

Resource Update

Southeast MN Trout Stream Management

The hills and valleys of southeastern Minnesota make up one of the most scenic, biologically rich areas in the state. Fed by the cold water of natural springs that arise from the land's fractured limestone geology, its valleys also make the southeast an angler's paradise, with more than 700 miles of trout streams.

Ecologically sensitive, and popular with anglers from around the upper midwest, these streams require special attention to assure that they remain healthy and productive.

With that in mind, the Minnesota DNR's section of fisheries in 2003 worked with anglers and other interests to lay out a 12-year strategic plan and a 6-year management plan highlighting a variety of approaches to maintain the recreational and biological values of these coldwater resources. Now, at the midpoint of that 12-year period, DNR is reporting on its progress and fine-tuning plans for the period from 2010 to 2015.

Accomplishments: 2004 - 2009

DNR's 2004-2009 management plan for southeast trout streams laid out four major goals related to angling opportunities, habitat improvement, research and monitoring, and public information. Accomplishments for this period include:

- Added 20.26 miles of angling easements on 20 streams.
- Reintroduced native brook trout in 17 streams.
- Implemented tiered trout fishing regulations to increase angling opportunities.
- Assessed fish populations in 68 streams.
- Published 68-page booklet highlighting angling opportunities.
- Intensified long-term monitoring program to better evaluate impacts of habitat improvement projects.



Opportunities: 2010 - 2015

While retaining the four major goals of the earlier plan, DNR fisheries staff have identified a number of opportunities for further improvements in their management of southeast Minnesota's unique coldwater resources, including:

- Accelerate acquisition of AMAs.
- Explore simplification of angling regulations.
- Secure new funding for habitat improvement.
- Enhance research and monitoring efforts.
- Augment information on DNR website.

Next steps

In spring 2010 DNR will host a series of open houses in southeast communities, as well as in St. Paul, to share information with the public on their management efforts. Any changes to regulations would undergo a separate process to allow for public input later in 2010 or in 2011.



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