

# Adirondack Brook Trout Pond Management Plan

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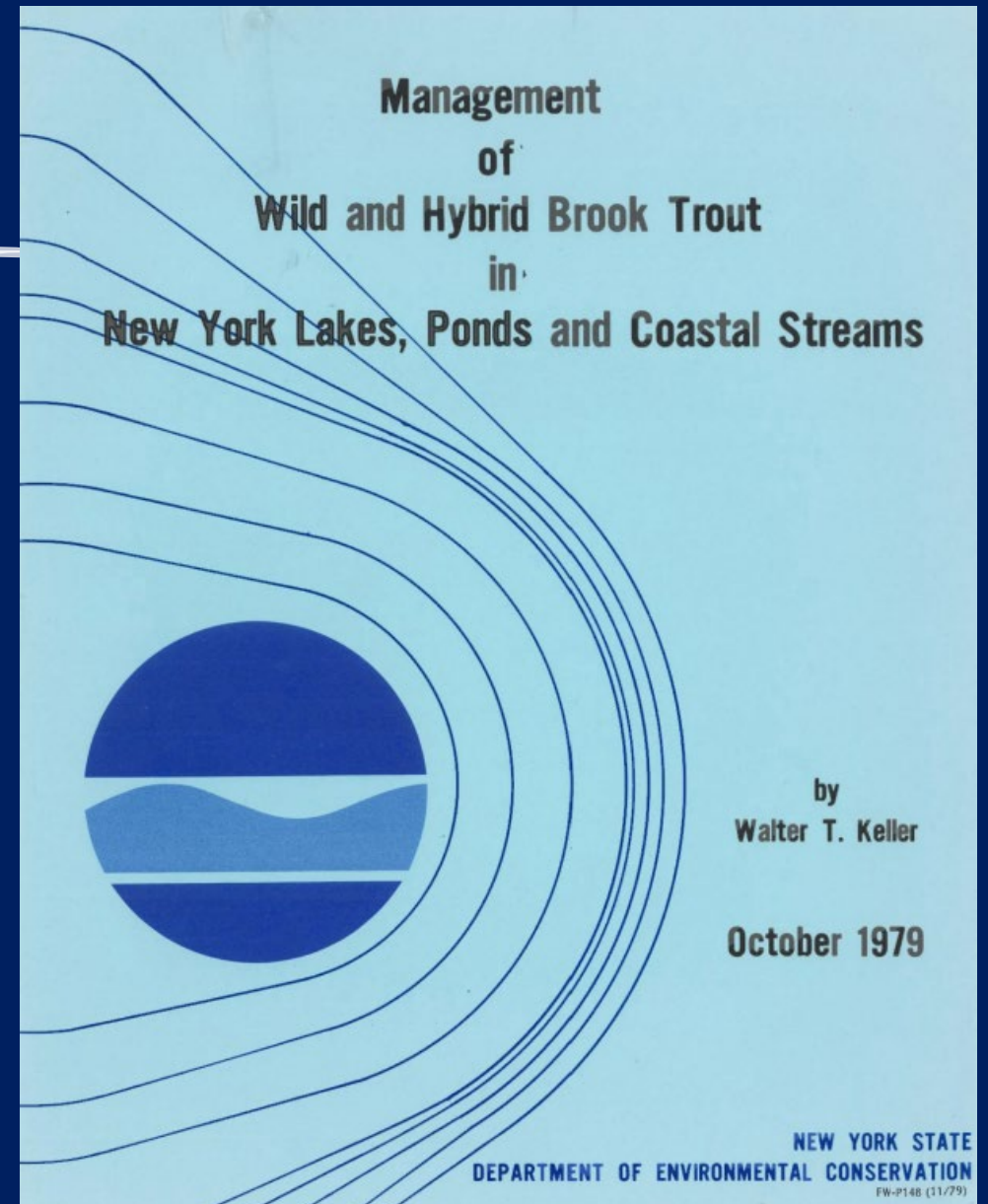
**Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation**

July 11, 2024

# Why write a new plan?

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- Current plan outdated
- New challenges
- Persistent problems
- Roadmap for management



# Historical perspective

- Lessons learned
- Foundation for the plan



Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation

## Historical Perspectives on Brook Trout Management

Kathy Hochul, Governor | Basil Seggos, Commissioner



# Focus Group

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- Adirondack Council
- Back-Country Hunters & Anglers
- Conservation Fund Advisory Board
- Cornell University
- Izaak Walton League
- Native Fish Coalition
- NYS Guides Association
- NYS Conservation Council
- The Nature Conservancy
- Trout Power
- Trout Unlimited
- US Geological Survey
- Two Independent Anglers



