

# Addition of the upper West Branch Susquehanna River to Section 65.15 (Catch and Release All-Tackle Regulations)

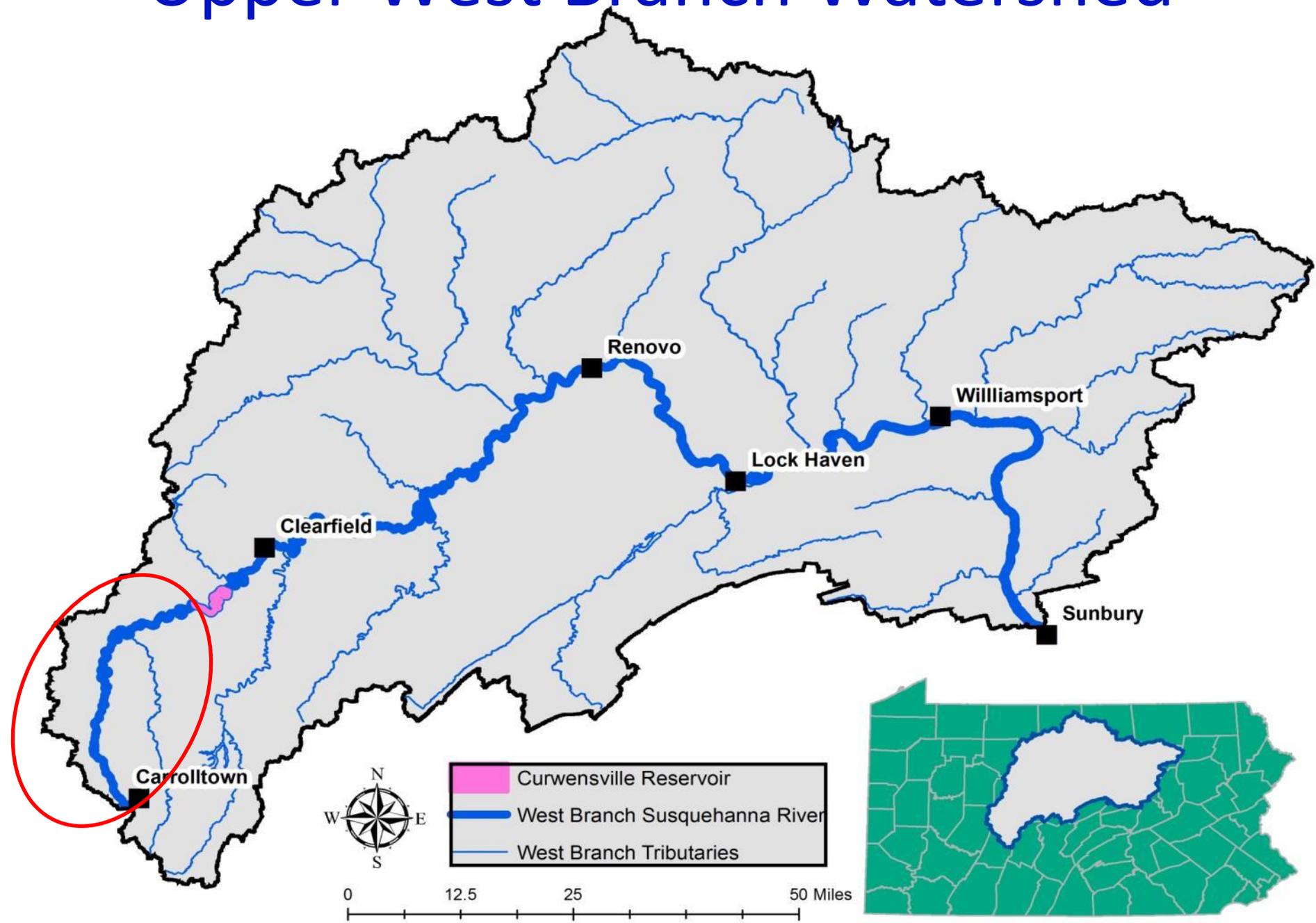


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Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission



