

Proposed Wild Trout Regulations



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What is a Wild Trout?

- ▶ A wild trout is a trout born in the wild, not in a hatchery.

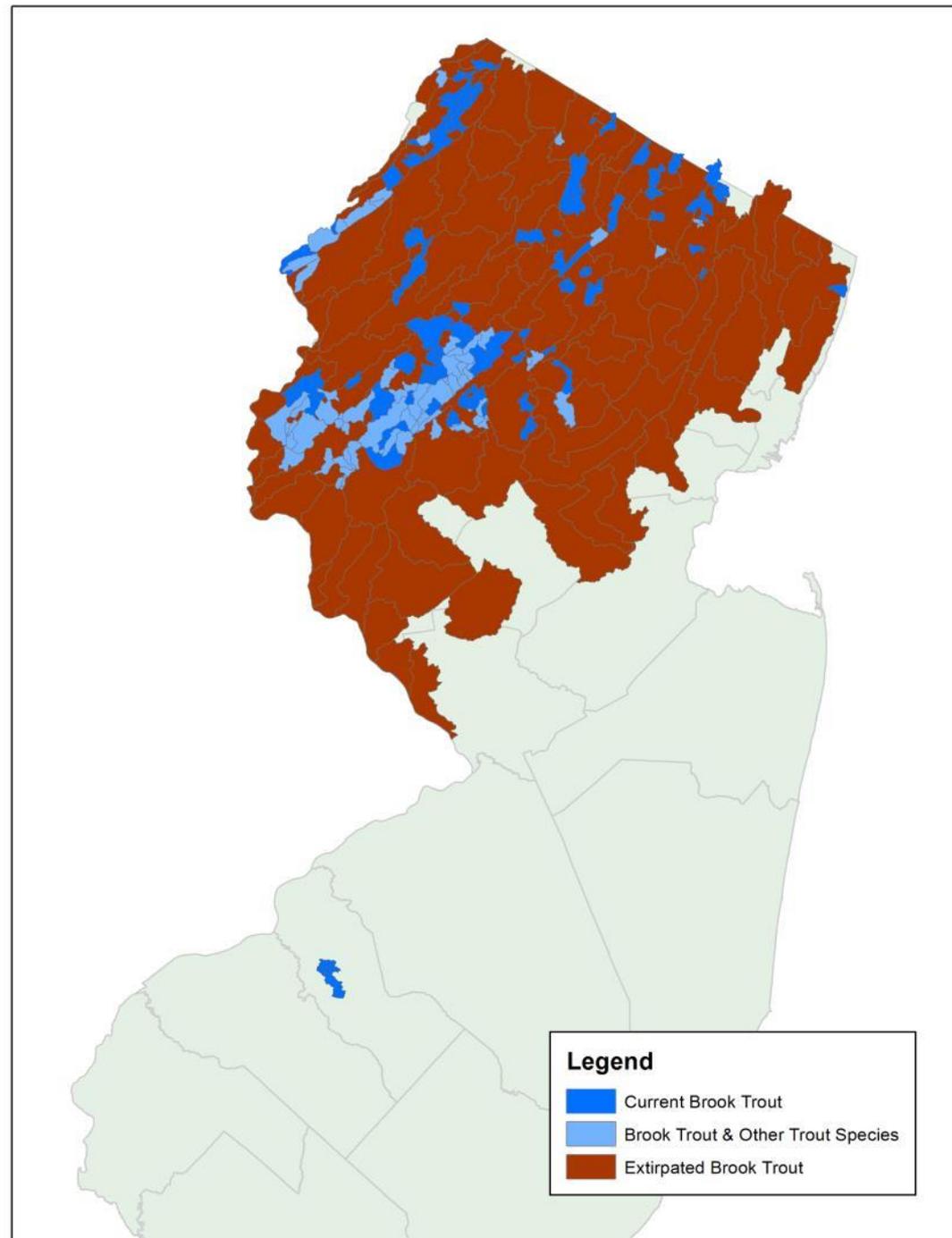
Native Trout vs. Wild Trout?

- ▶ Trout are considered native only if they originated in their location naturally, without the involvement of human activity or intervention at any time in their genetic history.
- ▶ Brook Trout are NJ's only NATIVE trout.
- ▶ Brown and Rainbow Trout can be born in the wild and be a "Wild Trout", but they can never be a native trout.

BROOK TROUT

A Heightened Concern

- **Red:** Watersheds where it is believed that Brook Trout were once present but have now been extirpated.
- **Dark BLUE:** Watersheds where Brook Trout is the only wild trout species.
- **Light Blue:** Watersheds having Brook Trout plus wild Brown Trout and/or Rainbow Trout that compete with Brook Trout.