# Brook Trout 101:

## Definition of a brook trout pond

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Ponded waters with habitat and water quality that supports the survival and growth of naturally reproduced or stocked brook trout

# Brook Trout 101:

## Current status (publicly accessible waters)

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- 398 known Adirondack brook trout ponds
  - 84 Wild ponds
  - 51 Stocked ponds - heritage strains
  - 250 Stocked ponds - Temiscamie-hybrid
  - 13 ponds - Temiscamie-hybrid stocking on experimental pause

# Plan for moving forward

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# Plan Scope

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- Adirondack Park only
- Ponds only
- Public waters
- Wild and stocked brook trout
- 15-year timeframe





# Management Philosophy:

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Brook trout ponds will be managed in a strategic fashion, taking into consideration the potential of waters to sustain wild or stocked brook trout populations while also being adaptive in the face of a changing environment



## KEY Guiding principles:

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- Angling opportunities
- Self-sustaining populations
- Genetic diversity
- Pragmatic approach
- Consistent management
- Transparent and accountable
- Simple and understandable
- Climate change

# Features of the plan

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- Hatchery production
- Diverse brook trout populations
- Fishing regulations
- Standardized and consistent management
- Citizen Science
- Incompatible and detrimental fish

# Hatchery production

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- Strains
  - Heritage strains
  - Temiscamie hybrid strain



# Hatchery production

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- Propagation of heritage strains
  - Broodstock waters
- Propagation of hybrids
  - Reliance on private source
  - Want a public Temiscamie brood stock source



# Diverse brook trout fisheries

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- Add 20 self-sustaining brook trout fisheries
- Maintain existing self-sustaining fisheries (84)
- Provide PGT fisheries
  - 60/12 size objective
- Maintain genetic diversity
- Inform anglers of opportunities

# Fishing Regulations:

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- Broadly applicable regulation
- Season: April 1 – October 15
- Harvest regulation strategies considered:
  - Catch & release
  - 5 brook trout/day, any size
  - 5 brook trout with no more than 2 over 12"



# Fishing Regulations:

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**Recommendation:** 5 brook trout/day,  
any size, April 1 – October 15

- No management reason for a more restrictive harvest regulation
- Potentially less waste of 12" fish





# Standardized and consistent management

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- Standard operating procedures (SOP)
  - Sampling
  - Wild egg take
  - Stocking/strain use
- Information management system
- Management categories
- Decision-making tools

# Standardized and consistent management

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## Management Categories

- Put-grow-and-take
- Self-sustaining
- Preservation
- Candidate
- Restoration in-progress

