



**TROUT UNLIMITED**  
**ANN ARBOR, MI CHAPTER**

A scenic photograph of a river flowing through a lush, green landscape. In the foreground, there is a stone and metal railing. The background shows a dense forest of trees, some with autumn-colored foliage, under a hazy sky.

# **MILL CREEK**

## **Public Access Points and Stream Sections**

Second Edition

**A guide to access points, stream sections and insect hatch schedules along the three miles of public sections to Mill Creek in Dexter, Michigan. Find access points, read descriptions of stream sections and see pictures of Mill Creek!**





Sloan Preserve  
North Island

Sloan Preserve

# SLOAN PRESERVE SOUTH TO NORTH ISLAND

# SLOAN PRESERVE SOUTH TO NORTH ISLAND

**Starting from the south end and ending downstream at the north tip of North Island**, there are wide sections of creek with hard sandy bottom with some gravel patches in the center and deep silt pockets near the banks in the quiet water. There is plenty of shade and there are wood structures in the creek in the South Section of Sloan Preserve. The North Section of Sloan Preserve has some riffles, pools, and runs along with some deep holes under wood structure with firm sand and gravel and rocky bottom in the center of this stretch. The wide bends with deep pools in the creek have deep, sticky mud on the shallow inside sections. The west bank of the North Section of Sloan Preserve has a large hardwood forest of tall trees on the hill that provide cooling shade on the creek in the afternoon and evenings. There are brown trout, creek chub, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, catfish, carp, white sucker and hognosed sucker in the Sloan Preserve section. Access from Scio Township Sloan Preserve Access Point.

