

## "Beaver Pond Trout"

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I only had about a half day to get out and stretch a line so I thought I would go down the road about 10 minutes from our home, to the Little Piney Creek and cast dry flies for wild trout. It was raining and I was tired of working on my deck, I just needed to get away for a little while. Fortunately for me I have been able to make some good friends down along the creek, that allow me to fish on their property. Most of the Little Piney Creek flows through private property, so getting to know people is a very important requirement for fishing on this quiet little stream. There are several farms along the banks of the Little Piney creek, so expect to find a few cattle, and where there is cattle there is usually a bull, but if you know enough about cattle you will know which one is the bull, and which one you want to avoid. This quiet little stream also has an abundance of wildlife, including beaver, and today I had an opportunity to fish in a beaver pond.



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I usually have opportunities to fish in beaver ponds when I go to Pennsylvania to fish for Brook trout. AND yes occasionally I will find

one on some of our local creeks here in Missouri, like Mill Creek or Spring Creek and the Little Piney Creek. This particular pond dam was about 4 feet high. It was made of sticks, mud and stones...yes I said stones. Most people think of beaver dams made out of sticks and mud, but not many people realize that beaver also use stone. And some of the stones they use are surprisingly large. The picture above gives you an idea of how large some of the stones are that are used in the construction of a beaver dam. These stones were at that top of a section of this dam. If you look carefully at the picture on the left you can see my fly rod at the top of the dam in the center and just above my rod is a very large gray stone, twice the size of the stones in the picture on the right. Beaver are incredible creatures and amazing engineers.

Fishing in a Beaver Pond for trout is like fishing in a Lake for trout. Unlike a stream where the current brings the food to the fish, and they are always facing upstream waiting for some tasty morsels to drift by, there is very little current bringing the food to the fish, so they have to swim about trying to find something to eat. If you cast to a rise on a stream, you know that the fish is holding somewhere just a little up stream above that rise. If you cast to rise on a pond you will almost always cast behind the fish, because a feeding fish in pond is moving. When you see a rise on a pond, is better to sit tight and try to get a pattern to the direction the fish is taking and time your cast accordingly. OR if you can see the fish, better yet. You just have to lay the fly out softly a couple of feet in front of his nose and hold your mouth right.



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Beaver Pond trout are very spooky, not Halloween spooky, maybe shy would be a better word. If you try to fish for beaver pond trout, use a very long and fine leader, and don't get the sun to your back. If a shadow is cast with your line, the fish will head for cover and you may not see them again for a long time. When one or two fish "spook" it alerts the entire area, and all of them spook. You have to remember that these fish have to defend themselves from Osprey, Eagles, Herons, Otters and Fishermen. They are not accustomed to someone hand feeding them pellets every day of their lives. These are very wary trout and if they have reached 12 or 13 inches

they have done an excellent job of dodging danger for a long time. Wild trout are very firm when you touch them. Not anything like those soft flesh fish at the trout parks. You find out how strong they really are when you are fighting one on the end of a fly rod. Even little 8 inch trout give you a battle before they are netted.

We are very lucky in Missouri to have the quality of water and habitat for rainbow trout to reproduce naturally. Get out and enjoy the Ozarks and remember " A bad day fishing is still a Great Day"