

Silver Lake Wilderness Trout Power Angling Survey
(Survey #s: 519300, 519301, 519302, 519304, 519305)
 Jon Fieroh, Region 5 Fisheries

12/11/2020

The Adirondack region of New York has been plagued by acid precipitation for over five decades. Since the passage of the Clean Air Act, New York has witnessed a slow but gradual recovery of some Adirondack aquatic ecosystems. Given this positive shift, DEC would like to assess the occurrence of brook in lotic environments, refreshing its historic Adirondack stream fisheries data to include a modern-day assessment of the occurrence of brook trout. Securing this data is essential to document the current status of brook trout for both management and protection purposes. DEC partnered with Trout Power (www.troutpower.org), a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization, in a citizen science initiative to document the presence or absence of brook trout in a suite of Adirondack streams. The streams chosen for this effort are in the Silver Lake Wilderness Area; few streams in this unit have ever been surveyed. In May 2018 Trout Power conducted a sampling event in the Silver Lake Wilderness after receiving training from DEC and a Volunteer Stewardship Agreement (VSA 18-05-RB-03) was adopted for that event. In June 2019 Trout Power Returned to the Silver Lake Wilderness and a second VSA was signed to cover the 2019 surveys.

The volunteer anglers surveyed 18 of 48 possible sample sites on seven streams in 2018, all tributaries of the West Branch of the Sacandaga River. In 2019, 10 sites were sampled on 5 streams. Of the 10 sites sampled, 7 were repeated from 2018 and 3 were new sites. While traversing the streams the anglers also recorded any natural or manmade barriers that could impede fish movement. The 2018 surveys documented brook trout presence in 5 of 7 waters, and in the 2019 surveys, brook trout were collected in an additional water, Cold Brook (Table 1). Barriers to fish movement were identified, photographed and documented during these surveys.

In the 1932 Biological Survey, brook trout were reported or observed (but not caught) in three of these seven streams; there was no fisheries information for the remaining streams (Table 1).

Table 1. Brook trout presence in streams of the Silver Lake Wilderness in 1932, 2018, and 2019.

Stream	Watershed Index No.	Brook Trout Present		Brook Trout Present In 1932?
		2018?	2019?	
Hamilton Lake Stream	H-369-20-19	Yes	Yes	Brook trout seen/reported
Devorse Creek	H-369-20-2	Yes	Yes	Brook trout reported; not caught
Cold Brook	H-369-20-20	No	Yes	Not reported
Dugway Creek	H-369-20-10	Yes	Yes	Not reported
Vly Creek	H-369-20-1	Yes	Yes	Brook trout reported; not caught
Unnamed Water	H-369-20-17	No	Not Surveyed	Not reported
Gallop Creek	H-369-20-19-5	Yes	Not Surveyed	Not Reported

Historic stocking records show that some of the surveyed streams were stocked as late as 1964. Hamilton Lake Stream, Gallop Creek, and Unnamed Water were stocked with brook trout. Devorse and Dugway Creeks were stocked with both brook and rainbow trout. In 2019 Trout



Power volunteers again took tissue samples from captured brook trout for genetic analysis. The genetic study was underwritten by Trout Power, but results will be shared with DEC. The samples have been submitted to the NY State Museum for analysis.

When the Silver Lake Wilderness Unit Management Plan is updated, the information from these surveys and genetic study will be incorporated into the plan.