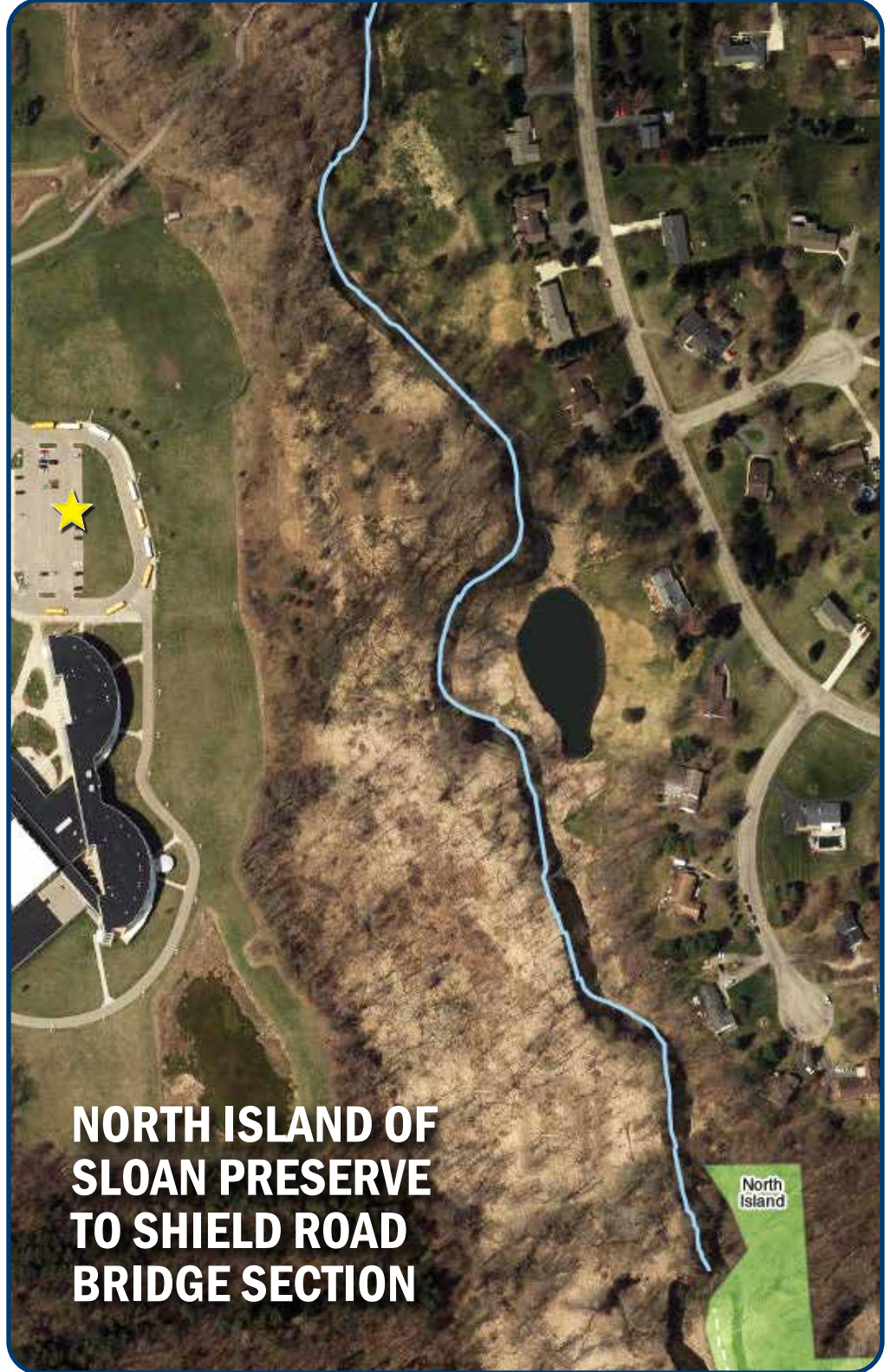


## SCIO TOWNSHIP SLOAN PRESERVE ACCESS POINT

**The Sloan Preserve property was purchased by Scio Township in 2012 and 2013.** The property is 50 acres in size and includes woods, wetlands and Mill Creek frontage. There is a public parking area located off of Baker Road providing access to the trail network and Mill Creek for fishing. A Wader Wash station is also provided at the parking lot. Please clean your waders before you enter and when you leave Mill Creek after fishing.

Anglers that venture into Sloan Preserve may see a wide variety of woodland birds. Various species of woodpecker, including the spectacular pileated woodpecker, can be seen. An occasional barred owl may also be seen. Walking around a bend in the creek may result in flushing a pair of mallards or wood ducks. Turkeys wander the woods along with white tailed deer, cottontail rabbits and fox. Mink and muskrat make their homes in the stream banks and beaver leave their signature gnawed stumps along the way.





**NORTH ISLAND OF  
SLOAN PRESERVE  
TO SHIELD ROAD  
BRIDGE SECTION**

North  
Island

# NORTH ISLAND OF SLOAN PRESERVE TO SHIELD ROAD BRIDGE SECTION

**Starting at the North Island of Sloan Preserve and ending at Shield Road bridge.** This area is noted for its rich variety of bottom strata, long gravel runs with pools, with plenty of wood structure throughout.

