

A man with a beard and a grey flat cap is crouching in a shallow stream. He is wearing a brown and white plaid shirt over a blue t-shirt and olive green waders. He is holding a large brown trout with both hands, showing its spotted pattern and open mouth. The background is a lush green forest with a river flowing through it.

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# TROUT

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opening day on  
the Beaverkill is  
like celebrating  
Christmas in  
Bethlehem.”**

**Red Smith  
New York Times  
Sportswriter**

**A Sullivan  
County  
Democrat  
publication  
Spring 2022**

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<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Do you believe crossbows are another form of bow and should be allowed in all seasons and areas archery equipment is permitted?
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<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Are you a NYS Bow Hunter Education instructor? <input type="checkbox"/> Current <input type="checkbox"/> Former _____ Approximate Years Teaching

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# TROUT

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**On the Cover:** Alec Milucky holds up a 20-inch Brown Trout he caught last year in the West Branch of the Delaware River. An avid outdoorsman, Alec is studying to become a Fisheries Technician. Page 18.



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A photograph of two men, Peter Kolesar and Adrian LaSorte, standing on a riverbank. They are both wearing white caps, sunglasses, and light-colored shirts. They are holding a large, spotted brown trout horizontally between them. The background shows a river with green grassy banks and trees under a blue sky with some clouds.

PHOTO BY  
ANDY BOYAR  
'Mongo', a fabulous  
Delaware River  
Brown Trout, poses  
with Angler Peter  
Kolesar and Guide  
Adrian LaSorte.

# Memories and expectations

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ANDY BOYAR

**I**magine yourself emersed in nature under a sky more beautifully blue than ever before. You are at trout waters – clear, cold, sparkling and teeming with life forms. Midges and nymphs are emerging from winter's icy bottom darkness. Minnows are becoming energized and active by the warmth of the spring sun and longer days. Mayflies emerge and rise to the surface. The holdover trout have endured winter's privation, surviving on their body reserves. Now they have nourishment in many forms. Trout begin to feed aggressively to replenish depleted body reserves. The cycle begins anew. It is spring, a time to rejoice.

Perhaps, this year we are refreshed as never before. COVID-19 infected our psyche even if not our bodies. For more than two long years we lived in some form of isolation. Dare we now indulge in hope and anticipation as we emerge from the pandemic. We have survived. We are freed of our isolation. The sky is the bluest of blues. It's time to step into nature with a new sense of appreciation. We are alive!

Trout fishing is a superb way to celebrate

life. As we return to our favorite waters, memories of a special outing, or a singular fish come to mind. Joan Wulff sagely observed that her favorite fish is the one dancing on the end of her line. Yes, it's all good and if you wet a line often enough, something memorable is bound to happen. I'd like to share some of my memories with you.

I was flyfishing on a branch of the Delaware River with guide Adrian La Sorte. I could see no rises or finning fish even in the gin clear shallow run. Adrian assured, "they are there." I figured I'd work over to the deeper run on the other side. It's ironic that fishers always seem to want to fish the "other" bank. Fishers coming in from the opposite shoreline, also want to fish the other side. The grass is always greener syndrome, I guess. But the seasoned angler looks things over carefully, slowly and forms a strategy to work the water.

The water I stood in was only knee deep. I took only a few steps and my guide counseled, "Fish across, don't walk to the other side. Fish

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY ADRIAN LASORTE

## Andy Boyar with jumbo Delaware Rainbow Trout.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

to the other side!" Now I could see every stone, current break and holding spot, but not a single finning fish. But when the guide suggests, just do it. I identified a subtle trough nearby, only a few inches deeper than the rest and put my first cast into the slightly darker water. My fly had barely touched the water when I glimpsed what I can only describe as a streak not as a fish. It seemed to come out of nowhere. The fish dashed toward the deeper water and went entirely airborne, a two-foot rainbow. A large Delaware River wild rainbow fights like no other. I applied all the resistance my tippet would allow, but ended having to reel and follow down to a holding pool, and by some good luck and fortune, we landed the fish. The fish was measured, a photo was snapped and a fish of a lifetime was released to its freedom. A first cast fish, how bizarre.

