

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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July 1, 1992 (706) 947-3112

MEMORANDUM

TO: Trout Committee Members

FROM: Jeff Durniak, Chairman *JD*

SUBJECT: 1992 Meeting Minutes

The 1992 AFS Southern Division Trout Committee Meeting was held on June 22 at Penn State University, State College, PA, with 16 Committee members, three proxies, and seven guests in attendance. We had an informative round table discussion of ongoing agency projects, a spirited debate of old business issues, and a productive forum on items of new business. Members then stayed for a three-day East Coast Trout Management and Culture Workshop hosted by Mr. Marty Marcinko of the PA Fish and Boat Commission and Dr. Dean Arnold of Penn State University. Highlights of our committee meeting follow below.

ROUND TABLE

Kentucky (Doug Stephens): Of eight streams stocked with fingerling browns, only one has since maintained a naturally reproducing population. Stocking of adult browns has begun and will be evaluated during the next 2-3 years. The Fish and Game Commission voted to reduce the brown trout creel limit to a maximum of three fish within the eight trout aggregate limit. A summary of the Kentucky trout stream classification system and management program is available from Doug, I believe.

Daniel Boone National Forest (Vicki Bishop): The USFS has continued a close working relationship with the state wildlife agency to produce a forest-wide trout management plan and to continue stream survey and monitoring efforts.

Georgia (Durniak and Biagi): Fish community sampling was begun during fall 1991 in 12 wild trout streams in an effort to establish a long-term monitoring program. Environmental protection efforts have continued where trout streams are threatened by warming from ponds and by sedimentation from development. John Biagi is about to complete a report on the effects of three fingerling brown trout stocking rates (50, 100, 150K) on trout populations and angler success in the Lake Lanier tailwater.

West Virginia (Don Phares): Don reported little success in establishing reproducing brown trout populations in that state. Spencer Turner said that water temps above 53F during egg incubation limited brown reproduction in Missouri and might do the same in this region.

Delayed harvest reg's were tried with very little success on two streams. Don thought that his anglers preferred general regulation streams.

A drum liming operation on a tributary brought the Cranberry River pH up 0.2 units and allowed recolonization by several fish species. A river liming drum system should be operational this fall.

A Wild and Scenic River legislative proposal has caused a rift between WV DNR and several environmental groups. The agency opposes the initiative because it would severely limit the ability of DNR to actively manage river resources.

Don Gasper is planning to reclaim, lime, and restock a stream with native brook trout, and may implement restrictive regulations to protect the population.

West Virginia Coop Unit (Dr. Sue Perry): The unit is working with DNR on a stream liming project and a smallmouth bass habitat study. Two PhD students are conducting brook trout bioenergetics and embryo/larval development studies that factor in temperature and pH effects.

North Carolina (Jim Borawa for Chris Goudreau): Delayed harvest (Mar-June) regulations were tried on four streams and were a big success with local anglers. Catch rates were 4-6 fish/hr.

The agency is in its third year of its wild trout stream monitoring program and second year of a wild trout feeding program. Jim reports a small response of browns to feeding so far, but a much better response of rainbows. Rainbow size structure has shifted and biomass has tripled. A creel survey is planned next year.

Arkansas (John Stark): Newcomer Stark bragged to us about the new world record brown (40 lb 4 oz?) from the Little Red River. John said that discussions (battles?) over minimum flows in tailwaters are continuing. He may try some IFIM analysis next year. The agency is also discussing with the COE improvement of tailwater DO's, since oxygen levels of 0.5-1.5 mg/l are seen for 5-6 miles below some dams. John is also considering large-scale habitat improvement and catch-and-release reg's to further improve his fisheries.

Missouri (Spence Turner): Another trophy brown trout stream (15 inch limit, artificial lures, 3 fish creel) and another wild rainbow trout stream (18 inch limit, artificials, 3 fish) have been added to the list. A new state record brown (23 lb) was taken from Lake Taneycomo. Spence passed out copies of a smallmouth bass literature review, and also offered to host any upcoming Trout Committee meeting.