# Upper West Branch Watershed



# Historical View

- Historically polluted by acid mine drainage (AMD) and devoid of aquatic life
- AMD remediation has substantially improved water quality in the past 5-10 years



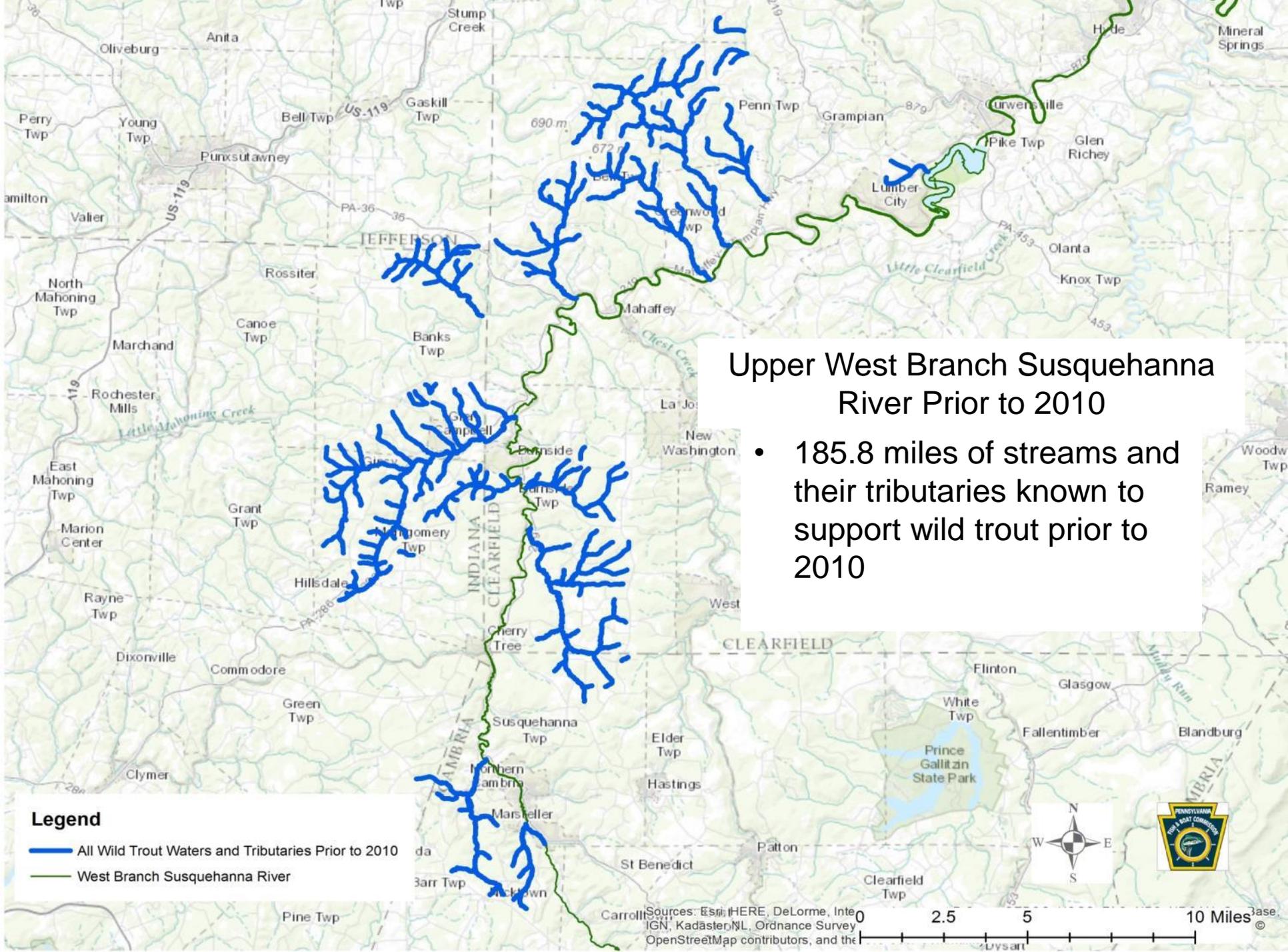
# Rapid Recovery



# Upper West Branch Wild Brook Trout and Brown Trout

2012 – 2 wild trout  
2014 – 22 wild trout  
2016 – 51 wild trout





## Upper West Branch Susquehanna River Prior to 2010

- 185.8 miles of streams and their tributaries known to support wild trout prior to 2010

