

Minutes of the AFS Southern Division Trout Committee Meeting
April 7-8, 2003
Unicoi State Park, Georgia

The 2003 meeting of the American Fisheries Society, Southern Division Trout Committee convened at 9:00 a.m. on April 7. A quorum of 14 members were present. Committee members present : Doug Besler (NC) , John Boaze (NC) , Sheryl Bryan (USFS), Jeff Durniak (GA), Frank Fiss (TN), Jim Habera (TN), Lee Keefer (GA), Jerry Kosa (USFWS), Mike Kruse (MO), Matt Kulp (GSMNP), Larry Mohn (VA), Steve Moore (GSMNP), Steve Reeser (VA), Kim Ryals (TU), Monte Seehorn (GA). Additional meeting attendees: Mallory Martin (NC), Wes Cornelison (WCU), Mitzi Cole (USFS), Mike Skeakler, Peter Gealbreath (WCU), Tim King (USGS)

Old Business:

Mike Kruse distributed the 2002 meeting minutes and made a motion to approve the 2002 meeting minutes. Steve Moore seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

Matt Kulp (treasurer) read the treasurer's report and submitted a copy to the chair-elect. The SD Trout Committee's account balance as of 3/17/03 was \$5,559.51.

Jim Habera informed the committee that to date, he had not received many comments on the Southern Appalachian Brook Trout Position Statement paper. The paper has been the primary work of Jim Habera and Steve Moore. Other members of the committee have also contributed to the paper. The position statement has been endorsed by the state fish and wildlife agencies of TN, NC, and by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. It was assumed that the state fish and wildlife agencies of VA and GA and the National Park Service will also endorse the document.

Jim Habera indicated that the plan was to publish the paper in *Fisheries* and asked for final comments and reviews by May 1, 2003. Jim stated that Fisheries asked for additional reviewers. Possible reviewers were discussed by the committee.

Jim Habera asked Sheryl Bryan for an estimate (%) of Southern Appalachian Brook Trout found on National Forest in North Carolina out of the total S. A. Brook Trout in NC. Sheryl said she would get Jim the data ASAP.

The USFWS offered to fund the publication of the Southern Appalachian Brook Trout Position Paper. The cost was estimated to be up to \$1,200 depending on if the paper was included in one of the color issues of Fisheries.

Jeff Durniak made a motion to set aside \$1,200 from the SD Trout Committee account to pay for the publication as a "back-up" if needed. Lee Keefer seconded the motion and the motion was passed.

Jeff Durniak made a motion to consider authorship of the SA Brook Trout paper to Jim Habera and Steve Moore. Mike Kruse seconded the motion.....discussion.....

Jim Habera suggested to have the SD Trout Committee be the author of the paper.

Steve Moore asked how the paper should be cited using the SD Trout Committee as the author.

Mallory Martin explained how it could be done.

Steve Moore suggested asking the editors of Fisheries to see how they wanted the paper cited.

Matt Kulp stated that committee authorship would give the paper additional credibility.

Mike Kruse made a motion to see how Fisheries suggests to cite the paper and follow their recommendations. Larry Mohn seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Frank Fiss contacted the Computer Users Section of AFS and inquired about population estimator software that was available.

Matt Kulp gave an update from the sub-committee working on updating the MicroFish software. The most updated version of MicroFish is a DOS based program.The author of MicroFish (Jack Van Deventer)was contacted and verbally agreed to upgrade the program into a Windows version. The sub-committee then began floating possible application ideas of the “new” version to other fisheries biologists

Matt Kulp indicated that he received an e-mail from Jack Van Deventer explaining that after further thought the software upgrade will require funding to develop. The committee decided to have Matt discuss \$\$ with Mr. Van Deventer and report back to the sub-committee working on the project. The sub-committee consists of:Matt Kulp, Doug Besler, John Odenkirk, Frank Fiss, Bart Carter, and Jim Habera.

Matt Kulp gave a short Power Point presentation of what the program would look like and some possible applications.

