

## Wells Creek History (Fish)

### 1959 Survey

Indicates the stream was designated trout water from the source to 7.2 miles d.s. Wells Creek was considered "borderline" trout habitat, ie: riffles lacking, high sand/silt bedload, few springs and marginal summer temps, (sound familiar?). Fishing pressure was considered moderate – an aerial car count on opener counted 6-10 cars/mile. No trout were sampled (gear not indicated, but most likely seining).

Stocking from 1947-1960 consisted of approximately 15,000 BNT yearlings and 4000 RBT yearlings.

Reports indicated fair fishing success early in the year, but poor by mid-summer.

**Conclusion:** Wells Creek was considered unsuitable for trout mgmt., and suggested that a good watershed improvement program and proper land mgt. measures be put in place!! However, stocking of mostly BNT (some RBT) yearlings continued annually through 1975.

**Creel Survey 1975** indicated 140 man-hours pressure and no trout harvested.

### 1976 Stream Survey

BNT were sampled in low numbers (0 – 31/mi. Avg 14/mi.). Growth was considered good. The survey indicated that "One fish was sacrificed and eaten. It was inedible because of a muddy taste." This could probably be said about most brown trout!!!

The Survey indicated that conditions had deteriorated further since 1959, and that trout yearling stocking was considered unsuccessful (due in part to results of 1975 Creel Survey). The survey recommended no further stocking or management for trout and removal of trout stream designation. Designation was removed following that survey.

**1986 Re-Survey** Indicated no improvements in stream or watershed conditions since the 1976 survey and recommended no gamefish (trout) mgt. **Not sure why we continued trying???? Gates????**

### Late 1980's

Redband RBT arrive on the scene! (a product of Larry Gates and friends) The redband was a strain believed to be able to withstand higher stream temps!!

An initial stocking of 10,000 redband yearlings in April, 1988 yielded fair survival, with estimates of around 100/mile in several stations sampled in June. By November of that year the population had decreased to less than 40/mile in one station and no trout present in the other. Another 9,300 redbands were stocked in November, 1988. An assessment

in 1989 yielded only 2 redband RBT's. Redband stocking was discontinued and stocking of BNT fingerlings (annually) was recommended.

### **BNT fingerling stocking**

From 1990 – 1993, a total of 53,000 BNT fgls were stocked. In 1993, the fingerlings were marked to determine the amount of natural reproduction. During sampling that year, the fingerling abundance was estimated to be 144/mile and nearly 40% of those fish were not marked, indicating fair reproduction. Annual sampling through 1997 revealed fair numbers of adult brown trout (60 – 120/mile), with decent numbers of larger fish, with some exceeding 20 inches. Natural reproduction was documented nearly every year. Sampling in 1999 yielded an estimate of 265 adults/mile in one station. Populations continue to improve! The most recent sampling in 2003 yielded estimates of adult BNT ranging from 245 – 407/mile, with fair numbers of naturally reproduced fingerlings.

### **Tributaries**

Brook trout have been stocked in several tributaries in recent years. Brook trout fingerlings are typically stocked in two consecutive years and then monitored for survival and any subsequent reproduction.

**Unnamed Creek (now Klair's Creek, at least to us Fish folks)** was stocked in 1997 and 1998. Brook trout were sampled in 1998 and 1999 with an abundance of 88/mile and 65/mile, respectively. Reproduction was excellent, with an estimate of 3200 fingerlings/mile in 1999. Growth was considered excellent too, with some age 2 fish reaching 11 inches! Klair Creek was sampled again in 2003, and the brook trout continue to do well. The adult and fingerling estimates were 153/mile and 998/mile, respectively. Brown trout had been sampled in 1998 and '99, but none were sampled in 2003 (Good News).

**Clear Creek** – Stocked in 1997 and 1998 also. The estimates in 1998 and 1999 were 168/mile and 179/mile, respectively. Reproduction has occurred, with fingerling abundance estimated at 110/mile. Clear Creek was also sampled in 2003. Numbers appeared to decline slightly. No adults and only one fingerling were sampled in the streams lower reaches. A station further upstream yielded an estimate of 106 adults/mile, but no fingerlings were present.

**Rock (Burfeind's) Creek** was stocked in 1998 and 1999 and sampled for the first time in 1999. Sampling took place before the stocking, so all fish collected were age 1 and the estimate was 355/mile. Growth was good, with some fish reaching 8 inches long.

Sculpin ( a native coldwater forage fish) were introduced to all three tributaries in the past several years.