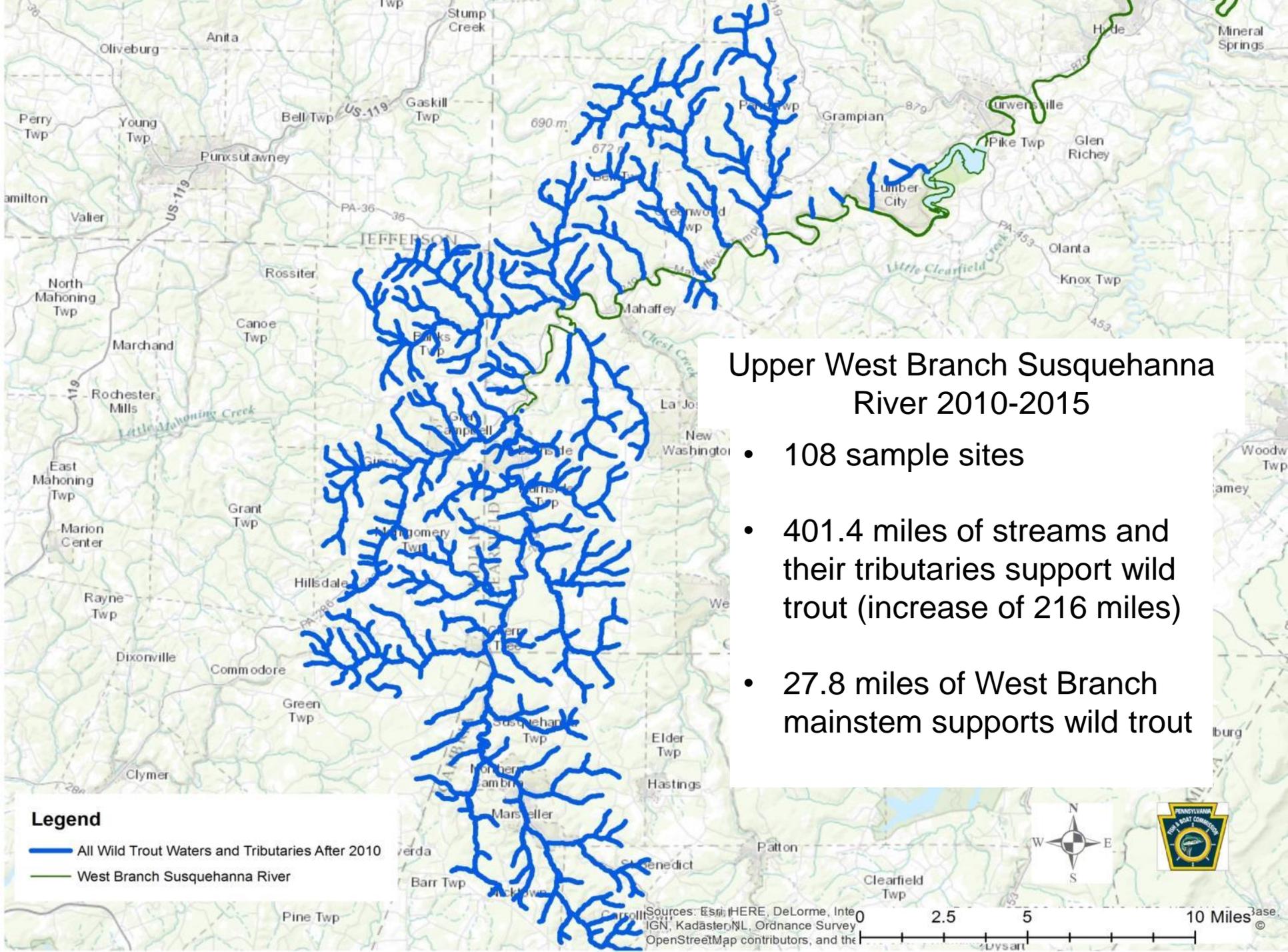
**Legend**

- All Wild Trout Waters and Tributaries Prior to 2010
- West Branch Susquehanna River

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, Intergis, IGN, Kadaster, NL, Ordnance Survey, OpenStreetMap contributors, and the

0 2.5 5 10 Miles





## Upper West Branch Susquehanna River 2010-2015

- 108 sample sites
- 401.4 miles of streams and their tributaries support wild trout (increase of 216 miles)
- 27.8 miles of West Branch mainstem supports wild trout