US Fish and Wildlife Service (Dan Wilson): Dan, who is Walhalla (SC) Hatchery Manager, has replaced Roger Schulz on the Committee. He reported that Erwin and White Sulphur Springs hatcheries should be back on line next year. Dan encouraged us to listen to Harold Kincaid's talk the next day on the development of a trout strain database system.

South Carolina (Dan Rankin for Randy Geddings): New trophy trout regulations (15 inch min size, up from 12 inches) are being evaluated on Lake Jocassee, where trout creel returns are still down. Dan will also look at spatial stocking patterns to see if some fish are migrating up rivers and not returning to the reservoir.

Lake Murray tailwater temperatures are low enough for trout, but DO's are low. Plans are to work on correcting that problem.

Greenville water system watershed streams are being surveyed. Much of the watershed is in old growth and virgin timber and streams sampled so far have good trout populations (good data from some unfished populations would be very interesting to many of us, Dan!). No fishing is presently allowed, but SCWMRD may try to work with the property owner to open the streams to public fishing.

Private Consultant John Boaze: Acid rain appears to be an increasing problem with NC trout growers. The Cherokee Reservation hatchery has installed a pH alarm system which automatically pumps sodium hydroxide into hatchery waters when acid events are detected.

John has part-time and seasonal job openings available (704-497-6505). He also offered to host a Committee meeting.

Maryland (Ken Pavol for Bob Bachman): Maryland tailwater fisheries continue to improve. Catch-and-release reg's are planned for the Yaugheheny (sp?) River. Natural reproduction of brown trout has been found in the North Branch Potomac tailwater, reclaimed from acid mine drainage by construction of a reservoir. A very strong brown year class was seen in the Savage. Ken plans to monitor the Savage to see whether those browns or the always abundant brook trout end up dominating that year class down the road. The Gunpowder tailwater has spawning rainbows and is supplemented with 5 inch brown trout.

Ken reminded us of his workshop paper on hooking mortality and of Mike Dean's paper on net pen culture (both in your Proceedings).

Wisconsin (Bob Hunt): State trout reg's were changed in 1990 to very biologically oriented standards, allowing area managers to manage by species and by individual waters. Law enforcement staff initially thought the reg's were too complicated, but went along with the change. Despite the complexity, the reg's have received very strong public support. The 90-91 drought forced closure of half the state's trout streams, so 92 will be the first good chance at evaluating the change. Big brook trout have been seen, and Bob attributes their abundance to a lack of fishing mortality due to stream closures.

Spence Turner asked Bob about the new school of thought which prefers to let nature heal itself (fluvial geomorphology approach). Bob thought that it was good to have a multidisciplinary approach to stream rehabilitation or enhancement, but thought that nature may take too long to cure some ills. A common midwestern problem is lack of instream cover and wide channels due to old logging. There is too much proof that many biologists' stream improvement efforts have worked, so that approach should not be abandoned.

The Committee was truly fortunate to once again hear from Bob, whose work has benefitted many of us. He planned to retire two weeks after the Pennsylvania conference. Best wishes are extended to him for an enjoyable and productive "new career" that will hopefully bring him around even more often.

Duke Power (Duane Harrell): That agency is assisting North and South Carolina wildlife agencies with reservoir and stream sampling. Monitoring is continuing on the Green River (SC?), where a penstock

collapse led to a sediment "hit" there five years ago. Howard Creek appears to be recovering quicker than expected from sedimentation caused by the Bad Creek pumped-storage construction project. The stream is flushing well and rainbow reproduction has once again been found. Durniak encouraged that agency to make sure the information is published somewhere rather than ending up in a thick internal report.

Great Smoky Mtns. National Park (Steve Moore): Long-term stream monitoring has continued, thanks to a few more bucks in the budget. Brook trout range monitoring also continues. New studies for this year include assessing acid rain impacts on headwater brook trout streams and horse trail impacts on trout streams.

Tennessee (Jim Habera and Rick Bivens): A newly printed FY91 report summarizes work to date on quantitative trout stream sampling, establishment of long-term monitoring stations, and electrophoretic analyses of wild brook trout. Work will continue in 92.