# Standardized and consistent management

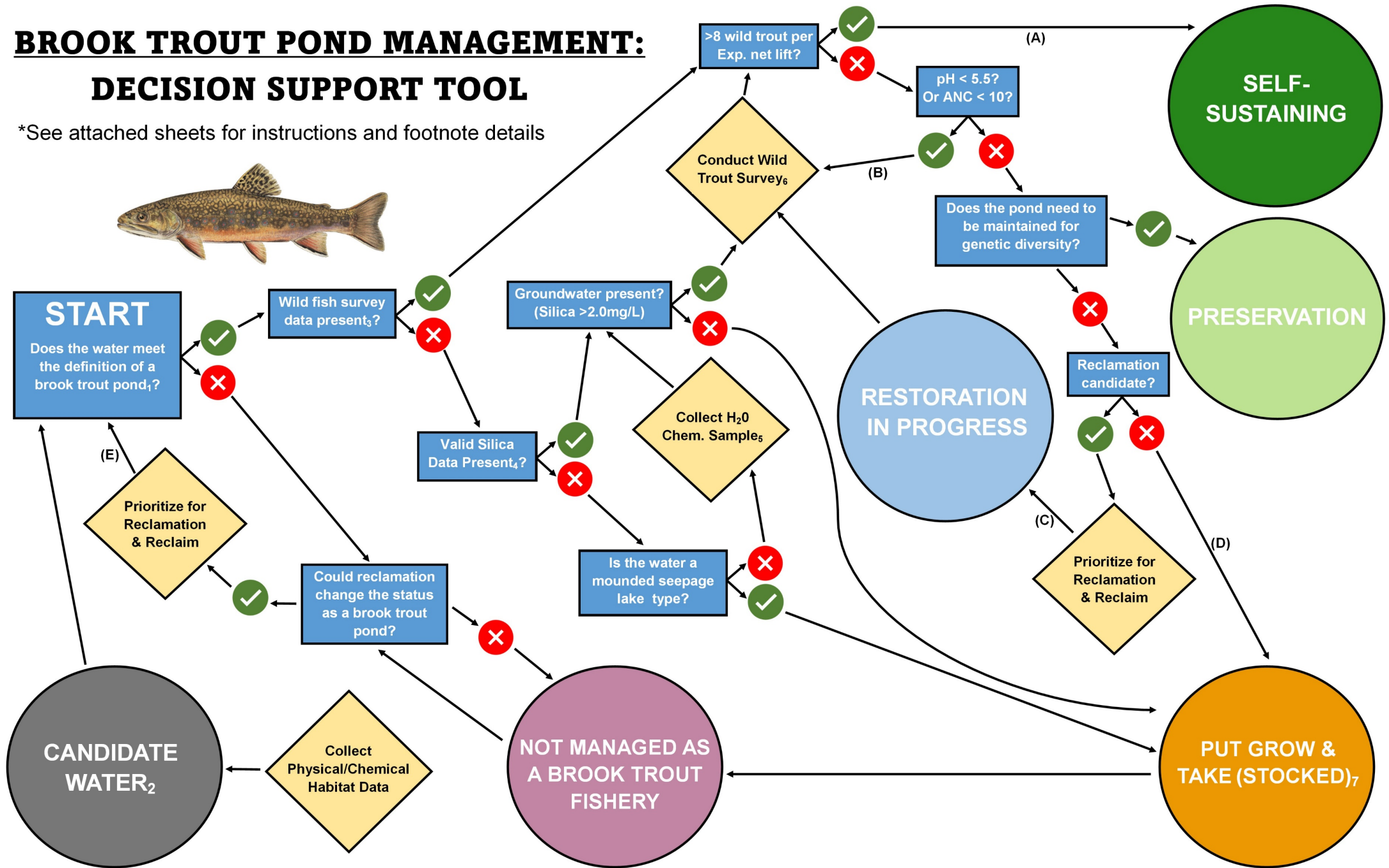
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- Decision-making tools
  - Decision support tool
  - Put grow & take management matrix



# BROOK TROUT POND MANAGEMENT: DECISION SUPPORT TOOL

\*See attached sheets for instructions and footnote details



## PUT GROW & TAKE MANAGEMENT MATRIX

- These metrics should be used to interpret netting survey data from PG&T waters to inform stocking adjustments.
- Netting surveys must follow Adirondack Poned Brook Trout Sampling Protocol for results to be interpreted via this tool.

## GROWTH METRIC

Average length of 2 year-old brook trout expected to be <12" by October 15 of survey year

Average length of 2 year-old brook trout expected to be >/= 12" by October 15 of survey year

## CPUE METRIC

> 10 fish per experimental net (all age classes)

REDUCE STOCKING RATE

MAINTAIN STOCKING RATE

5-10 fish per experimental net (all age classes)

MAINTAIN STOCKING RATE

MAINTAIN STOCKING RATE

<5 fish per experimental net (all age classes)

TERMINATE STOCKING

MAINTAIN STOCKING RATE

# Brook Trout Surveillance Team

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- Small team of selected anglers (20)
- Presence/absence, water sampling, genetic sampling
- Expanded surveillance will inform DEC survey priorities



# Incompatible and Detrimental Fishes

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- Detrimental:

Brown bullhead, white sucker, longnose sucker, pumpkinseed, redbreast sunfish, rock bass, golden shiner, creek chub, fallfish, fathead minnow, rainbow smelt, alewife

- Incompatible:

Yellow perch, black crappie, largemouth bass, walleye, smallmouth bass, northern pike, and pickerels



# Incompatible and Detrimental Fishes

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- Fish barriers
- Reclamations
- Improved signage
- Enhanced messaging
- Stocking Permit Policy
- Limit baitfish use