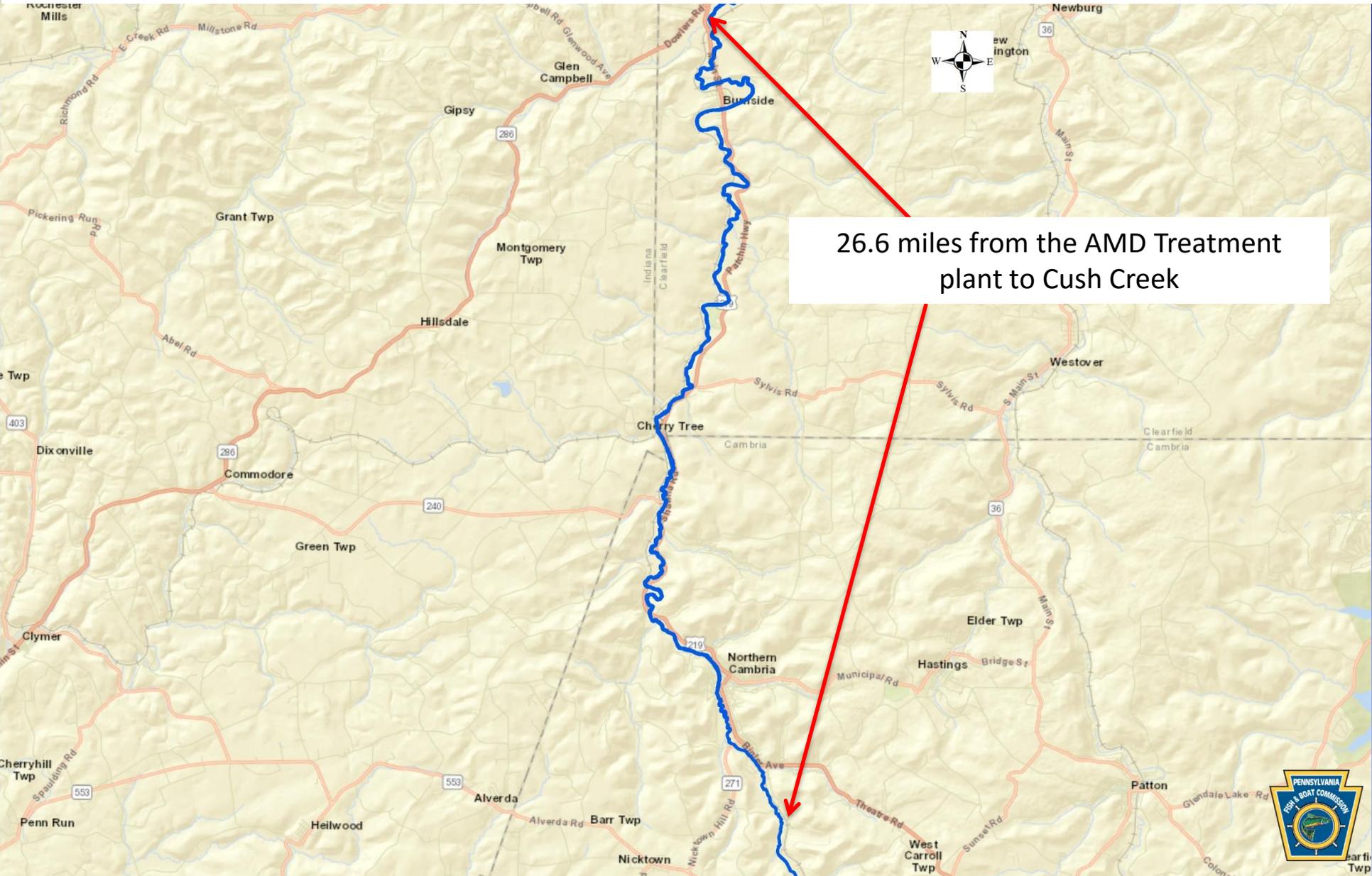
### Legend

- All Wild Trout Waters and Tributaries After 2010
- West Branch Susquehanna River



Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, Intermap, iGN, Kadaster, NL, Ordnance Survey, OpenStreetMap contributors, and the

# Upper West Branch Susquehanna River Catch and Release All-Tackle Regulations



26.6 miles from the AMD Treatment plant to Cush Creek



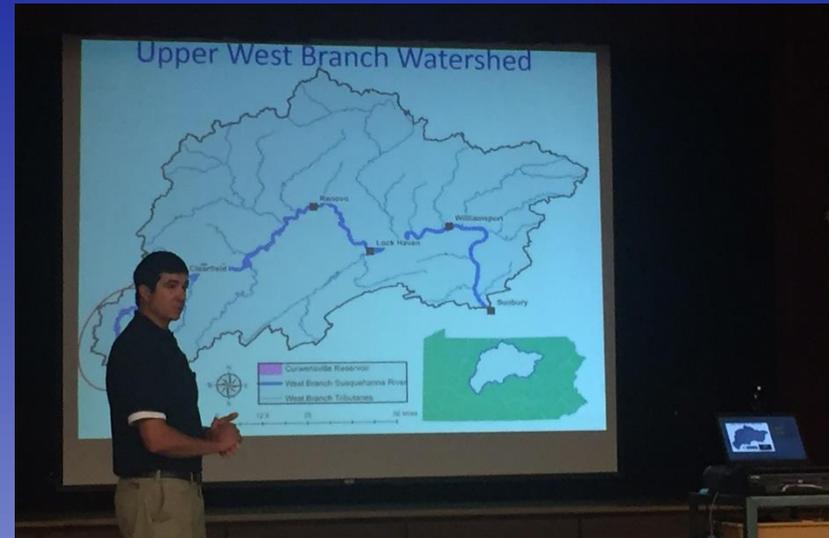
# Catch and Release All-Tackle

- West Branch: Brook Trout and Brown Trout
- Catch and Release All-Tackle regulations will help ensure full recovery of wild Brook Trout and Brown Trout populations in as short a time period as possible
- Regulations provide increased protection to the wild trout and are inclusive as possible for youth and families



# Public Input

- Staff held a public meeting at the Northern Cambria Middle School on June 22 to obtain public input regarding adding the West Branch to the Catch and Release All-Tackle program
- **20 public attendees**
- All 18 attendees that completed a comment card indicated support for the proposed regulation change
- **4 additional public comments** also supported the change



# Staff Recommendation

- Special opportunity to protect, improve, and highlight a developing wild trout fishery in a region that many waterways have not supported fisheries for over a century due to historic pollution
- Staff recommend the West Branch Susquehanna River from the AMD treatment plant outflow to the confluence with Cush Creek be added to Section 65.15 (Catch and Release All-Tackle Regulations)

