



FRESHWATER CAST · FRIDAY CAST · PENNSYLVANIA

Pinchot: Hot Friday Storm Edge, Cool Dry Saturday & Soft Sunday Showers

Pinchot Lake (Gifford Pinchot State Park) · Fri Oct 2 – Sun Oct 4, 2026 · bank / kayak / boat · times ET

Highs ~84° Fri → ~71° Sat → ~66° Sun (NWS PHI south band)

KRDG ~29.96 · KMDT ~29.95 inHg (Fri AM)

Pool/outflow boards thin · Swatara ~413 cfs regional context

Weekend recreational · no named trail event pulled Fri–Sun

Capital-region Pinchot gets the early-October flip: a sticky Friday high near the mid-80s with a late shower chance, then Saturday's crisp dry cool-down when nights dip into the low 50s and Conewago Day Use docks finally feel like fall. Fish Quaker Race and the rental-area banks at dawn before picnic traffic.

● WEEKEND OUTLOOK

NWS Mount Holly (PHI) grid for the southern Pennsylvania corridor covering this water this Cast window (PHI 17,94), pulled Friday morning, sets up an early-October flip: one sticky warm day, then a clean cool-down. **Friday** runs partly sunny with a high near **84°F**, west wind 0–15 mph, and a ~50% chance of rain showers after about 2 PM ET (under a tenth of an inch if they fire). Overnight low near **54°F** with a lingering shower chance before 10 PM. **Saturday** turns mostly sunny and fall-like — high near **71°F** / overnight low near **52°F**, light north wind around 5 mph, and dry. **Sunday** cools to near **66°F** under mostly cloudy skies, east wind 5–10 mph, and another ~50% shower chance after 8 AM (light). No active NWS watches or warnings at the Friday-morning pull. Nearby METARs around 7:10 AM ET Friday: **KRDG ~29.96** and **KMDT ~29.95 inHg** — a firm high.

For black bass: protect Friday's first light before the heat and afternoon shower risk, then lean into Saturday's cool, dry morning when nights in the low 50s should pull bait and fish shallower on docks, weed, and wood. Sunday's cooler, showery look favors a slower presentation and cloud-cover spinnerbait if rain stays light. Soft weekend recreational pressure expected at Gifford Pinchot SP — **no named trail tournament pulled** for Fri–Sun on Pinchot Lake.

FRIDAY OCT 2

~84°F

Low tonight ~54° · ~50% showers · W 0–15 mph

Partly sunny, then late shower chance

Sunrise **7:05 AM** · Sunset **6:47 PM ET**

Best bite: first light—~9:30 AM ET; midday shade/wood; watch the afternoon shower edge

SATURDAY OCT 3

~71°F

Low ~52° · ~0% storms · N ~5 mph

Mostly sunny · clean cool-down day

Sunrise **7:06 AM** · Sunset **6:46 PM ET**

Best bite: dawn through mid-morning on points and creek mouths; midday rock transitions 8–18 ft

SUNDAY OCT 4

~66°F

Low ~54° · ~50% showers · E 5–10 mph

Mostly cloudy with soft shower chances

Sunrise **7:07 AM** · Sunset **6:44 PM ET**

Best bite: cloudy low-light windows; slow down if rain light; protect any clear dawn pocket

BITE TIE-IN

Cool nights into the low 50s plus Saturday's dry high = morning bass on docks and weed edges where bait marks, then a midday slide as the sun climbs. Friday's heat compresses the dawn window; Sunday's clouds can stretch a spinnerbait or walking bait if showers stay soft. Keep a shad-profile soft bait ready when birds tip schools along the main lake.

● DAM & CURRENT / GENERATOR SCHEDULE CHEAT SHEET

Pinchot Lake is a DCNR Gifford Pinchot State Park reservoir with a recreation-first operating story. There is **no public hour-by-hour generator board**. Pool elevation and outflow boards were **thin** on the Friday-morning USGS pull for this water — honest thin, then failover to park notices and nearby Susquehanna tributary context. Swatara near Hershey (~413 cfs) only sketches regional runoff; Pinchot itself remains a park-pool story until DCNR posts elev.

