

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

Wild Trout Summit

Stream Section Habitat Prioritization

Tyler F. Neimond, Chief
Stream Habitat Section

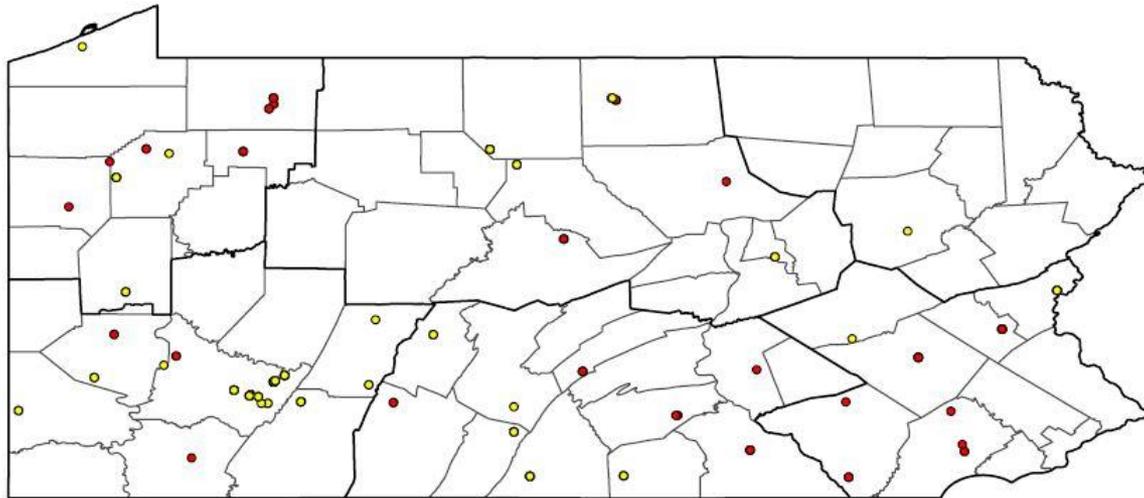
August 26, 2017



Past Prioritization Processes

- Before 2012 projects were selected on a first come first serve basis. It was a reactive “shotgun approach”.

