

OKLAHOMA

Spring Creek

55 miles from Tulsa

Spring water surfaces to create the headwaters of the creek about 70 miles east of Tulsa in the Ozark Uplands near Kansas. A couple dozen or more springs feed the flow as it meanders about 35 miles west & south to dump into the Neosho River in the upper reaches of Fort Gibson Lake. Among anglers it has a reputation of being off-limits & not worth the attention because its shorelines are privately owned. But it can be sampled from some public land & at some private properties that charge just a few bucks for a day's visit.

The section above Peggs is approx. 6 miles of Class I-II paddling with nice scenery & a few good eddy lines for play boating. Put-in is at Teresita bridge **36.10655 -94.98958**. When the creek is high, there's fun surfing just below the low water bridge **36.10407 -95.09605**.

The general area is 70 miles east of Tulsa & just south of I-412 off Highway 82. The low water bridge, **36.10407 -95.09605**, at Peggs is just 55 miles from downtown Tulsa. Use 412 E to Hwy 82, then 7 miles south to 635 Rd. Go east to the "T" turn north for approx. 1.5 miles to the creek. There are campgrounds where you can arrange for day use & parking.

The stream is home to 40 fish species. Included are stonerollers, cardinal shiners, mad toms, sculpins, species of darters, & game fish. This is a place for a three-weight fly-rod & 5X tippet or ultra-light spinning rigs like Walker's with four-pound-test line & 1/16-ounce jigs. A trophy is a 13-inch smallmouth or a pudgy 12-inch spot or an angry little red-eyed rock bass. Brilliant painted gifts from Spring Creek are the reddish orange & turquoise long-eared sunfish that sport a unique broad red stripe down their foreheads being considered as a separate sub-species of long-eared sunfish.

The majority of the Creek is off-limits due to private land ownership. The water itself is public domain but the stream has long shallow stretches that require portage across a lot of private land so floating the creek is a problem.

There are some access points, said Brandon Brown, fisheries biologist with the ODOW
Accesses #1 & #2 are off to the east by themselves.

1 Old Rocky Ford State Park

36.14396 -94.90713

2 Blue Hole Public access

36.13896 -94.91615 This is where 545 goes right & 613 goes left. About a mile & half southwest of the town of Oaks, this park is no longer operating but public access remains. The upper portion is just off Oklahoma 82A at CR N545, just about a quarter to a half mile of creek is public here. Blue Hole is about a half mile down at E613 Road. Lots of swimming but fishing can be good.

Cave Spring paid access Area: Just north of Peggs, CR E620 has a gate at **36.11813 -95.11831**. Crosses the creek near Cave Spring. Look for signs in this area on properties that allow paid access. A swimming hole – one of the deepest parts of the creek along its length – this deeper, slower water is home to largemouth & spotted bass.

A low water bridge at **36.10407 -95.09605**, farther south off Hwy 82, may be worth a try.

South off Hwy 412, Exit Hwy 82 South about 1.6 miles you'll cross **Snake Creek** bridge. One mile more & you cross **Spring Creek** bridge. About 100 yards up the hill take **Ear Bob Rd**

36.14616 -95.15796 to the west, just past a spot-in-the-road called Ballou, Ear Bob crosses the creek. In 2.1 miles, you'll see a big plywood "swimming hole" sign in the trees on the left & that's where you turn right on N4390 Rd **36.12622 -95.18573** Cross the creek at the 'old twin bridges area'. You'll notice the bridge area is really new compared to the rest of the roadway. Stop on the bridge & count bass. The barbed wire & no trespassing signs keep us off of the creek. Past the bridge, at the "T" at

36.13202 -95.19193 don't turn right (ENE) on N4400 Road. Turn left (WSW) on E0610 Road.

3 Smokey Valley Camp/Swim area, operated by **Mark Foster 918-386-2640 cell 803-7839** is 0.4 to 0.6 miles down E0610 Road downstream from the bridge. \$5/day/adult. **Call ahead for details to enter.**

36.13239 -95.19894

4 Rip-rap Corps Land Access 1

36.12754 -95.20817 is about 0.6 miles WSW of the campground on the south side of N4380 Rd. Park off the north side of the road, then cross the road & the rocks to the creek where it crosses into Corps land (well upstream of Cedar Crest community). It is partially hidden behind guard rail & foliage. There seems to be two places on the south side of the road that border the creek (1/3 of a mile apart as the crow flies). Drive to the second point at

5 Rip-rap Corps Land Access 2

36.12549 -95.21311 to show everyone the set-up. Then take some fishermen to the first access point to walk down to the second point where you can park & fish up or down. The creek has deeper holes & good habitat.

If you follow the road on WSW toward Cedar Crest & turn back south on N4370 Road,

6 Spring Creek N4370 bridge It looks swampy & there is a lot of litter.

36.11890 -95.22470

7 Spring Creek Rec Area is back up on N4380. A day-use area with boat ramp on Fort Gibson Lake where Spring

36.11464 -95.24767 Creek joins the **Neosho River**. At this point Spring Creek is basically an

36.11723 -95.25642 arm of the lake. Good fishing from here back up.

8 Earbob Ferry Rec Area

36.08187 -95.24786