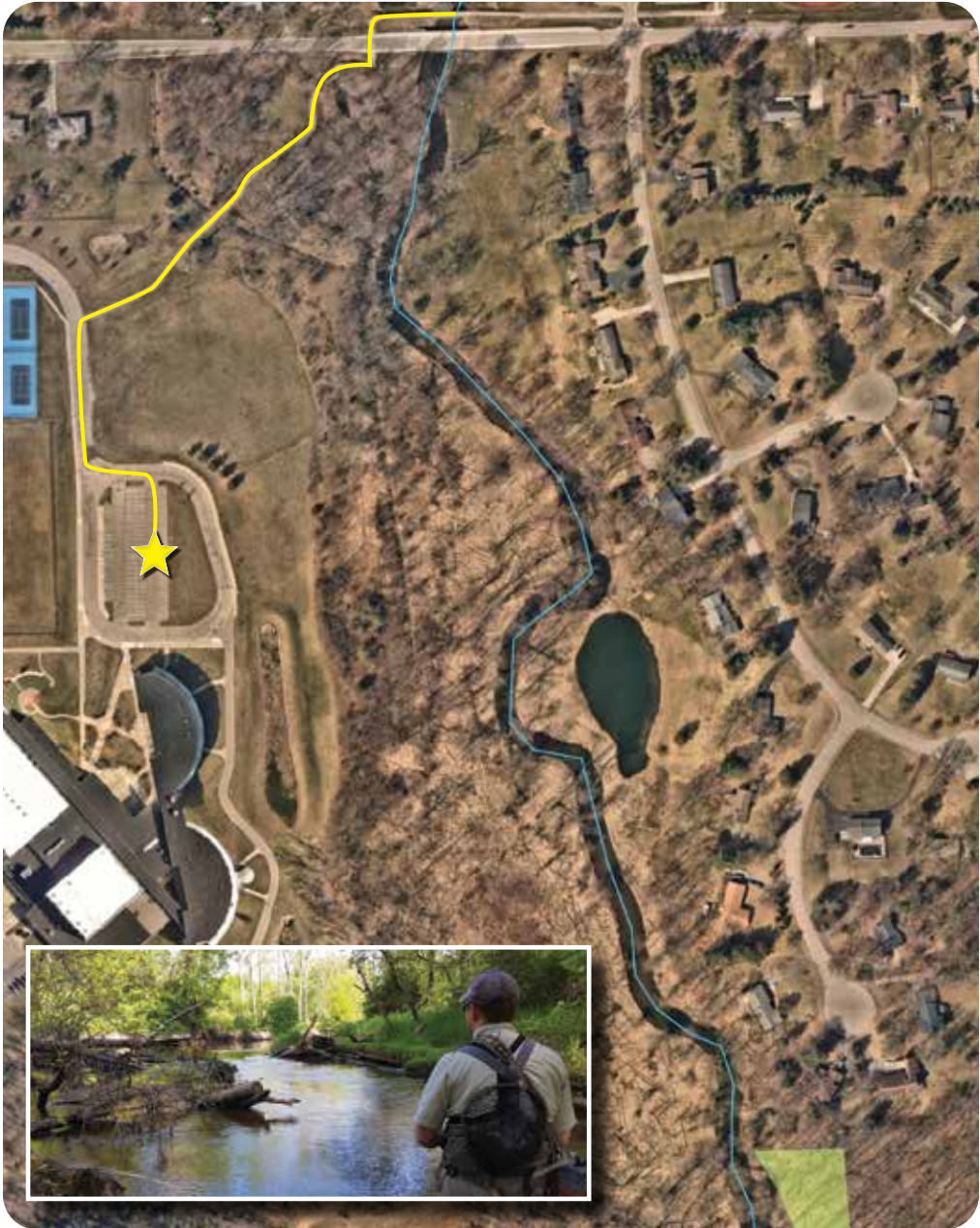
Noted Mill Creek angler and author of the “Mill Creek Fly Fishing Guide”, Ethan Cramer has a strong attachment to the north end of this stretch of Mill Creek. This stretch has been named “Ethan’s Place” in honor of his many contributions to the improvement of Mill Creek for brown trout. Ethan’s Place inspired this description: Through Ethan’s Place, Mill Creek winds and drops over sun drenched bends and shady pools. Here trout spend their days invisible to the untrained eye, and nearly invisible to the trained, as they cruise the creek’s cool waters in search of prey. The large boulders, remnants of the last ice age that sculpted the landscape you see, create complex currents resulting in numerous trout lies. A well placed cast may reward you with an encounter with a red and black specked Mill Creek resident.

There are brown trout, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, white sucker and hognoed sucker in this section. Access from Dexter High School Access Point or Scio Township Sloan Preserve Access Point. Please note that Dexter High School Access Point is restricted to when school is not in session including weekends, after school hours and vacations.




## DEXTER HIGH SCHOOL ACCESS POINT

The access point is located behind Dexter High School with parking permitted in the teacher's parking lot when school is not in session. This includes weekends, after school hours and vacations. Walk and work your way to the creek from the parking lot.





An aerial photograph of a creek area. A large green area is in the top left. A red line follows the left bank of the creek. A blue line follows the right bank. A yellow star is in the top right. A yellow star is near a school. A warning text box is in the upper middle. A title is in the bottom left.

**DANGER!!**  
Deep water!  
High banks!  
Do not wade.  
Fish from banks.

Creekside  
Middle School

**SHIELD ROAD  
TO FOREST  
LAWN CEMETERY**

# SHIELD ROAD TO FOREST LAWN CEMETERY

**From Shield Road bridge, Mill Creek flows downstream** with an initial shallow, hard packed sand bottom. Behind the Creekside Middle School, there is also occasional sticky clay bottom sections and intermittent short gravel sections with rocks, riffles, runs and pools in a long, wooded and shaded section. Mill Creek flows down to a long, open grassy section that starts with hard packed sandy bottom which gradually gets shallow as it rounds the first wide bend.