2011 Stream Section Completed Habitat Projects



Legend

Program

- CHIP-Stream
- TAP-Stream
- PFBC Law Enforcement Regions
- Counties

Project Totals

25 CHIP Projects
33 TAP Projects

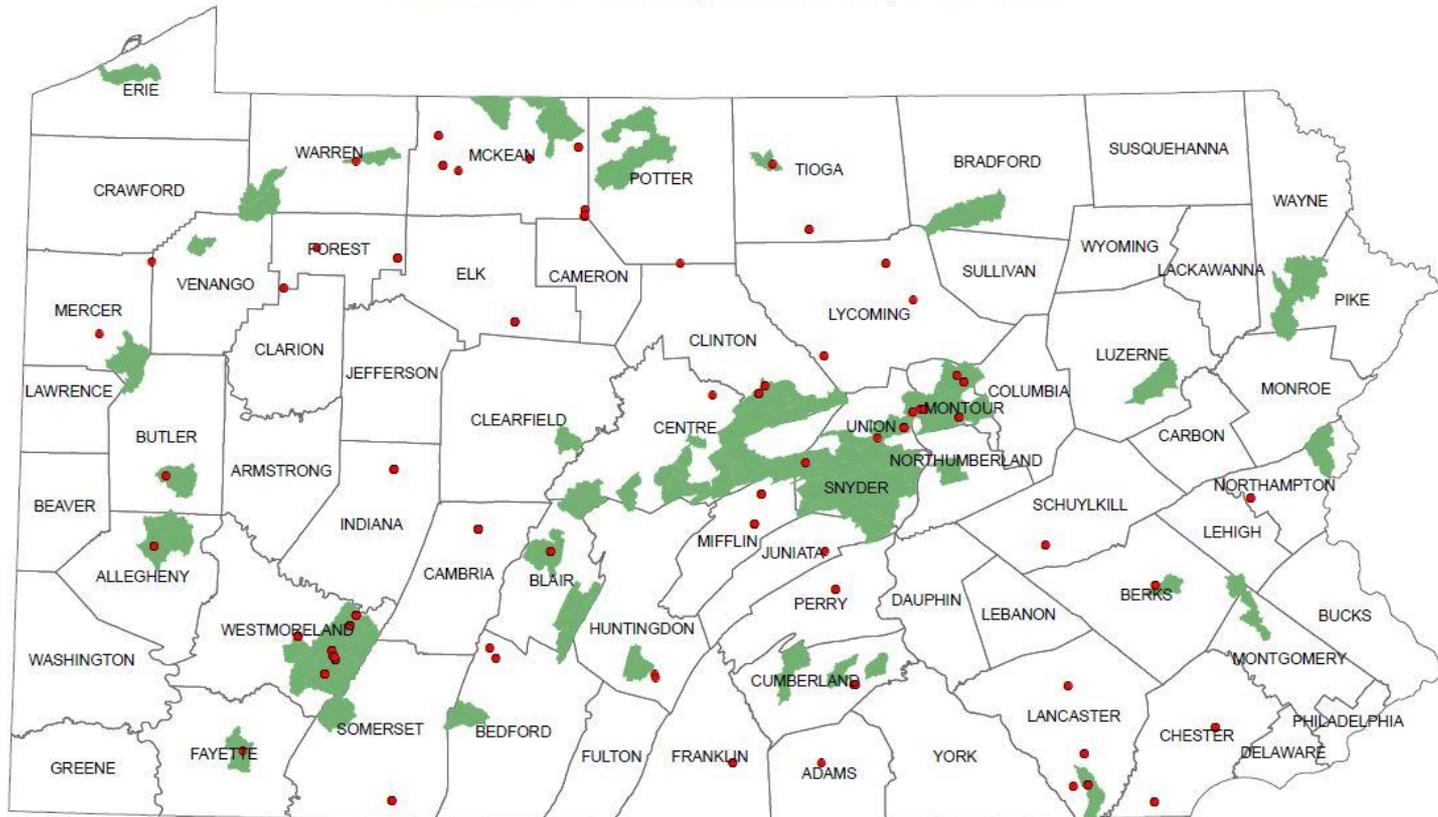
Past Prioritization Processes

- In 2012 met with each Area Fisheries Managers (AFM) to set priorities
- **Resulted in 27 “Tier 1” and 18 “Tier 2” watersheds**
- Continue to implement projects from this list
 - Limitations
 - Subjective
 - Continual maintenance



2012 Priority Watersheds

Stream Section's Priority Watersheds with 2012's Completed Project Sites



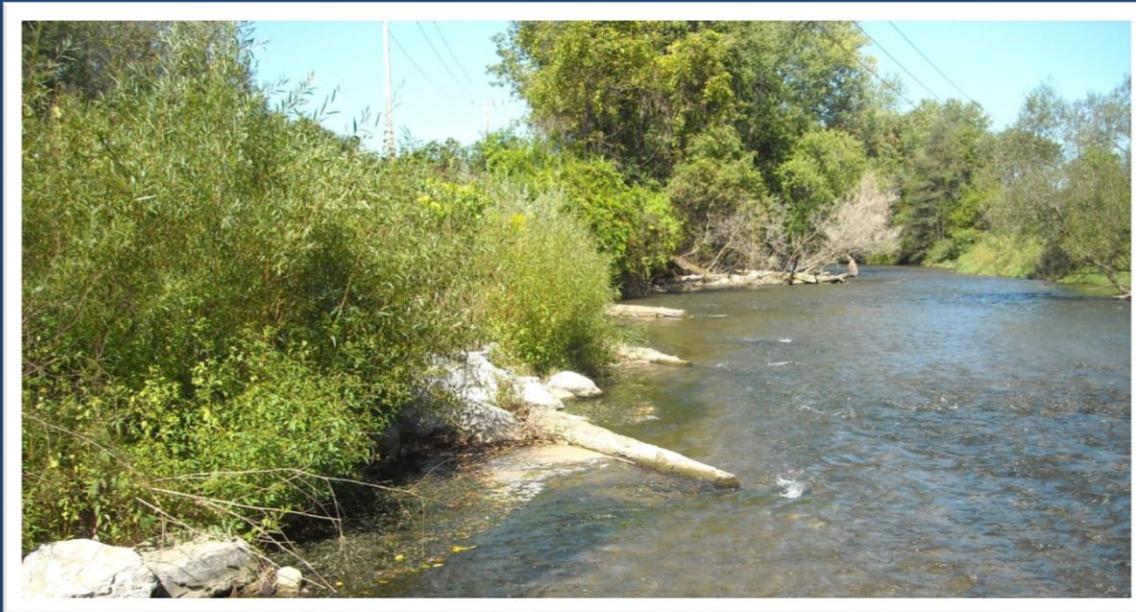
0 12.5 25 50 75 100 Miles



TFN

Current Prioritization Processes

- In 2014 the Habitat Improvement Prioritization Workgroup was formed
- Included staff from the Division of Fisheries Management, the Division of Habitat Management, and the Geospatial Technologies and Business Solutions Section



Assignment:

- Determine the broad objectives statewide for fish habitat improvement work on streams.

