

South Branch Grass River Special Regs Evaluation (Survey #: 621008)

Les Resseguie, Region 6 Fisheries

6/9/2022

South Branch Grass River (SL-2-59) is a 47.4-mile-long tributary to the Grass River in the Towns of Russel, Clare, Clifton and Colton, St. Lawrence County, and is classified as C(T) by NYSDEC Division of Water (i.e., suitable for fishing and trout present). Ample public access is available through the Grass River and Cranberry Lake Wild Forests. Special fishing regulations apply for trout from “0.5 miles below State Route 3 upstream to Grass River Flow” where catch and release only, artificial lures only apply year-round. Statewide Inland Trout Stream regulations apply to the remainder of the waterbody. Current angling effort is unknown. In June 2021, a Special Regulations Evaluation was conducted to assess the current status of the stream and trout population, necessity of a special trout regulation, and to determine the appropriate management category for current conditions as outlined in the New York State Trout Stream Management Plan (TSMP; NYSDEC 2020).

Using backpack electrofishing, three sites were sampled on June 29th. Sampling sites were selected with one inside the special regulation section, one in the statewide regulation section, and one at the border of the two. On the day of the survey, an extremely thermally stressful environment was found where water temperature ranged from 78-80°F at all three sites. Zero trout were captured or observed and only species common to the area were collected (Table 1). We planned to resample the river in the fall when water temperatures were expected to be lower and conditions are favorable for the presence of trout. Unfortunately, we were not able to complete the fall sampling because of high water and staffing issues. We recommend that a future survey be completed and temperature loggers should be placed along the reach to record the frequency and duration of these thermally stressful periods.

Table 1. Fish species and numbers collected during the 2021 South Branch Grass River Special Regulations Evaluation.

Common Name	Number Collected
Brown Bullhead	3
Common Shiner	4
Creek Chub	8
Eastern Blacknose Dace	41
Rock Bass	8
White Sucker	3

Literature Cited

NYSDEC. 2020. *New York State Trout Stream Management Plan*. Albany, NY: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