As the creek begins to curve around the final wide bend, it begins to rapidly deepen into a 700 foot long sun drenched pool that is deep with a sticky clay bottom and sides. The banks in this section are high and grassy that are very difficult to climb up and out of the creek. Exit up the bank to the right and follow the paved trail along the eastern bank to reach Forest Lawn Cemetery. This is a dangerous section for those attempting to wade while fishing. Fishing from the bank is recommended as it is the safest and most productive method of fishing this deep section.

As Mill Creek emerges from the wooded sections, you will find an abundance of songbirds that prefer meadows and open stream sides. Bluebirds, finches and wrens will zip from shrub to shrub. Red-winged blackbirds proclaim their territories with a *conk-la-ree* from their perches on cattails. Great blue heron will wade the shallows while ducks and geese may paddle along the placid sections.

This section of the creek is rich with insects and crayfish that feed the brown trout, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, white suckers, hognose suckers and carp. Access is from Shield Road access points, the Creekside Middle School Access Point, and the Mill Creek Park South Access Point at the riffles next to Forest Lawn Cemetery. Please note that the Shield Road and Creekside Middle School Access Points are restricted to weekends, after school hours and vacations.



## SHIELD ROAD ACCESS POINT

**This access site is on the northeast side of the Shield Road pedestrian bridge.** Parking is available in the parking lot by the Louie Ceriani Building. It is a short walk to the Wader Wash Station then access to the creek. This access point is restricted to after 5pm on weekdays.



# CREEKSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL ACCESS POINT

This is a restricted access site behind Creekside Middle School.  
Access is restricted to weekends, after school hours and vacations.

