Subject: : Conservation
Topic: : Acid Rain and Un-surveyed streams
Re: Acid Rain and Un-surveyed streams
Author: : troutbert
Date: : 2013/8/2 15:20:37
URL:

That's a good article, and it describes accurately the situation with acid rain. And as he says, this the mechanisms of acid rain and the effects on streams have been known for 40 years or so.

It's not mine drainage in the area he is talking about. And it's not naturally occurring acid from exposure to pyrite. If the cause was pyrite, the streambed would be orange, from the iron in the pyrite depositing out, such as you see with many AMD streams.

He wrote about a particular area in NW PA. But there are many similar stream stretches in other parts of the state, in NC PA, NE PA, and mid-state PA.

Most of these streams don't get talked about much by flyfishers, because the interest in exploring streams with no fish, or very few fish, is usually not great.

But if anyone is interested in seeing an example for themselves, here is a good place to go, and it's not far from Penns Creek. It is south of Weikert.

The stream is called Swift Run in Snyder County, in Bald Eagle State Forest. In the lower part of the stream it is paralleled by a forest road and here the stream holds native brook trout, and is also stocked.

Drive up and park at the last picnic area. At this point the forest road leaves Swift Run and follows up along a trib. This little trib comes out of a lower rock formation and is buffered well enough so that it supports brook trout, and adds enough fertility so that Swift Run below this also supports wild trout.

But, if you fish Swift Run on up above that tributary and up into the roadless backcountry, you very quickly run out of fish.

The stream runs for about 4 miles through nothing but forest. This area is labeled "Tall Timbers Natural Area" on the forest map.

There has been no mine drainage up there, or other pollution sources. The water is clear. It looks a like a beautiful, tumbling forested "typical brookie stream."

But there are no trout and no fish of any kind. And if you turn over rocks you will see that there is very limited aquatic invert life. Not zero, but not much.

This stream has been studied a lot by Carl Kirby and his students at Bucknell. The stream is flowing out of the Tuscarora sandstone formation, which provides very little buffering.

Some other streams nearby where the headwaters are coming out of lower rock formations that provide more fertility, better buffering, and there are trout the whole way to the extreme headwaters.