Standardized Sampling Guidelines

Jim Habera put together a WORD version of the latest version of the SD Trout Committee Standardized Sampling Guidelines (1991), and posted it on the Listserver for review. Jim said he has received few comments. There was discussion among the committee regarding the need for updating the sampling guidelines.

Mike Kruse made a motion to have a sub-committee work on updating the standardized sampling guidelines. Steve Reeser seconded the motion and the motion was approved

The sub-committee will be comprised of a representative from TN,NC,VA,GA, GSMNP, and Jim Habera will chair the committee.

10:30 a.m.Break.....

New Business 10:40 a.m.

Listserver

Jim Habera , Steve Reeser, Mike Kruse, and Larry Mohn indicated there were problems with committee members utilizing the listserver.

The question was posed of whether a listserver was needed for committee communication. The committee felt that since the membership was under 40 individuals and that e-mail software has improved, that there was no need for a listserver.

Steve Reeser made a motion to remove the listserver and use an e-mail list of current SD Trout Committee members that would be maintained by the Committee chair, as the means of communication among Committee members. Jim Habera seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

The Listserver Chair position will be abolished and the section in the SD Trout Committee Summary of Procedures referring to the Listserver Chair and duties will be removed from the Summary procedures. An updated version of the summary of procedures will be submitted to the committee by the committee chair at the 2004 meeting.

Membership

Mike Kruse read the membership section of the SD Trout Committee Summary of Procedures.

Steve Reeser asked Larry Mohn to give a brief history of the formation of the SD Trout Committee.

Larry Mohn said that the SD Trout Committee was formed by the directors of state fish and wildlife agencies that were members of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Each SEAFWA member appointed one representative. Also the USFS was asked to participate. Sometime in the 1980's the Southern Division of the American Fisheries Society adopted the committee.

Jim Habera stated that he did not think special interest groups should be allowed on the committee.

Jeff Durniak thought we needed to discuss the issue and mentioned the history of the SD Trout Committee and Trout Unlimited.

Mike Kruse felt that having Trout Unlimited as a member of the committee would be an advantage to the committee.

Monte Seehorn gave some examples of his experiences involving TU and the USFS.

Lee Keefer said that allowing a TU member on the committee could be a positive move.

Frank Fiss indicated that if a TU member is on the committee that other committee members would not feel free to express their views/opinions as they have in the past.

Steve Moore stated that everyone on the committee has had positive and negative dealings with TU at one time or another. We probably should have TU representation on the Committee, but only as a guest or ex-officio status.

Steve Reeser thought the committee needed to see what the AFS by-laws stated concerning committee membership.

Mallory Martin said there is a constitutional consultant in AFS that can answer the membership question.

John Boaze said originally each member had to show a letter of appointment to the committee (1991)

Jeff Durniak said he created the summary of procedures for the committee in 1991, but is not sure if AFS every accepted the document.

Matt Kulp stated that he thought open communication is great, that the membership procedures are complicated, and that we need to be careful of who we allow on the committee.

Jim Habera made a motion: Any member of the Trout Committee that lists their organizational affiliation, as listed on the roster, as Trout Unlimited , their membership shall be null and void. Matt Kulp seconded the motion.....the vote

In-favor 5
Opposed 6
Abstained 3

The motion failed.

Mike Kruse made a motion: The SD Trout Committee Summary of Procedures should be reviewed by the parent society's constitutional consultant, and the comments should be

brought back to the committee by the committee chair at the next meeting of the committee. Steve Reeser seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Larry Mohn made a motion: Current committee members that use TU as their organizational affiliation on the committee roster, have a trial membership of one year from this date (4-7-03), pending the constitutional review of our summary of procedures by the parent society. John Boaze seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Frank Fiss brought up the subject of how to get more university participation in the trout committee. Some discussion.....

Election of Officers

Steve Reeser nominated Doug Besler as chair-elect.....Doug accepted and was approved by the committee.