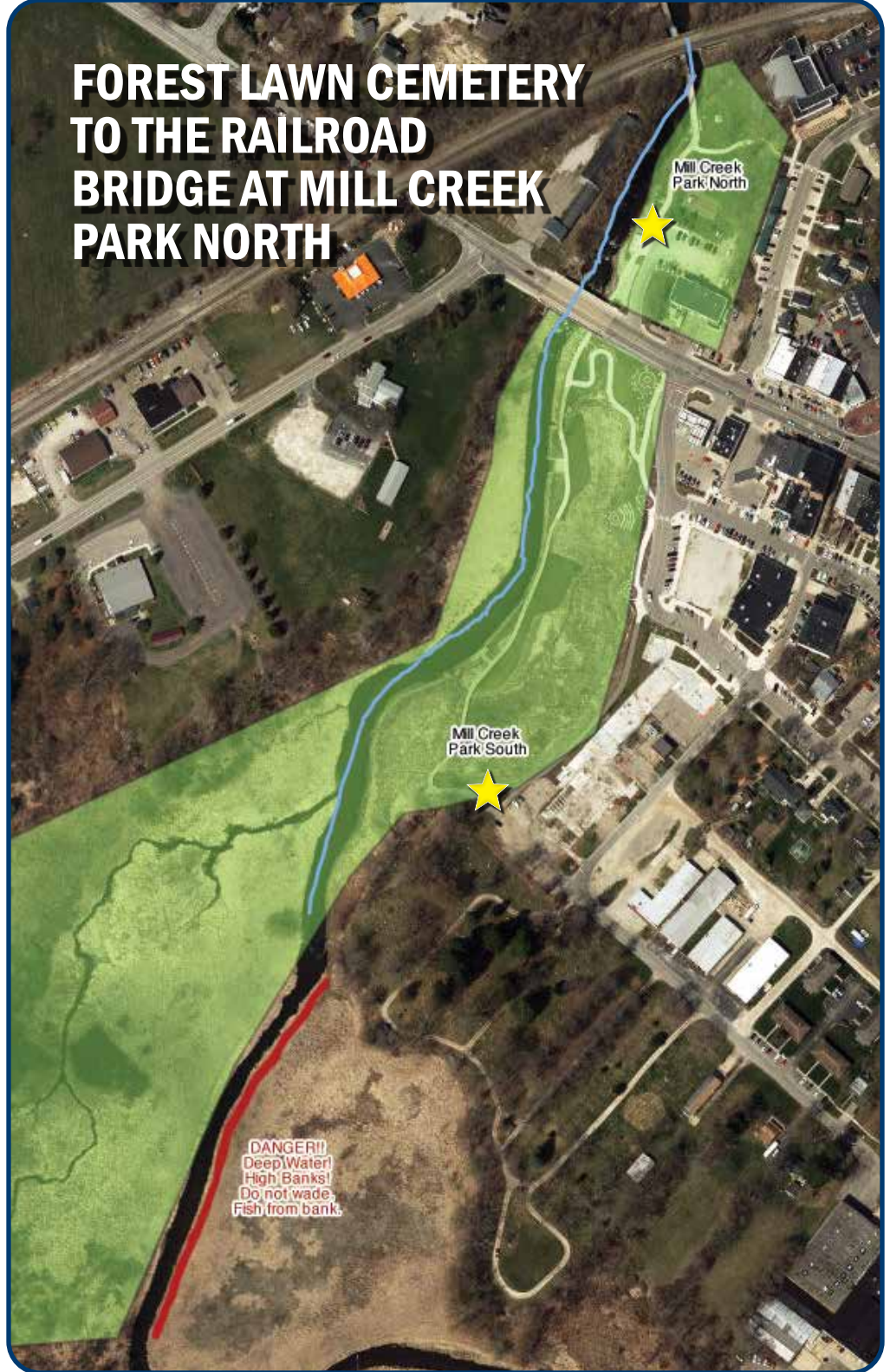


# FOREST LAWN CEMETERY TO THE RAILROAD BRIDGE AT MILL CREEK PARK NORTH

Mill Creek  
Park North

Mill Creek  
Park South

**DANGER!!**  
Deep Water!  
High Banks!  
Do not wade.  
Fish from bank.



# FOREST LAWN CEMETERY TO THE RAILROAD BRIDGE AT MILL CREEK PARK NORTH

**This section is a wetland open to sunlight with a paved and boardwalk path parallel to the creek.** The creek bottom goes from hard sand to gravel, to rocky runs, with deeper pools and long gravel riffles. During summer 2023 Ann Arbor Trout Unlimited added woody structures to this section of Mill Creek. These are composed of black locust logs and are deployed as either single log vanes or multi-log structures. There are some undercut banks and the deeper pools have some thick “boot grabbing muck” sections leading to the series of drop pools under and downstream of Main Street bridge. Below and downstream of the Main Street bridge, the creek bottom is rocky with swift current up to the pool at the south east side of the railroad bridge where the creek turns left and flows under the bridge.

This area is rich with insects, crayfish and minnows that feed the brown trout, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, rock bass, white sucker, hognose sucker, carp and catfish. You may occasionally encounter walleye, pike and rainbow trout in this section. Access is from Mill Creek Park North or South Access Points.



