

## Fishing Thompson's Spring Creek

So far my experience has been limited to August and June, so this is a tentative guide.

The stream is a pure spring creek with no run-off whatever. Oddly enough, water levels peak in August. Water seeps in gradually from bed and banks; there are no conspicuous springs.

Main vegetation is Potamageton (3 kinds) and watercress. It does not block the stream, and nymphs thrive on it. The weeds do make it easy for trout to escape. I recommend leaders of not below .006" and strong hooks.

There are a lot of cattle in the stream a half-mile or so upstream, causing some siltation. Formerly, my water was also "overgrazed," but cattle have now been excluded for a few years and the stream has made a lot of progress in recovering.

The trout are extremely wary, especially when the bright sun is beating down -- as it often is. Long leaders and casts may be required. On dark days, fishing is easier. Try wearing high waders and kneeling in the stream.

The fish are all wild. (As far as I know, the stream has never been stocked.) Most anglers find that rainbows predominate, but I seem to catch about as many browns. There are occasional brook trout. I've never caught a whitefish. The trout caught run from about 11" to 18" and are often in good condition. Some 20-to-25" trout are caught each year, and more are lost. For some reason, the biggest fish seem to be in the upper part of my property. I do not recommend concentrating on them, especially during a first visit. (There is a high risk of getting skunked.) Instead, try hiking down to the bottom of the Jarvi & Sharrer property below mine (where I have a right to one rod per day). There are some big fish there too, but there are also some smaller ones for practice.

There is a catch-&-release covenant on the water, but the gourmets aren't missing anything: these fish look beautiful and taste terrible.

Apparently even the biggest fish get that way by eating small flies, most of which they seem to get near the surface. I've never found sculpins, trout, crayfish, or scuds in a trout.

There is rarely any early-morning or late-evening fishing, because of cool temperatures. Fishing can also be slow during the heat of day (from about 1 to 5). During dull days, there is usually something hatching all day, and even during the heat, you can pick up the occasional trout on a small beetle.

There are always midges hatching, and some are big enough to imitate easily. There are plenty of caddis larvae in the stream, but I have not seen a good hatch yet. Stoneflies also appear to be unimportant to the fishing. Crane flies



and grasshoppers are occasionally good. There are plenty of other terrestrials (such as ants and jassids), but I usually stick to a beetle when trout are not clearly rising to anything. The beetle will carry a stouter hook.

Mayflies provide most of the fishing. There are many species, some of which I have not identified, and one hatch or another is important from opening day to the close of season.

In June, there is a mid-sized Ephemerella (infrequens?), and good fish rise for it. They may also take black gnats at this time. Nymphs, duns, and spinners are all taken in large quantities. Try at least a hatching dun and a spinner.

In August, there is a heavy Trico hatch -- too heavy, sometimes -- from about 10:30 to 1:00. Then, if there is an overcast sky in the afternoon, there are heavy hatches of an olive (Baetis). Its spinners may then fall the next morning at first warmth. You will not see as many rises in the evening, but the bigger fish are often taken then. On the occasional balmy evening fishing can go on till dark, but the first cool breeze usually ends the activity shortly after sundown.

Dan P  
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Fishing Rules Under Protective Covenant

Certificate of Survey #620, Gallatin County, Montana

Lot 13 (Proper)

Lot 12 ( Jarvi & Sharrer)

Owner or bona fide guest of either property has right of access (for fishing only) on the other property.

Access limited to 50' <sup>Measured from</sup> strip ~~on~~ centerline of Thompson's Spring Creek.  
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Catch-&-release fishing only; all trout to be returned with care.

Each property has right to only one rod per day on the other.

Guests must have written permission from host, specifying time period.

No pets.

Only fly rods with traditional fly lines are permitted. No spinning rods, lines, lures, or bait.

All persons exercising the right of access shall take care to avoid frightening trout unnecessarily. To this end, fishermen will walk with caution, a reasonable distance back from stream banks. Fishermen will cast only to trout which are rising or otherwise visible in the water. Casting shall be done in an upstream or cross-stream direction, not downstream.

Obsolete, at this point. Bob Sharrer +  
I both fish the good trout water.