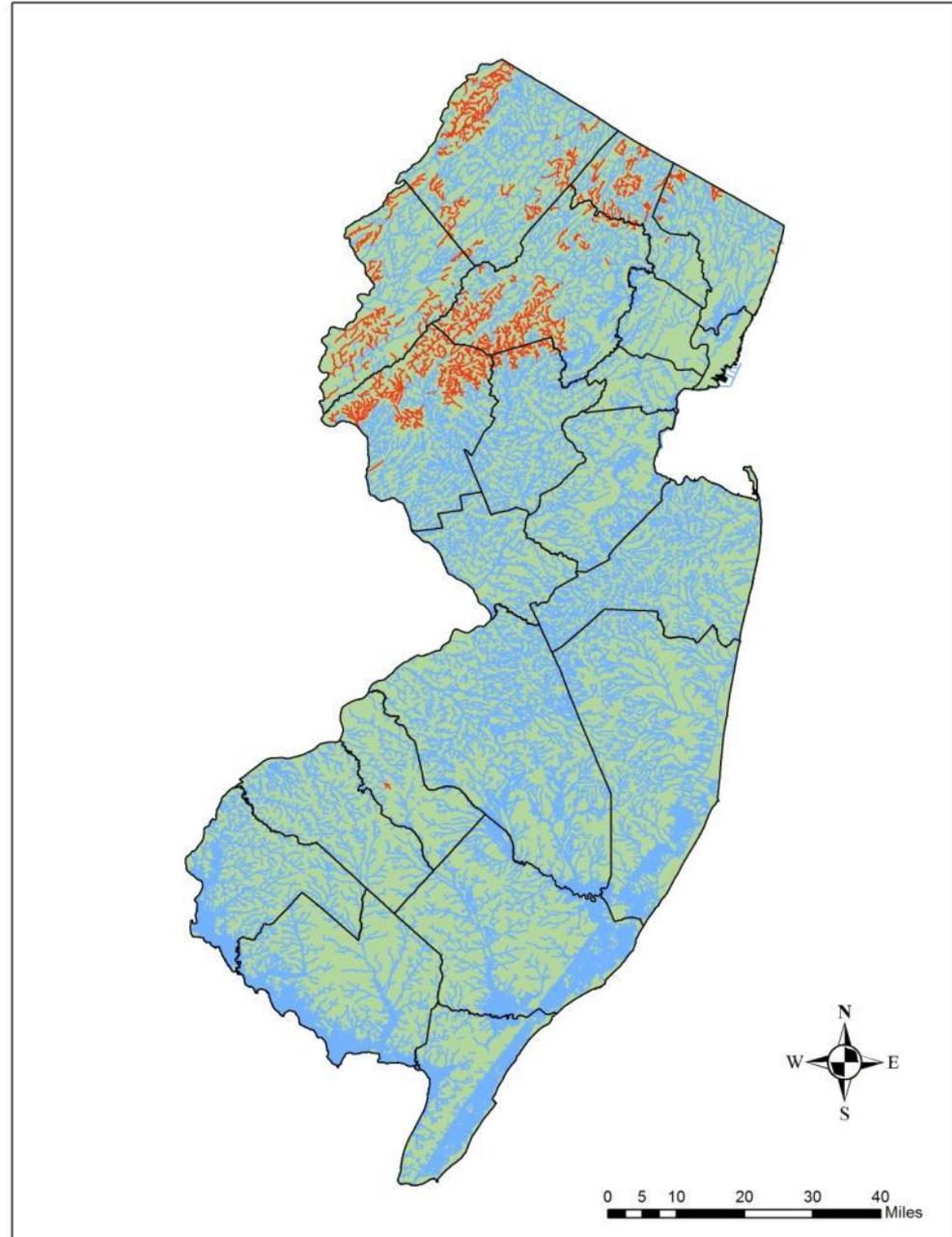
Trout Production Streams in NJ

- ▶ Nearly 200 streams have wild, reproducing trout populations
- ▶ Only 36 have more conservative special regulations known as *Wild Trout Stream Regulations*
 - Smaller Creel Limits
 - Artificial lures only

Problem:

Approximately 164 trout production streams, have the more liberal general trout regulations

- 6 trout per day
- No gear restrictions (Bait allowed)





2014-2016: 95 Electrofishing Surveys Conducted on 59 Streams
2,451 Brook Trout **3,587 Brown Trout** **461 Rainbow Trout**

All Current Wild Trout Streams

High Sustainability/
Low Recreational Value

High Sustainability/
High Recreational Value

- **Recreational Value**
 - Total Numbers of Trout
 - Size of Trout
- **Sustainability**
 - Total Numbers of Trout
 - Recruitment
 - Population Balance
- **Trout Species**
- **Angler Access** (Public/Private)

Low Sustainability/
Low Recreational Value

Low Sustainability/
High Recreational Value

Data & Information

- ▶ **Stream Surveys (electrofishing)**
 - 2014–2016: 95 Total Surveys on 59 Streams
 - (2,451 Brook Trout, 3,587 Brown Trout, 461 Rainbow Trout were collected)
- ▶ **Scientific Literature**

