

**District 3 (James Walker, Aaron Yeager) - 304 924 6211**  
**163 wildlife Rd.**  
**French Creek, WV 26218**

### **D3 Reservoirs -**

District 3 has 5 large reservoirs all situated along the I-79 corridor in central West Virginia. Stonewall Jackson, Burnsville, Stonecoal, Sutton, and Summersville Lakes.

**Stonewall Jackson Reservoir:** (Corps. of Engineers) is well known for its largemouth bass population, musky, and panfish. It's a shallow lake and still contains lots of standing timber. The lake is lowered for flood control 6 feet Nov-April but typically is at the summer pool level (recreation pool) by mid-April. Largemouth will be moving from deeper water locations at or just above the thermocline to shallow water structure as the water temperatures decrease. Find areas where shallow water with cover is next to deeper water. Rip rap banks, shallow points, road beds, standing timber as well as trees that have fallen are prime areas to target. Creek channels and large mats of hydrilla can be very productive fall fishing spots. Topwater lures and weedless presentations of soft plastics progressing to faster crankbaits will prove effective in these areas as temperatures dip following cool fall nights. Largemouth Bass can tough to fool, but gizzard shad imitations of the correct size will locate actively feeding fish. Musky become more active this time of year as high surface temperatures subside and successful anglers troll and cast large plugs, spinners and specialized musky baits. Crappie, perch, bluegill (panfish) this time of year is great. Try beaver huts, blow down trees, bridges, and hydrilla weed mats as water temperatures decrease. Live bait (minnow on light jig) or small plastic jigs can produce many fish and is a great way to introduce a new angler to the sport of fishing because action can be fast. Fall turnover will occur on Stonewall Jackson Reservoir when the warmer oxygenated top layer (typically above 14 feet of depth) cools to the point that it mixes with the cooler low oxygen bottom layer. This may result in a brief period of poor fishing, but fish will quickly acclimate to the change and resume their fall feeding spree! Following turnover fish may be caught deeper than expected as they now have access to the entire water column. The tailwaters of this lake can also produce many warmwater gamefish such as bass, yellow perch and crappie. You may be lucky enough to catch a trout that carried over from the spring trout stockings. When streams and rivers are high, tailwaters can be some of the only fishable water. Be sure to take advantage of the good access and parking. Daily lake and tailwater conditions can be obtained by calling the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at: 304-269-4588

**Burnsville Reservoir:** (Corps. of Engineers) is known for its largemouth, spotted bass, catfish, musky, and panfish. The lake is lowered for flood control 13 feet Nov-April but typically is at the summer pool level (recreation pool) by mid-April. It's a shallow lake and still contains some standing timber. Largemouth will be moving from deeper water locations to shallow water as the water temperatures decrease. Find areas where shallow water with cover is next to deeper water. Rip rap banks, deeper downwind sides of shallow points, road beds, standing timber as well as trees that have fallen. Areas of cover adjacent to creek channels can be really productive for Fall bass. Faster moving lures such as soft plastic flukes/worms, crankbaits and topwater lures shine as water temperatures first start to dip. Bass will be in 6-14 feet of water as temperatures drop and will be holding to cover near the thermocline. A channel/flathead catfish population is a bonus to Burnsville and fish have been caught in the 20-30 lbs. range. Try live bait on the bottom as temperatures drop especially after fall turnover has occurred. Musky become more active this

time of year as well and head lake areas where suckers congregate. Successful anglers troll and cast large plugs and specialized large musky baits. Crappie, and bluegill (panfish) this time of year is great. Try beaver huts, blow down trees and creek channels as water temperatures increase. Live bait (minnow on light jig) or small plastic jigs can produce many fish and is a great way to introduce a new angler to the sport of fishing because action can be fast. The tailwaters of this lake is also very productive and contains many warmwater gamefish. It is also stocked with trout in October, the two weeks after Columbus Day week. Discharges above 200cfs in the tailwaters can be especially good fishing as fish actively pass through the dam. Tailwaters can sometimes be the only fishable water with good access and parking. Daily lake and tailwater conditions can be obtained by calling the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at: 304-853-2371.

