

Subject: Trout Fishing and the Holidays
November 29, 2022

The trout are back in Harris Lake. The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission has restarted their winter pond stocking program. As a result, Harris Lake has several hundred trout for the public to harvest.

The popular program was started several years ago. The floods on the Pigeon River the summer before last damaged the state hatchery so there were no trout available for stocking this past year. But this year the hatchery had a surplus of fish so the popular winter program is back. The winter stocking makes room in the hatchery for new trout for the upcoming season.

The rules for catching the trout are pretty simple. Adults have to have a North Carolina fishing license. Any bait, live and artificial can be used. The limit per fisherman is 7 fish a day. Any size trout can be harvested. Catch and release rules do not apply for this program. All fish need to be harvested before spring because rising lake temperatures will not support trout.

So, take your children, grandchildren and friends and go fishing right here in town. Please be a good sportsman and remove any trash such as bait cans and snack materials after fishing.

My favorite way of cooking trout is to stuff a whole trout with onions and other herbs and bake it. Fried and smoked trout are great too.

I want to thank the owner of the lake, Terry Potts, for his cooperation with the Wildlife Resources folks. Also, normally Harris Lake is catch and release. So, if you do happen to catch a fish that is not trout, please release it.

Let me also update everyone about trash collection for Christmas. The town picks up trash on all holidays except Thanksgiving and Christmas. Our holiday collection schedule goes well beyond what most trash collection operations do. Since Christmas is on Sunday this year, there will be no interruption of residential collection. Commercial collection will stop for the Christmas weekend.

Please remember to place all garbage and foodstuff in plastic bags and place them in bear resistant containers. Trash container cannot be over filled to where the lid can't be closed. We all need to work together to keep Highlands beautiful during this special time of the year.

The Christmas season has become one of the most populated and busiest times in Highlands. Our electrical usage spikes to its highest point during this period. Please be cognizant of electrical usage during this period. It used to be that the number of people in Highlands in December was at a yearly low, but now that is just the opposite.

With so many people in town, everyone needs to be mindful of careful driving and posted speed limits. Our police will be patrolling for speeders and dangerous or impaired drivers. We all want to keep the town safe during the holidays.

Finally, I want to thank the chamber of commerce for organizing a wonderful town and Christmas Tree lighting this past Saturday evening. I also want to thank all the town

employees who worked on putting up the Christmas decorations throughout the town. And the Highlands Fire Department did a great job of getting Santa Claus to the tree lighting.

I hope to see everyone on Saturday at 10:30 am at our holiday capstone event, the annual Christmas Parade on Main Street. I always look forward to seeing all the community organizations that are in the parade.