

BROWN MOUNTAIN CREEK

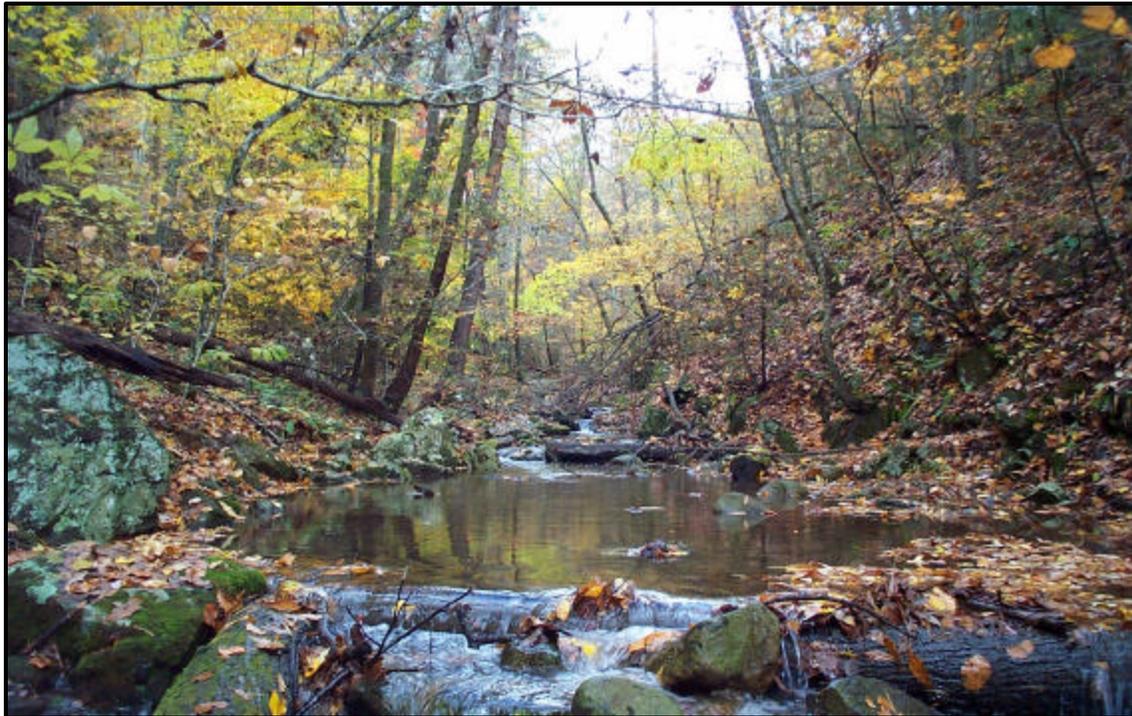
Boundary Description

Brown Mountain Creek in Amherst County from the City of Lynchburg property boundary upstream to the first crossing with the national forest property boundary for a total distance of approximately 3.8 miles.

Observations

On November 6, 2002, David C. Whitehurst as required by DEQ Exceptional Waters guidance conducted a site visit to the nominated segment of Brown Mountain Creek in Amherst County. The nominated segment of the stream is entirely contained within the George Washington National Forest. Approximately one mile of the nominated segment near the downstream boundary was observed.

Brown Mountain Creek is a medium to high gradient tributary to the Pedlar River and relatively narrow being no more than ten to twelve feet across the widest pool in the portion observed.



The stream has minimal meander as it flows through the stream valley formed by Brown Mountain and Long Mountain and the most prominent feature of the surrounding landscape are the steep sides formed by these two mountains. The majority of the stream's substrate in the observed portion is cobble with some gravel and sand. An occasional boulder or group of boulders form small falls that spill into pools. Fallen trees and limbs are a frequent occurrence as one proceeds upstream, which makes hiking up the stream valley difficult. The environmental setting in the area observed is very attractive and unspoiled in appearance though lacking in prominent outstanding features that tended to characterize other candidate waters for Tier III designation that have been surveyed.