&

- **Develop a recommendation for an objective, systematic prioritization process for developing stream habitat improvement projects.**



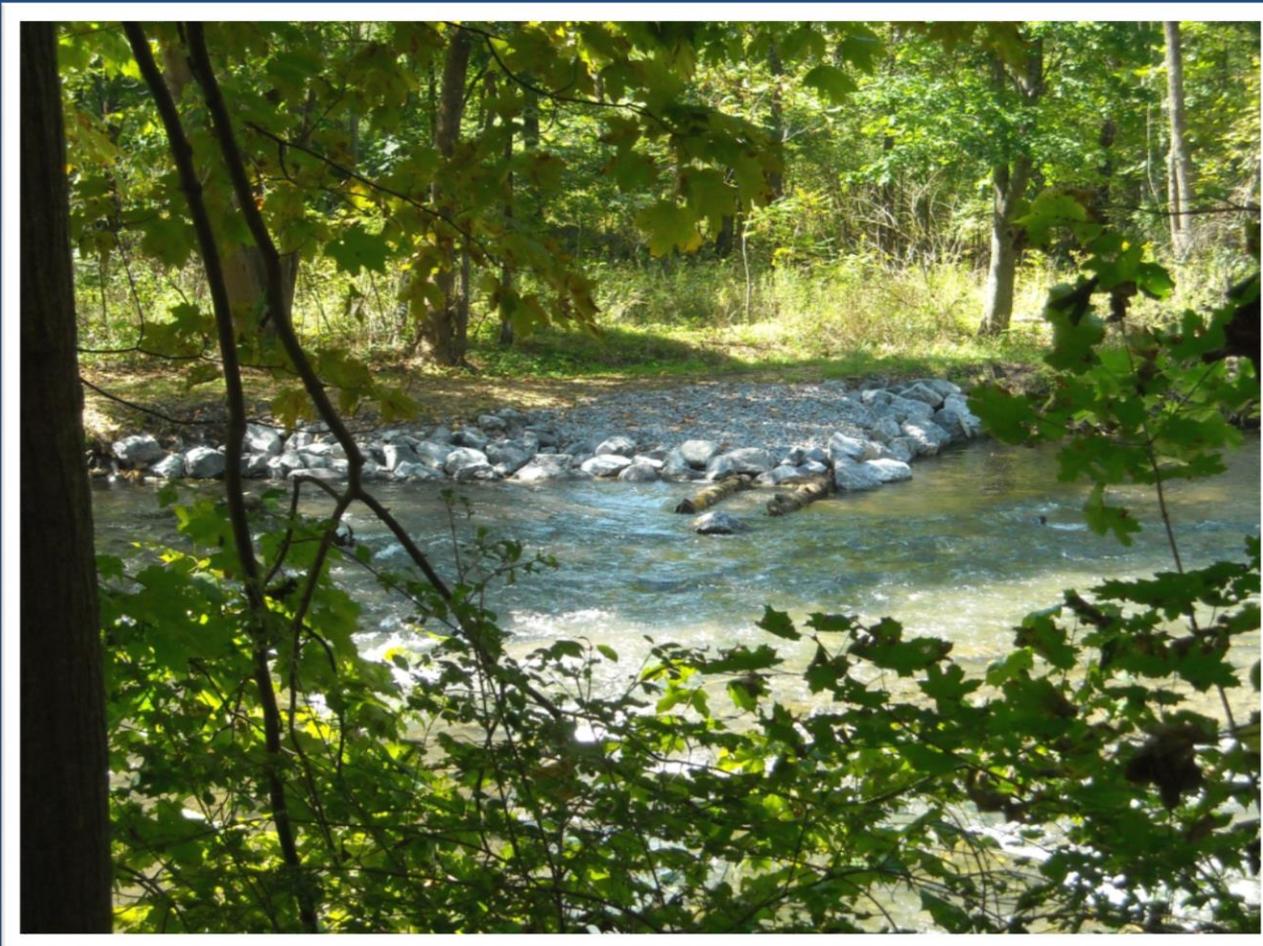
Considerations

- Proactive approach
- **Reactive approach**
- Prioritization processes being utilized elsewhere
 - Agencies – PA NRCS, PA DEP
 - NGO's – e.g. WPC, TU, Am. Rivers, TNC (Chesapeake Fish Passage), Fish Habitat Partnerships
- **Feasibility – treatable, equipment access to site, funding, partners**