Almost the opposite happened to my fishing partner, Peter Kolesar on another outing. Peter and Adrian took note of a steady riser on the "other side," sipping mayflies regularly under an overhanging tree sheltering a deep hole. There was both a back current and cross currents. Peter and Adrian stalked into position

but it seemed quite impossible to deliver a fly to the big head rising. Adrian pointed, Peter cast. Working as a team, they very patiently worked the fish for more than thirty minutes. I stopped fishing entirely to watch this chess game ensue. They watched and watched, then a rise and a cast to the current crease, only to suffer another rejection. If the drift was off, it was only by inches. Most fishers would have given up long ago. The focus and teamwork of guide and fishers was intense, the drama palpable. What made Peter's last cast different is hard to say, but a monster brown finally ate. Feeling the hook set, the fish exploded and bolted out of its lair to fight in the open river. It was a giant brown, beautifully colored and in its prime. 'Mongo' was photographed and released, perhaps a gift to a future angler.

Those two beauties were river fish, the pride of the upper Delaware and its big water. But not all prize fish are giants nor do they come from big water. I am of course referring to our native trout, the brookie, the official state fish of both New York and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. You'll find the strikingly colored gem in the brooks and streams in our own

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



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backyards; in all those little waterway tripping down the mountainside and in the pools, in the undercut banks and in and along the rocks and shelves. It was in one of these places that I had my day to remember.

The brook meandered through a vast undeveloped tract, away from roads, human habitat and noise. The day was overcast and drizzly. I walked alongside the brook till I came to a steep riffle spilling into a pool. There was a lovely bubble line sustained for the full length of the pool. I tried a beaded #14 Prince Nymph with a #16 Royal Coachman wet tied off the nymph 15" below. The pool was deep for such a small stream, but the flow was full after two days of gentle rain. The brookies were simply stacked up in that dark, tannic water. Brookies came to my hand one after another - 9 inches to the largest a 12 inch. One was prettier than another. No fish compares to the brook trout, so gayly colored - fins outlined in black and white, speckles of vermillion, orange and even blues and golden yellow.

When it was time to meet my fishing pal, the action hadn't abated. But it was time to leave with a perfect memory. In all the intervening



ONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY PETER J. KOLESAR

### Colorful Lackawaxen River Rainbow caught on a White Wulff fly.

years, I have never dared to go back to that pool for fear of tarnishing the memory of that special afternoon angling for brookies. These are wonderful memories and perhaps it is time for you to start collecting your own. After all, it is spring on the Delaware and its tributaries. Let's go trout fishing and celebrate life.

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# Supporting local needs and drawing in visitors



**T**he Town of Hancock, established in 1806 and named for John Hancock, has a long and rich history as an old lumber and farming hamlet, but more specifically in sports.

"Honest Eddie" Murphy, a major league baseball player who appeared in three World Series and played for the Chicago White Sox and Pittsburgh Pirates, was a Hancock native, spurring the love of baseball throughout the town for generations - and of course, fishing. With the East and West branches of the Delaware River converging and flowing right through the town - abundant with brook and brown trout, perch, bass, bullhead and eels - fly fishing has remained popular for decades.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

Clockwise from above:

Friends of the Upper Delaware River is a professionally staffed organization working to protect and restore the Upper Delaware River for the benefit of the local environment by engaging communities and people, revitalizing the local economies, and building strong and diverse coalitions. Becoming a member, whether an individual or larger business or organization, helps propel advocacy and on-the-ground conservation work.

A family-owned local lumber and supply store geared to meet your individual home needs with anything from material estimates and delivery service to supplies like roofing materials, hardware, power tools, stains, finishes and paints, doors, windows, and of course, lumber. Open Monday through Friday 7:30am - 5pm, and Saturdays 8am - 3pm.

Located downtown just a short walk from the Delaware River, the Hancock House Hotel has 32 rooms and suites along with the Honest Eddie's Tap Room for a classic cocktail and The Maple Room Restaurant for a delicious meal.







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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

And just like any small country town, its main streets and attractions have changed and grown with every season of every year, catering to and supporting local needs as well as drawing in visitors from outside the area. Places like Bisbee Lumber and the Hancock Liquor Store to the Hancock House Hotel, Friends of the Upper Delaware River, and many more.



