

**T-1 of Stoddard Creek Trout Evaluation**  
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Tributary #1 of Stoddard Creek, flowing through Allegany State Park had never previously been surveyed by fisheries staff, although the author has caught wild brook trout while fishing in this stream. A hand-built stone culvert with a concrete drop apron, falling at a steep angle for approximately 15 vertical feet, is located 0.2 miles above the mouth and likely acts as a significant or total barrier to trout movement (Figure 1). No stocking records exist for this stream, however Stoddard Creek itself was stocked with brook trout fingerlings in the 1920s and 1930s. In order to document the presence of wild brook trout in this stream and to determine if brook trout exist upstream of the culvert on ASP Route #1, we sampled the stream at two sites on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Our lower site was located 250 feet below the culvert and the upper site began just above the culvert. At the time of the survey, both sites had very little water flow, with much of the stream going subsurface between pools.

Figure 1. Stone road culvert on ASP Route #1.



At the lower site, in the 250 feet of stream sampled, we captured 20 yearling-and-older (adult) wild brook trout, ranging in length from 4.1 to 8.1 inches. This small average size is typical of low

productivity wild brook trout streams in Western NY. If angler harvest is low, some fish will live long enough to achieve quality size, but the average size of adult fish will be small. At the lower site we also captured 14 young-of-year brook trout. Mottled sculpin were the only other fish species captured at the lower site. At the site above the culvert we captured 11 adult wild brook trout in 500 feet of stream, along with two young-of-year brook trout. No other fish species were captured at this site.

While adult trout habitat was actually much better at the survey site above the culvert than below, the density of wild adult brook trout was much higher below the culvert, as were the number of young-of-year trout observed. This likely indicates that the culvert is mostly or totally impassable to adult brook trout and fish cannot move upstream to find higher quality habitat. It is not clear whether the brook trout population upstream of the culvert has resulted from fish that were able to, at some point in the past, get past this culvert or whether these fish are decedents of trout existing in the upper portion of the stream prior to this culvert being installed (likely by the CCC in the 1930s). Fisheries staff will work with park staff to determine if there is any way to alter the outlet of the road culvert to better facilitate brook trout movement upstream to reconnect this brook trout population. No changes in management or regulations are currently recommended, pending updates to the state-wide inland trout management plan.