Officers as of 4-9-03:

Steve Reeser , chair
Matt Kulp , treasurer
Doug Besler , chair-elect/secretary
Mike Kruse, past-chair

Mike Kruse posed the question of what number of committee members represents a quorum. Larry Mohn indicated that he would investigate and report back to the committee chair.

East Coast Trout Workshop

Larry Mohn informed the group that the next East Coast Trout Management and Culture Workshop is being planned for June 2005. Kyle Hartman of West Virginia University has offered to host the meeting at West Virginia University. The SD Trout Committee will be greatly involved in putting the workshop together. Jarrad Kosa mentioned that there has been discussion of the USFWS hosting a brook trout symposium in 2004. The committee agreed that the two meetings should be combined if possible. Larry Mohn will be the committee's main representative working on the workshop.

Wild Trout VIII

Steve Moore informed the committee that Wild Trout VIII is planned for September 2004 in Yellowstone National Park. Steve is on the program committee and stated that program topics for the 2004 meeting are focusing on: watershed protection, environmental regulation, communications, and trout fisheries in the media.

Roundtable Discussion

John Boaze(Fish and Wildlife Associates)

John informed the committee of what appears to be natural reproduction of brown trout in a small private reservoir in North Carolina

Jim Habera (Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency)

Wild Trout

1. Creel

Finally, a stratified roving creel (with non-uniform day-period probabilities) is underway on 5 of TN's best wild trout streams: Beaverdam Creek, Laurel Creek and Doe Creek (Johnson Co.) and Stony Creek and Doe River (Carter Co.). Will run from January 1 through December 31 2003.

Will ask if anglers favor stocking hatchery fish in these wild trout stream (we do in all of them), if they favor the current regs. on that stream, and if they belong to a fishing or fish conservation org.

Prelim. results: only 7 wild trout harvested through March (more hornyheads); most early effort is for stocked fish.

2. Otoliths

Collected scale and otolith samples from over 600 wild rainbow trout representing 11 streams throughout east TN during 2002. Sample includes ~10 YOY per stream for verification purposes.

Also have otolith and scale samples from known-age fish from several of these streams.

Samples are being aged (otoliths sectioned) by a grad. student at UT Knoxville as part of an M.S. project directed by Dr. Richard Strange.

Will compare and validate both structures and obtain some better age/growth/mortality data

3. Drought Effects on Wild Trout Pops.

East TN continued to be in a drought through the summer of 2002 (goes back to the summer of 1998). Flows in some of our monitoring streams were the lowest I've ever seen/recorded.

In fact, flows were so low in some cases that our abundance estimates were artificially inflated because of the corresponding surface area reductions (up to 35%).

Wild trout abundances at several monitoring stations in 2002 were at the lowest levels we've seen since sampling began 10-12 years ago.

Reproduction has generally been good during this period, but recruitment (and probably growth too) is off, thus the abundance of larger fish (9" and larger) is particularly low now.

4. Regulations

No regulation changes this year that affect wild trout fisheries.

5. TARP

New Tennessee Angler Recognition Program (TARP) –provides certificates for anglers who catch large fish in TN waters beginning in 2003.

6. Wild Trout map

Draft/prototype wild trout map shown—will highlight better wild trout fisheries in TN.

7. Annual Report / Website

2002 Annual Trout Fisheries report is complete (distributed some copies; also available on our Region IV streams website (can be reached via a link from tnwildlife.org).

Mike Kruse (Missouri Department of Conservation)

Trout Plan

Over the past 18 months, the Department of Conservation has been developing a strategic plan to guide the state trout program over the next decade. Staff have drafted and approved a plan that will be sent out for public review over the next 6 weeks. A series of 3 focus group meetings are planned. Anglers representing a variety of geographic areas, fishing methods, and angling group affiliations have been invited to attend these meetings to critique the current draft. After the public comment period, staff will make appropriate changes, and present the document for Conservation Commission approval and eventual implementation.