Goal

- Protection and enhancement of coldwater fisheries through habitat improvement to streams



Objectives

- **Maintain or improve Class A fisheries**
- **Raise the biomass category by at least 1 level**
- **Increase the size structure of the population**
- **Increase angler use and satisfaction**
- **Remove sources of impairment from the PA DEP 303 d list**
- **Using the EPA Rapid Bioassessment Protocol, increase the habitat condition score**



Resource Focus Areas

- Trout biomass
- **High angler use**
- Limestone streams
- **Public lands**
- PA DEP 303 d list with PFBC treatable sources of impairment
- **Biomass Class B, C, and D adjacent to Class A sections**

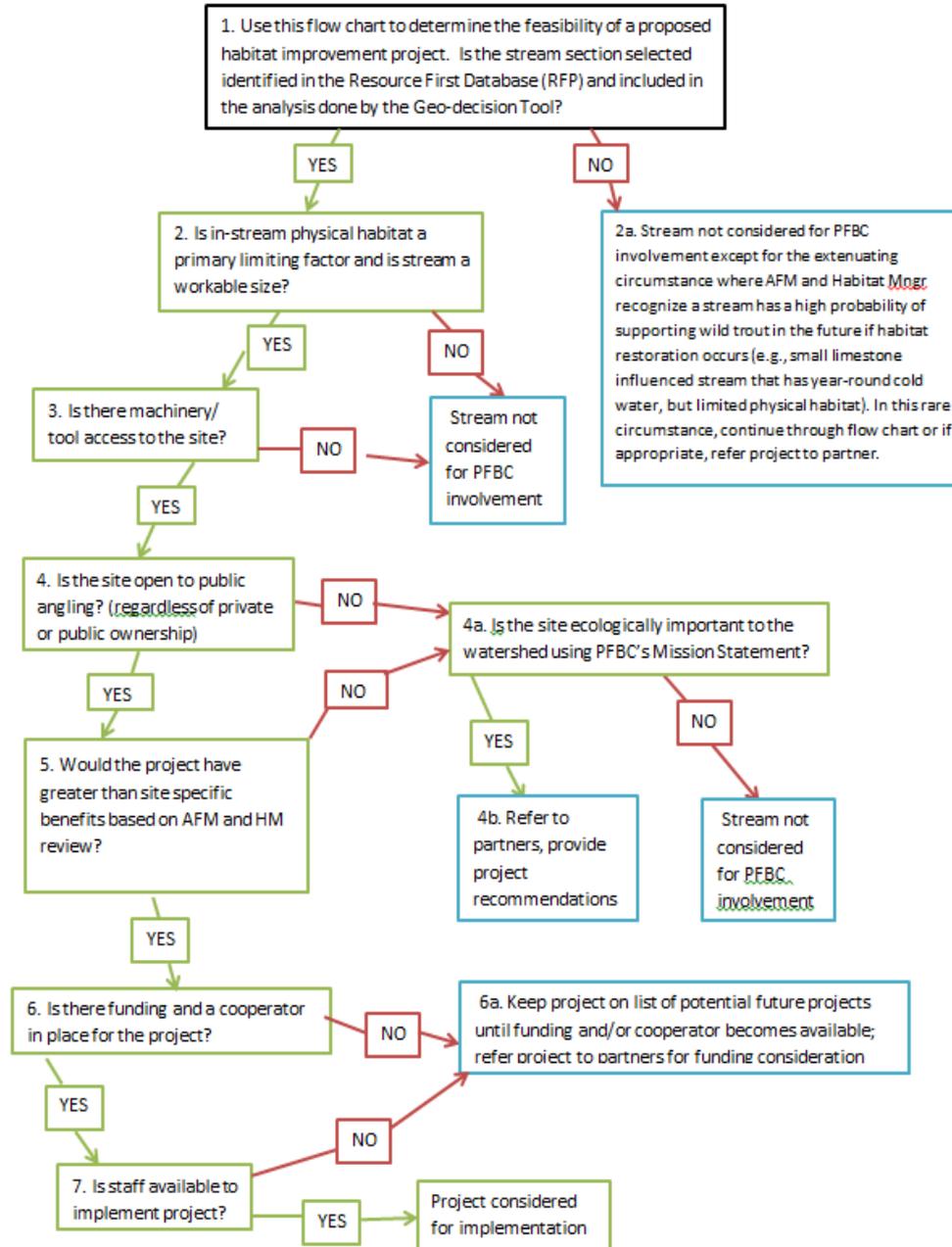


Geo-decision Tool

- Relies on readily accessible, data from PFBC or PASDA
- **Resource focus areas are weighted by a standardized scoring criteria**
- The outcome of the Geo-decision tool produces a score for each stream section
- **Priority 1,2,&3**
- Project locations still need to be evaluated using the “Feasibility Flow Chart”



APPENDIX B: PFBC Screening Criteria for Feasibility of Stream Habitat Improvement Projects



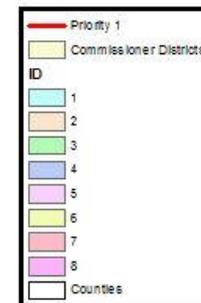
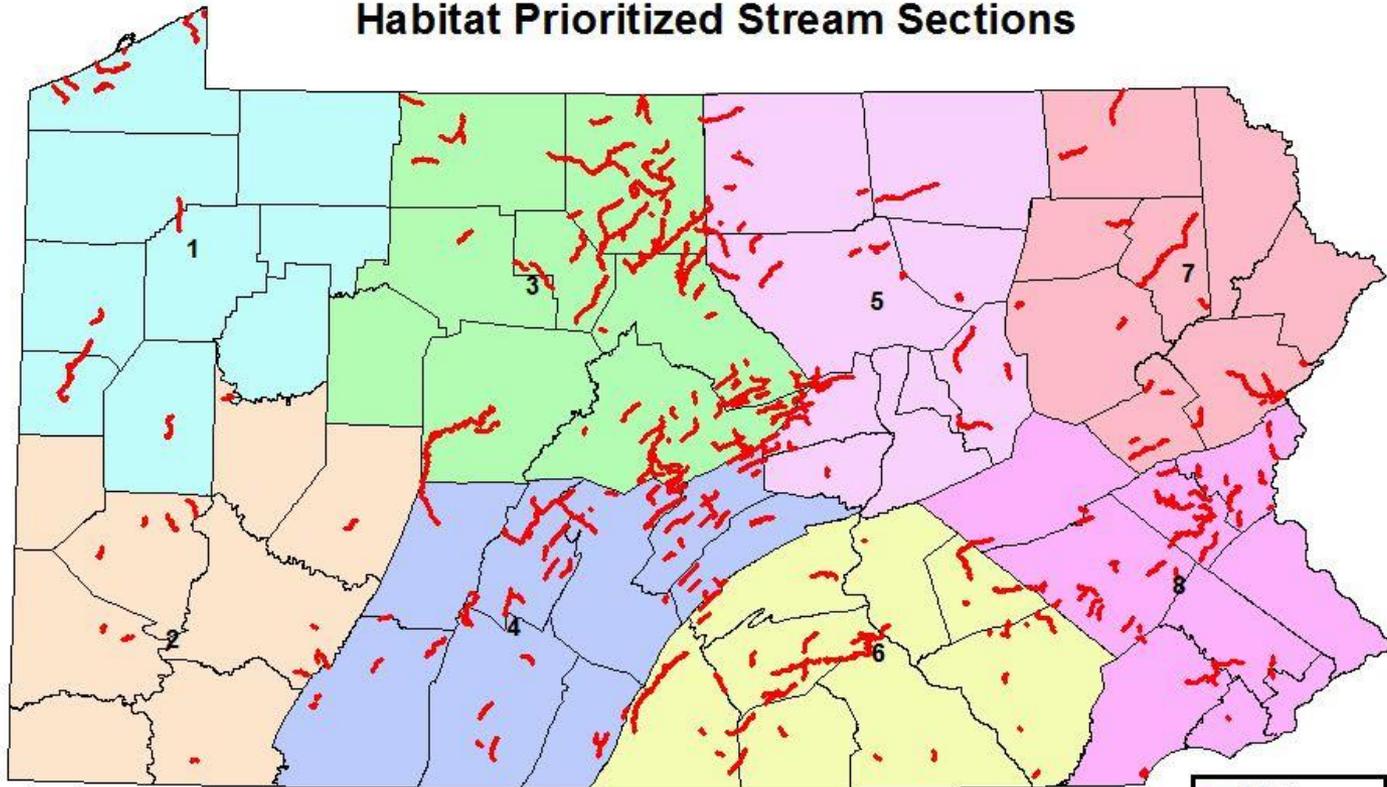
Geo-decision Tool-Outcome: Priority 1