The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries designates Brown Mountain Creek as a Class ii wild natural trout stream. One brook trout was observed as were several black nose dace and other

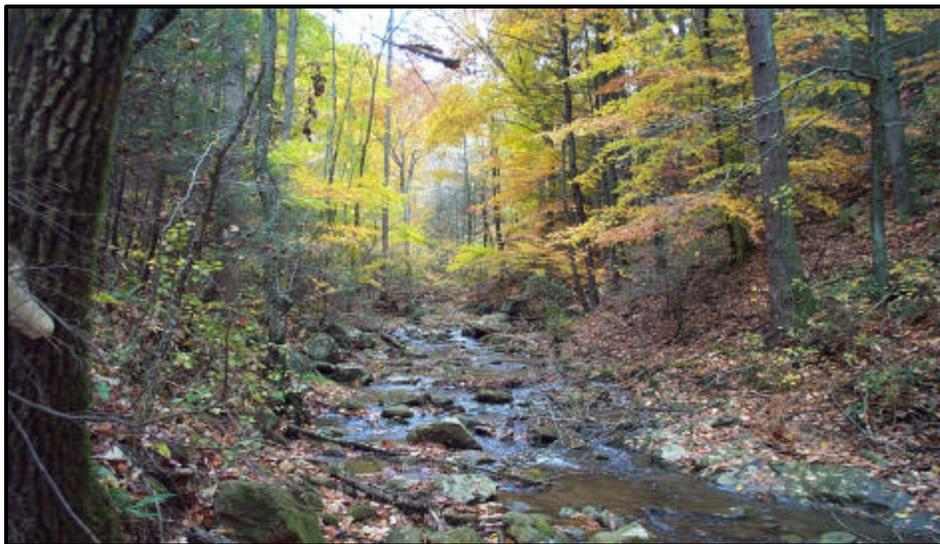
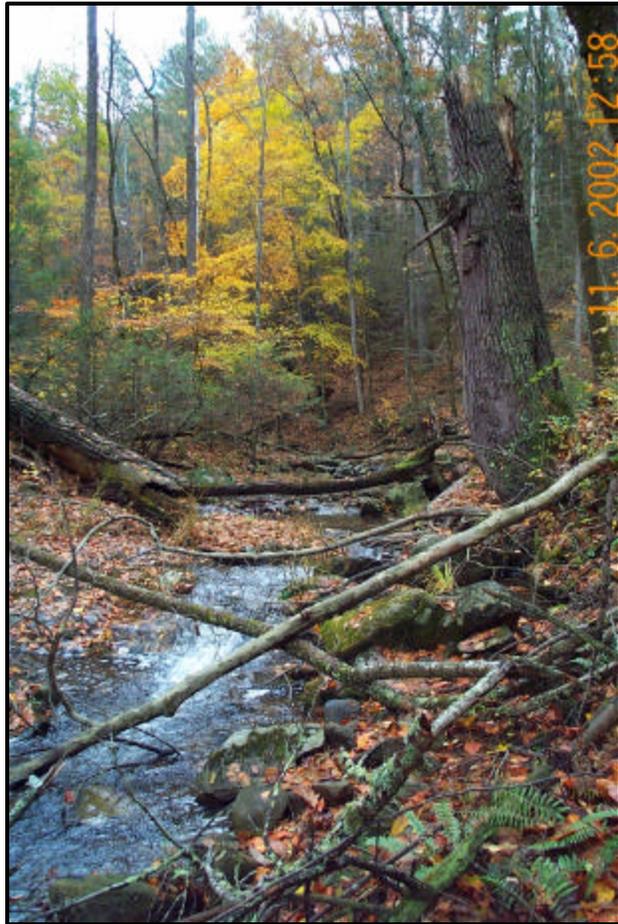
unidentified members of the cyprinid family. Although native trout are apparently present, trout fishing in the portion observed would be difficult due to the close steep sides, and narrowness of the stream. A cursory benthic survey was done at several points and numerous individuals of the family ephemeroptera (mayflies), plecoptera (stoneflies), and trichoptera (caddisflies) were seen, as were crayfish.

Although the stream may not present an outstanding opportunity for angling, there is hiking and primitive camping closely associated with Brown Mountain Creek. The Appalachian Trail parallels the stream for approximately two thirds the length of the stream, and as in most of the national forest, primitive camping is permitted.