Lake Taneycomo Study

A 10-year study of the Lake Taneycomo trout fishery was completed in December 2002. The final report is in preparation, but it will eventually describe the changes that have occurred to the rainbow and brown trout fisheries of this tailwater trout fishery during the period 1993 through 2002. Data to be summarized in this report come from annual electrofishing surveys, annual invertebrate surveys and an angler survey that was conducted continuously from April 1993 through December 2002. Special fishing regulations placed on a 3-mile segment of the upper tailwater have improved the density and size structure of rainbow trout. After the regulation change anglers caught more and larger rainbow trout, expended equal or greater amounts of fishing effort and indicated greater satisfaction with their fishing success. Despite the presence of a slot length limit that allowed the harvest of rainbow trout less than 12 inches or greater than 20 inches, anglers released nearly all the trout they caught in the special regulation area. Prior to the regulation change, anglers fishing upper Lake Taneycomo primarily fished with either bait or lures, with fly fishing a minority. After the regulation change, bait fishing was not allowed and fly fishing predominated, while about a third of the anglers fished with artificial lures. About 63 percent of Lake Taneycomo's anglers reside in Missouri; an additional 31 percent reside in 8 surrounding states of the Midwest and mid-south. About a third of the anglers reside in local southwest Missouri counties with the remainder being non-local anglers.

Trout Habitat Study

A two year study of trout habitat in Missouri Ozark streams began in July 2002. The 3 main objectives are:

Measure water temperature of current or potential trout management areas, assess the length of coldwater habitat in a given stream, and evaluate the relative thermal suitability of coldwater streams for meeting regional and statewide trout management objectives
Using or modifying existing stream habitat assessment techniques and salmonid habitat suitability information, conduct a quantitative assessment of physical habitat quantity and quality within Missouri's coldwater streams.

Assess applicability of various trout management options (wild trout, put-and-take, put-grow-and-take or delayed harvest) for each stream section to allow managers to efficiently allocate the state's coldwater habitat and MDC resources among a diversity of fisheries.

First year activities on this project included installation of 101 automatic temperature recording devices in 39 different streams. In each location, hourly temperature measurements were made for the period July 1 through September 15. Water temperatures were also measured on 13 of these streams during the period November 1 through April 1 to coincide with spawning and egg incubation periods for brown and rainbow trout. Four streams were selected for a pilot study of physical habitat quality in the fall of 2002. Plans for 2003 include continued water temperature monitoring, analysis of physical habitat data from the pilot study and expanding or modifying the study of physical habitat.

Otters

Controversies regarding otter depredation on sport fish continue. Because of angler complaints, verified examples of depredation on fish in ponds, hatcheries and some small streams, Department efforts to address this problem have accelerated. A publication on otter damage control has been developed to assist landowners with otter depredation problems. Otter trapping seasons have been lengthened and the season limits removed over a large portion of the Ozarks. A research study to examine fish responses to otter removal from a small stream watershed is also planned. A variety of public expectations regarding otters complicates management of this species and its effect on other resources.

Department Reorganization

In August of 2002, Director John Hoskins announced the formation of a new Science Division within the Missouri Department of Conservation. This Division, eventually named "Resource Science" includes all research positions formally contained within Fisheries, Wildlife and Forestry Divisions and also includes the former Natural History Division. Resource Science staff will be divided among various field locations and a Resource Science Center in the former Conservation Research Center in Columbia.

Doug Besler (North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission)

Brook Trout Genetics

Microfish 3.0 - One of the action items from the last meeting was to look for other computer software for three-pass estimates. I requested the help of AFS's computer users section and found that there was little out there that Matt hadn't already tried. Thanks! to Matt Kulp for setting up the new plan to work with Van Deventer.

New reports available – hand out bibliography and mention website. www.tnwildlife.org under fisheries\tailwater trout.

Latest is attitude survey, and creel survey results from Watauga and South Holston and shortly there will be an economic report.

Management plan is available for the Clinch River TW. Watauga, South Holston, and Caney Fork might be finished by December 2003. Plans give a pretty good summary of our fisheries so you might be interested in seeing them.