- 370 stream sections
- **3.6% of all stream sections**
- 250 different streams
- **1450 mile of streams**



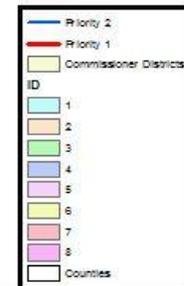
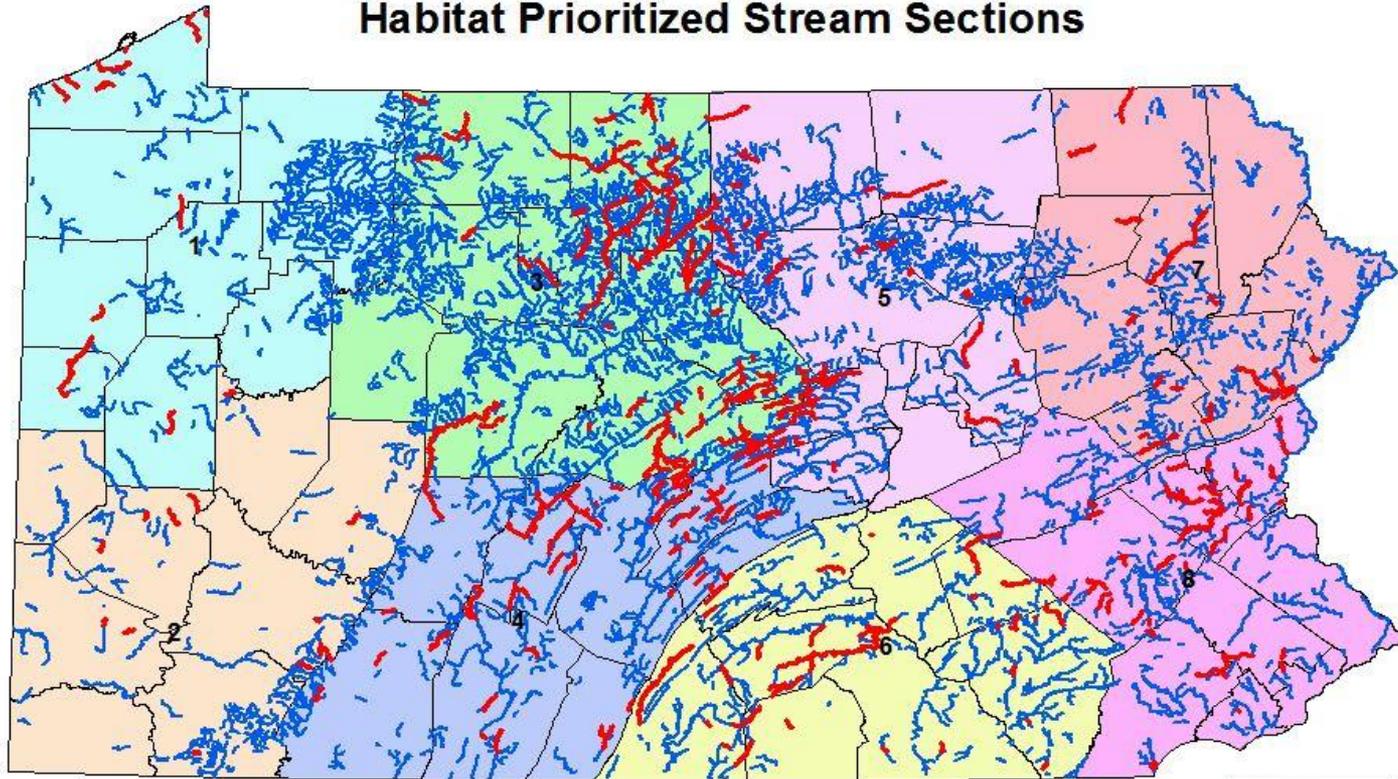
Geo-decision Tool-Results: Priority 1