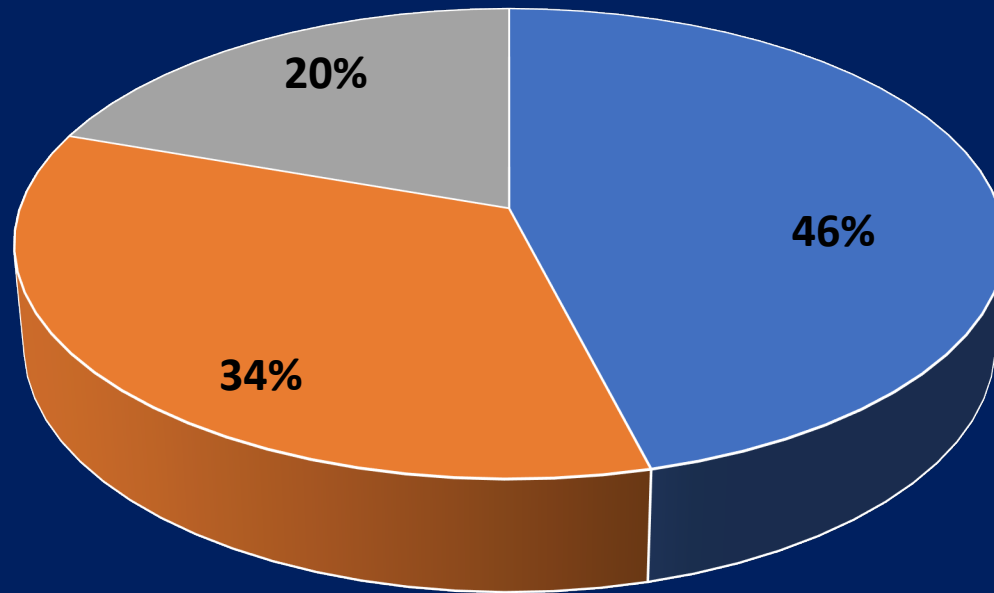


# Curbing the Introduction of Baitfish in ADK Brook Trout Ponds



# Need

Curb the illegal and uninformed use of baitfish in ADK brook trout ponds



■ Major problem ■ Minor problem ■ No problem

# Are baitfish really a problem?

Yes!

Baitfish:

- Compete and prey on brook trout
- Reduce growth and survival to older age
- Suppress natural reproduction



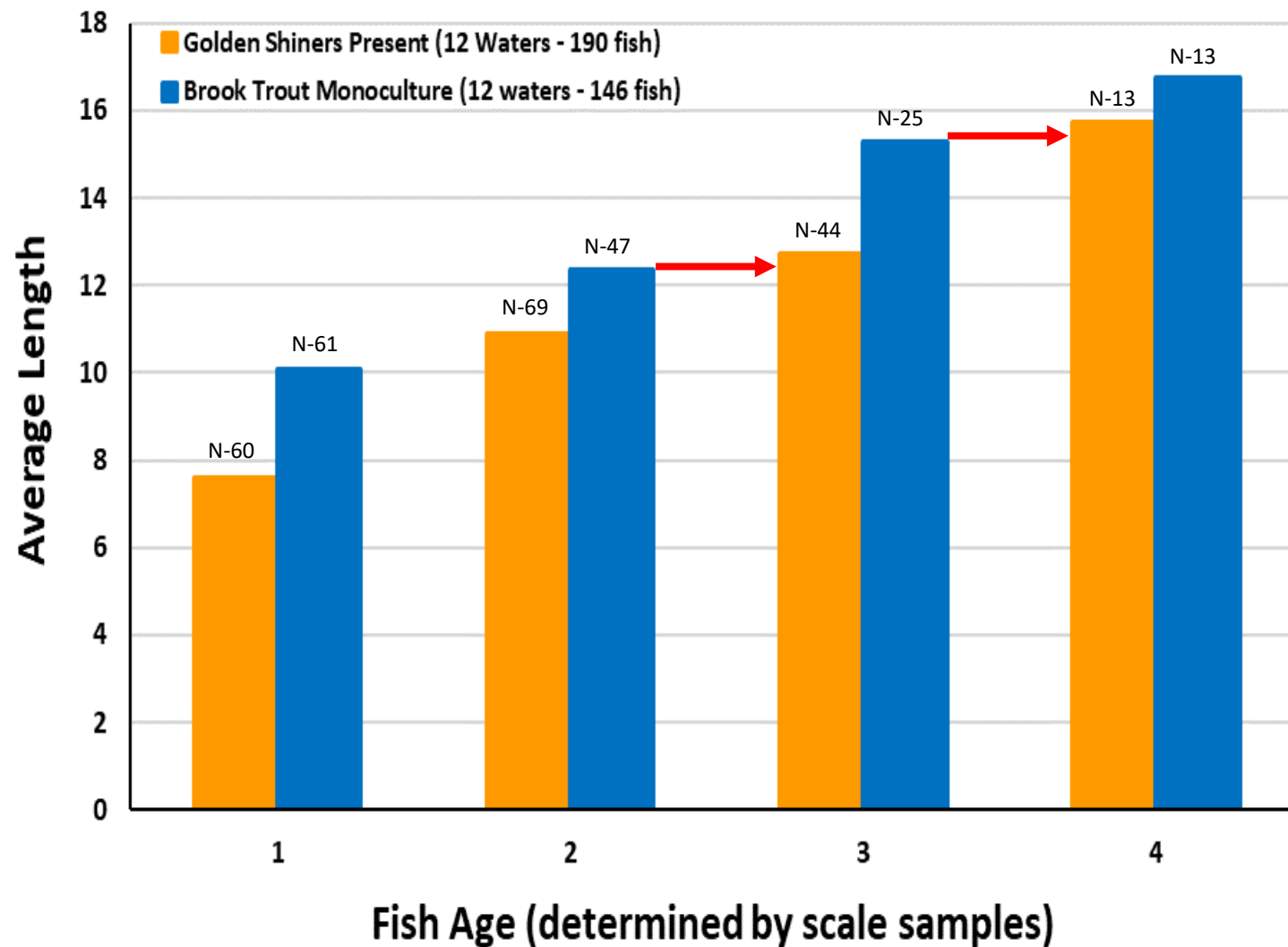
“They gotta eat something...”