Genetics study - Contract with John Eppifanio of Illinois Natural History Survey to determine which strains are contributing to natural reproduction of browns in the South Holston and Watauga, and rainbows in the Clinch. He determined that our hatchery strains can be differentiated and then determined which strains were contributing to wild populations. Only one strain of browns, Plymouth Rock, was stocked and it was similar to the fish reproducing in South Holston and Watauga. Wild rainbows in the Clinch River were comprised of Kamloop (22%), EED (eagle lake x Erwin cross) (24%), fish lake (27%), eagle lake (9%). Whereas, Arlee (0%), ten sleep (2%), Shasta (6%), and Erwin (3%) strains made little contribution.

Winter trout program has spread to 12 locations in urban areas, compared to 5 last year. This program is limited by the availability of fish and manpower. Public demand appears insatiable. The stockings are advertised by press releases and on the website. After that it quickly spreads through these heavily populated areas. Stockings range from 1000 to 3500 fish per month, December through March, to one-time stockings in December or January.

Upcoming research overview - TTU creel on Caney Fork River, growth and survival of browns over time in four tailwaters. Evaluation of 1-inch trout stockings using OTC. USCOE hired Gary Houser to model instream flows in Caney Fork in help us pick a decent minimum flow, however there are no plans to improve DO on table.

Tailwater Overview - We now have 5-7 years of annual spring CPUE data on most of our tailwaters. We are starting to feel more comfortable developing management plans for these fisheries. Too soon to tell how our 16-22 inch slot on the South Holston is working; right now we are hoping for a successful recruitment of one year class to make the difference. Watauga is recovering nicely from the fish kill in 2000, fishing pressure is up 50% since 5 years ago.

Fish Pro – We are contracting Fish Pro to evaluate our cold water hatcheries. They will evaluate water discharge, water supply, and maintenance at each hatchery. The goal is to have a prioritized list of what maintenance we need to do and provide an estimated cost. We will also be evaluating our ability to meet current demand for trout statewide.

Trout plan – We are going to work on a statewide trout plan in the upcoming year to address management of all trout fisheries: wild trout, stocked streams, urban trout, tailwaters, and reservoirs. If your state has a general trout plan I would like copy for ideas. I am especially interested in any comments on how effective different aspects of your plan and strategies have been.

Jarrad Kosa (United States Fish and Wildlife Service)

The new Director Steve Williams has been helpful in revitalizing the Fisheries Program. The USFWS plans to increase the emphasis on recreational fisheries which was lost over the past decade. The USFWS also has a new document which describes the future role of the Fisheries Program. The budget for the Fisheries Program was increased this past year with \$8 million going towards the Hatchery Division's maintenance backlog. The Fisheries Program received a \$1.5 million appropriation for culvert removals targeted specifically at restoring salmonid habitat. We expect funding opportunities directed towards habitat restoration to continue, therefore we are working to develop potential projects in our funding needs database. The Fisheries Program continues to be interested in developing a regional partnership to restore southern Appalachian brook trout habitat. Further details are in the draft partnership proposal that was distributed at the meeting. We will try to hold a teleconference of potential partners in the near future if spring field schedules permit it.

Larry Mohn (Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries)

Current budget cuts have reduced our agencies workforce by 35%. Essentially we lost all of our part-time hourly employees.

Other budget items include the proposed closing of two fish hatcheries (one warm-water and one cold-water).

VDGIF eliminated its urban trout program due to budget constraints.

Completed statewide trout angler survey. This is the 3rd such survey in the past 15 years. The report should be out soon.

Virginia added three new delayed harvest streams in 2003.

Proposed hiring of two riparian/stream restoration biologists.

Landowner / angler conflicts have decreased on the Jackson River in recent years and the trout fishery is outstanding with both brown and rainbow trout now reproducing naturally.

Lee Keefer (Georgia Department of Natural Resources)

Georgia's brook trout genetics work continued in 2003. eighteen populations sampled by Georgia DNR and 15 populations sampled by Clemson University.

The Hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) has been observed in Rabun County in N.E. Georgia, and there is concern over it's potential impact on stream temperatures. Work is being coordinated with the USFS to map the hemlock stands on trout waters.

The Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forest plans are through the first stages. One potential problem is to substitute alternatives for the Oconee that would allow whitewater boating in parts of the Chattooga that have been closed to that activity since 1976. The river was zoned into boating and no-boating zones to alleviate increasing conflicts between anglers and boaters.

Several streams were added to the list of streams open to year round fishing in 2003. Georgia still has a "trout season" for about ½ of its trout streams.

The delayed harvest program was increased to four streams: Smith Creek, Amicalola Creek, a four-mile section of the Chattahoochee River tailrace, and a three-mile section of the Chattooga River. A total of about 62,000 trout annually are dedicated to this program, 50,000 to the Chattahoochee Tailrace alone.

Standardized sampling of trout streams continues on an annual basis, with streams being sampled on a two-year rotation. Impacts to streams as a result of a five-year drought appear to be minimal so far.

Trout stocking fro prey fish control in several mountain reservoirs has successfully established significant sport fisheries, and "lake trout" fishing has become quite popular with anglers

We are attempting to conduct a complete trout stream inventory, identifying and sampling public water streams that have either never been sampled, or have not been sampled during the past 20 years. This project will take several years to complete.

We continue to find evidence of natural reproduction in the Lanier Tailrace. We have long thought that there was little or no natural reproduction. Lisa Bohm is leading this work. Lisa is also doing a survival study on the Morgan Falls tailwater located downstream of the Lanier TW.

Matt Kulp (Great Smoky Mountain National Park)

Eight brook trout streams were opened to fishing for the first time since 1976. They were placed under a 7 inch minimum 5 fish/day regulation. Creel surveys indicated low fishing pressure, but the surveys were not started when the streams were initially opened for fishing. There has been no change in the fish populations of these streams looking at

the electrofishing data. There are plans to evaluate these streams for at least three years. There was more opposition to opening these streams from within the National Park Service than the general public.

Steve Moore (Great Smoky Mountain National Park)

There are plans to write standard operating procedures (SOPs) for using antimycin for restoration of brook trout waters in GSMNP. They have learned that the antimycin treatment must be done before “leaf-fall” begins. The dead leaves in the streams severely decrease the effectiveness of the chemical. Also, they observed a 30-40% decrease in the invertebrate population directly after treatment. The invert population then “exploded” after trout removal.

Sheryl Bryan (USFS Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests)

They have been coordinating with North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission on determining public land trout distribution and brook trout genetic work. Actively monitoring water quality since 1997 and find that streams are not acidifying as in GSMNP, Virginia and Pennsylvania. Working on land management plans for both national forests. The forests are involved in stream habitat restoration projects and fish passage projects.

Monte Seehorn

There was a document put together by the SD Trout Committee in the 1970's that each state provided information on where trout had “ever” been stocked within the state.
****If anyone comes across this list/document please notify the committee chair or Mr. Seehorn

It was decided that next years meeting will be held on either April 4-6 or 25-27 at Roan Mountain State Park in Tennessee. Jim Habera and Frank Fiss offered to take care of the meeting arrangements.

Tim King of the USGS gave a presentation on developing DNA markers for brook trout. He showed the group data from brook trout populations in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park and Shenandoah National Park.

Tuesday April 8, 2003

The meeting began at 8:00 a.m. There were 15 people present at the meeting (13 committee members)

Kim Ryals (Trout Unlimited)

Kim talked to the group about her experiences as a urban fisheries biologist with the state of Utah. She discussed the nationwide trend in the decline in anglers and what that might mean to the future of trout programs.

Mike Kruse (Missouri Department of Conservation)

Mike gave a detailed presentation on the Missouri Trout Plan which is in draft form. He said they are not sure how they will involve the public in reviewing and commenting on the plan.

10:00 a.m. meeting adjourned