

# KEYSTONE SELECT STOCKED TROUT WATERS

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In 2016, the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) implemented a new element to the adult trout stocking program referred to as the Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters program. The program was designed to provide anglers with an opportunity to fish for greater numbers of large trout in eight stream sections managed under Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures Only regulations. Stream sections included in the Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters program received a much higher stocking rate of large trout (250 per mile), as compared with the average stocking rate of large trout allocated to other Delayed Harvest areas and trout-stocked stream sections statewide. In 2016, approximately 3,200 large trout ranging from 2- to 3-years old and 14- to 20-inches in length were distributed among the Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters. These larger trout were stocked during the spring stocking periods (preseason and inseason) to coincide with the peak period of angler use that occurs during spring. For additional information on the development of the Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters program, see the article in the March/April 2016 issue of *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* authored by Leroy Young.

To evaluate the program, PFBC staff conducted angler counts following the preseason and inseason stockings on the eight stream sections included in the Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters program during 2016. For comparison, angler counts were also conducted on three stream sections managed under Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures Only regulations that were not in the Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters program. As expected, a higher amount of

angler use was recorded during both evaluation periods on the Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters stream sections (12.5 anglers per mile—preseason and 9 anglers per mile—inseason), as compared with the Delayed Harvest areas not in the Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters program (8 anglers per mile—preseason and 4.5 anglers per mile—inseason).

In addition to angler counts, angler interviews were also conducted following the 2016 preseason and inseason trout stockings on the eight stream sections included in the Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters program. Overall, a total of 231 angler interviews were completed on these streams.

Anglers were initially asked if they were fishing this Delayed Harvest area because of the greater number of large trout stocked as part of the Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters program or would they have fished this area anyway? Overall, 36 percent of the anglers interviewed responded that they were fishing these areas because of the greater numbers of large trout stocked.

Anglers were asked if they purchased a 2016 Pennsylvania fishing license specifically for the purpose of fishing in Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters where greater numbers of large trout were stocked. Three percent of the anglers responded that they purchased a license specifically for the purpose of fishing in Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters where greater numbers of large trout were stocked.

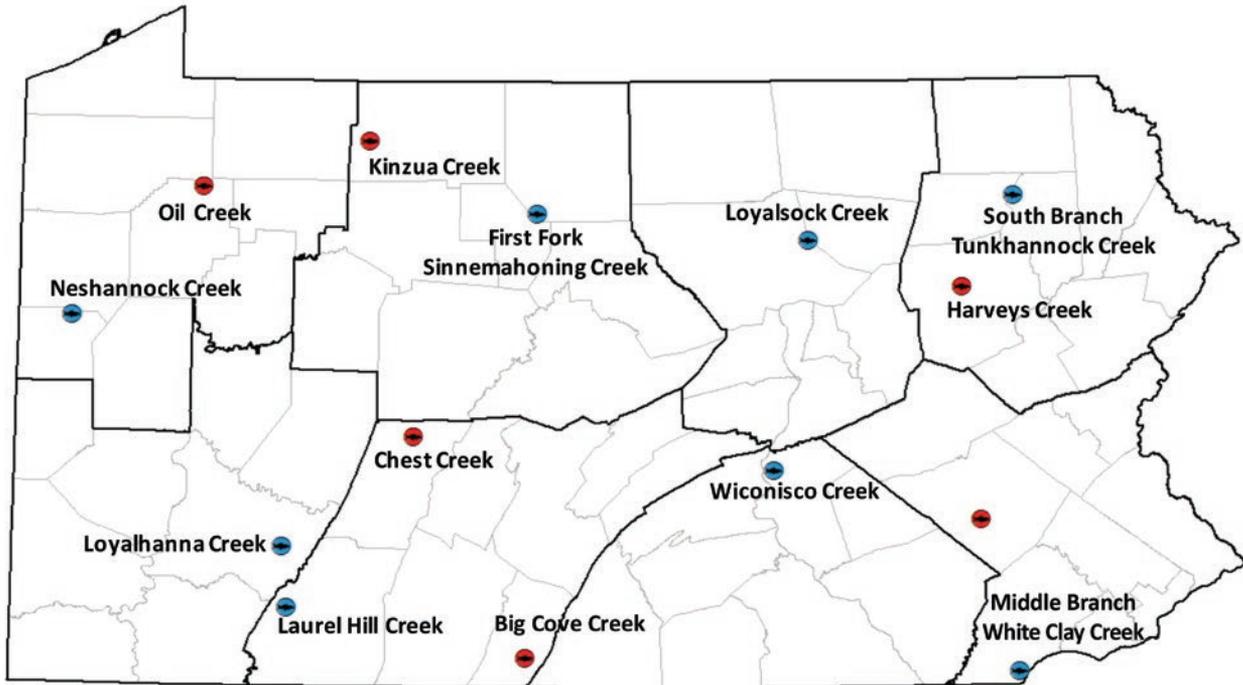
Another question asked was: “Since more large trout are being stocked in this Delayed Harvest area do you believe you will make more, less or about the same number of trips to fish this area in 2016?” Seventy percent of the anglers responded that they planned to make more trips to fish this Delayed Harvest area in 2016.

Anglers were also asked if they supported or opposed expanding the Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters program to other Delayed Harvest areas in the future. Ninety-seven percent of the anglers supported the expansion of this program to other Delayed Harvest areas.



Rainbow Trout caught in the Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters section of First Fork Sinnemahoning Creek in May 2016.

# Location of Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters



**Current Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters**



**New Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters for 2017**



photo-Rick Larson



Rainbow Trout caught in the Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters section of Loyalhanna Creek, Westmoreland County in March 2016.

Additional information gathered from the survey revealed 97 percent of the anglers interviewed while fishing in Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters were male anglers. Fifty-nine percent of the anglers caught at least one trout during their angler trip, and 65 percent of the anglers fished with flies, while 35 percent fished with artificial lures or both flies and artificial lures.

Based on the high level of angler support for the Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters program and the fact that these waters have turned out to be true destination waters for anglers, PFBC has added six more Delayed Harvest areas to the program in 2017. These include: Oil Creek, Venango County; Kinzua Creek, McKean County; Chest Creek, Cambria County; Harveys Creek, Luzerne County; Big Cove Creek, Fulton County; and Tulpohocken Creek, Berks County. These are some of the waters that anglers suggested during their interviews. Currently, one stream section is included in the Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters program from each of the eight Commissioner Districts. Expanding the program by six stream sections will provide better statewide distribution of these waters. This will reduce the travel time required by anglers to reach one of these waters and potentially allow more anglers to experience this special program. In 2017, approximately 4,500 large trout ranging from 2- to 3-years old and 14- to 20-inches in length will be distributed among the 14 Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters. We are excited about the excellent opportunities for large trout that these areas provide. ☐