

Report of the Sub-Committee on Trout Streams
of the Forest Game Committee
Southeastern Section of the Wildlife Society
Clearwater, Florida
1964

A meeting of the Sub-Committee was held during the period September 14-16, 1964 with all members attending. The meeting included field trips in Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee to observe and compare damage to streams in recognized problem areas with relatively undamaged ones.

Our definition of a trout stream is a flowing, dynamic, stream system, including all tributaries, which sustains a resident population of trout within its boundaries and is limited at the downstream end only by temperatures exceeding the lethal limits of any trout species. Your Sub-Committee believes that trout streams in the southern Appalachian Mountains represent a unique and non-renewable resource of tremendous value within the overall forest complex and that encroachment by various "special use" interests appears to be gaining ground at an alarming rate. The Sub-Committee feels it is past time for an evaluation of these streams with respect to their worth as a part of the overall forest complex and as a recreation resource in their own right. And we charge that the recreation benefits provided by these streams must be considered at the top of the ladder in any enumeration of quality recreation.

Due to (we hope) a gross underestimate of the recreational value of this resource, the headlong plunge of some agencies to spread their programs of impoundments and access for various purposes, along with special interest users, is gobbling up and destroying trout water at an alarming rate. If there is to be hope of preserving this valuable resource, the following problems must be resolved. First are the physical problems including both new and old surface disturbances within the watershed. Those having the most detrimental effect are agriculture, road building, logging, mining, fire, vegetal changes, grazing, construction of impoundments and channelization, and development and settlement. Secondly, biochemical problems associated with management including pollution, both organic and inorganic, intrusion of undesirable fish species and low nutrient levels in the water (perhaps an indictment of past watershed management), beg for attention. Resource use problems must also be considered including examination of fishing pressure imbalance, pressure from commercial interests, whether or not there is a need for access, and an assessment of the quality of recreation derived from use of these streams, as well as the amount of use now and in the future.

In answer to these problems, the Committee recommends a program of inventory and research designed to gain recognition of the value of this trout stream resource by administrators. If we are to

protect what remains, a survey must be conducted to inventory all such streams, within the Section boundary, on the basis of the following five categories:

1. Number of miles of tributaries or feeder streams which contribute flow to mainstem streams.
2. Number of miles of mainstem streams in which native reared fish are found.
3. Number of miles of catch-out waters where natural production may not occur but where physical characteristics are such that the stream is utilized in the state fisheries program for a put-and-take fishery.
4. Number of square miles of watershed encompassing these trout streams by type of ownership.
5. An estimate of present fishing pressure and the growth increment of this pressure during the last ten years.

Once compiled, these data will provide reliable information on the type and size of the resource and the problem--both of these are now lacking.

The Committee further recommends that member organizations give immediate attention to the following needs with special consideration to research needed for effective, balanced administration of this resource.

1. The development of methods to determine the economic and esthetic contributions of trout streams.

2. The determination of minimum standards for highways to satisfy scenic and other recreational travel requirements.
3. Encourage studies to develop methods of minimizing disturbances during logging operations, including, but not limited to, cutting methods and road placement. Support research of silvical systems designed to reduce soil water losses.
4. Review and re-evaluate special interest uses on public lands, particularly those associated with grazing, mining, and development and settlement.
5. Encourage life history studies on trout and associated fish species in these streams.
6. Improve communication among people presently managing this resource by stepping up publications, sponsoring symposiums, and providing wider distribution of existing and future unpublished progress reports.

Mr. Chairman, your Sub-Committee has attempted to identify the main problems and it offers a program which we are certain can lead to at least partial solution--that is the protection and restoration of this unique resource. If you desire, this Sub-Committee can be continuing, and would strive to implement those items of need outlined in this report.

Thomas H. Ripley
Claude E. Hastings
Price Wilkins
Charles E. Lane, Jr., Chairman