PROPOSED

Scientific Literature (Hooking Mortality)



VS



- **Majority of studies show no significant difference in mortality between single hook and treble hook but, trout size matters**
 - Larger trout have a tendency to have higher mortality when treble hooks are used (larger gape enables them to engulf and the hook to become embedded)
 - Smaller trout have an easier time engulfing single hooks compared to treble hooks resulting in higher mortality in these cases

Data & Information

▶ Stream Surveys (electrofishing)

- 2014–2016: 95 Total Surveys on 59 Streams
- (2,451 Brook Trout, 3,587 Brown Trout, 461 Rainbow Trout were collected)

▶ Literature Searches (hooking mortality)

- Single vs. Treble – Majority of studies show no significant difference in mortality
- Barbed vs. Barbless – Majority of studies show no significant difference in mortality
- Bait vs. Artificial Only – Bait causes significantly higher mortality

▶ Public Forums / Meetings

▶ Online Wild Trout Angler Survey

Data & Information

◦ Online Wild Trout Angler Survey

What makes a good day of fishing for wild trout????

90% anglers felt that the most important attribute to having a good day of fishing for wild trout is not due to the number of trout caught or even the size of the trout caught, but just seeing evidence of wild trout in their stream.

87% said catching just one wild trout is important to having a good day fishing.

95% of the anglers said that a scenic location without a lot of other anglers was important to having that good day of fishing.

Data & Information

◦ Online Wild Trout Angler Survey

Anglers thoughts on Creel Limit.....

*61% of anglers are **NOT** in support of the current 2 fish per day creel limit (26% support)*

74% would like Catch & Release Regulations on Brook Trout streams

75% answered that they want a Catch & Release Regulation on all wild trout streams (14% opposed)

60% answered that they would support Catch & Release Regulations on wild Brook Trout but allow harvest on wild Brown Trout & wild Rainbow Trout (19% opposed)

Data & Information

◦ Online Wild Trout Angler Survey

Anglers thoughts on Bait and Gear Restrictions....

*70% of participating anglers support the current
Artificials Only (No bait or
scents)*

*78% were NOT in support of
the current hook point
regulation that allows up to 3
treble hooks or 9 hook points*

*65% of anglers support
single hook only*

*69% want barbless hooks
only*

Goals for New Regulation

- ▶ Protect and Enhance Native Brook Trout populations
- ▶ Protect and Enhance all wild trout populations (Brook, Brown & Rainbow Trout)
- ▶ Create more opportunities for anglers to catch wild trout
- ▶ Provide a diverse amount of fishing opportunities
- ▶ **Considerations:**
 - ▶ Minimize impacts on anglers who primarily fish for stocked trout.
 - ▶ Keep regulations as simple as possible

Proposed Wild Trout Regulation Zone Concept!

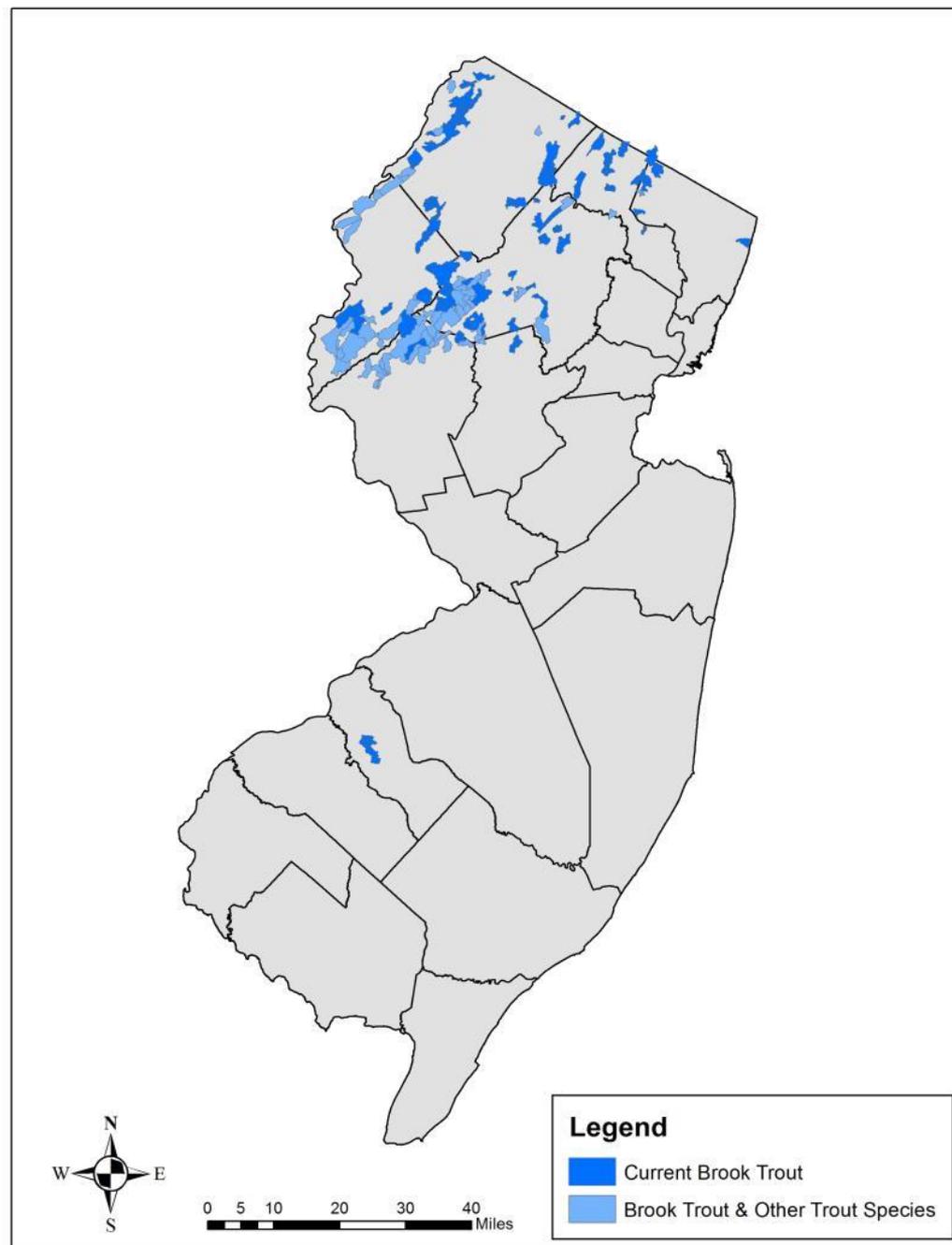
- ▶ **In the Zone Only:**
- ▶ **Catch & Release for Brook Trout** in the Northwest quadrant of the state only (I-287 and Rt. 202 boundaries)
(Minimize or eliminate stocking of Brook Trout in zone)

