

Changes in store for Stone Mill Spring

Stocking dates no longer announced to align with state regs



File photo

The winter catch-and-release trout-fishing season will end soon and revert to the regular trout season at Stone Mill Spring. On Fort Leonard Wood, the summer catch-and-keep trout fishing season begins on the last Saturday of February after the annual Kid's Fishing Derby ends and runs until Oct. 31.

One change anglers should be aware of this year is that the stocking schedule will no longer be posted. In order to align fishing regulations at Stone Mill Spring with the rest of the state's White Ribbon Trout Area regulations, stockings will occur randomly and anonymously. The number of stockings and overall quantity of fish will remain the same as previous years, but dates and the number of fish stocked will not be published. Although this type of stocking strategy is new at Stone Mill Spring and might take some getting used to, it is the norm across the state and can help minimize the crowd on stocking days. It also can extend the time that trout remain in the spring between stockings while continuing to provide lasting opportunities for trout anglers of all expertise.

The Missouri Department of Conservation classifies Stone Mill Spring as a White Ribbon Trout Area. These areas maintain water temperatures cold enough to sustain trout populations year-round. These areas are stocked periodically with catchable-size trout as well as the occasional "lunker."

Stone Mill Spring is a unique fishing spot in that the area is owned by the United States Forest Service and is cooperatively managed by the Forest Service, the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Fort Leonard Wood Natural Resources Branch.

Please familiarize yourself with fishing and area regulations. For your convenience, this information is posted on information boards located at the parking lot trailhead and near the spring. This information can also be obtained at the Outdoor Adventure Center or can be found on the Fort Leonard Wood's Environmental Division website at www.wood.army.mil/newweb/garrison/fishing.html as well as the MDC website <https://mdc.mo.gov/>