

The Willowemoc

The Willowemoc has often been referred to as the “Sister” or “Twin” to the Famous Beaverkill River. Over time the Willow has stood quietly in the background as the Beaverkill has attracted most of the literary attention.

Despite the Willow’s lesser known status this river is interwoven into the regions deep Fly Fishing History and has shared equally in providing visiting anglers with a Trout Fishing Paradise for hundreds of years.

The Willowemoc is a freestone river that is just about 27 miles long. The Willow originates much like the Beaverkill does, from cold clear springs high in the Catskill Mountains.

In the headwaters the Willowemoc is a network of smaller creeks and Bog like brooks that grow in size as they descend through pristine forest. From the headwaters downstream for the first few miles the Willow is a small stream. This section has a varied water types ranging from slow bog like runs to the tumbling pockets and riffles found in most mountain streams. Throughout this section there are cold deep pools and an abundance of springs. Overall the stream through this section will average 10 to 15 feet wide.

In this area anglers will find mostly Wild Brook Trout and the occasional Brown Trout. The fish in this section are abundant but small with most fish averaging in the 6” -10” range. What these fish might lack in size they more than make up in beauty. The Wild Brook Trout is truly one of nature’s greatest displays of color.

In this section public access is good and easy to find. Visiting anglers will find clearly marked public access areas and abundant state forest lands.

In the Middle Section of river which extends down to Livingston Manor the river grows in size. Throughout this section the stream will average about 50 feet wide with a good mix of riffles runs and deep pools. This section has abundant insect life and produces fishable hatches of Mayflies, Caddisflies and Stoneflies on a regular basis. Throughout this section the Forest canopy is thick and much of the river remains in deep shade throughout the day. This section contains Prime year round Trout Habitat and Anglers will find a nice mix of Wild Brook Trout along with Wild and Stocked Brown Trout most of which are in the 8”to 12” range.

Public access in this section is limited as some long standing fishing clubs have their waters within this section. The public water that is available in this section is excellent and extends up and downstream from the marked DEC parking areas.

The lower section of the Willowemoc extends from Livingston Manor down to its confluence with the Beaverkill. It is this section that gets the most attention from visiting anglers and the reasons are many. In this section the river again doubles in size. It is in this section that visiting anglers will find the Classic Dry Fly Type Pools that the Catskills are famous for. It is in this section where Anglers will find Wulff Run, Hazel Bridge, Buck Eddy, the Rhododendron Pool and More. It is also in this section where visitors will find the popular No-Kill and the Home of the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum.

Anglers who fish the lower river will find strong numbers of Trout throughout. This section is mostly Stocked and Wild Brown Trout that average 8” to 12” inches but fish up to 18” are fairly common. In recent years Wild Rainbow numbers have been on the rise and anglers are catching them regularly now in this section. During recent studies by the NY DEC several tributaries in this section have been identified as spawning areas for these hard fighting, beautiful Trout.

