

Trout Stakeholder Meeting

March 3, 2018

Breakout Session Notes: Objectives

Bolded bullets were selected as the highest priority by the group.

Habitat Restoration/Improvement

- Focus on native planting in conjunction with habitat restoration.
- Maintain access to habitat projects (mow or brush) so you can fish it
- **Target restoration on priority streams rather than shotgun approach.**
- Beaver control/management – protect historic investment (1900 miles/year)
- **Develop habitat restoration techniques that favor brook trout over brown trout or browns over brooks based on streams management goals**
- Incorporate non-game habitat into restoration projects
- Ensure connectivity of streams – fish passage/culverts/road crossings
- **Find additional funding sources to increase staff, equipment and cost share and partnerships to increase restoration work to have 50 miles completed/year by 2030**
- Identify regional objectives for habitat restoration work
 - Driftless, north woods, south, east, etc.
 - watershed based objectives
- comprehensive analysis to prioritize habitat restoration projects
- ability to pursue fee (own land) and/or easements. Currently little fee opportunity, mostly easements, at this time, volunteer use agreements.
- Prioritize future habitat work in areas that will be resistant to climate change and/or other future variables
- Have funding for DNR to conduct 25 miles of habitat work/year
- Develop habitat techniques that benefit brook and brown trout, possibly fewer structures
- Create a technical bulletin on habitat techniques that landowners can use to improve habitat on their lands
- Town road crossing impact on habitat to streams/fish passages
- Develop funding mechanism to help with private landowners to do less intensive habitat work (maintenance, brushings) so DNR can focus on intensive habitat work
- Prioritize habitat restoration on climate change impacts
- Drainage district stream/habitat management. Focus on instream and external factors.

Angler Opportunities

- Increase vegetation (invasive species and other) management/stream corridor work (access)
 - Might happen in focused areas because we can't do all streams

- **Increase quality trout >8" in north, includes regulations and other management actions; there are equity concerns about not having sufficient opportunities in north**
- **Promote angler opportunities (residents, non-residents, market how good WI fishing is) – this was focus increasing the awareness of Wisconsin trout fishing**
- Let anglers know rules are not that complicated; this is a perceived barrier by some and much has been done to make regulations simpler.
- **Add more stream easements**
- Let people know about easements
- Catchable trout in accessible areas (ponds, urban, easy access streams)
- Easy accessible sites
 - Amount and distribution
 - Youth, handicap, elders, etc.
- Simplify trout regs
- Keep current suite of reg opportunities
- **Increase reg options to better manage diverse opportunities**
- Reassess trout stream classifications
 - Some streams no longer have trout
 - Some streams have trout but are not listed
- Add new trout populations
 - Restore/improve marginal fisheries
 - Restore where no trout currently are where there is potential
- **Give greater weight to angler recruitment and retention when choosing restoration/enhancement projects**
 - **Even if waters are marginal; look to easy access locations close to people (urban/suburban matters but does not necessarily need to be only near large urban areas; could be near small towns too)**
- Expand harvest opportunity season to increase family participation
- Increase harvest opportunities where appropriate and with proper assessment
 - E.g. yellow to green
- Increase creel surveys
 - Including expanding surveys to natural reproduction streams
- **Education/outreach on proper catch and release handling to decrease mortality**
- Outreach and education on how to cook/prepare trout to eat
- **Maintain water quality to maintain trout populations**

Outreach, partners and education

- **Increase outreach to diverse partners (youth)**
- Educate leadership and boards for collaborative management
- **Build a broader base (values, anglers)**
- Make sure our partners are informed
- Build more interest in streams and fishing
- Lead people to become stewards

- Create culture and identity of trout resources in Wisconsin DNR plan for future threats
- Collaborate with existing entities
- Increase funding
- Increase stream improvement
- Increase monitoring and data collection
- Increase and improve signage and thank you (appreciation)
- **Promote our fishing opportunities in state and out of state**
- Utilize trout resources/habitat in promotion of economic development in Wisconsin and wealth retention in the state
- Clearly communicate best management practices to partners
- More people fishing
 - Use non-consumptive partners (e.g. kayakers)
- Clarify policies with partners (e.g. trout in the classroom)
- Adopt a stream (public, youth, high schools, monitoring, stream improvement)
 - Stream improvement
 - Science (monitoring, data)
 - Recruitment of anglers and stewards

Two story Lakes/Inland lake trout

- **Prioritize existing lake trout populations/fisheries**
- Evaluate other opportunities for establishing lake trout (additional fisheries)
- Educate people on resource (underutilized)
- **Evaluation of our lake trout data/research**
- Consider opportunities for angler reporting of catch/harvest on existing fisheries
- **Stocking strategy that (all species) incorporates genetics (lake trout)**
- Is funding available to support research management of lake trout inland
- Inland brook trout genetics
- Look for opportunities (other species)
 - # of lakes
 - Time of year
- Develop criteria for where/when to decide stocking of spp. In 2-story lakes
- Make sure we have proper regulations to protect lake trout
- Population assessment
- Maximizing benefit/effort
 - 2 story lakes get bang for buck
- More emphasis on holdovers opportunities
- Explore additional splake stocking inland

Wild (natural reproducing) trout management (genetics, management units, stocking)

- Beaver control for more wild trout free movement, coldwater, spawning areas

- Fine tune genetic strains, gill lice resistance, higher quality trout population, temperature tolerant brook trout
- **Protect our best systems and best brook trout waters (cold waters), keep genetically pure, (possibly remove naturalized populations)**
- Remove barriers where it makes sense
- Where brook trout can't make it then wild brown trout
- Minimize rainbow trout
- Status quo on rainbow trout
- Enhanced monitoring for better understanding on wild populations and genetics
- Restoration keyed to the species
- Mimic good natural habitat in restorations
- Carrying capacity studies, what can a stream support?
- Maximize wild trout spawning (close season Oct 1-Jan1 north)
- Reduce stressors (i.e. fishing pressure) on wild populations (study this)
- Manage for native species first, give them priority where it makes sense
- **Study whole system – bugs and water quality (early warning systems)**
- Protect best brook trout populations – have a reference populations – what's the best a stream can do?
- Protect coaster brook trout (habitat management)