



Walnut Creek

Walnut Creek is the second largest and second most popular creek for steelhead fishing. Walnut begins south of the Millcreek Mall (which is just east of the Kearsarge exit, Exit 41, of Interstate 79). It flows northwest through Millcreek Township, north through Fairview Township and enters Lake Erie east of the town of Fairview.

The Fish and Boat Commission stocks Walnut with steelhead, but not brown trout, and it is NOT a stocked trout water. During the summer and fall, the lower reaches of Walnut hold bass, panfish, catfish and carp. Like the other creeks in the watershed, by June most parts of the creek are low and too warm for trout and the fishing for steelhead is over.

During early fall, steelhead may not get beyond the Manchester Hole just south of the first bridge. The fish move upstream as the season wears on. By winter, steelhead can usually be found all the way upstream to the Millcreek Mall.

The Fish and Boat Commission maintains the Walnut Creek Access Area at the mouth of the creek. There is a nice marina with lighted paved parking lots, a building with Fish and Boat officials, a weigh station and rest rooms. Licenses and ice can be purchased here. Crowds are heavy at the Access area in the fall and early winter months. The PFBC has made many noticeable improvements to the area to accommodate the angling and boating pressure and future improvements are in the works. The building closes in December after the marina closes.



The mouth and access area can be reached from State Route 5 by turning north on either Dutch Road (Township Road 4007 - beside the Walnut Creek Grill) to the west of the creek, or Manchester Road (also Township Road 4007) to the east of the creek. There is a sign for the access area at the intersection of Route 5 and Manchester Road. Follow either road north to the access area.

Fishing along the wall between the marina and the mouth of the lake is popular, especially in the fall. Access is easy and no waders are needed. The area is handicapped accessible and only a minimum amount of walking is necessary to fish. This location is also popular for night fishing. It is relatively deep (it is dredged each year to maintain access to the marina for even larger fishing boats) and the water is usually slow-moving. Many still fish or fish with lures in this area, and very few fly fish here. During the early season, steelhead may be present only in this area, and in the first hole just south of the access area.



During the summer of 1999 the Fish and Boat Commission, with the financial assistance of local

contributors, created several new pools between the marina and the first bridge. This has become known as the "project waters." The objective was to create additional fishing opportunities on Walnut on property owned by the Commission. Many of these new pools hold many fish during the season, but pressure can be heavy.

The first original pool, referred to as the "Manchester Hole," is one of the most popular spots for steelhead fishing. This pool is located just south of the Manchester/Dutch Road bridge, just upstream from the access area and project waters. In the summer of 1998 the landowner first posted the east side of the hole, and fishing from or walking on the east bank is now prohibited. Fairview Township has also posted no parking signs all along both Manchester and Dutch roads, preventing parking on the street anywhere north of Route 5. As a result, to fish the Manchester Hole, you must park in the access area and either walk up the west bank, or walk along the street and enter on the west bank. The east bank of the Manchester Hole is posted. Anglers may only fish from the west bank and are not permitted to fish from the island in the middle of the hole.

If there are fish in Walnut Creek, there will be fish in this pool. It is deep and fairly long. Fishing pressure can be intense. Often there will be 50 or more anglers fishing the hole. It is seldom a place for peaceful, solitary fishing. Fishing in this pool is usually drift fishing (often with a small float) or fly fishing.



Just upstream from the Manchester Hole is the "chutes" area. It is a short area of fast chutes, and often holds many fish. Upstream from the chutes are several pools, then a waterfall. Often the steelhead have a difficult time getting over this waterfall. As a result, often the fish are stacked-up below the waterfall, and there are few fish anywhere above it.

If the fish have made it past the waterfall, Walnut Creek is fished extensively from the first pool to the Route 5 bridge, and upstream to the tubes under the railroad tracks. Limited parking is available along both sides of Route 5, and you can walk down rather steep trails on the north sides of the road to the creek. There is a good sized pool immediately downstream from the bridge, and fish often hold in the tube under the road.

The creek can also be accessed beneath the railroad tracks from either Manchester or Dutch Road. The tracks are located between Route 5 and Route 20. The access is from the northernmost set of tracks. On both sides of these tracks you will find a path leading down to the creek. Many drive along the track bed and park by the trails. There is a nice pool just downstream from the tube under the tracks. Fishing is decent downstream from here to Route 5. Fishing is also good upstream (especially around the bridge for the second set of tracks), but a short distance upstream the creek is posted and access ends.

The next access above the tracks is at the Walnut Creek Gun Club. This area is located at the bottom of Walnut Creek Hill on Route 20, between Dutch Road and Manchester Road. Drive into the club lot, then to the left into a small dirt parking area. There is good fishing just downstream from and inside the tube under Route 20. This spot also provides access to the area upstream, where the creek runs through mostly wooded and undeveloped land. Although pleasant, there are not many good holding areas until you get a considerable distance upstream.



The next access road to the creek is Millfair Road, on the Millcreek/Fairview Township border. There is a small parking area just south of the bridge on the East side of Millfair Road. There are several good areas a distance downstream. There is also a good-sized pool just upstream from the bridge just before the bend in the creek.

The next upstream access is at Old Sterrettania Road (which is just off Sterrettania Road - State Route 832). Parking is available next to the bridge. Downstream around a few bends is Buttermilk Falls, and there is a nice pool there just below the falls. Upstream from the bridge the creek passes under Sterrettania Road. There are some good small pools and pockets upstream from the bridge. The area upstream from Sterrettania Road is rapidly becoming developed into residential and retail areas. Although there are some good fishing spots, access is becoming more and more difficult, and fishing in the shadow of a house or store lacks some of the charm of fishing in the shadow of tall trees.