Brook trout do best as  
a singular species  
feeding on aquatic  
insects.



# Baitfish and Growth

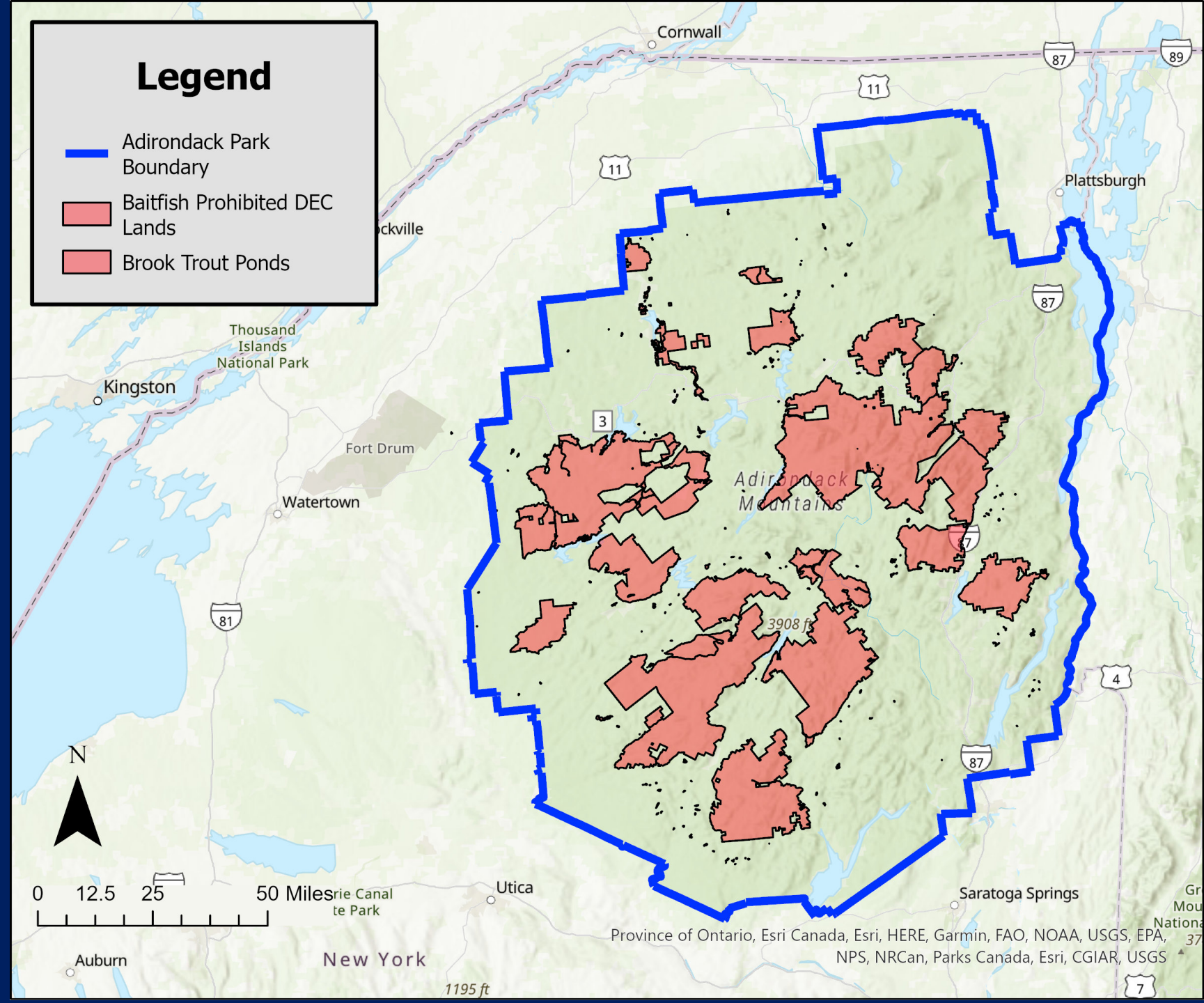
## Brook Trout Length at Age in Ponds w/ Golden Shiners vs. Monocultures