Pros:

- Protects Brook Trout in appropriate area where wild populations occur
- Minimizes effects on anglers who fish for stocked trout & on stocking programs

Cons:

- **More Complex Regulation:** Anglers need to know new zone boundary
- **Species Identification:** Anglers need to correctly identify the species



Wild Trout Diversity



Diverse Species Combinations



Streams with every possible combination:

Brook Trout only

Brown Trout only

Rainbow Trout only

Brook & Brown Trout Combo, etc.....

Proposed Wild Trout Regulation

▶ Current Regulation

- One size fits all concept

▶ New Proposed Regulation

- Multiple Categories
 - Allows for different management strategies
 - Highlights fish species found in specific streams
 - Identifies opportunities to catch MORE and BIGGER trout

NATIVE BROOK TROUT STREAMS	WILD TROUT STREAMS	WILD BROWN TROUT ENHANCEMENT STREAMS
Open to fishing year round, not stocked with trout	Open to fishing year round, not stocked with trout	Open to fishing year round, not stocked with trout
<p><u>Description:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streams in this category are Brook Trout Only or nearly Brook Trout Only Brook Trout populations can withstand fishing pressure <p><u>Management Goals:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To conserve, protect, and enhance native <u>BROOK TROUT</u> Eliminate or reduce Brook Trout competition with other trout species through active management removal techniques &/or angler harvest 	<p><u>Description:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brown Trout and/or Rainbow Trout populations are robust Streams in this category contain Brook Trout and other trout species. <p><u>Management Goals:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To conserve, protect, and enhance <u>all</u> Wild Trout Allows anglers unique opportunity to catch multiple wild trout species Limited non-native trout harvest will aid in Brook Trout survival 	<p><u>Description:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brown Trout and/or Rainbow Trout populations are robust Streams in this category do not have Brook Trout in them or nearby <p><u>Management Goals:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To conserve, protect and enhance <u>all</u> Wild Trout Populations Enhance Wild <u>BROWN TROUT</u> populations Create unique angling opportunity to catch many and/or large Brown Trout

NATIVE BROOK TROUT STREAMS	WILD TROUT STREAMS	WILD BROWN TROUT ENHANCEMENT STREAMS
Open to fishing year round, not stocked with trout	Open to fishing year round, not stocked with trout	Open to fishing year round, not stocked with trout
GEAR	GEAR	GEAR
Artificial lures and flies only	Artificial lures and flies only	Artificial lures and flies only
Up to 3 barbless only hook points	Up to 3 barbless only hook points	Up to 3 barbless only hook points
HARVEST	HARVEST	HARVEST
Opening Day at 8 a.m. - Sept. 15 2 trout/day (Brown and Rainbow Trout combined)	Opening Day at 8 a.m. - Sept. 15 2 trout/day (Brown and Rainbow Trout combined)	Opening Day at 8 a.m. - Sept. 15 2 trout/day (Brown and Rainbow Trout combined)
No min. size on Brown and Rainbow Trout Catch & release all Brook Trout	9" min. size on Brown and Rainbow Trout Catch & release all Brook Trout	9" min. size on Rainbow Trout 12" min. size on Brown Trout Catch & release all Brook Trout

