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Subject: : Paflyfish General Forum

Topic: : Big Spring Rainbows being killed

Re: Big Spring Rainbows being killed

Author: : troutbert

Date: : 2013/10/8 8:27:03

URL:

The PFBC paper at the link does not favor using a barrier, to manage for brook trout. And does favor allowing harvest of rainbows and browns to manage for brook trout.

But that paper is simply what PFBC staff is proposing. It is now open for public comment. And the commissioners have the final decision.

IMHO, their proposed plan of allowing harvest rainbows and browns would definitely not work. Two things would happen if that plan was adopted:

1) The really large rainbows would be quickly removed by people wanting trophies to hang on their walls.

2) The brook trout population would not benefit at all. The reason is that the number of medium sized rainbows would still be high enough to out-compete the brook trout.

So it would be a lose-lose proposition.

But using a barrier, along with periodic electrofishing removal, could make a very big difference for the brook trout. In the paper it says that the former barrier fell into disrepair and lost its effectiveness. They could have chosen to repair or rebuild it. They simply chose not to.

And it says that the escapement of fish from the hatchery was part of the problem. That problem is now gone. And in the intervening years, there are probably more good options for designing and building a barrier.

Regarding the occasional outlaw who would transfer fish above the barrier. That's a law enforcement issue. The people who fish certain streams often know each other. The WCO could ask around and find out who is doing that, and "have a talk" with them.

And if the occasional fish is put above the barrier, the periodic electrofishing would deal with that. As long as the rainbow numbers above the barrier were kept very low, the brook trout population would respond.

In some places where brookies have limestone waters mostly to themselves, there are brookies 12 inches to 15 inches, and even up 17 inches long. Pretty interesting potential, IMHO.

I think they should place the barrier where the old one was. In this way the brookie management zone would not be the entire regs area, just the upper part of it. And the rainbow fishery would continue below that.

As Big Spring Creek continues to recover, the wild trout fishery overall, including rainbows and browns can be extended downstream. And perhaps the brookie management zone could then be extended in the future also.

But I think it will always be only the upper end of the creek.