# Current State

- The use of baitfish within the Blue Line of Adirondack Park is allowed

*with “some” prohibitions (1,211)*



# Current Approach

Use of baitfish allowed except for.....

- 1,211 prohibited waters
- Mish-mosh of waterbodies and land classifications
  - 261 – direct waterbody reference
  - 950 – based on land classification
- 4 pages in the guide (293 entries)
- Difficult to figure out where baitfish are illegal

## Region 5 Special Regulations

### BAITFISH PROHIBITED WATERS

Use of baitfish is prohibited in the following waters and units:

#### CLINTON COUNTY

##### TOWN OF BLACK BROOK

- Cranberry Pond
- Mud Pond (2 miles southwest of Riverview)

##### TOWN OF DANNEMORA

- Mud Pond

#### ESSEX COUNTY

- Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area
- Giant Mountain Wilderness
- High Peaks Wilderness
- Hoffman Notch Wilderness
- Hudson Gorge Wilderness Area (except Hudson River)
- McKenzie Mountain Wilderness (except West Branch of Ausable River)
- Pharaoh Lake Wilderness
- Pine Lake Primitive Area
- Sentinel Range Wilderness (except East Branch of Ausable River)
- Tahawus Primitive Area

##### TOWN OF CROWN POINT

- Bloody Pond

##### TOWN OF JAY

- Clements Pond

##### TOWN OF MINERVA

- Barnes Pond
- Big Sherman Pond
- Black Pond
- Center Pond
- Clear Pond
- Deer Pond
- Hewitt Pond
- Huntley Pond
- Little Rankin Pond
- Little Sherman Pond
- Nate Pond
- Rankin Pond
- Stony Pond
- Twentyninth Pond

##### TOWN OF NEWCOMB

- Beaver Pond (south of Lake Andrew)
- Chub Pond
- Mud Pond (north of Clear Pond)
- Newcomb Lake (including Upper and Lower Duck Hole)
- Unnamed Pond (north of LeClaire Brook)

##### TOWN OF NORTH ELBA

- Big Cherrypatch Pond
- Cameras Pond
- McKenzie Pond
- Tom Peck Pond

##### TOWN OF NORTH HUDSON

- Bass Lake
- Bloody Pond
- Boreas Ponds
- Challis Pond
- Courtney Pond
- Deer Pond
- Howard Pond
- Moose Mountain Pond
- Triangle Pond
- Labier Flow
- Lower Twin Pond
- Upper Twin Pond

##### TOWN OF ST. ARMAND

- Moose Pond

##### TOWN OF SCHROON

- Cotters Pond

##### TOWN OF WILLMINGTON

- Morgan Pond (Copper Kill)

##### TOWN OF MORIAH

- Goose Puddle
- Trout Pond

#### FRANKLIN COUNTY

- St. Regis Canoe Area
- High Peaks Wilderness (except Raquette River and Saranac River)
- Madawaska Flow-Quebec Brook Primitive Area