Virginia Tech Experiment Station (Andy Dolloff): Ongoing and newly initiated studies include: Shenandoah NP study with Univ. of VA on acid rain effects on brook trout and dace, large woody debris addition to Jefferson NF streams, the King Creek (SC) fish migration study (see Proceedings), an angler creel survey on the Little River (Smokies NP), project with Clemson Univ. on beaver impacts to trout stream, Hurricane Hugo impact study (being published), and a basin survey how-to handbook. Dr. Dennis Lemley (aquatic invertebrate specialist) has been added to staff to study sediment impacts, among other duties.

George Washington National Forest (Mark Hudy): Mark spent considerable time assisting with development of a new Forest Plan. He is also looking into the EPA biological assessment methods that use macroinvertebrates.

Virginia (Larry Mohn): McConaughy rainbows have established a strong river run up from Gathright Reservoir. The saga of public access to the tailwater continues, as test cases on trespassing are about to come to court.

OLD BUSINESS

Jeff Durniak reported that sales of the 1988 Brown Trout Workshop Proceedings were about 170 copies. A balance of about \$1600 was in the bank after reimbursement of \$250 to NC Trout Unlimited for publishing costs.

Steve Moore handed out copies of a cleaned-up draft of the standardized trout stream sampling (voluntary) guidelines. Steve and Jim Habera plan to edit a few typos and update the references before giving us the finished product shortly. Of the 17 members responding to my February mail ballot, all voted to support the draft as written or after some minor revision. Appreciation was extended to working group of Moore, Habera, Goudreau, Bivens, and Scott who developed the document.

Steve also reported on brook trout genetics analyses in the Southern Appalachians. Dr. Gary McCracken (Univ Tenn) has observed

alleged pure southern strain, northern strain, and hybrid brook trout in his samples from the Smokies and from northern hatcheries. Dr Rex Dunham (Auburn Univ) is analyzing ten Georgia populations. McCracken has proposed to sample more populations between VA and GA/SC and develop a regional assessment, working with Dunham and others with brook trout genetics data. The proposal has gone to NPS and maybe the USFS for funding consideration.

A spirited and healthy discussion then ensued over the draft resolution on US Forest Service timber harvest alternatives. Thanks to Seehorn and Gasper for giving the Committee much needed information on the issue, and to Dolloff, Bachman, and Phares for their commentary. After debate, the motion to support the resolution which encourages the Forest Service to retain all timber management alternatives, including clearcutting, which are considered after site-specific analysis of least adverse impacts to aquatic systems, was passed by a vote of 19-0. The Committee agreed to work as cosponsor with the Warmwater Streams Committee on developing a better draft. Doug Stephens volunteered to represent the Trout Committee at the July 22 WWS Committee meeting in Lexington, KY for that purpose.

NEW BUSINESS

Durniak reported that the relationship with SDAFS EXCOM was somewhat strained, and attributed most of the problem to lack of better communication by Durniak to EXCOM. Duane Harrell read a letter from Larry Olmstead citing Larry's ideas for continuing productivity of SDAFS. Durniak proposed the opportunity/need to coordinate Trout Committee meeting with SDAFS meeting.

Lively discussion then ensued, from which emerged two factions. One group thought that holding concurrent meetings with SDAFS was the best approach, while a stronger majority liked things the way they were. The recent Committee record of activities was cited as evidence of meeting Committee goals, so "if it wasn't broke, don't fix it." Another concern was over travel limitations if our meeting was held with EXCOM, since Trout Committee members from state agencies would have to compete with other committee members for the few out-of-state travel slots allowed by state agency administrators. Committee supported idea of spring 1993 meeting in late May/early June in Cherokee, NC (John Boaze hosting), and probable spring 1994 meeting in Missouri (Spence Turner hosting).

Hoping to meet needs of both EXCOM and Committee, Durniak then handed out newly drafted Committee procedures and a proposal to create a Chair-elect position. Committee was charged with returning comments on draft procedures to Durniak by August 1. Committee expanded officer slate further to include Secretary/Treasurer. Each officer was to serve one-year term before moving up to next office (Sec/Treas > Chair-elect > Chair), with a new Sec/Treasurer elected each year. Committee elected Dolloff, Borawa, and Moore as Sec/Treasurer, Chair-elect, and Chair, respectively, and the meeting was then adjourned.