



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

EcoNewsWire

Environmental Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Brook trout are Iowa's only native trout and can now be found in streams in northeastern Iowa, including Winneshiek County. (Photo by Larry Reis)

Watershed improvement efforts help brook trout thrive in northeastern streams

MEDIA CONTACT: Michael Steuck, DNR, 563-382-8324 or michael.steuck@dnr.iowa.gov.

It was just a few weeks ago when staff with the Fisheries Bureau of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources visited South Pine Creek Wildlife Management Area to monitor the population of brook trout in South Pine Creek.

The news was good - years of work to protect and enhance the South Pine Creek watershed in Winneshiek County has allowed Iowa's only native trout to be protected, thrive and continue to naturally reproduce in that stream.

Now, DNR Fisheries staff spawn adult brook trout from South Pine Creek, raise them in a hatchery to about 2 inches in size, and reintroduce them into other streams in Iowa with good water quality. The clean, clear cold water has allowed the stocked fish to thrive in several northeastern streams that have also undergone improvements.



The areas that staff like Northeast Fisheries Supervisor Michael Steuck have determined viable to reintroduce brook trout are those that have undergone significant conservation work to reduce bacteria and sediment, said Steve Hopkins with the DNR's Water Quality Bureau. In some streams, it has been decades since trout have been able to naturally reproduce and survive.

Before work began on watersheds such as the Yellow River Headwaters and Silver Creek in Winneshiek County, excess bacteria and sediment runoff primarily from farmlands, unstable streambanks and pastures contributed to elevated temperatures and pollution in streams, creating an unsuitable habitat for trout.

Grants from Section 319 of the Clean Water Act have funded land improvement efforts on these watersheds, such as water monitoring, floodplain restoration and bank stabilization. The DNR has also worked with landowners to reduce the amount of livestock manure that could run into streams and cause the growth of algae and bacteria.

Although the watershed project goals were to reduce bacteria, sediment reduction most benefited the trout. The best management practices, such as cover crops, improved manure storage and terraces, also helped reduce sediment to those waters, which led to creating better habitat for trout.

Trout lay their eggs in gravel so clear conditions are critical - sediment can smother the eggs and prevent new trout from hatching.

"When you have improved water quality and habitat you have more robust trout populations," Steuck said. "They can successfully reproduce on their own and we don't have to stock them.

We can put our resources into more habitat or stocking other streams that are of lesser quality."

Healthier streams have been able to support larger and naturally reproducing populations of trout. As work in watersheds to reduce sediment delivery to the streams continues and expands, there is a new goal: To restore native South Pine Brook Trout populations in those clear, cold streams.

Native South Pine brook trout were reintroduced over four years ago into the headwaters of the Yellow River and Silver Creek because of improving water quality in those streams, and the brook trout have successfully survived and grown in those waters.

"Because of less sediment and better habitat, streams have trout that are reproducing on their own," Steuck said.

DNR enforcement actions

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DES MOINES – DNR staff work with individuals, businesses and communities to help them protect our natural resources by complying with state and federal laws. This approach is very effective. In the few cases where compliance cannot be achieved, the DNR issues enforcement actions. The following list summarizes recent enforcement actions. Find the entire, original orders on DNR's website at www.iowadnr.gov/EnforcementActions.

Consent Orders

A consent order is issued as an alternative to issuing an administrative order. A consent order indicates that the DNR has voluntarily entered into a legally enforceable agreement with the other party.

Buchanan County

Sean Dolan

Pay a \$2,000 administrative penalty.

Johnson County

Watts Development Group, Inc.

Comply with all terms of its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit; pay a \$3,000 administrative penalty.

Pottawattamie County

WKC Farms, Inc.

Pay a \$2,000 administrative penalty.

Air Quality permits under review

MEDIA CONTACT: Marnie Stein, DNR, at 515-725-9525 or Marnie.Stein@dnr.iowa.gov for Title V permits.

DES MOINES – The DNR Air Quality Bureau has the following draft permits up for review. The permits help protect Iowans' health and air quality. DNR's permitting staff review each permit application to ensure facilities comply with state and federal air quality requirements. We encourage public comments on draft permits, providing help on how to make effective comments. Submit written comments to the assigned permit writer before 4:30 p.m. on the last day of the comment period. DNR considers public comments before finalizing the permits.

Title V Operating Permits

Title V Operating permits are reviewed and re-issued every five years. Facilities with a Title V permit have the potential to emit large amounts of air pollutants compared to other facilities. The five-year reviews are a federal requirement and ensure adequate monitoring is included in the permit. The DNR plans to issue Title V Operating Permits for the following facilities. Find permit details at www.iowadnr.gov/titlev-draft.

Pocahontas County

BrandFX, LLC, 21201 510th St., Pocahontas.

The application was submitted to operate their existing Truck and Bus Bodies facility. The public comment period ends December 31.

Polk County

Metro Park East Landfill, 12181 NE University Ave., Mitchellville.

The Title V renewal application was submitted to operate their existing municipal solid waste landfill, (SIC 4953) (NAICS 562212). The public comment period ends December 30.