Regulation Set	Gear	Season	<u>Brook Trout</u>		<u>Rainbow Trout</u>		<u>Brown Trout</u>	
			Harvest	Minimum Size	Harvest	Minimum Size	Harvest	Minimum Size
Brook Trout Conservation Streams	3 barb-less hook points	Opening Day at 8 a.m. to Sept. 15	Catch & Release all Brook Trout	2	No min. size	2	No min. size	
Wild Trout Streams					9"			
Wild Brown Trout Enhancement Streams					12"			

PROPOSED

Trout-stocked streams with wild trout in them?

Hakihokake Creek (Little York-Mount Pleasant Road to Delaware R., Milford)

Lopatcong Creek (Rt. 519 bridge, Harmony Twp. To Delaware R.)

Pophandusing Creek (Belvidere)

Raritan River, S/Br. (Schooleys Mtn. Road bridge, Long Valley, downstream to Lk Solitude dam, High Bridge, excluding Ken Lockwood Gorge Catch & Release Area)

Saddle River (Lake Street to Dunkerhook Rd., Fairlawn)

Trout-stocked streams with wild trout in them?

Description:

- These streams will continue to receive stocked Rainbow Trout, but they also have wild Brown Trout

Management Goals:

- To increase the abundance & size of wild Brown Trout
- Provide anglers with opportunities to catch both stocked and wild trout in one location

TROUT-STOCKED STREAMS

WILD BROWN TROUT MANAGED

Open to fishing year round, except March 19 - Opening Day at 8 a.m. (Stocked with trout)

GEAR

Artificial lures & flies, and bait allowed

9 hook points

HARVEST

Jan 1 - Mar 18 and June 1 - Dec 31

4 trout/day

(only 2 may be Brown Trout)

Opening Day at 8 a.m. - May 31

6 trout/day

(only 2 may be Brown Trout)

9" min. size on Rainbow Trout

12" min. size on Brown Trout

Catch & release all Brook Trout

STREAMS

Hakihokake Creek (Little York-Mount Pleasant Road to Delaware R., Milford)

Lopatcong Creek (Rt. 519 bridge, Harmony Twp. To Delaware R.)

Pophandusing Creek (Belvidere)

Raritan River, S/Br. (Schooleys Mtn. Road bridge, Long Valley, downstream to Lk Solitude dam, High Bridge, excluding Ken Lockwood Gorge Catch & Release Area)

Saddle River (Lake Street to Dunkerhook Rd., Fairlawn)

Wild Trout Streams

Additions/deletions

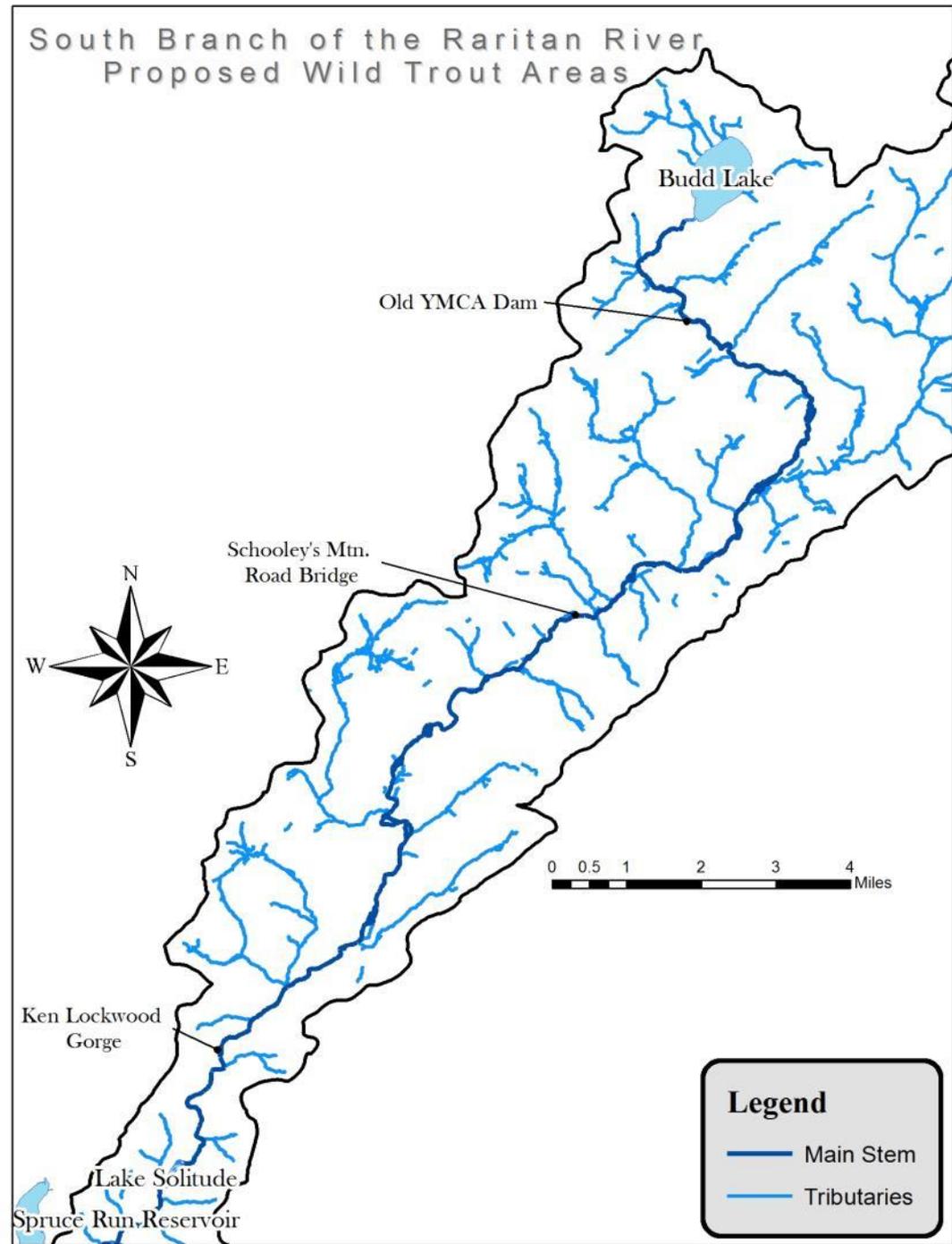
▶ Wild Trout Streams being dropped (7)