**Stonecoal Reservoir:** (First Energy Corp.) is well known for its largemouth and smallmouth bass, walleye, musky, and panfish. Stonecoal is a deep lake with a 9.9 hp limit that keeps the lake quiet, resulting in a backcountry feel perfect for canoe or kayak fishing. A recent Lake profile revealed a zone of higher dissolved oxygen associated with rapid temperature drop between 15-25 feet of depth. Largemouth will be moving from deeper water locations to shallower water as the surface water temperatures decrease. Find areas where shallow water with cover is next to deeper water. Rocky banks, deeper downwind areas of shallow points, road beds, submergent vegetation (pondweed/lily pad beds) as well as trees/brush piles that WVDNR Fisheries staff has added are prime spots to target. Deeper weedlines in coves can be productive Fall fishing locations. Faster moving lures such as soft plastic worms/flukes, crankbaits and topwater lures are good as temperatures first begin to decrease. Bass will be in 10-15 feet of water as temperatures dip and feeding actively around areas of cover. Walleye like to congregate around the brush piles/felled trees as water temperatures fall. Musky become more active this time of year as well and hold in areas with good ambush cover. Successful anglers troll and cast large plugs and specialized large musky baits. Crappie, perch, bluegill (panfish) this time of year is great. Try upper end of lake (pondweed/lily pads), beaver huts, blow down trees and creek channels as water temperature decrease. Live bait (minnow on light jig) or small plastic jigs can produce many fish and is a great way to introduce a new angler to the sport of fishing because action can be fast. Stonecoal Lake Fishing Map can be found here: [http://www.wvdnr.gov/Lake\\_Maps/](http://www.wvdnr.gov/Lake_Maps/)

**Sutton Reservoir:** (Corps. of Engineers) is known for its largemouth, spotted and smallmouth bass, and panfish. The lake is lowered for flood control 29 feet Nov-April but typically is at the summer pool level (recreation pool) by mid-April. Sutton is a deep steep-sided lake with lots of rock and blow down shoreline trees. Largemouth will be moving from deep open water locations to shallower water as the water temperatures decrease. Find areas where shallow water with cover is next to deeper water. Rip rap banks, deeper downwind sides of shallow points, road beds, standing timber as well as trees that have fallen are good spots to target. Mouths of coves can also be productive fall bass locations. Faster moving lures such as plastic worms/flukes, crankbaits and topwater lures work well as temperatures first begin to decrease. Bass will be in 10-15 feet of water as temperatures fall. Smallmouth can be found in rocky shoreline areas near the upper end of lake all the way to the first riffle up the Elk. Crappie, bluegill, and rockbass (panfish) this time of year is great. Try beaver huts, blow down trees, creek channels and weedbeds as water temperature decrease. Live bait (minnow on light jig) or small plastic jigs can produce many fish and is a great way to introduce a new angler to the sport of fishing because action can be fast. The tailwaters of this lake also produce many warmwater gamefish (Smallmouth, walleye, musky and

panfish). It is also stocked with trout in October, the two weeks after Columbus Day week. When streams and rivers are high sometimes the tailwaters are the only fishable water with good access and parking. Daily lake and tailwater conditions can be obtained by calling the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at: 304-765-2816

