



THE SINK TIP TIMES

Three Rivers Fly Fishers Newsletter

**Saturday, June 21st, 2025 - Bristol, IN -
all day.**

The first of our Three Rivers Fly Fishers summer outings, on the St. Joseph and Little Elkhart Rivers

Target Species: Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike and Panfish, among other warmwater fish in the St. Joseph River. - - Smallmouth Bass and Panfish in the lower reaches; while Brown Trout and Rainbow Trout predominate the upper reaches of the Little Elkhart River.

We will base out of the Congdon Park Pavillion at Congdon Park on N. Division St. in Bristol, IN.

A public access canoe / kayak launch site on the north side of the park puts you on the St Joseph River. Bigger boats can be put in at the public boat launch in Hermance Park in downtown Bristol. Hermance Park is located on Apollo St. just off of E. Vistula St. (Rt. 120) which is Bristol's main thoroughfare. Hermance Park has a nice large concrete boat ramp and is directly across the river from our outing location at Congdon Park. Both park launches can offer walk and wade opportunities on the St. Joseph as well. Just be cognisant of water flows / levels and river conditions, as well as boat traffic close to the ramps for your safety and enjoyment. This is a big, and can be, a powerful river. It can rise quickly under rainy conditions. But with discretion and a little common sense it is a wonderful river and a great resource to both boat and wade.

There is also the possibility of access to the St. Joseph for bank casting, and walk and wade fishing at Cummins Park. You'll just have to do a little research and recon to see if it's a viable option. Cummins Park is located behind the Elkhart County Historical Museum just off W. Vistula St. Cummins Park is literally just a few blocks back across the bridge from our location at Congdon Park, but may offer another option to yet another stretch of the St. Joseph if you're wade fishing.

A popular float on the St. Joseph is from Mottville, MI down to Bristol.

Don't forget to make shuttle arrangements with someone for vehicles to and from Mottville. Take the Mottville Rd. (Rt. 15) off of E. Vistula St. (Rt. 120) going out of Bristol. This will turn into Rt. 103 at the Michigan State line. In Mottville, public access to the St. Joseph is at the Mottville Canoe Park off of Riverside Dr. and Thomas Rd. You can get to either Riverside Dr. or Thomas Rd. off of Rt. 12, which is also the W. Chicago Rd. This can be a pretty long float back to Bristol, depending on how much time you stop to fish along the way, and / or river conditions, so plan your float time accordingly. Don't forget, you'll need a Michigan fishing license if you're going to fish this stretch back down to Bristol.

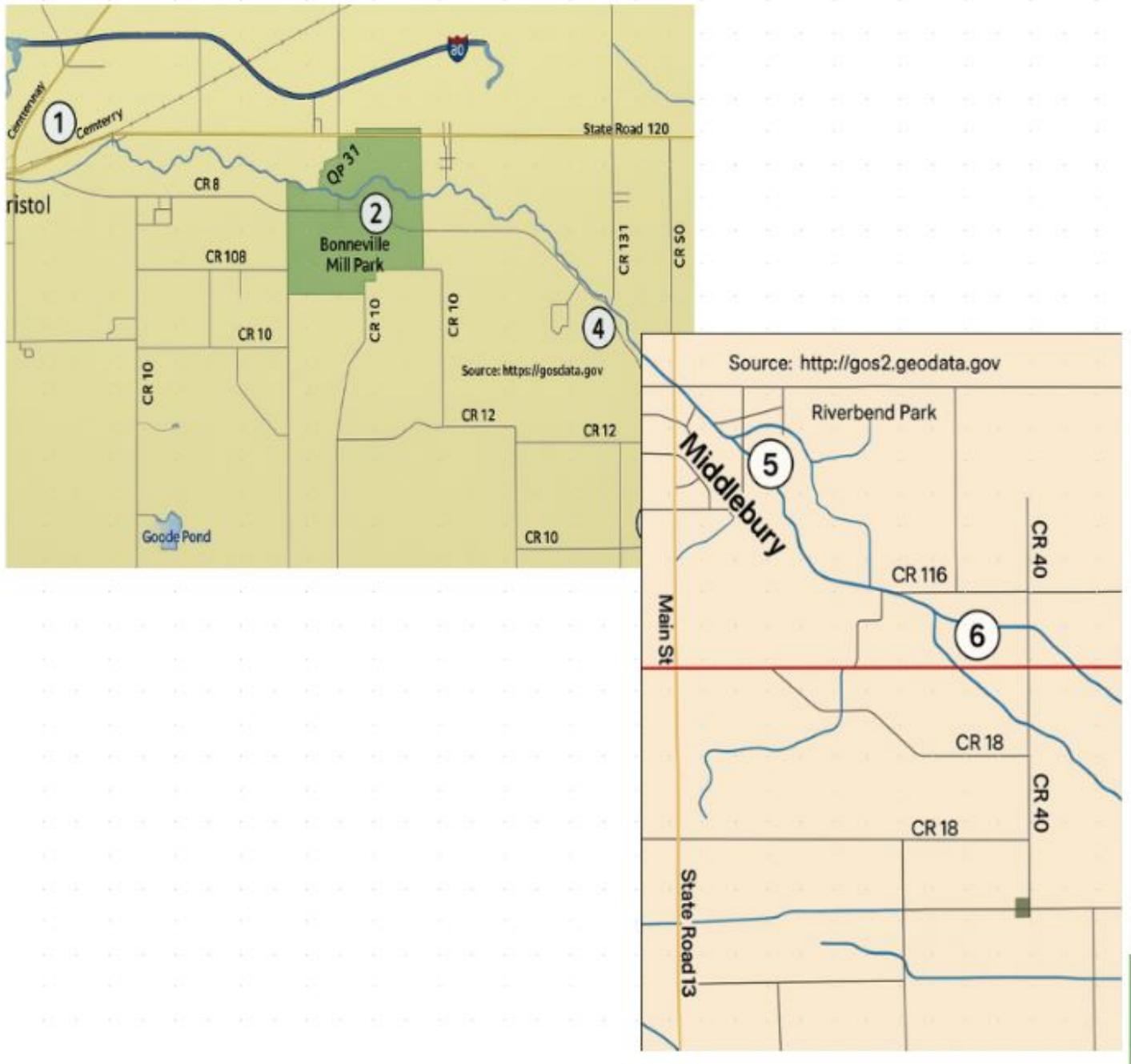
For those that may want to fish the tailwaters below Mottville Dam, there is a Public Fishing Spot at the AEP Mottville Substation, across the river from the Mottville Canoe Park. As with any tailwater fishery below a power dam, this can be good wadeable water, and good fishing when river conditions permit. Be aware of your conditions, i.e., watch the weather, know when AEP may have water releases at the dam, and keep an eye out for changing currents and water depths. Read all posted signage and heed the warnings! Watch your step, and use the buddy system here. Respect the river and she will give you a good day in return. To access the Public Fishing Spot, use the AEP access drive off of N. River Rd. (Rt. 114), which is right off of Rt. 12 or the W. Chicago Rd. Reminder, Michigan fishing license required here as well.