- Bear Creek(Southtown)
- Black Brook (Clinton WMA)
- Dark Moon Brook (Johnsonburg)
- Hance's Brook (Penwell)
- Mill Brook (Montague)
- Merrill Creek (above Merrill Creek Res.)
- Parker Brook (Montague)

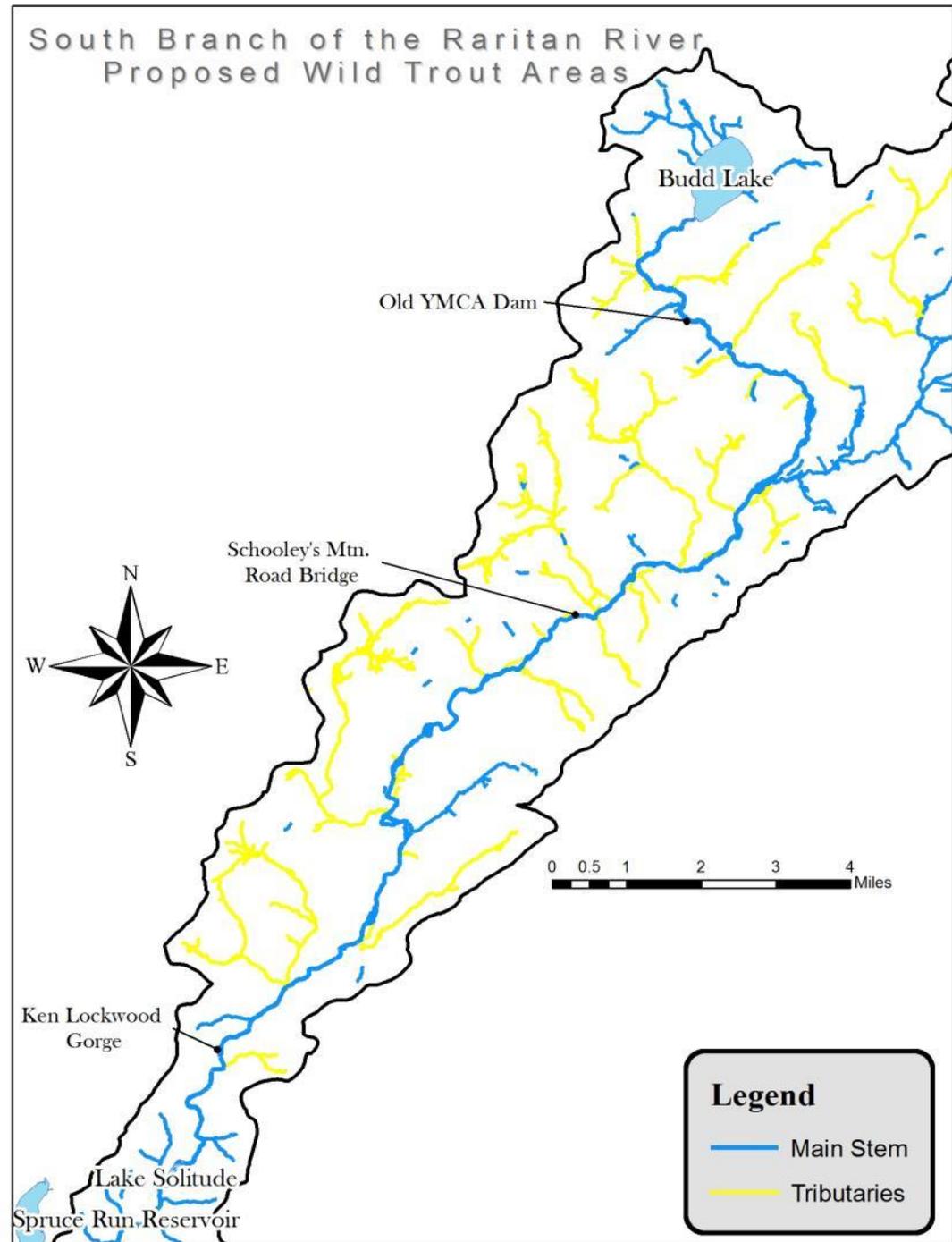
▶ New Wild Trout Streams (9)

