



**LET'S  
PROTECT RHODE ISLAND'S WILD BROOK TROUT  
NOW!**

**A PROPOSAL**

## **PROTECT RHODE ISLAND BROOK TROUT (PRIBT)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

PRIBT IS A COMMUNITY-BASED ADVOCACY GROUP WITH THE GOAL OF CONSERVING WHAT IS LEFT OF OUR STATE'S WILD AND NATIVE BROOK TROUT POPULATIONS. TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR EFFORT GO TO: [protecttribrooktrout.org](http://protecttribrooktrout.org) AND SEE US ON FACEBOOK.

### **ISSUE**

MULTIPLE SOURCES FROM THE SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE DOCUMENT THE CURRENT STATUS OF THIS SPECIES IN ITS ORIGINAL RANGE. THE EASTERN BROOK TROUT JOINT VENTURE (2008:4) SUMMARIZES THESE STATING THAT "BROOK TROUT POPULATIONS ... ARE DECLINING ACROSS THEIR HISTORIC RANGE FROM MAINE TO GEORGIA." FURTHER, WILD BROOK TROUT POPULATIONS IN THE EASTERN UNITED STATES ARE DESCRIBED AS "IMPAIRED". THE TOP FIVE THREATS TO STREAM-DWELLING WILD BROOK TROUT POPULATIONS IN THE EAST ARE CITED AS: RIPARIAN CONDITION; WATER TEMPERATURE; AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES; URBANIZATION; AND NON-NATIVE SPECIES.

### **PROPOSAL**

PRIBT PROPOSES THAT RIDEM ESTABLISH AN EXPERIMENTAL WILD BROOK TROUT MANAGEMENT AREA IN THE UPPER WOOD RIVER WATERSHED, DEFINED SO AS TO INCLUDE TRIBUTARY STREAMS ABOVE AND BELOW ROUTE 165 AND EXTENDING DOWNSTREAM TO THE DAM AT BARBERVILLE.

### **RATIONALE**

THE UPPER WOOD RIVER WATERSHED IS THE PROPOSED SITE BECAUSE:

THIS WATERSHED, AS DEFINED ABOVE, IS KNOWN TO HAVE SUPPORTED THE NATURAL REPRODUCTION OF BROOK TROUT.

MUCH OF THE WATERSHED IS STATE OWNED.

THE WATERSHED IS LARGELY INTACT AND NOT SUBJECT TO DEVELOPMENT. RISWAP 2005 NOTES THAT THE WATERSHED IS OF "LOW VULNERABILITY" RE: WATER QUALITY IMPACTS.

FOUR OF THE FIVE THREATS TO STREAM-DWELLING WILD BROOK TROUT CITED ABOVE DO DO NOT APPLY TO THIS WATERSHED.

THE SOLE REMAINING THREAT, THAT IMPOSED BY DEM STOCKING OF NON-NATIVE SPECIES, IS WITHIN THE STATE'S CONTROL. (SEE NOTES BELOW FOR FOR IMPACTS OF NON-NATIVES)

THE DAM AT BARBERVILLE IS AN EFFECTIVE BARRIER TO THE UPSTREAM INTRUSION BY HATCHERY-REARED FISH.

FOR THESE REASONS THE UPPER WOOD RIVER WATERSHED MAY BE RHODE ISLAND'S BEST OPPORTUNITY TO SALVAGE WHAT IS LEFT OF THE ONLY NATIVE TROUT, CHAR, OR SALMON SPECIES PRESENTLY FOUND REPRODUCING NATURALLY IN RHODE ISLAND WATERS.

### **SPECIFICS**

IT IS FURTHER PROPOSED THAT SPECIAL FISHING REGULATIONS BE APPLIED TO THE WILD TROUT MANAGEMENT AREA FOR AN INITIAL STUDY PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS, THAT NO STOCKING OF FISH TAKE PLACE DURING THIS TIME, AND THAT REGULAR AND FREQUENT MONITORING OF WILD TROUT IN THE AREA BE CONDUCTED. IT IS PROPOSED THAT FISHING BE ALLOWED WITH ARTIFICIAL LURES ONLY, THESE FEATURING SINGLE, BARBLESS HOOKS AND WITH ALL FISH TO BE RELEASED. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT, WHEN AND WHERE FEASIBLE, DAMS IN THE UPPER WATERSHED BE REMOVED. EVALUATION OF THIS INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF WILD BROOK TROUT TO BE CONDUCTED AT THE END OF THE STUDY PERIOD. RESULTS TO INFORM POLICY DEVELOPMENT THEREAFTER.

### **CONCLUSION**

THE BROOK TROUT HAS BEEN CELEBRATED FOR CENTURIES IN PAINTING, SONG, AND IN A RICH BODY OF LITERATURE. THESE SPECTACULARLY BEAUTIFUL CREATURES HAVE ASSUMED A PARTICULAR CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE, SUCH THAT SEVERAL STATES HAVE DESIGNATED THE BROOK TROUT AS THE "STATE FISH". SOME STATES, MOST NOTABLY MARYLAND, HAVE EXTENSIVE BROOK MANAGEMENT PLANS AIMED AT CONSERVING THIS IMPERILED SPECIES. THE MARYLAND PLAN MAKES PARTICULAR MENTION OF THE RISKS TO WILD BROOK TROUT ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE INCREASED FISHING PRESSURE ENGENDERED BY TROUT STOCKING.

RHODE ISLAND HAS AN OPPORTUNITY, NOW, TO MITIGATE THE DECLINE OF THIS SPECIES LOCALLY. TAKING ACTION ON BEHALF OF WILD TROUT IS CONSISTENT WITH PUBLIC ENVIRONMENTAL SENTIMENT AND EVOLVING ANGLER OPINION, AND RIDEM'S EXPRESSED INTENT TO PREVENT WILDLIFE FROM BECOMING ENDANGERED ... TO CONSERVE DECLINING SPECIES BEFORE THEY ARE LOST. AS NOTED ELSEWHERE, THE COST OF RESTORATION EFFORTS WILL EXCEED THOSE OF PRESERVATION, AND COMES WITH NO GUARANTEE.

A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise. A Sand County Almanac, Leopold 1949

LET'S DO THIS !

**Continued .....**

## **NOTES**

A SAMPLING OF SOURCES IN THE SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE DEALING WITH THE DELETERIOUS IMPACTS, DIRECT AND INDIRECT, OF TROUT STOCKING ON WILD TROUT POPULATIONS:

ALEXANDER 1977	HANSEN 2002
AULT & WHITE 1994	HANSEN 2009
BACHMAN 1994	HAYES 1996
BERNER 2001	HOPELAIN 2003
BURNHAM-CURTIS 2001	HUDY 2005
CALLEN 1983	HUMSTON et al 2012
COOPER 1953	HYATT 1999
DANZMANN et al 1991	KALLEBERG 1958
DEWALD & WILZBACH 1992	McKENNA et al 2013
FAUSCH & WHITE 1981	PERKINS 1993
FAUSCH 1984	VINCENT 1974
FAUSCH 1988	WATERS 1983
GRANT 2002	
HAMILTON 2004	

A SAMPLING OF OTHER INTEREST GROUPS SHARING THE GOALS OF PRIBT

TROUT UNLIMITED  
SEA-RUN BROOK TROUT COALITION  
PROTECT NEW HAMPSHIRE BROOK TROUT  
THE NATURE CONSERVANCY OF RHODE ISLAND  
EASTERN BROOK TROUT JOINT VENTURE

### **ON BEHALF OF PRIBT WE ARE**

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