From top down::

This local outdoor equipment store has been serving the community for 98 years, beating or matching any area merchant's gun prices. Open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday 9am - 5pm, Saturday 9am - 3pm, and Sundays 9am - 11am.

A large selection in a small town, the Hancock Liquor Store carries all the wines and spirits you like, including local products like Catskill Provisions, Rock Valley Spirits, Bootlegger and more. Open Monday through Thursday 9am - 7pm, Friday and Saturday, 9am - 9pm, and Sundays 12pm - 6pm.

Scott's Auto Body on Peas Eddy Road offers full collision repairs and refinishing, free estimates, and insurance company assistance. Open Monday through Friday 6am - 4pm, and Saturdays 6am - 11am.

A combo kitchen and gallery, The Camptons is a unique space where you can enjoy a coffee and light fare before browsing paintings, Antique Tribal rugs and textiles, handmade furniture and artwork from local artists and artisans.





# Notes on getting started

STORY AND PHOTOS

BY ANDY BOYAR

**T**he Upper Delaware River and its tributaries are a great place to get started with fly fishing. Water temperatures between 55 and 65 degrees are the best. Trout are cold water species, so it's best not to fish at all when the water temperature exceeds 70 degrees.

The Delaware has many public accesses on both sides. Some offer fishing access while others allow you to launch a craft. Respect private property and don't trespass.

When it comes to fly fishing, trout are pursued on either spinning gear or flyrod. In either case you want to put something natural to eat in front of the trout's nose.

Bill Payne of Hagemann's Tackle Shop in Shohola, PA suggests several lures for spinfishers - No. 7 or 9 silver sinking Rapala, a Yo-Zuri

Pin Minnow, any Thomas Spoon (locally made) and even a fly you can spin cast with a "Joe's Flies" size 8. Your old favorite lure is probably a good option too.

Flyfishing can be a bit more complex. Every aspect of flyfishing has its subtleties and nuances, but the basics are that you'll want to use a 5 or 6 weight flyrod with a matching fly line, a weight forward floating line is a good line to start with.

Trout eat on the surface and underwater, so it gets complex, not to mention that there are many dozens of flies to choose from. A good fly shop will help you select the ones you will need. Trout will feed on what the river gives them by way of a hatch. No, you don't have to know the Latin name of the bug or even its common name. Just carefully observe the bugs that are on the surface and select the fly in your box that most closely matches in terms of size and color. A small aquarium net helps if you want a closer look. Cast your fly up-

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stream of your rising target and let it drift, drag free into the trout's feeding zone. Perplexed about what fly to use, try an Adam's matching the size of the living inserts on the water.

Trout also feed subsurface (about 80%) so you'll want some nymphs or wet flies to get down to them.

To a beginner this may seem to be getting complicated. I advise all new flyfishers to hook-up with a mentor. Usually experienced flyfishers are generous in helping others get started. Ask a lot of questions at your fly shop. Trout Unlimited is a great resource. Our local chapter is the Upper Delaware Chapter Trout Unlimited – 611, check it out online and consider joining.

Final thoughts: Always consider releasing your trout. "A game fish is too valuable to be caught only once," Lee Wulff.

Participate in river clean-ups such as the Upper Delaware Council's Littersweep, an annual event during the week of Earth Day each April.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**Both fishing access and boat launch.**

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# Fish stocking to take place starting in April through June

**T**he New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has scheduled fishing stocking beginning the first week of April and running through the first week in June.

In total, nearly 40,000 Brown Trout between 8 and 15 inches are anticipated to be stocked in 18 different bodies of water across Sullivan County. The DEC said the actual number of fish to be stocked and times may vary depending on fish availability and weather conditions.

Fish are stocked with help from the Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs of Sullivan County (FOSCOSC).

Check out website <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/23285.html> for complete details.

**Beaver Brook** in the Town of Highland will see 359 stocked trout during the third week of April. The fish will range in size from 9-10 inches up to 12-15 inches.