- Brass Castle Creek (Washington)
- Dismal Brook (Mendham Twp)
- Beatty's Brook (Penwell)
- Hibernia Brook Tributary to Lake Ames (Rockaway)
- Beaver Brook (Clinton)
- Primrose Brook (Morristown Nat. Hist. Area)
- Mill Brook (Randolph)
- Spring Mills Brook (Spring Mills)
- Raritan River S/Br (upstream of Rt. 24 in Long Valley (2 new sections))

South Branch of the Raritan River



South Branch of the Raritan River



South Branch of the Raritan River

Brook Trout Conservation

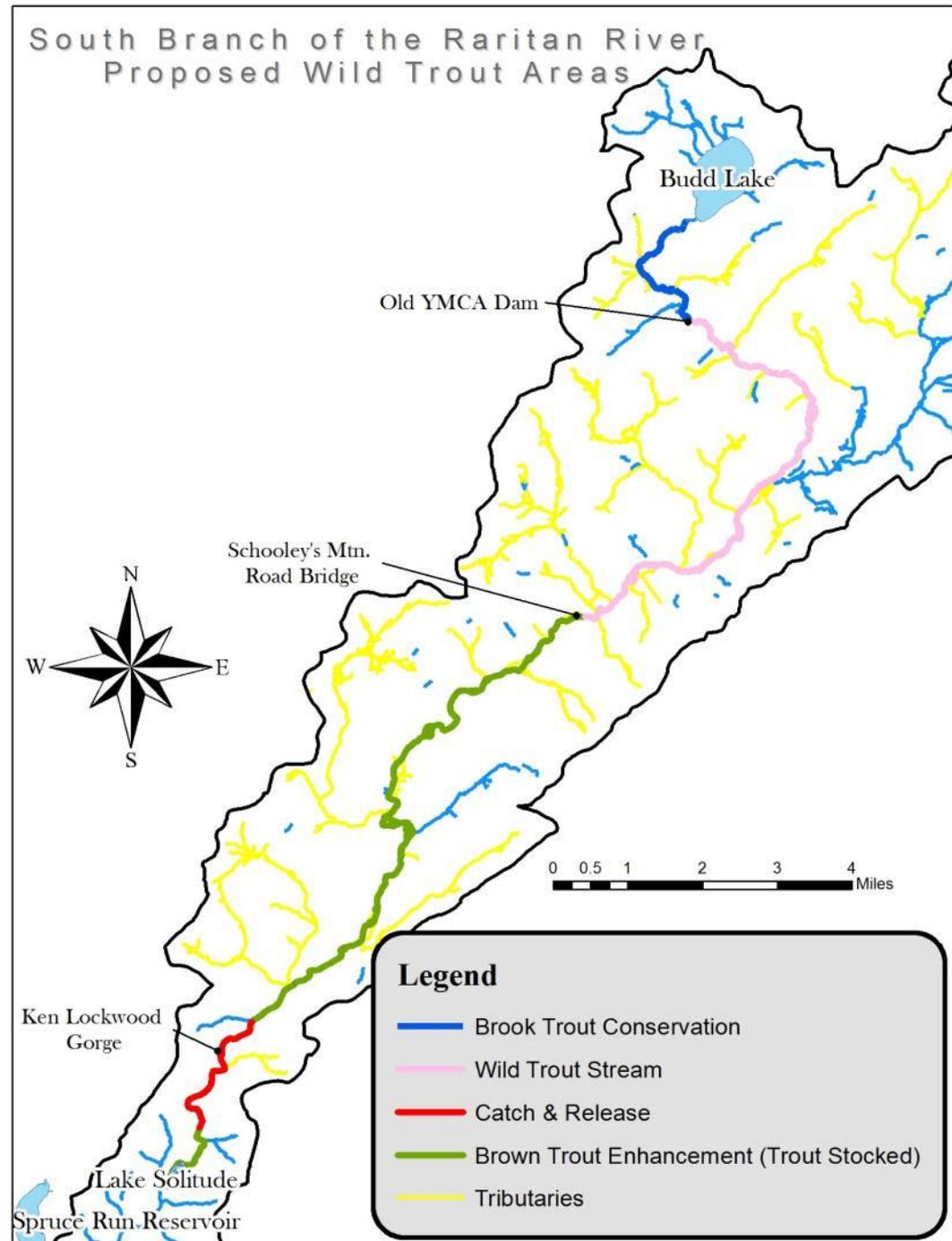
- What's found here:
 - Only wild Brook Trout are found above the YMCA dam, primarily in the tributaries
- Management Goals
 - Conserve this stronghold of wild Brook Trout by liberalizing harvest of Brown & Rainbow Trout