##### TOWN OF BELLMONT

- Drain Pond

##### TOWN OF BRIGHTON

- Barnum Pond
- Black Pond (on Visitors Interpretive Center Property)
- Long Pond (north of Black Pond)
- Loon Pond
- Lost Pond (0.4 mile southwest of Mountain Pond)
- Mountain Pond
- Slush Pond
- Star Mountain Ponds (2)
- Upper Spectacle Pond

##### TOWN OF DUANE

- Buck Pond
- Clear Pond
- Debar Pond
- Skiff Pond
- Winnebago Pond

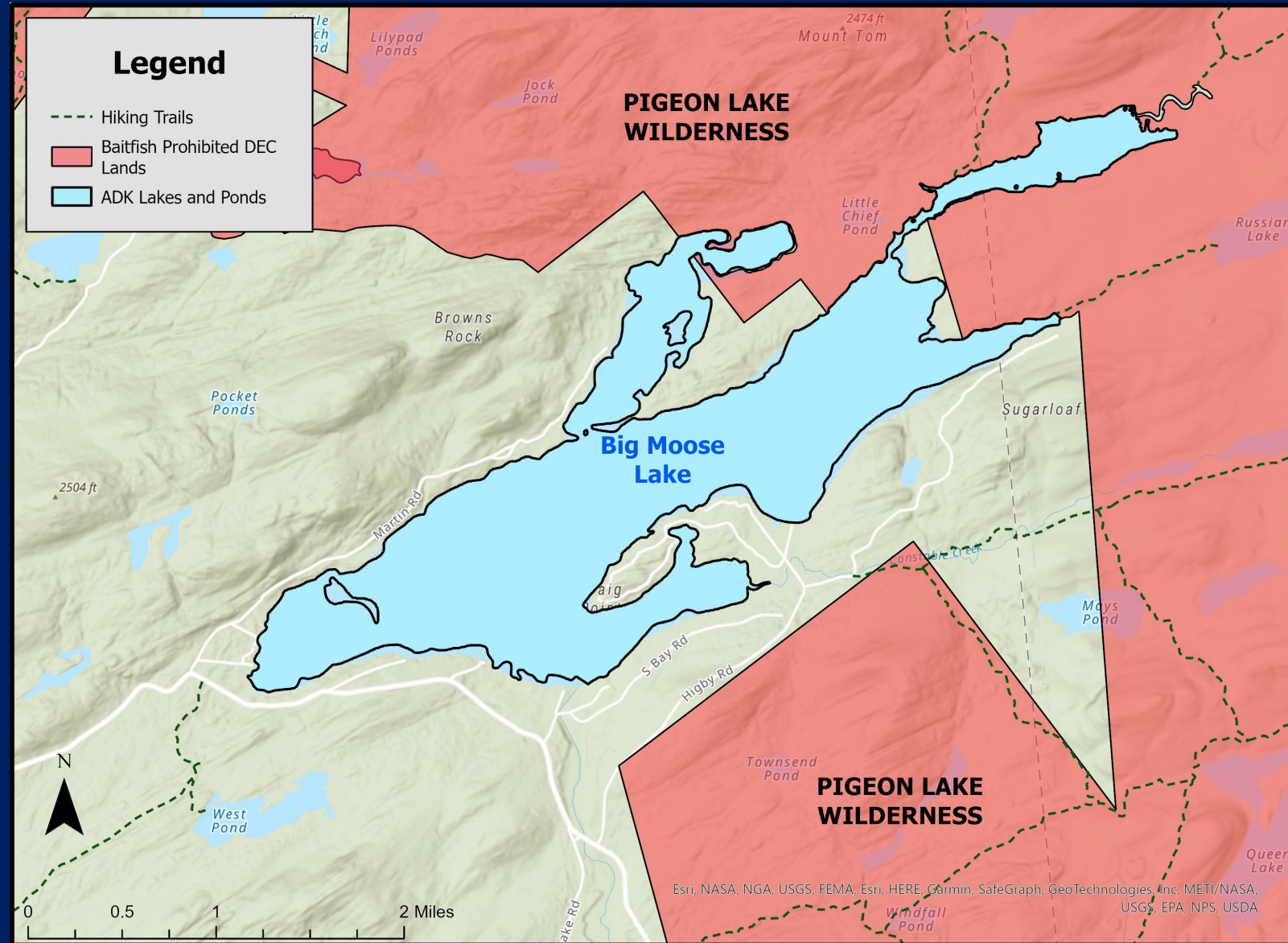


# Are Baitfish Prohibited in Big Moose Lake??

Baitfish are prohibited in Pigeon Lake Wilderness

(pg 29 & 39)

Can you use baitfish in Big Moose outside of the Wilderness Area?



