

Strategic Action Plan

Priority Water: Delaware

Five-year Vision Statement: Over the next five years, the Delaware Priority Water will continue to persist as a stronghold for wild trout that provides outstanding angling opportunities, with adequate coldwater resources, improved habitat and water quality to benefit wild trout, and is in accord with regulations and current and planned conservation plans for development, recreation, and water use, including plans upstream of the PA/NY Priority Waters border.

Five-year Conservation Goals

1. Reconnect streams to allow for fish passage, specifically wild trout, and improved flood resilience.
2. Minimize the impacts of development on wild trout populations both commercial and residential.
3. Reduce the impacts of abandoned mine drainage (AMD) and abandoned mine lands to coldwater tributaries within the Delaware Priority Watershed.
4. Advocate for and educate the public and decision makers on the importance of wild trout fisheries in their community.
5. Ensure a sustained wild trout/cold water fishery in the Delaware Priority Waters, with regard to dams and reservoirs, to ensure that reservoir management is protective of the fishery.

Primary Conservation Strategies

1. Replace undersized stream crossings and remove dams that are barriers to aquatic organism passage (AOP) and restore stream sections impacted by problems associated with barriers. Implement projects that will provide AOP for all life stages of wild trout and accommodate flooding. Prioritize and ensure connectivity to streams that are breeding waters for wild trout.
2. Ensure development regulations are being followed and environmentally sensitive practices are implemented. Advocate where regulations are not sufficient to protect the wild trout/cold water resource. Encourage and work with municipalities and boroughs to adopt appropriate protective land use planning tools including those that protect intermittent streams and headwater areas, utilizing measurable metrics to assess progress.
3. Explore opportunities for TU to become involved in AMD treatment in the Delaware Priority Water, increase the number of AMD remediation projects. Be an advocate for private, state, and Federal funding opportunities that will lead to implementation of AMD projects.
4. Foster cooperation and collaboration among local, state, federal agency, and other watershed stakeholders. Promote and advance policies and plans (Upper Delaware River Trout Management Plan – Flexible Flow Management Program, for example).
5. Advocate for better management of dam and reservoir functionality by engaging in the reauthorization of the Flexible Flow Management Program for the NY City/Delaware Basin Reservoirs. Engage and collaborate with F.E.W Dam and support the Lehigh River annual Flow Plan and Feasibility Study.

Current Partners

- Conservation Districts: Wayne, Pike, Lackawanna, Monroe, Carbon, Luzerne, Schuylkill, Lehigh, Northampton
- Watershed groups: Brodhead Watershed Association, Equinunk Creek Watershed Alliance
- Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Drainage
- State and Federal Agencies: PA Game Commission, PA Fish and Boat Commission, PA Department of Environmental Protection, US Geological Survey, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Office of Surface Mining Control and Reclamation
- Friends of the Upper Delaware River
- East Stroudsburg University
- Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed
- Delaware River Keeper Network
- PennFuture/Our Pocono Waters
- Wildlife Management Institute
- Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Potential Partners and Affected Communities

- Audubon Society
- Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River (NPS)
- Delaware Water Gap (NPS)
- The Nature Conservancy
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Delaware State Forest
- American Rivers
- National Park Conservation Association
- Delaware Highlands Conservancy
- Lackawaxen River Conservancy
- Wildlands Conservancy

Decisionmakers

- PA Fish and Boat Commission
- National Park Service
- PA DEP
- PA Game Commission
- County Planning Departments
- Conservation Districts
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Delaware River Basin Commission

TU Chapters Directly Involved in Plan Development and Implementation

- Lackawanna Valley
- Western Pocono
- Schuylkill County
- Brodhead
- Pike Wayne
- Forks of the Delaware
- Hokendauqua
- Monocacy
- Shehawken