SOURCE	LIVE PULL (FRI OCT 2 MORNING ET)	WHAT IT MEANS THIS WEEKEND
Pool elevation USGS / DCNR lake-elev board for Pinchot	Thin / not live on Friday-morning pull No instantaneous pool elev in the Friday USGS bundle	Treat shoreline docks and weed as normal early-October park pool until DCNR posts a live number. Confirm Gifford Pinchot SP ramp notices before launch if levels matter to your trailer.
Outflow / dam release Gifford Pinchot SP dam/spillway notices	Thin / not live on Friday-morning pull No public unit schedule pulled	No public hour-by-hour release board for anglers. Fish the lake like a park reservoir — docks and weed first — and fail over to DCNR notices if the spillway neighborhood looks different than last trip.
Regional context USGS 01573560 Swatara Creek near Hershey, PA	~413 cfs · gage ~1.95 ft ~6:45 AM ET Oct 2	Regional tributary context only — not Pinchot pool. Useful as a runoff sketch after showers; lean on park notices for the lake itself.

Failover before launch: DCNR Gifford Pinchot State Park page · park ramp / spillway notices · USGS 01573560 for regional context only. Dam/spillway fences stay off-limits. Soft current → bite only when release is visible; otherwise treat as still-water docks and weed.

CONEWAGO DAY USE / DOCKS

Where fishing is posted along Conewago Day Use and rental-area docks, short casts to visible wood and weed pay before afternoon picnic traffic. Keep a safe buffer from any spillway fence. Largemouth hold shade after 10 AM on Friday's heat; Saturday's cool morning favors covering the first light edge.

QUAKER RACE · MID-LAKE

Quaker Race and mid-lake weed edges fish a classic early-fall pattern: bait in the backs early, then sliding toward channel swings as the sun climbs. Friday's heat favors shade docks after 10 AM; Saturday's sun favors weed transitions; Sunday's clouds can keep fish shallower longer.

● HOW TO FISH IT — BANK / KAYAK / BOAT

BANK

Shared: Friday's warm dawn still wants a light shell for the first hour; PFDs on any wet rock after showers; dam/spillway fences stay off-limits; verify Gifford Pinchot SP fees and hours live. Start on the **Conewago Day Use** shoreline before picnic traffic, then rotate to **Quaker Race** and posted rental-area banks where docks and weed meet walking water. Saturday's cool, dry morning is the banker's best window — walk a shadowed bank with a buzzbait or spinnerbait at first light, then slow a green-pumpkin creature or soft stick along visible docks once the sun climbs. Sunday's soft shower risk favors a spinnerbait along stained pockets if rain stays light.

KAYAK

Launch **Conewago Day Use** or posted park kayak access for short paddles to dock lines and weed edges without fighting the whole main lake. On calm Saturday mornings, work the lee side with a $\frac{3}{8}$ -oz chatterbait or squarebill, then slide a small swimbait through bait showers if birds tip schools. Friday's west breeze and Sunday's east wind can chop open water — hug protected banks and give big boats the ski lanes after late morning.

BOAT

Conewago Day Use and the park marina corridor put you closest to classic fall transitions: docks, weed edges, and points where bait pulls bass. Idle the first hour on a topwater or waking bait along slicks — especially Saturday after the cool night — then slide to 6–12 ft on weed transitions with a jig or Texas-rig as the sun climbs. Confirm park ramp notices before launch; pool boards are thin this window. Weekend recreational and picnic traffic builds by late morning even without a trail blast-off, so protect the dawn idle.

