

PA COUNCIL OF TROUT UNLIMITED
POLICY ON TROUT MANAGEMENT
September 2014

The Trout Management Committee is a subcommittee under the direction of the Pennsylvania Council. The committee was formed to strategize ways to protect our wild trout populations and their habitats. Our focus is to ensure that wild trout populations and their habitat stay intact. We help to restore populations that are declining or have been extirpated. With over 86,000 miles of streams in Pennsylvania it is important to protect our coldwater resources and ensure that they can provide angling opportunities for future generations. The Pennsylvania Council works with state agencies and other conservation organizations in order to develop strategies to protect our coldwater resources. State Council helps to implement best management practices and works on statewide initiatives. The Trout Management Committee has created the following guidelines in order to conserve, protect and restore Pennsylvania's coldwater fisheries. These guidelines should be followed by all chapters and by any members while they are representing Trout Unlimited.

The long-term goals of PA Trout – A State Council of Trout Unlimited – are the following:

Preserve and enhance wild trout populations, coldwater habitat and diverse angling opportunities for wild Pennsylvania salmonids.

This goal establishes a broad foundation for developing future policies, actions, and recommendations by PA Trout. In order to achieve this goal, PA Trout has adopted the following, which more explicitly sets forth the policies of this organization regarding trout fisheries throughout Pennsylvania.

Wild Trout

Protect, restore and enhance wild trout stocks and promote self-sustaining populations wherever possible.

Native Brook Trout

Brook trout are Pennsylvania's only native stream-dwelling salmonid. Protecting existing native populations requires special considerations and management policies to assure healthy and sustainable populations of this species.

Coldwater Habitat

Habitats currently providing healthy, wild trout populations should be protected from degradation. They should be restored and improved in those situations where they have been degraded. The aquatic biota of coldwater ecosystems should be conserved, adequate water quantity and quality assured, and environmentally sound land use fostered on a watershed basis.

Hatchery Trout

Hatchery-reared trout provide valuable recreational fishing for Pennsylvania anglers and provide a means to introduce our youth to trout fishing. Adult-sized hatchery trout should be stocked only in those waters in which such stocking will have no detrimental effect on existing, healthy and self-sustaining wild trout populations or the ability to restore wild trout populations.

These guidelines should apply to all stocking programs, including cooperative nurseries and private stockings within the Commonwealth. Fingerling stocking is preferable to 'put-and-take' stocking in situations where natural reproduction cannot be sustained because of limited or non-existing spawning habitat but where conditions are otherwise suitable for sustaining year-round trout populations.

Overharvest

Notwithstanding the inherent natural annual variability of wild trout populations resulting from climatic fluctuations and other environmental insults, Pennsylvania trout considers over-harvest an impediment to increasing the size and numbers of wild trout in Pennsylvania. Accordingly, trout management programs should be instituted to reduce harvest of wild trout and minimize hooking mortality and to educate anglers on “proper” catch and release technique.

Stream Assessment

Scientific management of Pennsylvania's trout waters should be based on the individual assessment and evaluation of each waterway. Knowledge of the resource and its potential is essential to a scientifically justified management program. Every stream should be evaluated, classified, and periodically reviewed to determine measures appropriate for improving the standing stocks of wild trout. This assessment should also measure the overall health of coldwater habitat and the condition of the ecosystem throughout the watershed. Staff and equipment should be enhanced to insure that these assessments can fully and adequately be conducted.