



The "Spot"

The day started with multiple complaints to "follow up" on while conducting some fishing and boating checks along the way. The second complaint of the day began relatively benignly, and I hoped it would end just the same. The complaint was of a home heating tank suspended by a rope floating on Yellow Breeches Creek, a stocked trout stream. I was unfamiliar with this remote section of the creek, and with some hesitation I began my trek into the heavy underbrush. About a half-mile upstream from where I began, I saw what was described in the complaint. This particular section of the Yellow Breeches was wide and slow. It was the backwater of a partially breached lowhead dam.

The site was named the "Spot," complete with a sign and all the adornments of a weekend getaway—only everything was in far worse condition. The home heating tank appeared to be empty as it floated, tethered to an overhanging limb. I suppose it was a swim platform, although I can think of at least a half-dozen items that would have worked better for that purpose. The campsite was littered with rubbish that included broken-down tents, parts of grills, old couches, fishing equipment, fish carcasses, drug paraphernalia and beer cans.

I walked the perimeter of the site, and in the process I discovered marijuana plants. The young seedlings hadn't been planted. They were still in their cultivation containers. I scoured the immediate area for more plants, and because of the illegal drug activity I had found, I searched the area most carefully. Remote stream corridors often provide all the necessities for illegal plants: Deep soil, plenty of water and nondescript



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ownership. I gathered the drugs and plants, and then left the site to confer with a Pennsylvania State Police vice unit. I met with the vice unit officer and explained where, when and how I found the drugs. The officer said they would add the area to their summer fly-over program, an effort which would pay dividends.

With one problem solved, now only the removal of the home heating tank and the clean-up of the "Spot" remained, not an easy task considering the location of the rubbish. I called several agencies with no commitment to remove the waste. Not satisfied, I went to the local township and secured contact informa-

tion, listed on a housing development permit, for the property owner. I called the developer and informed him of what had been found on his property. He had access to machines and manpower—just what was needed for this job. He agreed to remove the trash and clean up the creek. He was very appreciative because he was unnerved by the mess and activities discovered on his property. As a businessman, he understood the liability associated with potential pollution and illegal activities. The man was an avid sportsman and pledged to keep his property open to fishing and boating activities. Satisfied, I offered my sincere thanks and promised to patrol the area in the coming months to stem any possible reoccurrence.

The state police vice unit discovered several more groves of marijuana plants in the township near and at this site later that summer. Through the cooperation of multiple agencies as well as the benevolence and hard work of one landowner, this is one section of stream still available to Pennsylvania anglers and boaters. ☐



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