



PA COUNCIL OF TROUT UNLIMITED P9 POLICY ON TROUT MANAGEMENT SEPTEMBER 2007

Pennsylvania's 10,000 plus Trout Unlimited members regard trout, salmon, and their habitats as their badge of identification. Their interests are broad enough to embrace all aspects of aquatic ecosystems: water quality, water quantity, acid precipitation, influences of forestry and agricultural practices, point and non-point sources of pollution, wetlands, riparian corridors, land use and management practices, stocking policy, regulations to restore wild trout populations and all other related factors which affect salmonid populations and the waters they inhabit.

For these reasons, the long-term goal of PA Trout – A State Council of Trout Unlimited – is the following:

Preserve and enhance wild trout populations, coldwater habitat and diverse recreational angling opportunity 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.

Policy #1 - Wild Trout

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

Policy #2 - 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.

Policy #3 - 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.

Policy #4 - Hatchery Trout

Hatchery-reared trout provide valuable recreational fishing for Pennsylvania anglers. Adult sized hatchery trout should be stocked only in those waters in which such stocking will have no detrimental effect on existing wild trout populations or the ability to restore wild trout populations. Streams should be stocked with hatchery trout only if it has been determined that such streams are unable to support self-sustaining 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.

Policy #5 – 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.

Policy #6 - 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.

Policy #7 - Stream Access

Access to trout waters on both public and private property is necessary for the public to enjoy trout fishing and central to the management of trout water throughout Pennsylvania. Trout management, watershed improvements, and land conservation policies should encourage both acquiring public lands and fostering partnerships with landowners, local governments, conservation organizations and others to promote increased public access to designated trout waters.