For those wanting to try the Little Elkhart River

There are numerous access points from its confluence with the St. Joseph, and traveling upstream to the town of Middlebury, IN. There may be some limited access to the Little E at Hermance Park in Bristol. There are numerous bridge crossing / access points at various county roads along the river's length. Access can be had at Bonneyville Mill County Park, which can be reached from Rt. 8 via the Bonneyville Mill Rd. They have a downloadable pdf map of the park to include parking areas and trails throughout the park from which you can access the river.

There are numerous access points within the town of Middlebury, to include Riverbend Park off of E. Warren St., which is part of the DNR / Little Elkhart Chapter TU designated catch and release waters. Nearly the entire length of the Little E is wadeable water. Please just be aware that much of the adjacent property along the Little E is privately owned, so be respectful of that when entering or exiting these waters. Most landowners seem to be OK with angler presence in the river, however,

sometimes a courteous knock on the door of a landowner to be sure of where you're at on the river goes a long way. The Little Elkhart Chapter TU has not only done great work in habitat restoration and water quality advancements, as well as established a wonderful Brown Trout fishery in partnership with the DNR; they have also built a trusted and respected relationship with landowners and other interests along the river. Let's help them keep it that way through our actions on the river. This is a great little gem worthy of our respect, and protection, as well as healthy landowner and public relationships.



Those who may be a little more adventurous, and don't mind a little extra driving, you can base out of Bristol and check out the Pigeon River watershed to the east as well. Flowing through Indiana and Michigan, and emptying into the St. Joseph, it provides many warm water fishing opportunities also.

As a side note, whether you're floating or wading, tools like Google Maps and the various cell phone apps now available can be very helpful in navigating the area and identifying put-in and take-out points, public use areas, wadeable waters, fishing spots (think Trout Route apps), land ownership, etc. Also networking with fellow 3RFF members to share information can be invaluable. All of these tools and member to member info sharing go a long way in making everyone's outing more enjoyable.

Should you wish to come in the night before, or spend the weekend, and are a camper; then consider Eby's Pines RV Park & Campground just east of Bristol on Rt. 120. This will also allow you access to yet another good stretch of the Little Elkhart River. Check with Eby's for site availability and pricing, as well as river access information. There are also numerous motels and B&B's throughout the area.

If you enjoy a hearty breakfast and a good cup of coffee before you hit the water, then Evan's Sidewalk Cafe, downtown Bristol, comes highly recommended. They open at 5:00 am. Looking for a cold beverage after a long day on the water, then check out the Red Bird Tavern in downtown Bristol as well.

Don't forget to show up hungry between noon and 12:30 at the Congdon Park Pavilion for the start of our traditional cookout and lunch. It's always a great part of our fellowship together. And a chance to hear how all of the mornings fishing went.

If you're thinking about a boat in the near future, then take some time while in the area, and check out Fluid Fun Canoe & Kayak Sales on N. Division St. in Bristol. They are just a few blocks down the street from our outing at Congdon Park. They carry all the top brands and accessories.

Wrapping things up, don't forget your fishing licenses, life jackets or wading staff, your paddles, fly rods and a fly box, or your sunglasses and waders. Not interested in fishing that day, then just bring your boat out for a quiet day on the water. Better yet, just bring your lawn chair and gather at the pavilion for a relaxing day of comradery, fellowship and storytelling. Not to mention that great lunch. Hope you all can make it. Have a safe and successful outing, and a great day while enjoying your club!

Club Meeting Schedule

All Club Meetings Held at Classic Café 4832 Hillegas Rd., Fort Wayne, doors open at 6:30 pm meetings start at 7

September 17 Mike Mehrle, Frugal Fly Rodder

October 15 Dennis Potter, Terrestrial Flies

November 19 Nathan Perkinson, Author and Fly Fisherman

Mark Your Calendars! 2025 Outings:

June 21, 2025 –St. Joe / Little Elkhart Rivers, Bristol, IN

July 19, 2025 –Mad River, West Liberty, OH

August 9, 2025 –Membership Cookout & Appreciation Day, Ft. Wayne, IN

September 12-14, 2025 –White River, Daleville, IN

