several streams carry special rules. Read the Georgia regulations booklet for the stream you pick.
- **License.** You need a Georgia license on Georgia water. Check whether a trout endorsement applies.

Tennessee is close too. The Hiwassee River tailwater in Polk County, Tennessee, near Reliance, is a delayed harvest water. It is catch and release with artificial flies and lures from October 1 to the end of February. Southeastern Anglers and Reliance Fly and Tackle work that river. Plan on about an hour from Murphy. This is an estimate.

WEST TO

Nantahala

Nantahala Gorge and Bryson City

The most famous trout river in the area. It sits at the top of your hour.

50 to 60 MIN
FROM MURPHY (EST.)

RULES CLASS
Delayed harvest

Nantahala River NANTAHALA GORGE

WHERE Highway 19 runs along the river through the gorge. State Road 1310 (Ball Road) leaves Highway 19 for the powerhouse. Nantahala Outdoor Center sits on the river at 13077 Highway 19 West and puts Bryson City about 15 minutes away.

THE WATER The delayed harvest section runs from White Oak Creek down to the powerhouse falls. It is the most popular stretch. The gorge below the powerhouse runs about eight miles. It is stocked and holds many holdover trout.

RULES Delayed harvest rules apply. From October 1 to the Friday before the first Saturday in June, you keep no trout and use single-hook artificial lures. North Carolina lists the Nantahala for a November stocking.

THE TRADE When the dam generates, the gorge rises fast and is nearly impossible to wade. In summer, wade early before generation starts. Check the release schedule and watch for rafts and kayaks.

THROW Blue-winged olives hatch all year. Midges are present all year. Little black caddis start in February. Hendricksons come in late March. See the next page.

About 1:10 HR
FROM MURPHY (EST.)

RULES CLASS
Ask the shops

Bryson City BEYOND THE GORGE

WHERE Bryson City sits about 15 minutes past the gorge. That puts it a little past one hour from Murphy.

LOCAL HELP Mac Brown Fly Fishing, Endless River Adventures, Tuckaseegee Fly Shop and Rivers Edge Outfitters are listed for Bryson City. Nantahala Outdoor Center lists guided fly fishing.

Sources: Perfect Fly, Nantahala River. Nantahala Outdoor Center. Explore Bryson City. NCWRC delayed harvest schedule.

What to throw

BOTTOM LINE **Blue-winged olives and midges hatch all year. Match the month for the rest.**

When	Hatch	Notes
January to March	Little winter stoneflies, little black caddis (from mid February)	Winter fishing is slow. Fish deep and slow in the middle of the day.
Mid February to early April	Blue quills and Quill Gordons	First big mayfly hatches of the year.
Late March	Hendricksons	A short hatch. Be there on the day.
Mid April onward	American March browns and light cahills	Good dry fly fishing in spring.
May to July	Little yellow stoneflies (early May to mid July), golden stoneflies (June)	Stoneflies also feed fish near the bank.
June	Terrestrials: grasshoppers, beetles, ants and inchworms	Fish the banks.
Late June to August	Cream cahills	Fish early and late in the heat.
Mid August to fall	Little yellow quills, mahogany duns, needle stoneflies	Slate drakes run mid May to mid November.
October to early December	Great autumn brown sedges	Good caddis fishing near dusk.
All year	Blue-winged olives and midges	Carry small sizes.

Hatch timing comes from a Nantahala River report by Perfect Fly. It fits the Hiwassee and the Cherokee County creeks as a rough guide. Hatches move with water temperature.

A short box

- **Dry flies.** Elk hair caddis or X-caddis in sizes 14 to 20, sulphurs in 16 to 20 and blue-winged olives in 18 to 24.
- **Nymphs.** Hare's ear, pheasant tail and caddis pupa in sizes 14 to 18.
- **Midges.** Zebra midge, Griffith's gnat and Matt's midge in size 20 and smaller.
- **Small water.** On small creeks such as Fires Creek, short casts and good cover matter more than fly choice.



THE FISH

Brown trout

Browns hold under cover and feed early and late. Fall is a good time for them on Fires Creek.