**Summersville lake:** (Corps. of Engineers) is known for its natural reproducing walleye population, smallmouth bass, and panfish. The lake is lowered for flood control 77 feet Nov-April but typically is at the summer pool level (recreation pool) by mid- April. it's a deep and steep sided lake with lots of rock, blow down shoreline trees, and habitat enhancement structures at various levels. Walleye will be in deep water (50-90 feet) as summer temperatures retreat. Try a minnow tipped jig or night crawler slow trolled on a bottom bouncer rig or try a dropshot rig in those extreme depths. Trolling crankbaits is also a very effective method for catching walleye at different depths as walleye will be moving up the water column as temperatures dip. Smallmouth will be moving from deep water locations to shallow structure as the temperatures decrease. Find areas where shallow water with cover is next to deeper water. Rock drop off banks, deeper downwind sides of shallow points, road beds, as well as habitat structures should hold fish throughout Fall. Mouths of coves can also be productive Fall bass locations. Try live crawfish or crawfish imitation lures such as plastic worms/flukes, crankbaits and topwater lures as temperatures first begin to decrease. Bass will be in 25-40 feet of water in early Fall, but will move towards the surface as temperatures dip. Smallmouth can be found throughout the lake in the Fall. Look for the habitat enhancement structures in Battle Run (entire cove) and McKees Creek (near Marina). Crappie, yellow perch, bluegill, and rockbass (panfish) this time of year is great. Try beaver huts, blow down trees, habitat enhancement structures, and shallow coves as water temperature increase. Live bait (minnow on light jig) or small plastic jigs can produce many fish and is a great way to introduce a new angler to the sport of fishing because action can be fast. Use sonar/electronics to find groups of fish on your screen as well as habitat enhancement locations that will hold fish. The tailwaters are also stocked with trout in October, the two weeks after Columbus Day week and contains many warmwater gamefish as well. When stream and rivers are high sometimes the tailwaters are the only fishable water with good access and parking. Daily lake and tailwater conditions can be obtained by calling the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at: 304-872-3412

### **D3 Rivers/Streams -**

The Elk, Gauley, Little Kanawha, Greenbrier Rivers, and Buckhannon are fantastic Fall fisheries. Focus on the Elk and Gauley for big walleye, smallmouth bass and musky around tributaries and riffles. Little Kanawha and Buckhannon are great for musky as the current state record musky came out of the Little Kanawha in spring of 2017. Smallmouth Bass can be found in all the above rivers and Fall is the most productive and rewarding time to fish. Anglers should target deep pools near shoals and flats, eddies along the bank, fallen timber along the shore, boulders or other current breaks. As the water cools Smallmouth Bass will move from the back of the deep pools to the head of the pools closer to the current. Popular lures are jigs, tubes, jerkbaits, crankbaits, spinnerbaits, swimbaits, and crawfish imitations. If looking for a place to float fish contact the district office for a map or check out our interactive map on line highlighting Public Access Sites.

District 3 is trout country so visit WVDNR website for daily stream trout (fall) stockings. The river flows have been great this year and many trout (as well as golds from the Goldrush stockings) still remain in streams. It is a more peaceful time of year to fish for trout without the big crowds but still plenty of opportunity to catch some fish. Streams and small impoundments are stocked with trout in October, the

two weeks after Columbus Day week. A few streams that are included in this are: Cranberry, Shavers Fork, and Buckhannon Rivers to name a few. Please check the website for complete listing. [www.wvdnr.gov](http://www.wvdnr.gov)

### **D3 Impoundments -**

District 3 has 12 small impoundments scattered around an 8-county region. Most all of them have good bass populations, channel catfish, and excellent panfish opportunities. Anglers can find Largemouth Bass around cover in the form of fallen trees, beaver huts, submerged timber, stumps, points, weedmats and riprap. Several of these impoundments are stocked with trout and surprisingly the warmwater fish populations are often overlooked but can produce bass in the 7 lbs. range. During the post-spawn find deeper areas near woody structures. Try soft plastics, crankbaits, and topwater as water temps. warm. Good population of crappie and bluegills with some larger-than-average-sized fish are found in several small impoundments, most notably Big Ditch and Wallback Lakes. Find structures like stumps and submerged timber. Use small jigs, minnow imitations, night crawlers, and wax worms. Bluegills will move to deeper areas near submerged cover/weeds. Tiger musky have been stocked in Big Ditch Lake for the past 2 years. A unique beautiful species that you can add to your list. Don't forget your camera.

Trout will be stocked in October, the two weeks after Columbus Day week. Buffalo Fork, Seneca, Wallback, and Watoga lakes to name a few.