

Sam Potter / [TightLine Fly Fishing](#)

Authorized Guide with the National Park Service for the Upper Current River and the National Forest Service for Mill Creek, Spring Creek, Little Piney and the Eleven Point River.

“Location, Location, Location”

We have all heard this before; Location is the #1 most important thing about business. If you could consider the location of my guide service in that category, then I have a GREAT location. From my home in Rolla, which is in South Central Missouri, I am 10 minutes from the Little Piney Creek, 20 minutes from Mill Creek, 30 minutes from Spring Creek, 30 minutes from the Meramec River, 30 minutes from the Big Piney River, and 40 minutes from the Current River. I have a GREAT location if you love to fish with a fly rod.

BUT this article isn't about a business location, this is about the location a fisherman chooses to cast from. Upstream, downstream, across, a quarter down are all good if the situation calls for it. BUT I am not going to get into these types of locations either, because they depend on the type of fly you fish, the type of water and the preferred method of each fisherman. I am talking about the fisherman's location according to the sun, the depth of the water, and the bank along the stream.

Location #1:

How many times have you seen fishermen, or put yourself, in a position to cast a shadow on the water. What happened, did you notice any change occurring in the stream? If there were fish around that shadow, they spooked. Why, because a moving shadow means danger to Wild Trout. Osprey, Eagles, Herons, Kingfishers and fishermen hunt fish from above the stream, and the fish learn, especially if they are large fish, that danger comes from above. It is just like Pavlov's theory, ring a bell and the dog salivates in anticipation of a meal. SEE a moving shadow and one of your relatives disappears, or a close encounter with death happens. If you are a spooky fish you live longer because a shadow means danger.

Approach pools in the shadow of the trees. Make every effort to cast from the shadow of the trees; this type of awareness on the part of the fisherman, kind of goes along with my last article about movement. Take the extra time to observe your surroundings and try to blend in with the natural environment.

Location #2

What does the depth and type of the water have to do with location? The deeper the water is, the larger the viewing window can become for the fish. It depends on the depth fish is holding. If it is on the bottom in a deep pool the viewing window is greatly enhanced. If it is holding on the top the viewing window is very narrow. It is this location of the fish that we as fishermen, must be observant about. I will not get into light rays, reflections and refraction angles, that is another long article in itself. Noticing the location, and depth where the fish is holding is very important in fishing success. A fisherman can get very close to a fish in fast, tumbling water, because the fish cannot see very well above it in this type of water. This is straight stick nymphing-indicator type of water, where you catch fish at the end of your rod. This is where novice fly fishermen have most of their luck, because it does not require much casting, a fisherman can get close, and the rush of the water conceals movement and noise. BUT if you are fishing a slow pool, your technique needs to change if you want to be successful. Be aware that fish can see much better, so you will have to keep your distance, move slowly and keep a low profile. The shallower the water, the spookier the fish become, because they are nearer the surface, their sight window diminishes and the closer they are to danger. Depth provides protection from above and enhances vision and awareness to danger. The large fish have learned this and obviously have adapted their movements, feeding patterns and such allowing them to survive for a long time. These are the fish you see in the middle of the day at the bottom of a deep pool. Just lying there resting and waiting for the sun to go down for dinner time.

The long and short of this paragraph means: Your location should be a long cast away from the fish you are after, if you are fishing a slow flat pool. **Side Castings** should be made, if possible, keeping the rod low to the water, where the fish cannot see very well. A rod sticking up in the air and waving back and forth is like flag, especially if you have that nice bright red fly line.

Location #3

Standing on the top of a stream bank allows the angler to get a better view of the stream below. We can see where fish are holding, how big they are and all those neat things that Polarized sunglasses provide. If you don't own a pair, buy some. It will open-up an entire spectrum of fishing that you have never seen before.

When you are standing on this bank looking at the fish, realize that the fish are looking back at you. Remember what was mentioned about fish vision? The deeper the fish the larger the sight window becomes. Standing on a stream bank places the fisherman very high above the fish, even if the fish is holding at the surface, and provides an opportunity for the fish TO SEE YOU. If you are fishing for Wild Trout and they see you.... Good luck catching them.

IF you like to observe fish from the top of a stream bank to find out where they are holding and how big they are, keep a low profile, move very slowly, avoid casting a shadow, and you will be rewarded, especially if you have those polarized sunglasses to help out.

I hope some of this helps improve your fishing success.

“A bad day fishing is still a Great Day”