Habitat Prioritized Stream Sections



Geo-decision Tool-Results: Priority 1 & 2

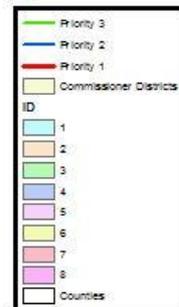
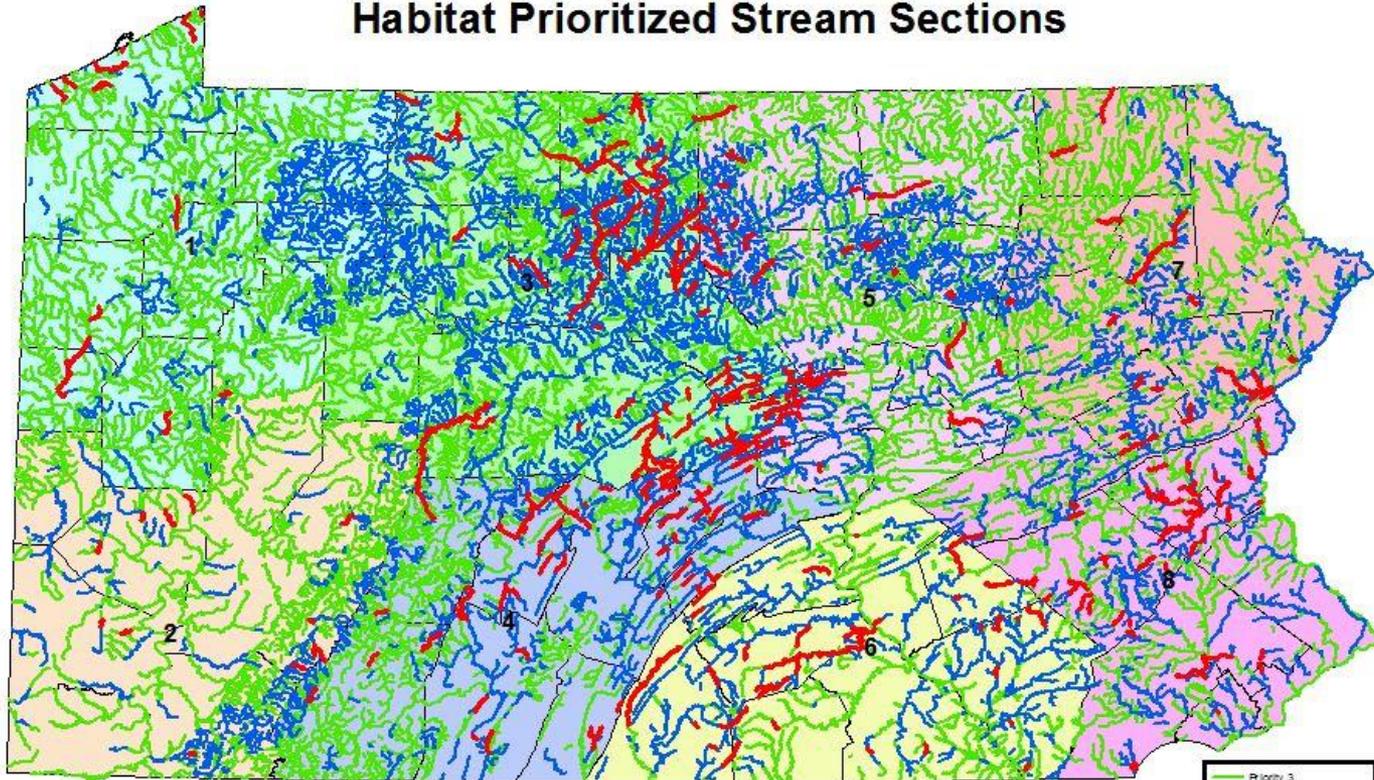
Habitat Prioritized Stream Sections



0 15 30 60 90 120 Miles

Geo-decision Tool-Results: Priority 1, 2, & 3

Habitat Prioritized Stream Sections



0 15 30 60 90 120 Miles

Geo-decision Tool: Continued

- Since 2016 staff have been using the Geo-decision tool with the feasibility flow chart to advance habitat projects with partners.