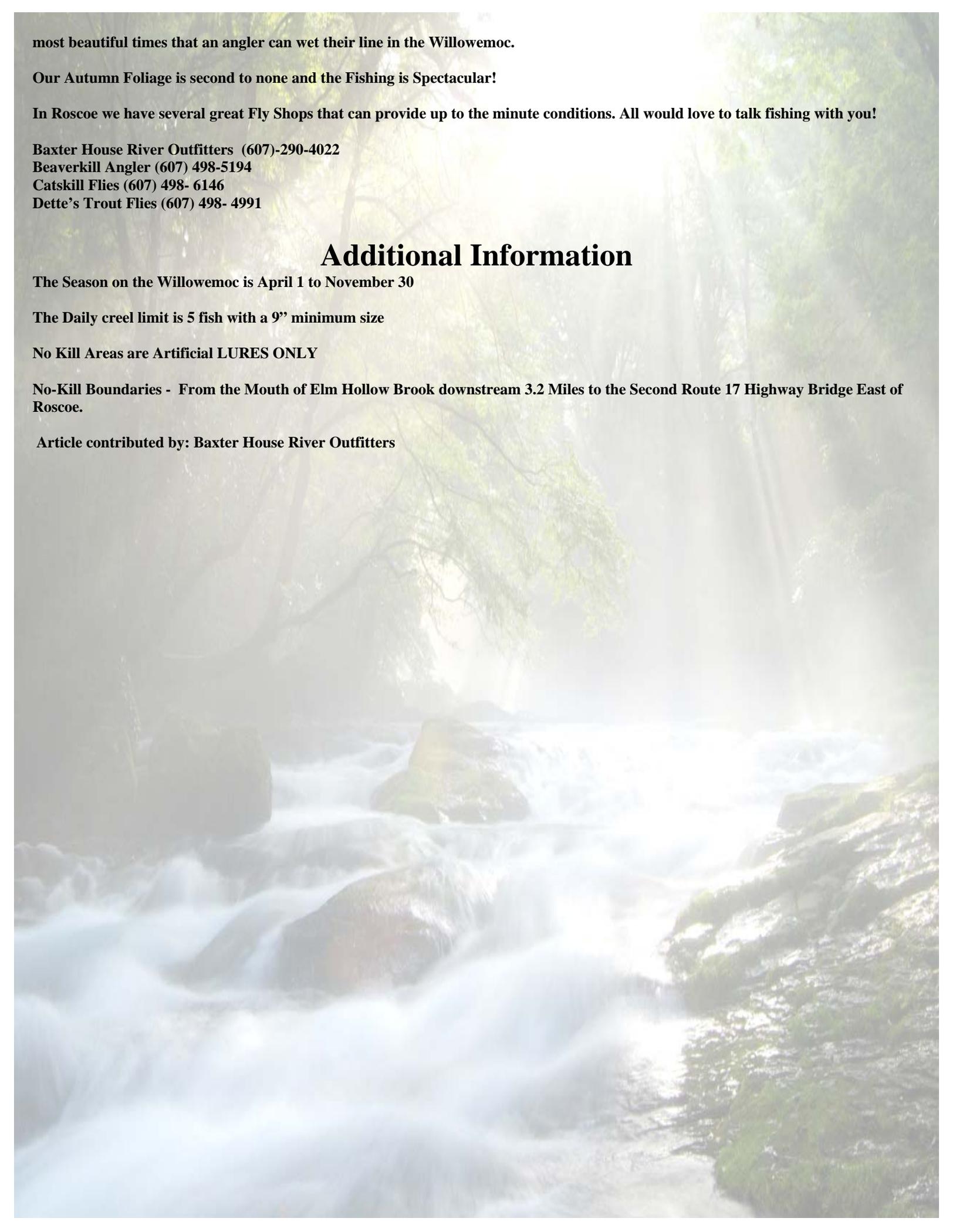
When to Fish

Fishing on the Willowemoc opens on April first each year and runs through November 30. There is a No-Kill sections on the Willow that is open year round. While fishing can be good during the entire year there are certain periods where this fishery really shines.

In about Mid April waters will start to warm to a point where both Trout and Insects will become active again. It is about this time each year that we get treated to a 10 week period where both Insect and Trout activity are in high gear. It is in this time period where we see intense insect hatching daily and our yearly visit from the larger Mayflies, including the Giant Sized Green Drakes!

Being a freestone river, the flows and temperatures are always dependant upon rainfall. In normal years the fishing will slow during the months of July and August unless regular rainfall occurs. It’s during this period that most visitors target the nearby tailwater rivers or choose to fish for Brookies in rivers upper reaches.

The beginning of September usually brings rainfall that raises the flows throughout the river. This combined with the cooler nights spur another period of high activity for both Trout and Insects. This Autumn season which lasts through November is one of the



most beautiful times that an angler can wet their line in the Willowemoc.

Our Autumn Foliage is second to none and the Fishing is Spectacular!

In Roscoe we have several great Fly Shops that can provide up to the minute conditions. All would love to talk fishing with you!

Baxter House River Outfitters (607)-290-4022

Beaverkill Angler (607) 498-5194

Catskill Flies (607) 498- 6146

Dette's Trout Flies (607) 498- 4991

Additional Information

The Season on the Willowemoc is April 1 to November 30

The Daily creel limit is 5 fish with a 9" minimum size

No Kill Areas are Artificial LURES ONLY

No-Kill Boundaries - From the Mouth of Elm Hollow Brook downstream 3.2 Miles to the Second Route 17 Highway Bridge East of Roscoe.

Article contributed by: Baxter House River Outfitters