THE FISH

Rainbow trout

A barbless hook and wet hands protect the fish. Land it fast and let it go.

Guides, shops and licenses

Stop in or call before you go. Local shops know this week's water.

Guides and shops near Murphy

Jeff Sabatula
Murphy, NC | 828-835-2776
Guide listed by the Hiwassee River Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Call to confirm.

WNC On The Fly Fishing Co.
wncontheflyfishingco.com
Listed as serving North Carolina waterways.

Nantahala and Bryson City

Nantahala Outdoor Center
13077 Highway 19 West, Bryson City | noc.com
On the river in the gorge. Its site lists guided fly fishing.

Bryson City shops and guides
Mac Brown Fly Fishing (macbrownflyfish.com), Tuckaseegee Fly Shop, Endless River Adventures and Rivers Edge Outfitters. Find hours and phone numbers on explorebrysoncity.com.

Tennessee Hiwassee

Southeastern Anglers
(770) 655-9210 | southeasternanglers.com
Guided trips on the Hiwassee. Reliance Fly and Tackle, 588 Childers Creek Road, Reliance | (423) 338-7771.

Licenses

- **North Carolina.** ncwildlife.org or 888-248-6831. You can also buy one in person at the Outdoor Department of the Walmart in Murphy.
- **Georgia.** georgiawildlife.com or 800-366-2661.
- **Tennessee.** license.gooutdoorstennessee.com or 800-648-8798.
- **Check each state** for any trout rule or endorsement before you fish.

Sources and credit

Verify the details you plan to rely on. Rules, shops and stocking dates change. We left out one local fly shop that a third-party listing shows as permanently closed.

NCWRC, trout fishing in North Carolina
NCWRC, delayed harvest trout waters
NCWRC, delayed harvest stocking schedule
FlyFishingNC, Cherokee County trout streams
Mountain Country Cabin Rentals, trout fishing in Murphy
The Angler's Destination, Hiwassee River fly fishing
Perfect Fly, Fires Creek
Perfect Fly, Nantahala River
Clay County Tourism, fishing creeks, rivers and Lake Chatuge
Hiwassee River Chapter of Trout Unlimited, local guides
Georgia WRD, 2026 Trout Stocking Frequencies
Georgia eRegulations, trout streams by county
Nantahala Outdoor Center
Explore Bryson City, fly fishing

Love these waters? Own a getaway nearby.

BOTTOM LINE **Stay first. Then see if Murphy feels like home.**

Joal Henke owns Fabulous Frog, a cabin in Murphy. Many guests fish the waters in this guide. Some then ask what a place of their own would take.

Murphy, NC

- We are licensed in Tennessee and Georgia.
- For a home in North Carolina, we introduce you to a vetted local agent and stay in the conversation.

Mountain homes we handle

- **Blue Ridge, GA.** Toccoa River and Lake Blue Ridge.
- **Ellijay, GA.** Cartecay, Ellijay and Coosawattee rivers.
- **Rising Fawn, GA.** Near Cloudland Canyon, closer to Chattanooga.

Before you buy a cabin

- Is the road open to your door in winter?
- What do the county and the HOA say about short-term rentals?
- Is the water a well or a town line? Is the waste septic or sewer?
- Does any of the lot sit in a creek flood zone?
- How good are the internet and cell service?

Thinking about a getaway home near trout water?

Tell us the water and the drive you can live with. We will send homes that match.

(423) 664-1900 | creativityteam.org/contact

Joal Henke's

CREATIVITY TEAM

HELPING YOU MAKE CHATTANOOGA HOME

Tight lines.

SCAN TO VISIT CREATIVITYTEAM.ORG

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(423) 664-1900 | 1830 Washington Street, Chattanooga, TN 37408

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kw GREATER DOWNTOWN KELLERWILLIAMS REALTY

Keller Williams Realty, Greater Downtown. Each office is independently owned and operated.

Equal Housing Opportunity. An unofficial guide for general information only. Not affiliated with any state wildlife agency or any shop named inside. Rules, seasons and stocking dates change. Confirm with the state agency before you fish.