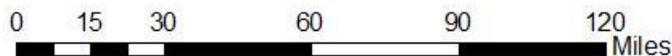
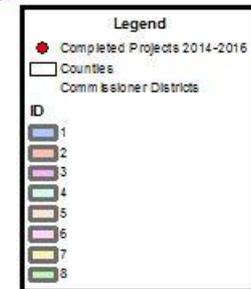
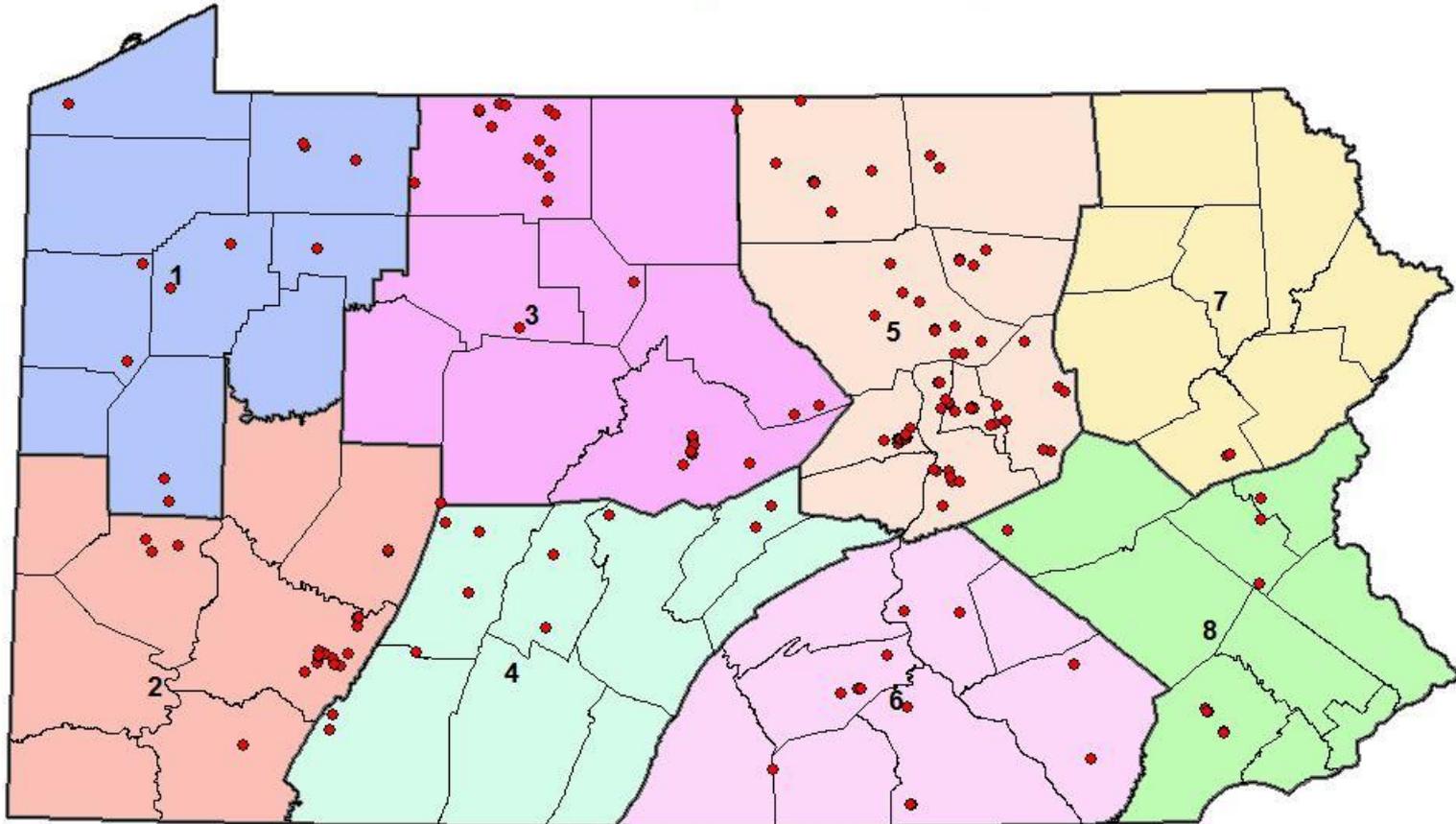


Current Project Partners and Focus Areas

- Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy
 - 14 counties in the Northcentral
- **Western Pennsylvania Conservancy**
 - **Western half of PA**
- Wildlands Conservancy
 - Lehigh Valley
- **County Conservation Districts**
- Trout Unlimited
- **Sportsman Groups**



Stream Section Completed Projects 2014-2016



Summary

- Historically a first-come, first-served approach
- **Currently a data driven “needs” approach**
- The current prioritization process uses a data driven tool that allows PFBC to:
 - Take a proactive approach
 - Take a reactive approach
 - Direct internal and partner funded projects toward PFBC identified priorities.



Tyler Neimond
Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission
Division of Habitat Management
tneimond@pa.gov

