

Subject: : Conservation

Topic: : Big Springs Need help

Re: Big Springs Need help

Author: : Fishidiot

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URL:

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Okay.....it was only a matter of time before this topic hit the Paff forums. I should point out in the interest of full disclosure that I am a board member of Cumberland Valley Trout Unlimited and am, as such, knee deep in this issue. *What follows are my personal views/opinions and do not reflect the official position of CVTU.*

This issue is much in flux and where things are headed remains to be seen. Those of you who have long read these forums know that the management of Big Spring - and the 2010 restoration project in particular - has been controversial with our board members. Just speaking for myself, I have written many thousands of words here on Paff (and elsewhere) on the topic and am frankly weary of the subject. For those of you new to the forum and not familiar with this issue, a site search will bring up enough stuff to keep you reading for many hours. I have fished BS for thirty years and love this stream as much as anyone. In short, I am a staunch fan of the restoration project and consider it an unqualified success. Studies completed by the PFBC in 2011 reveal that brook trout biomass in this restored section doubled (in only 11 months!). However, rainbow trout biomass improved at an even higher rate (about 3-4 fold). The purpose of the restoration, among other things, was to slow and deepen the channel so as to more closely match the habitat preferred by brookies. If you're not aware, BS is famous for its wild brook trout. Recently the large number of rainbows has convinced some individuals and organizations (many of whom are personal friends of mine) to seek the removal of the rainbows from this section of the creek and presumably the entire fly fishing section, and their transfer downstream below a dam or to another watershed. Exactly how and when this would be done is unclear. Rumors are rampant. My personal view is that removal of these 'bows from the fly fishing section is unnecessary *at this time* since there is no current evidence that they are impeding the growth of brook trout in BS (remember, brookie numbers have been verified to be increasing as well). I love the brook trout of BS and would certainly consider supporting the removal of rainbows if I thought it was necessary to get the brookies back. Efforts have been made in the past on BS to segregate rainbows. I might favor such a policy but - as it stands now with the excellent fishing for both wild brooks and bows - *I vote to leave the rainbows alone*. They're beautiful wild fish and grow to great sizes in BS. In the future, maybe we could take some out or try to build a new barrier (I've discussed this at length with folks in the know on the topic). If you're a fan of BS, by all means contact the Executive Director at the link above and voice your opinion. Should the rainbows be removed from the flyfishing section of Big Spring? I personally don't think so.....but your opinion matters. Let John Arway know what you think.