Conclusions

The environmental setting of the observed portion of Brown Mountain Creek is attractive and relatively pristine though lacking in prominent outstanding features that have characterized other candidate waters. As with other waters that have a native trout population, the aquatic community may be considered as exceptional and the stream can also be considered an integral component to an outstanding hiking/backpacking experience.

After considering observations made during a visit to the site, staff has concluded that Brown Mountain Creek may satisfy the criterion for exceptional environmental setting and does satisfy the criteria for exceptional aquatic community and exceptional recreational opportunities.



ADDENDUM
Brown Mountain Creek - Additional Observations

Due to some uncertainty as to whether Brown Mountain Creek satisfies the required eligibility criteria of having an exceptional environmental setting as required by DEQ Exceptional Waters guidance, DEQ staff conducted another site visit to the nominated segment of Brown Mountain Creek in Amherst County on November 27, 2002. Observations were made from the upstream boundary of the nominated segment to a point approximately one and a half miles downstream. Previous observations were made on November 6, 2002 from the downstream boundary to a point approximately one mile upstream.



Access to the stream was made by way of the Appalachian Trail where it crosses Route 60, which parallels the stream after approximately one half mile of a relatively steep descent down the trail. At this point the gradient of the stream becomes less steep and the floodplain becomes flatter and wider than the previously observed downstream segment and the substrate is composed of cobble, gravel, and sand. The stream has a moderate meander and a relatively even proportion of riffles, runs, and pools.

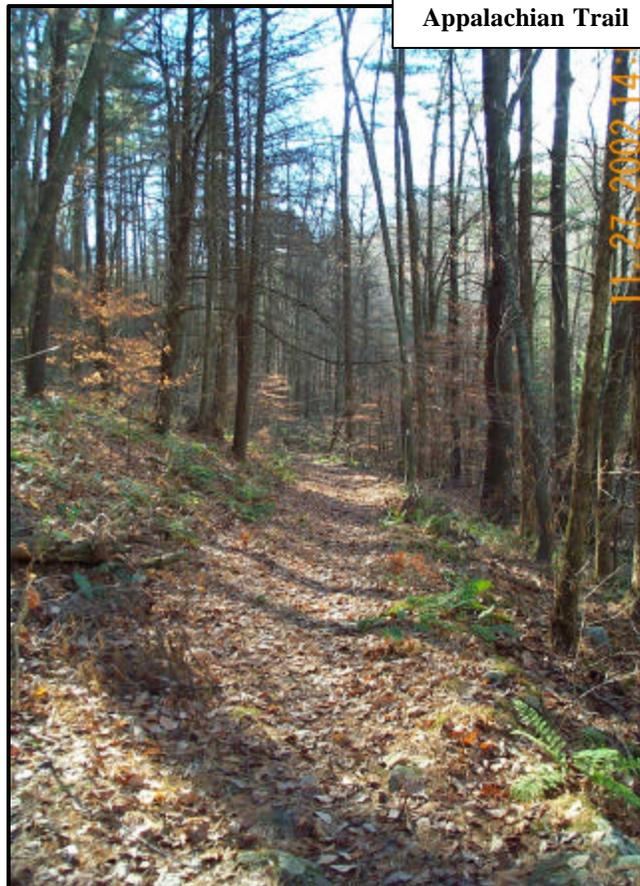


The environmental setting of Brown Mountain Creek is not as dramatic as other nominated water bodies observed. However, the feeling of remoteness and the subtle beauty of the stream and its environs as one hikes the trail combine to provide an exceptional environmental setting as well as providing an outstanding recreational opportunity in the form of hiking, camping, birding, and photography.



Two native brook trout were observed, the presence of which is generally considered to be indicative of near pristine conditions. A cursory benthic survey was done at several points and individuals of the family ephemeroptera (mayflies), plecoptera (stoneflies), and trichoptera (caddisflies) were seen.

After considering observations made during both visits to the site, staff has concluded that Brown Mountain Creek satisfies all eligibility criteria.



Appalachian Trail