The **Beaverkill River**, located in the Town of Rockland, will see Brown Trout stocking beginning the third week of April through the first week of June. Nearly 7,500 fish will be released into the Beaverkill, ranging in size from 9-15 inches.

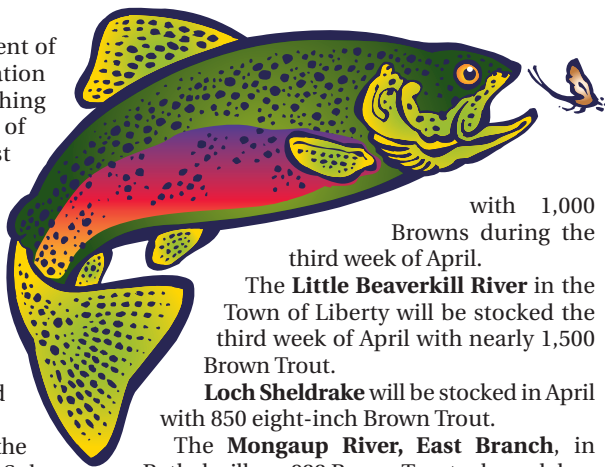
The **North Branch of the Callicoon Creek** will see 2,000 Brown Trout released beginning the second week of April through the fourth week of May. Again, the sizes will range from 9 to 15 inches.

In the main stem of the **Callicoon Creek**, stocking will begin the second week of April with over 700 Brown Trout released.

The **East Branch of the Callicoon Creek** will be stocked during the second week of April with over 2,500 Brown Trout scheduled to be released.

**Chestnut Creek** in Neversink will see 509 Brown Trout stocked during the second week of April. The trout will range in size from 9 to 15 inches.

**Halfway Brook** in Highland will be stocked



with 1,000 Browns during the third week of April.

The **Little Beaverkill River** in the Town of Liberty will be stocked the third week of April with nearly 1,500 Brown Trout.

**Loch Sheldrake** will be stocked in April with 850 eight-inch Brown Trout.

The **Mongaup River, East Branch**, in Bethel will see 833 Brown Trout released during the first week of April.

The **Mongaup River, Middle Branch**, located in the Town of Fallsburg, will see 680 Browns released during the first week of April.

And the **Mongaup River, West Branch**, in the Town of Bethel, will see nearly 600 trout stocked in early April.

The **Neversink Reservoir** in the Town of Neversink was stocked with 3,700 Browns last fall.

The **Neversink River**, which flows through the Towns of Fallsburg and Thompson, will see more than 8,000 trout stocked during April and May.

**Sanburg Creek**, in the Town of Fallsburg, will be stocked during the first week of April with 800 Browns.

**Ten Mile River**, which flows through the Towns of Cocheton and Tusten, will be stocked with 750 trout during late April.

And finally, the **Willowemoc Creek**, which is located in the Towns of Neversink and Rockland, will be stocked from the third week of April through the first week of June.

The DEC will release more than 15,000 Browns into these pristine waters, ranging in size from 8 inches up to 15 inches.

