



Pennsylvania Council
Trout Unlimited
P.O. Box 5148
Bellefonte, PA 16823
www.patROUT.org

December 1, 2021

Commissioners of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
Via Ms. Yvonne Grier
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
P.O. Box 67000
Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000

Re: Stocking of hatchery trout over Class A listed wild trout streams

Honorable Commissioners,

Trout Unlimited is the largest coldwater conservation organization in Pennsylvania, representing over 16,000 members. TU would like to submit the following statement for consideration regarding the proposed exception to the policy of not stocking of hatchery fishes over streams that are listed as Class A waters.

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission is to be commended for recognizing the value of quality self-sustaining trout fisheries and acting to protect these fisheries via the Class A trout stream designation. Along with the designation comes additional protections not afforded other wild trout waters, one of which is the prohibition of stocking hatchery trout and, for streams which have been stocked either by PFBC or a private entity or both, stocking shall cease.

Freeman Run, located in Potter County, is now one of but a very small percentage of trout waters in the Commonwealth to have been designated Class A and now ranks among the best of the best wild trout waters. Studies have revealed that stocking over a wild trout population can have a negative impact on the wild trout since stocked trout compete not only for food but, more importantly, for use of prime habitat which can increase the stress level of wild trout to the point of lethality. Further, elimination of stocking over a wild trout population can result in an increase in the wild trout population as has been the case on many wild trout streams here in the Commonwealth.

While there is a provision for the PFBC to allow stocking in a recently designated Class A water, the granting of an exception should be rare with all factors considered. In the case of Freeman Run the entity having a history of stocking the stream is a cooperative trout

nursery. PFBC staff have provided alternative streams for stocking the hatchery trout which had been allocated to Freeman Run prior to this classification change. While a change in classification to Class A typically removes a trout water from consideration for future stocking the alternative options now provide for expanding trout fishing opportunities in the area. When streams/stream sections are added to the total stream miles stocked in a given area, anglers are provided with additional trout angling options and increased variety of trout angling opportunities available.

The other option presented is to add the allocation to a currently stocked trout water. This option provides the angler who chooses to fish for stocked trout with the knowledge that significant numbers of trout should be present and, therefore, the angler may have a greater expectation of success.

On the contrary, to allow an exception to continue stocking Freeman Run, located in Potter County, would deprive anglers who enjoy the experience of fishing for stocked trout additional opportunities to do so. This would seem to run counter to the goal of PFBC looking to expand these opportunities.

Further, granting an exception to continue stocking would continue to subject the wild trout population in Freeman Run to the stressors associated with the introduction of hatchery trout and may inhibit the wild trout population from realizing its full potential.

Therefore, the Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited strongly recommends that the PFBC Board of Commissioners choose to increase angling opportunities for stocked trout as outlined and at the same time protect Freeman Run's wild trout population and the valuable wild trout angling opportunities it provides. This combination truly represents the PFBC's motto "Resource First."

Trout Unlimited appreciates the opportunity to further engage with the Commissioners and PFBC on this critical issue. Should you have questions, please contact Jennifer Orr-Greene at jen.orrgreene@tu.org or (717)364-4368. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Greg Malaska
Council President
Pa. Trout Unlimited