# MILL CREEK PARK SOUTH ACCESS POINT

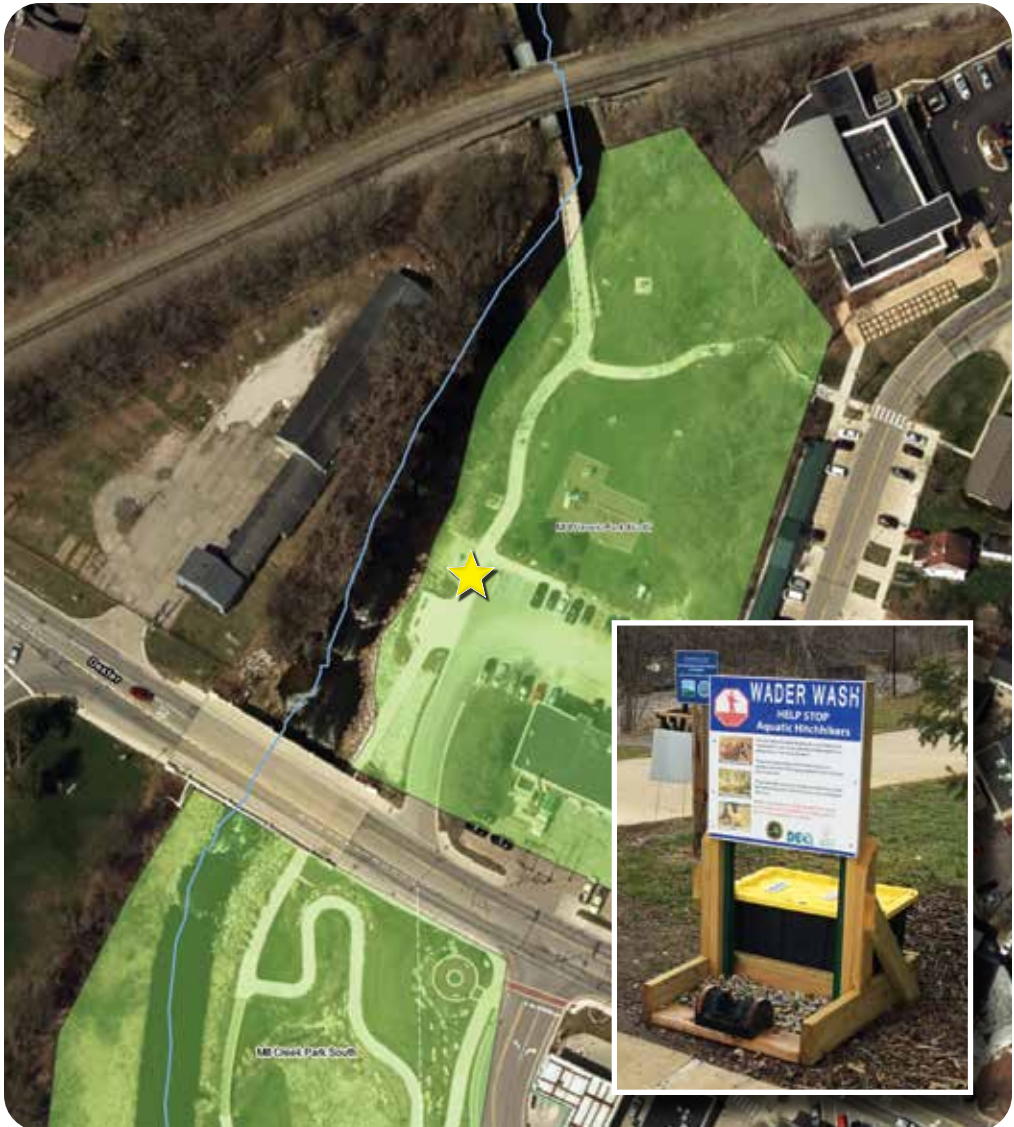
**Mill Creek Park South is approximately 4 acres in size** and was developed in the former Mill Pond Impoundment following the removal of Mill Creek Dam in 2008. The park is open to the public.



