Subject: : Conservation
Topic: : could we, would we and should we?
Re: could we, would we and should we?
Author: : Padraic
Date: : 2006/12/3 9:03:37
URL:

Good questions.

I think my spin on this is that water quality is the ultimate issue. It's way more important than habitat, etc.

Millions were spent on Big Spring before the hatchery was closed, and yet, there were very, very few fish outside the ditch. When the hatchery was closed, the trout spread out downstream and are beginning to reproduce. It'll be a while before the stream will be great, but it's on it's way. And it's the flushing of the stream that is doing the job, not the structures etc that were installed over the years when the hatchery was running.

Rather than building things in the stream (and remember any instream project you build is going to be temporary, and also will have some negative effects along with the good), projects to improve water quality should be pursued first. Planting native species along the banks will stabalize the banks. This will reduce silt. In addition, the leaf litter will provide the food that mayfly and caddis nymphs need. Maintaining dirt and gravel roads that parrallel streams will also reduce silt.

Instream projects are best suited (in my limited experience) to remediating the effects of other manmade structures. For instance, Muddy Creek TU put in some great streambank reinforcements opposite a railroad bridge. The supports for the bridge were wide enough for a tributary to flow between them at NORMAL flow. When the trib would rise with storm runoff the flow was focused like a fire hose at the opposite bank. The reinforcements deflect the flow, keeping the bank from washing out. It's a good project and good example of how these projects can be used.

The project water at Kettle Creek is a good example of how to restore a stream with instream structures. The structures restore, however, they do not create a trout stream.

IMHO there are good smallmout bass streams, there are Class C trout streams and that's OK. You can't turn every stream in PA into a Class A. You might be able to return a Class A to Class A where the problems that caused the population to drop are understood and addressable.