

# Conservation at Work – Frostburg Pond Project

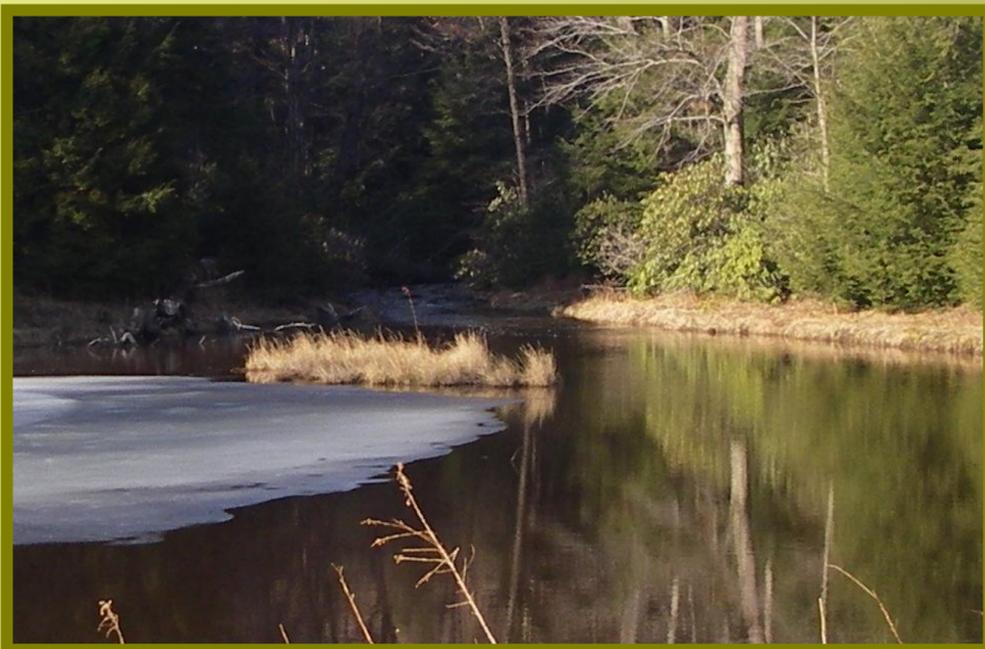
A vital aspect of Brook trout management - in addition to the traditional use of angling regulations such as harvest and minimum size limits - is the protection and restoration of stream habitat and the surrounding land in the watershed. Brook trout are incredibly sensitive to disturbances within their environment, and are the aquatic equivalent to the canary in the coal mine used by miners long ago. Therefore, protecting and restoring vital habitat is a priority of the Brook Trout Program.

Within Maryland countless small ponds have been built in the past, and one of the easiest ways was to dam up a small creek running through a farm or homestead. In areas where brook trout live this is a big problem for two reasons - they not only create a blockage for fish movement, but more importantly cause the water temperature downstream of the pond to be warmed, especially during the critical summer months. Brook trout require cold water to survive, and in summer months when stream temperatures naturally rise, the presence of a pond releasing

even warmer water can result in the loss of the downstream brook trout population.

Such was the case for a small pond that had been created by damming the upper Savage River near Frostburg. Originally, the pond had been built to supplement water supply to the City of Frostburg, but as time passed the utility of the pond as a water supply was no longer needed. Yet the pond and dam remained, releasing water that was much too warm for brook trout to survive in during the summer months. Brook trout Program staff met with city officials and local conservation organizations and helped to craft, organize, and fund a restoration plan to fix the problem. A new stream channel was created, the pond area was turned into a wetland, and the entire area was replanted with native plant species. Just over 1000' feet of new stream habitat was created, a problem pond was eliminated, and brook trout once again swim in the river where they had been absent for many decades!

Before...



After...