**DANGER!!**  
Deep Water!  
High Banks!  
Do not wade,  
Fish from bank.

# MILL CREEK PARK NORTH ACCESS POINT

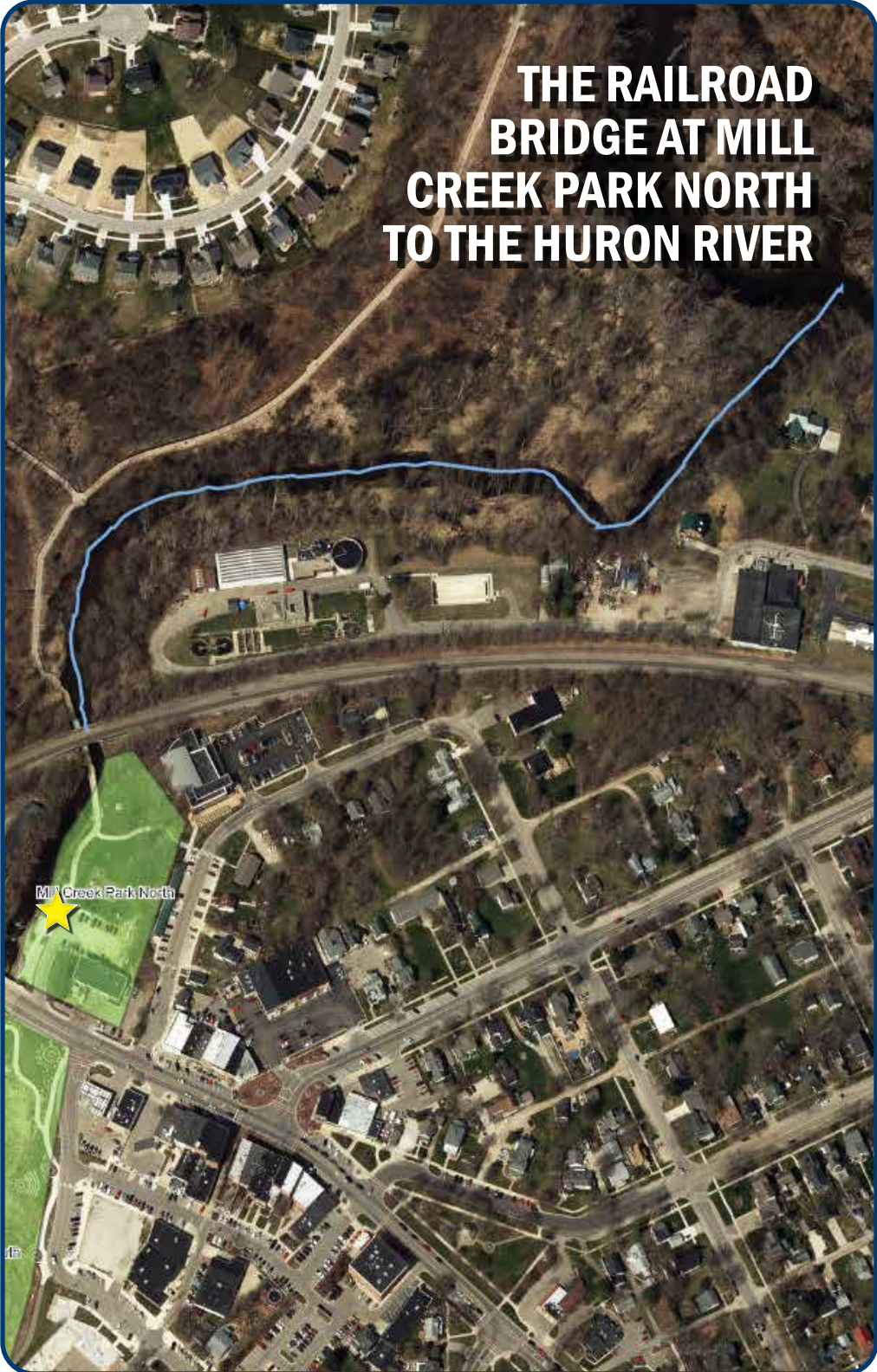
**Mill Creek Park North Access Point** is at the kayak launch area between the parking lot in Mill Creek Park North behind the Dexter Fire Station and The Washtenaw County Sheriff Department Sub Station. There is an Invasive Species Wader Wash Station at the parking lot next to the main pathway for Mill Creek Park North. Please clean your waders before you enter and when you leave the Creek after fishing.





# THE RAILROAD BRIDGE AT MILL CREEK PARK NORTH TO THE HURON RIVER

Mill Creek Park North



# THE RAILROAD BRIDGE AT MILL CREEK PARK NORTH TO THE HURON RIVER

**This section is heavily shaded to the Huron River.** There are two deep pools on the north side of the railroad bridge, one on each side of the creek, they provide holding water for a variety of the fish that live in and visit Mill Creek. The bottom in the center of the creek is firm with a gravel, firm sand, and clay base. As anglers fish downstream toward the Huron River, the gravel gets larger, there is abundant wood cover to provide food and shelter for the abundant insect life, minnows, and crayfish as well as shelter and food for the brown trout, largemouth, smallmouth, and rock bass, catfish, suckers, creek chubs, and the occasional pike, walleye, and rainbow trout that visit this section in the spring, summer and fall. Silt collects on the bottom near the banks with a few small sections of mud at the banks. Access to this section is made in Mill Creek Park North at the kayak launch area with the parking lot being behind the Dexter Fire Station. Some anglers prefer to approach this section from the Huron River to wade upstream to avoid disturbing the silt in the creek where they are casting.