Wild Trout Stream Area

- What's found here:
 - Numbers of wild Brook Trout are more prevalent here and in tributaries but wild Brown Trout still more common
- Management Goals:
 - Recognize the important wild Brown Trout fishery but allow harvest of > 9" Brown Trout to reduce competition with Brook Trout
 - Cease stocking

Stocked with Wild Brown Trout Enhancement

- What's found here:
 - Wild Brown Trout abundant
- Management Goals:
 - Maintain existing stocking
 - Recognize wild trout's importance here by limiting their harvest and by increasing the Brown Trout size limit to 12 inches



Regulation Set	Gear	Season	Brook Trout		Rainbow Trout		Brown Trout	
			Harvest	Minimum Size	Harvest	Minimum Size	Harvest	Minimum Size
Brook Trout Conservation Streams	3 barbless hook points	Opening Day at 8 a.m. to Sept. 15	Catch & Release all Brook Trout	2	No min. size	2	No min. size	
Wild Trout Streams					9"		9"	
Wild Brown Trout Enhancement Streams					12"		12"	

Brook Trout Conservation Streams	Wild Trout Streams	Wild Brown Trout Enhancement Streams
Beatty's Brook (Penwell) Bear Swamp Brook (Mahwah) Brass Castle Creek (Washington) Hickory Run (Califon) Lake Ames Tributary (boundary of Picatinny Arsenal to Lake Ames, Rockaway Twp.) Primrose Brook (Harding Twp.) Rinehart Brook (Hacklebarney) Rocky Run (Lebanon Twp.) Raritan River, S/Br. (Budd Lake dam to dam approx. 400 feet upstream of Flanders-Drakestown Rd., Mt Olive) Stephensburg Brook (Stephensburg) Stony Brook (Stokes S. F.) Trout Brook (Hacklebarney S.P.)	Brass Castle Creek (Washington) Dismal Brook (Mendham Twp.) Dunfield Creek (Worthington S.F.) Flanders Brook (Flanders) India Brook (Source to Mountainside Ave., Mendham Twp.) Indian Grove Brook (Bernardsville) Ledgewood Brook (Ledgewood) Lomerson Brook (also known as Herzog Brook) (Pottersville) Merrill Creek (Merrill Ck Res. Dam downstream to Pohatcong R., Stewartsville) Raritan River, S/Br. (dam approx. 400 feet upstream of Flanders-Drakestown Rd. to (Schooleys Mtn. Road bridge, Long Valley) Stony Brook (Washington Twp., Morris Co.) Teetertown Brook (Washington/Lebanon Twp.) Turkey Brook (Mt. Olive) Van Campens Brook (source to upper waterfall in Van Campens Glen, Del. Water Gap Nat. Rec. Area) West Brook (source downstream to Windbeam Club property, Ringwood) Whippany River (source to Tingley Rd., Mendham Twp.) Willoughby Brook (Clinton Twp.)	Beaver Brook (Clinton) Burnett Brook (Ralston) Cold Brook (Oldwick) Hakihokake Creek (also known as Little York Bk - source to Little York-Mount Pleasant Rd, Little York) Jackson Brook (source to Hedden Park Lake, Mine Hill Twp.) Mill Brook (Randolph) Passaic River (source to Rt. 202, Bernardsville) Pequanock River (Oak Ridge Rd. bridge in Newark Watershed to railroad bridge immediately upstream of Charlottesburg Res. and from Rt. 23 bridge at Smoke Rise to the Rt. 23 bridge at Smith Mills) Rockaway Creek, N/Br. (Mountainville) Saddle River (state line to Lake St., Upper Saddle River) Spring Mills Brook (Spring Mills) Van Campens Brook (below Glen, Del. Water Gap Nat. Rec. Area) Wanaque River (Wanaque Reservoir dam downstream to Wanaque Ave., Pompton Lks)

Questions?

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Artificial lures and flies only	Artificial lures and flies only	Artificial lures and flies only	Artificial lures & flies, and bait allowed
3 barbless hook points	3 barbless hook points	3 barbless hook points	9 hook points
HARVEST	HARVEST	HARVEST	HARVEST
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Comments

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