

Notice

Proposed Exemptions to Allow for the Continued Stocking of Class A Stream Sections

The Fish and Boat Commission (Commission) intends to consider at its meeting on January 25 and 26, 2021, whether to allow trout stocking to continue on each of the Class A wild trout streams listed below. Under 58 Pa. Code §57.8a (relating to Class A wild trout streams), the Executive Director will obtain approval of the Commission prior to granting permission to stock a Class A wild trout stream under 58 Pa. Code § 71.4 (relating to Class A wild trout streams).

On September 30, 2014 (effective January 1, 2015), the Statement of Policy at 58 Pa. Code § 57.8a (Class A wild trout streams) was amended to require the Executive Director to obtain approval from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (Commission) prior to granting permission to stock a Class A wild trout stream section. Following the update to 58 Pa. Code § 57.8a, staff developed internal decision-making criteria to allow continued Commission stocking of a limited number of Class A wild trout stream sections. Subsequently, 13 stream sections that support strong Class A wild Brown Trout populations were officially designated as Class A wild trout streams during the 2015-2017 timeframe following updated wild trout surveys, and stocking was continued. The stream sections where stocking continued are heavily fished waters in high-density human population centers of a size and character that can support a fishery featuring both stocked and wild trout components.

Historically, there have been very few streams where stocking of trout following Class A designation was considered and warranted. However, there are rare cases, beyond the current 13 stocked Class A wild trout stream sections, where a stocking exemption should be considered. To account for these rare circumstances, staff developed additional decision-making criteria to consider internal and external requests for continued stocking of newly designated Class A wild trout streams. These criteria provide staff direction to guide decisions when unusual situations arise but do not automatically result in continued stocking when criteria are met, as most Class A stream sections are best managed solely for

wild trout with no stocking. They offer a mechanism for transparent, timely, and consistent consideration of requests to continue the stocking of newly designated Class A wild trout streams. These criteria, listed below, can also be found in the *Operational Guidelines for the Management of Trout Fisheries in Pennsylvania Waters, 5th edition* anticipated to be released in December 2020 and available at www.fishandboat.com.

1. Pre-existing youth fishing derbies and special use areas that were properly permitted by the Commission and have a history of more than one past occurrence.
2. Pre-existing private stockings on private property on recently designated (i.e., within one year of posting in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*) Class A stream sections that have been closed to public angling at the time of Class A designation and at least since 2010. Historic stockings need to be verifiable by documentation, stocking records, and have a history of more than one past occurrence.
3. Stream sections stocked by the Commission, a cooperative nursery, and/or a private group or individual the year prior to Class A designation, have a history of more than one past occurrence, and meet the following sub-criteria.
 - a) The stream section was stocked with adult trout during the year immediately prior to its designation as a Class A wild trout stream.
 - b) Angler use (anglers/mile of stream) in the stream section equals or exceeds the statewide 50th percentile of angler use for the opening weekend of trout season as documented by Commission staff, or the stream section is a special regulation area under 58 Pa. Code Chapter 65 (relating to special fishing regulations) that was stocked by the Commission the year immediately prior to its designation as a Class A wild trout stream.
 - c) The trout species to be stocked are not the same species as the primary component of the wild trout population.
 - d) The stocking numbers and frequency will not exceed those of the year prior to the Class A designation.

4. Previously received an exemption or a Special Activities Permit from the Commission between 2010 and the present to allow for continued stocking of a Class A wild trout stream section. If the exemption was time-limited and not renewed before expiration, it will be considered a new request and a determination will be made according to other exemption criteria.

Exemptions to the prohibition of stocking hatchery trout into Class A wild trout stream sections will be granted only under rare circumstances. Consideration is only given to requests for continued stocking in stream sections within one year of the section being designated as Class A and posted in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*; however, entities that previously received an exemption or a Special Activities Permit from the Commission between 2010 and the present to allow for continued stocking are eligible for consideration. Should an exemption be granted, the Commission will determine the species of trout, number of trout, and frequency of stocking consistent with stocking strategies and historical stocking rates of the stream section to minimize impacts to the Class A wild trout population. All stocking provisions will be communicated in writing by the Commission to the entity receiving the exemption for continued stocking on Class A designated waters. Stocking exemptions will be valid for no more than five years at which time the need for continuance may be evaluated.

To date, Commission staff have identified 13 potential exemptions to 58 Pa. Code § 57.8a (Class A wild trout streams) that meet the criteria to consider the continuance of trout stocking at 12 Class A stream sections. Of these 13 potential exemptions, 10 are associated with youth fishing derbies that occur on a small portion of the stream section. The general exemption classification, stream name, stream section, county, and commissioner district are listed below.

Youth fishing derbies

- Beaver Run (Section 01), Clearfield County, Commissioner District 3
- Freeman Run (Section 03), Potter County, Commissioner District 3
- McElhattan Creek (Section 02), Clinton County, Commissioner District 3
- Yellow Creek (Section 02), Bedford County, Commissioner District 4

- Letort Spring Run (Section 03), Cumberland County, Commissioner District 6 (two events)
- Laurel Run (Section 02), Berks County, Commissioner District 8
- Unnamed tributary to Tulpehocken Creek (Womelsdorf) (Section 02), Berks County, Commissioner District 8
- Wyomissing Creek (Section 03), Berks County, Commissioner District 8

General fishing derbies (adult and youth participants)

- Kishacoquillas Creek (Section 05), Mifflin County, Commissioner District 4

Children/Disabled Fishing Areas

- Marvin Creek (Section 01), McKean County, Commissioner District 3

Previous stocking exemption granted

- Cross Fork (Section 03), Potter County, Commissioner District 3
- Warriors Mark Run (Section 01), Huntingdon County, Commissioner District 4

Persons with comments, objections, or suggestions concerning the additions are invited to submit comments in writing to Executive Director, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000, within 30 days after publication of this notice in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*. Comments also may be submitted electronically by completing the form at www.fishandboat.com/regcomments. If an acknowledgment of electronic comments is not received by the sender within two working days, the comments should be retransmitted to ensure receipt. Electronic comments submitted in any other manner will not be accepted.

FOR THE PENNSYLVANIA FISH AND BOAT COMMISSION:

/s/ Timothy D. Schaeffer
Timothy D. Schaeffer
Executive Director