● LURE BOX

TOP

Buzzbait or popper on weed edges

Walking bait (bone / chrome) over slicks

Popper at first light in calm pockets

MID

$\frac{3}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ oz chatterbait (wind / stain)

Spinnerbait (white/chart) under Sunday clouds

Squarebill along docks

3–4" swimbait on a jighead for bait schools

BOTTOM

Texas-rig creature in weed and docks

Football or hybrid jig (green pumpkin / brown)

Ned / soft stick on harder edges

Dropshot when fish suspend off points

Stain / clear match: Darker profiles after local showers; translucent smoke, shad, and green-pumpkin on clearer dock water. Tie colors to shad-class bait and crawfish first.

● BASS LIFE STAGE

Early-fall transition on Pinchot Lake. Cooler nights into the low 50s and Saturday's dry cool-down should keep **largemouth** honest around docks, weed, and wood. Fish are not on a winter deep stack yet — treat this as morning-shallow, midday-slide, with Friday's heat compressing dawn and Sunday's clouds stretching shallow activity. Skip the spawn talk; that chapter is closed.

What's on the menu: Dated hatch reports for this exact window are thin. Most-likely forage this week is **shad-class baitfish** and **young panfish** wherever birds tip you off, with **crawfish** on harder edges once the sun climbs, and **bluegill** still around shallow docks and weed. Start on shad imitators; keep a craw-colored jig ready for transitions midday.

● ALSO HOT / ALSO IN SEASON

HYBRID STRIPED BASS · MUSKIES

Pinchot's mixed-bag traffic shows when bait balls tighten — keep a swimbait ready on main-lake edges. Soft language only; confirm seasons and creel on the live PFBC page before you keep fish.

CRAPPIE · PANFISH

Crappie and panfish matter on brush and docks for mixed bags, especially low light Saturday dawn and Sunday's cloudy first hour. Same access rules as bass — legal bank and ramp water only.

CROWD / HEAVY TRAFFIC

No named Tri-State Bass Circuit, PA B.A.S.S. Nation, or PSBA trail event pulled for **Fri Oct 2 – Sun Oct 4** on Pinchot Lake. Expect normal weekend recreational and picnic traffic at Gifford Pinchot SP — earlier launch still beats the picnic crowd by late morning Saturday.

Looking ahead (next 1–3 weeks): After Sunday's soft showers, NWS leans cooler and clearer early week (Monday high near the upper 60s, night in the low 40s) — classic October mornings if nights stay crisp. No named trail blast-off pulled on this water for the next weekend at Friday pull — confirm live calendars before you plan. Next **Cast:** Monday window Mon–Wed.

PURE-GAS.ORG E0 · THIS WATER

Ethanol-free stations near the Dover / Newberrytown / Dillsburg corridor (no pump prices).

Dottie's Grocery — Dottie's Grocery, 898 E Canal Rd, Dover, PA (Ethanol-free UNBRANDED 90)

Rutter's Store #53 — Rutter's Store #53, 2215 Old Trail Road, Newberrytown, PA (Ethanol-free RUTTERS 90)

Rutters — Rutters, 5305 N Susquehanna Trail, York, PA (Ethanol-free RUTTERS 90)

Rutters — Rutters, 899 N Us Route 15, Dillsburg, PA (Ethanol-free RUTTERS 90)

Stations reused from Pure-Gas.org PA list for this water. Listings move — verify literal **E0** / ethanol-free grade at the pump. No pump prices in this **Cast**.

Sources: NWS Mount Holly (PHI) grid PHI 17,94 for the southern Pennsylvania corridor covering Pinchot · METAR KMDT · DCNR Gifford Pinchot State Park · USGS 01573560 Swatara (regional context) · Pure-Gas.org ethanol-free directory · PFBC (live regs). Confirm park notices and the forecast before launch.

Freshwater Cast · Friday **Cast** · Pinchot Lake (Gifford Pinchot State Park) · Fri Oct 2 – Sun Oct 4, 2026 · drafted Fri Oct 2 ~8:00 AM ET