# MILL CREEK FISHING SURVEY

**Thank you for your interest in Mill Creek** and Ann Arbor Trout Unlimited. If you have tried your hand at fishing Mill Creek, we would like to hear about your experience. Please fill out a fishing survey on the Ann Arbor Trout Unlimited website. This vital information will be submitted to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for their continued support of our fishery.

[WWW.ANNARBORTU.ORG/MILL-CREEK](http://WWW.ANNARBORTU.ORG/MILL-CREEK)



# MILL CREEK FLY HATCHES

## IN GENERAL, FOR DRY FLIES AND NYMPHING:

<b>February to April:</b>	Black stoneflies and midges
<b>May:</b>	Caddis and baetis (BWO)
<b>June:</b>	Mayflies
<b>July:</b>	Mayflies and baetis
<b>August:</b>	Terrestrials(ants, hoppers, crickets, beetles)
<b>September:</b>	Caddis and some terrestrials
<b>October:</b>	Caddis
<b>November to January:</b>	Midges and variety of nymphs

## FOR STREAMERS:

Water conditions, rather than time of year is the most important consideration. Conditions with corresponding streamer patterns that have been most successful are:

**Gin clear, low water:** Clouser minnows, mickey fins, wet flies

**Slightly stained, low - medium water level:** Wooley buggers, small sculpins, crayfish

**Stained, medium water level:** Small - medium articulated streamers, olive, yellow and brown colors

**Blown, high water level:** Larger articulated streamers, black and dark brown



# MILL CREEK UNIQUE ACCESS LAW

## **Please respect both public and private property along the creek.**

Mill Creek does not conform with the same stream access laws as many of Michigan's popular trout streams. Access into Mill Creek at bridge crossing is not legal above the three mile stretch from the Huron River upstream to the southern border of the Scio Township Sloan Preserve. The creek bottom is private property in the non-public sections of Mill Creek. Without the property owners of the bank on both sides of the creek giving permission, people in the creek are trespassing.

# MILL CREEK BROWN TROUT CAN BE VERY DIFFICULT TO CATCH

## **Respect fellow anglers.** Let them and you have a great day on the creek.

Mill Creek brown trout are very wary.

The most successful anglers are very stealthy in their approach and when casting. They make no sound in or out of the water. Their tips for success to fellow Mill Creek anglers are:

- Make the first cast to a location your best cast
- Be ready for the strike
- Give other anglers a wide and quiet space as you pass them on the public property side of the creek.



# THE 70° PLEDGE

**Brown trout are a coldwater species** and are stressed when water temperatures warm. Ann Arbor Trout Unlimited asks anglers to refrain from targeting trout in Mill Creek when water temperatures approach or exceed 70°. During summer 2023 AATU installed an EviroDIY water monitor in Mill Creek. This monitor will provide information on the water temperature in Mill Creek in real time.

**The monitor can be accessed at:**

**[HTTPS://MONITORMYWATERSHED.ORG/SITES/DEXTER\\_HIGH\\_SCHOOL/](https://monitormywatershed.org/sites/dexter_high_school/)**

**Mill Creek day time water temperatures are most likely to exceed 70° during late June, July and August and anglers are advised to take special care at this time to check the water temperature.**



## KEEP'EM WET!

The brown trout in Mill Creek are a unique resource and we should all do what we can to preserve and share them. Anglers are encouraged to practice catch and release. The survival of released fish can be improved by the following practices:

- **Minimize air exposure.** Use a net and reduce stress by keeping a fish's mouth and gills in the water.
- **Eliminate contact with dry surfaces.** Fish have a mucous (slime) layer that protects them from them from disease. Contact with dry, rough surfaces can remove scales and some of this protective coating. It is best to wet your hands before handling a fish.
- **Reduce handling time.** If you intend to take a photo have the camera ready and keep the fish as close to the water as possible.



# MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS TO THE MILL CREEK BROWN TROUT RESEARCH PROJECT:

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The Mill Creek Hatch Reports and Fly Selections are by Jason Kloess.

Jason is a three time winner of the  
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**ANN ARBOR, MI CHAPTER**

