

Brook Trout Access Restored on Shavers Fork Tributary

The DNR and its partners have completed a major project to restore spawning access for brook trout in Beaver Creek of the Shavers Fork River above Cheat Bridge in Randolph County. "For the first time in 25 years, brook trout in the Shavers Fork main stem can move upstream into Beaver Creek to their critical tributary spawning areas," DNR Director Frank Jezioro said.



Steve Brown

Besides improving brood trout habitat and access to their spawning areas, the project doubled the flood capacity of the Beaver Creek culverts.

Unique in West Virginia, Shavers Fork is a high-elevation, big-river brook trout fishery. For more than a century, the river and its watershed have been impacted by activities such as logging and railroad construction which have reduced brook trout habitat and populations. Recent plans to restore brook trout have prioritized both habitat restoration and removal of fish passage barriers between the main stem and the species' spawning tributaries.

The DNR Wildlife Resources Section has expanded its successful Acid Stream Restoration Program to include physical habitat restoration as well as stream liming. Director Jezioro said, "New grant funding for stream restoration became available to us through congressional appropriations and the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture."

To build the Beaver Creek project, biologists worked with key partners at West Virginia University's Natural Resources Analysis Center and others, assembling a team of experts with unique expertise and skills. The team included DNR biologists, WVU research scientists, stream restoration experts from Canaan Valley Institute, and railroad construction specialists from TrakSpec Railroad Corporation, based in Hurricane, W.Va. Because the project site is located on a remote section of railroad, all construction material such as logs and rocks and heavy equipment had to be transported to the site by rail. TrakSpec's expertise and equipment was critical.

In the end, the team built a new, fish-friendly section of stream with a sophisticated complex of culverts, the centerpiece of which is a partially-buried 10-foot culvert containing a simulated stream channel.

Midway through the project, a major design change was required to meet a mandatory construction deadline and to provide a design that could be more readily used for additional streams. "The most impressive thing for me was the way the team pivoted to an entirely new design and pulled together to build such a high-quality project," DNR Program Manager Steve Brown said. He added, "Major thanks go to the guys at CONTECH Construction Products who located a 10-foot culvert for us in a matter of hours and had it on site in three days. I also want to thank State Rail Director Cindy Butler and the State Rail Authority.

Looking to the future, Director Jezioro observed that the project is a good model for future transportation culvert replacements because it complies with all current and proposed Corps of Engineers requirements for fish passage through culverts.

Briery Mountain WMA in Preston County Permanently Closed

Effective Oct. 31, 2011, the lease between the West Virginia Army National Guard and the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources for the Briery Mountain Wildlife Management Area was terminated, and the area will be closed to public use.

"The removal of Briery Mountain as a WMA is necessary because of anticipated increase in training activity by the West Virginia Army National Guard, which will restrict public access to the area," said Curtis I. Taylor, Chief of the DNR Wildlife Resources Section. "These training activities will create public safety concerns that are not compatible with the use of the area as a WMA."

Public lands in the Preston County region that are available to hunters, trappers and anglers include the Coopers Rock State Forest, and the Snake Hill and Blackwater WMAs. Information on these public lands is available from the District 1 DNR Office in Farmington (304-825-6787), the 2011-2012 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary, and from the DNR website at www.wvdnr.gov.

Reporting fish and wildlife violations in West Virginia just got easier

The Law Enforcement Section of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources has added a new website option for reporting activity that threatens fish and wildlife. Submitting a tip sends a message to DNR district office staff for response. The website can be found at www.wvdnr.gov/LEnforce/Poachers.shtm.

"We have a limited number of Natural Resources Police Officers in the field, so the public plays a critical role in protecting our natural resources by reporting violations," said Lt. Col. Jerry Jenkins of the DNR Law Enforcement Section. "Submitting a report is a quick and easy way to report violations."



DNR law enforcement officers ask anyone who witnesses a potential violation to collect as much information as possible without confronting the individual under suspicion. Jenkins said helpful information includes license plate numbers, vehicle color and make, the type of violation, the time it occurred and a description of the individual or individuals involved.

"Reporting a crime with this form is anonymous," Jenkins said. "No information will be collected that will identify the user of this system unless you are willing to give us your name and contact information."



Courtesy Izaak Walton League

Shawn Head (left) receives award from Bruce Evans, president of the Mountaineer Chapter of the Izaak Walton League.

Wildlife Biologist Shawn Head recognized by Izaak Walton League of America

Shawn Head, a Wildlife Resources Section wildlife biologist stationed in the DNR Elkins office, was honored by the Izaak Walton League of America with its prestigious Honor Roll Award. Head received the award at the conservation organization's national convention in recognition of his outstanding contributions to public education and the conservation of America's natural resources over the past 23 years.

His education efforts have included giving wildlife-related presentations to youth groups, school classes, campers attending county, state and national youth camps, and college students. For 15 years he has been actively involved in setting up the Outdoor Youth Challenge held at Stonewall Resort during West Virginia's National Hunting and Fishing Day Celebration. He has volunteered for 10 years with the IWLA Mountaineer Chapter at the Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs Expo held annually in Elkins. In addition, Head helps with the Chapter's Youth Conservation Day. He also holds membership in several national and state conservation and professional organizations.

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