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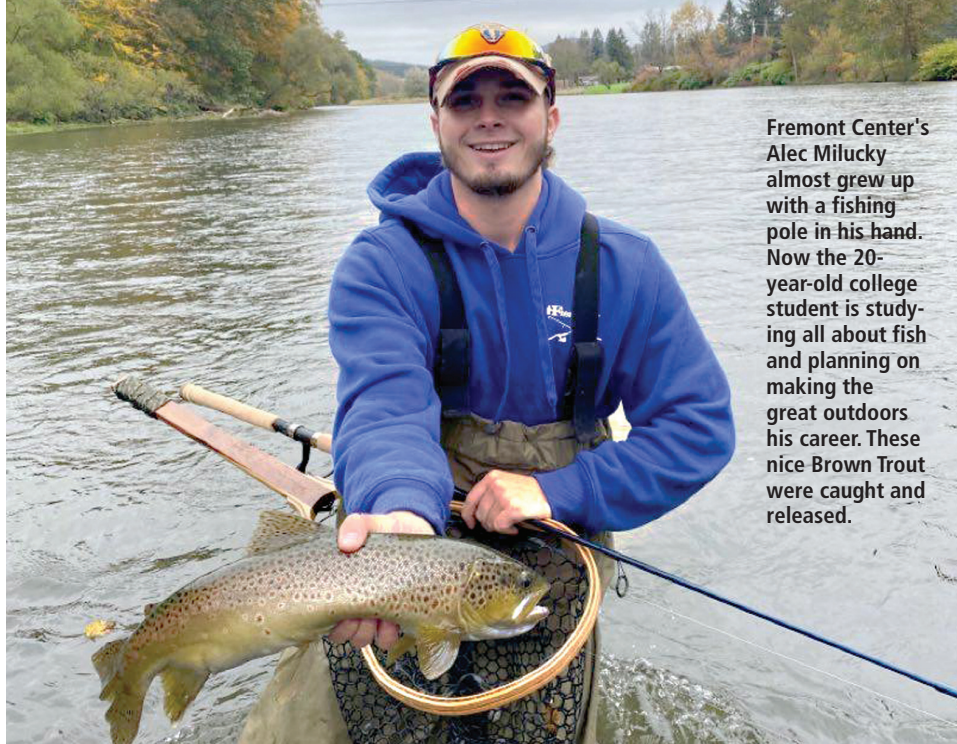


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Fremont Center's Alec Milucky almost grew up with a fishing pole in his hand. Now the 20-year-old college student is studying all about fish and planning on making the great outdoors his career. These nice Brown Trout were caught and released.

# Love of fishing turns into lifelong passion

BY FRED STABBERT III

**A**lec Milucky isn't quite sure when it happened. He was a little too young to remember when he first had a pole in his hand, waiting for a fish to bite.

But one thing is for sure, Alec is hooked on fishing and everything that goes with it.

"My favorite species? I'm a big fan of Pike," he said.

"I nearly grew up at Black Lake," Alec said, referring to the many fishing trips he took with his mom and dad, Tracey and Louis Milucky. "It's a super spot to fish."

Black Lake is a noted fishery in upstate New York, just south of Canada. It's here that Alec has had some pretty special days, catching Pike and other assorted species of fish.

A 2019 graduate of Sullivan West Central School in Lake Huntington, Alec entered SUNY College of Agriculture and Technology

at Cobleskill in the fall of 2019 to major in Fisheries and Agriculture.

When asked about his curriculum, Alec laughed, "It's crazy, you wouldn't understand a bit of it."

But he has used his new-gained knowledge on the trout streams of the Catskills to land some beautiful fish, especially along the East and West Branches of the Delaware River.

"You get to learn science in class," he said. "And that's a good thing to know for fishing."

One thing Alec learned is that trout like water in the 55 degree range and the West Branch of the Delaware, which comes out of the Cannonsville Reservoir, stays about that cool all summer long thanks to releases.

"That lengthens the growing season of the fish, making them grow bigger," he said. "Even in summer time, it stays about 55 degrees.

"It's no secret, how good it is," he said.

Alec also likes to wet his line in the East Branch of the Delaware, hoping to net a 20-plus-inch Brown trout.

"When I finally became old enough to drive – that really helped finding new fishing spots," he said.

And this summer, Alec will be traveling to Stanley, Idaho to work in the Sawtooth Fish Hatchery, raising Chinook Salmon.

"I don't need an internship," he said. "I'm getting real work experience.

"I'm taking a whole bunch of fishing stuff, including my fly pole, spinning rods, and my father's Flycraft Inflatable Raft – just don't tell him.

"I also bought a Sturgeon rod and hope to catch a White Sturgeon on the Snake River," he said. "I would be happy with a five-footer but they do get 10-feet long.

"I also want to catch a Bull Trout," he said. "I'm hoping to cross those two off my Bucket List."


Alec and his buddy, who is performing snorkeling fish surveys this summer in Idaho, will be roaming the mountains of Idaho and Oregon this summer, enjoying the great outdoors.

"It (fishing ) is really my favorite thing to

do," he said. "That's why I'm going to school. I want to become a fisheries technician or I may be persuaded to get a Master's and be a Fish Biologist."

Whatever the future holds, it's sure it will include being near two of the things Alec loves most – fish and water.








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