

Fine Hatches and Hatch Chart

Both runs are blessed with fine hatches of mayflies, caddisflies, and stoneflies. Since fishing is permitted all year, it is possible to meet fishable hatches even in February, if the weather is warm for a few days and the runoff minimal. I've found that a rise in the water temperature to the low 40s can increase the trout's feeding activity during winter. With stream levels on the high side, I focus on the slower runs and pools. Trout tend to be congregated in those areas of the stream during winter.

Large black stonefly nymphs (#8 and #10) and golden stonefly nymphs (#10 to #14) are my patterns of choice. The trout are not apt to move far in cold water, and a large offering drifted slow and deep seems to entice them to take more readily than other patterns and methods. But if small early black stoneflies are hatching, an appropriate nymph imitation can be effective.



Early-season flies to use on Cedar Run and Slate Run include (left to right): Baetis nymph, black midge, and Baetis parachute dun. Dave Rothrock photo.

With the approach of the trout season opening day in mid-April, Slate and Cedar begin to awaken from their wintry slumber. Springtime stream conditions

can be unpredictable. If melting of late-winter snow is delayed by unusually cold weather or early-spring rains are heavier than normal, the runs can be flowing bank-full, which delays the hatches and makes fishing difficult. Drifting large nymphs slow and deep or working dark-colored Woolly Buggers slowly along the bottom of a large pool can take trout.

When Slate and Cedar runs are at normal flow in mid-April, they can present some excellent opportunities for early-season hatch-matching. Little black stoneflies have been active for some time, and the trout are accustomed to feeding on them. Several early-season mayflies, including little Blue-winged Olives and Quill Gordons, are in full swing, and Paraleps and Hendricksons are just getting started. With water temperatures over 50 degrees, the resident brook and brown trout become more aggressive in their feeding, and good numbers of freshly hatched duns riding the stream surface can provide the first good dry-fly fishing of the year.

On blue-sky days with warmer temperatures Paraleps begin hatching as early as 10 A.M. and continue for several hours. Just after noon Quill Gordons and Hendricksons begin to emerge. On cold blustery days with low cloud cover any hatch activity will likely be sparse and occur in the early afternoon when both air and water temperatures are warmest.

Morning fishing on the runs can be productive by dead-drifting Paralep and Hendrickson nymphs in the slower water, or by drifting Hendrickson and Quill Gordon nymphs in moderate currents and pocketwater. I've experienced days when hatches were good and no trout rose. When this occurs a Quill Gordon emerger or a sparsely tied Hare's Ear wet fly fished deep like a nymph can be effective.

May is by far the best month for fly fishing the runs. Gray-tan caddis and Little Yellow Sally stoneflies usually appear early in the month and continue for several weeks. Midges (#20 through #28) have been appearing since late winter, but with the lower stream levels these tiny flies become an important hatch and trout sip them in the slow water and large pool eddies when no other hatch activity is present. They continue to be important throughout the rest of the season, with the most important midge colors black, gray, and cream.

COMMON NAME	SIZE	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY
<i>Early Black Stone</i>	#16	●				
<i>Blue-winged Olive</i>	#18	●			●	
<i>Early Brown Stone</i>	#16	●				
<i>Blue Quill</i>	#18		●			
<i>Quill Gordon</i>	#14		●			
<i>Dark Olive Caddis</i>	#16		●			
<i>Tan Caddis</i>	#16			●		
<i>Hendrickson</i>	#14			●		
<i>Little Yellow Stone</i>	#16			●		
<i>March Brown</i>	#10			●		
<i>Gray Fox</i>	#14			●		
<i>Dark Spotted Caddis</i>	#12			●		
<i>Sulpher</i>	#16			●		
<i>Dun Caddis</i>	#16			●		
<i>Brown Drake</i>	#10			●		
<i>Green Drake</i>	#10			●		
<i>Pale Evening Dun</i>	#18			●		
<i>Light Cahill</i>	#14			●		
<i>Slate Drake</i>	#12			●		
<i>Large Yellow Stone</i>	#8			●		
<i>Dark Blue Quill</i>	#18			●		
<i>Trico</i>	#24				●	

Pine Creek and Tributary

Hatch Chart

By mid-May the premier mayfly activity includes the March Brown and Gray Fox. These larger mayflies can provide excellent dry-fly fishing for about two weeks. I've also had good results early and late in the day with a March Brown nymph drifted through deep pockets or fast water when these mayflies are active. Tan caddis hatch in the afternoon, and both the pupa and adult patterns are important.

By the third week of May the hatches really pick up, and you can meet various hatches all day, beginning in morning with Paraleps and Blue-winged Olives. If you arrive before these hatches have begun, try a Dark Blue Quill nymph or a light olive Hare's-ear Nymph. Then in the afternoon the Little Yellow Sally and Little Lime Sally stoneflies appear.

Mid- to late-May evenings can provide the best opportunities of the year with Sulphurs, Light Cahills, and Slate Drakes. As these hatches progress, the spinners perform their mating dances above the riffles. Once they have deposited their eggs, the flies fall spent to the stream surface, and as their numbers increase, trout feed heavily on them, particularly in the slow water of large pools. Some of my most memorable evening fishing has been on these streams in May, casting a spent spinner pattern to trout rising to Sulphur spinners along a bank shaded by overhanging hemlocks.

The largest of the runs' resident mayflies, the legendary Green Drake, is present in sufficient numbers to provide good fishing. This hatch lasts only a few days; but if

you are on the stream when the giant duns ride the surface, you will find the trout feed on them more readily than the trout of limestone streams. Of course, the spinners of the Green Drake (Coffin Fly) are unmistakable. While they fall to the water too late in the evening to fish them on Slate Run, Cedar Run's regulations allow you to cast to surface-feeding browns long into the night.

By mid- to late June stream levels have dropped significantly, and angling pressure has subsided. Most of the prominent hatches have ended, but you can still meet sparse morning hatches of Blue-winged Olives and late-season Paraleps, and evening hatches of Yellow Sally stoneflies, Slate Drakes, and Light Cahills. Terrestrial fishing really comes into its own in summer. With stream flows at lower summer levels, both Slate and Cedar runs become more challenging. Mornings and evenings are the best times to cast to the wary browns and brookies. Black and cinnamon ants (#16 to #22), black, brown, and green beetles (#14 to #20), and crickets (#14 and #16) are the summer patterns that provide the most consistent success.

Summer thunderstorms with heavy rains can raise stream levels and lower water temperatures, causing the trout to increase their feeding activity. Subsurface flies, including sunken terrestrial patterns, small Hare's-ear Nymphs in natural and olive colors, and Slate Drake nymphs can be effective.

Fall fishing on Slate and Cedar runs can provide opportunities for stalking wild trout in a spectacular wild setting. The vivid autumn color bursts of reds, oranges, and yellows capture you. Even if the fishing is slow, the scenery alone is worth the trip. Hatch activity is sparse, with only a smattering of late-season Paraleps and little Blue-winged Olives. Terrestrials and midges are still the most consistent late-season producers.