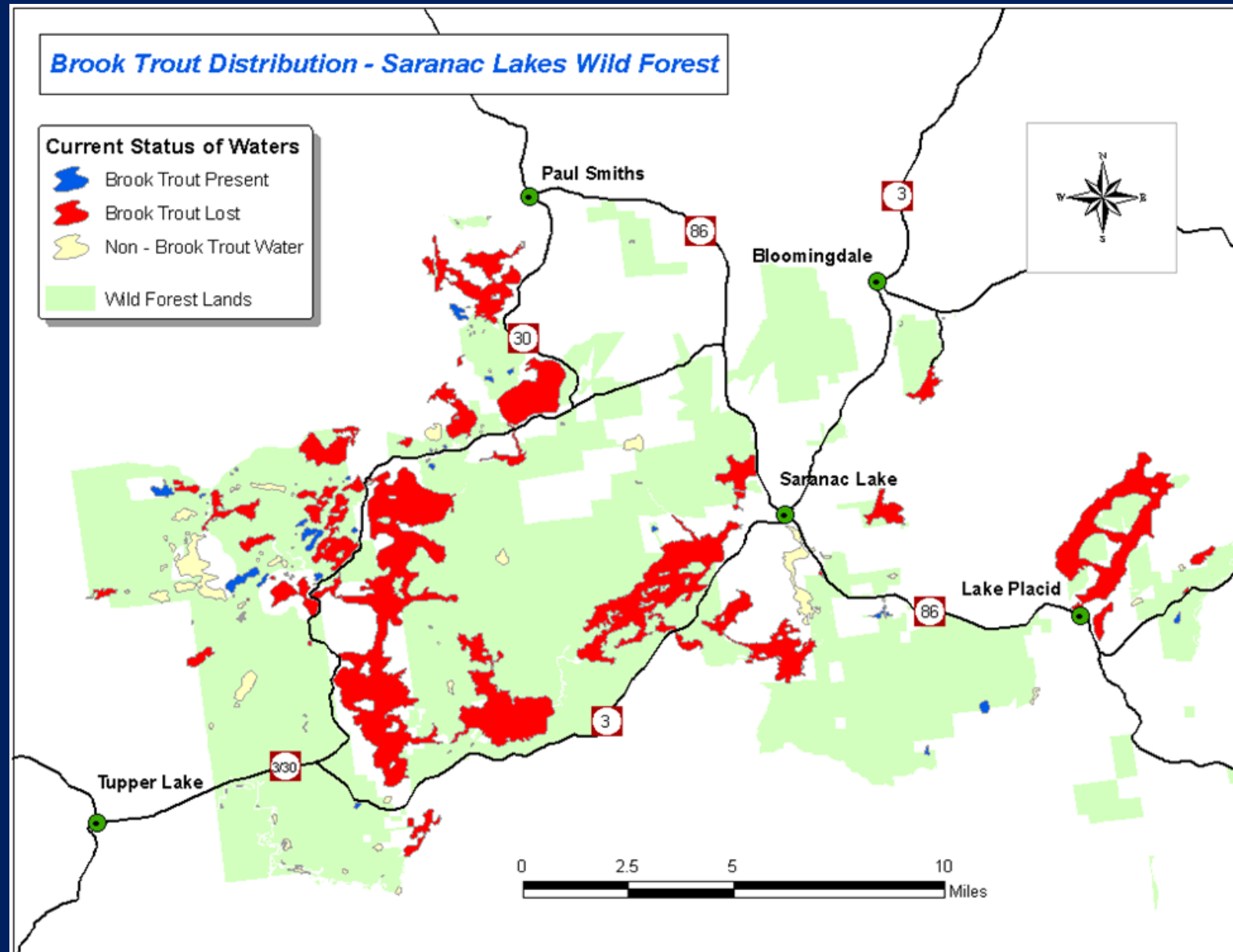
# Rationale for Change



- Protection of our remaining brook trout resources is desperately needed
- Current regulations for protecting are:
  - Unclear / Cumbersome
  - Difficult to enforce
  - Not working well

# We need to keep what we have!

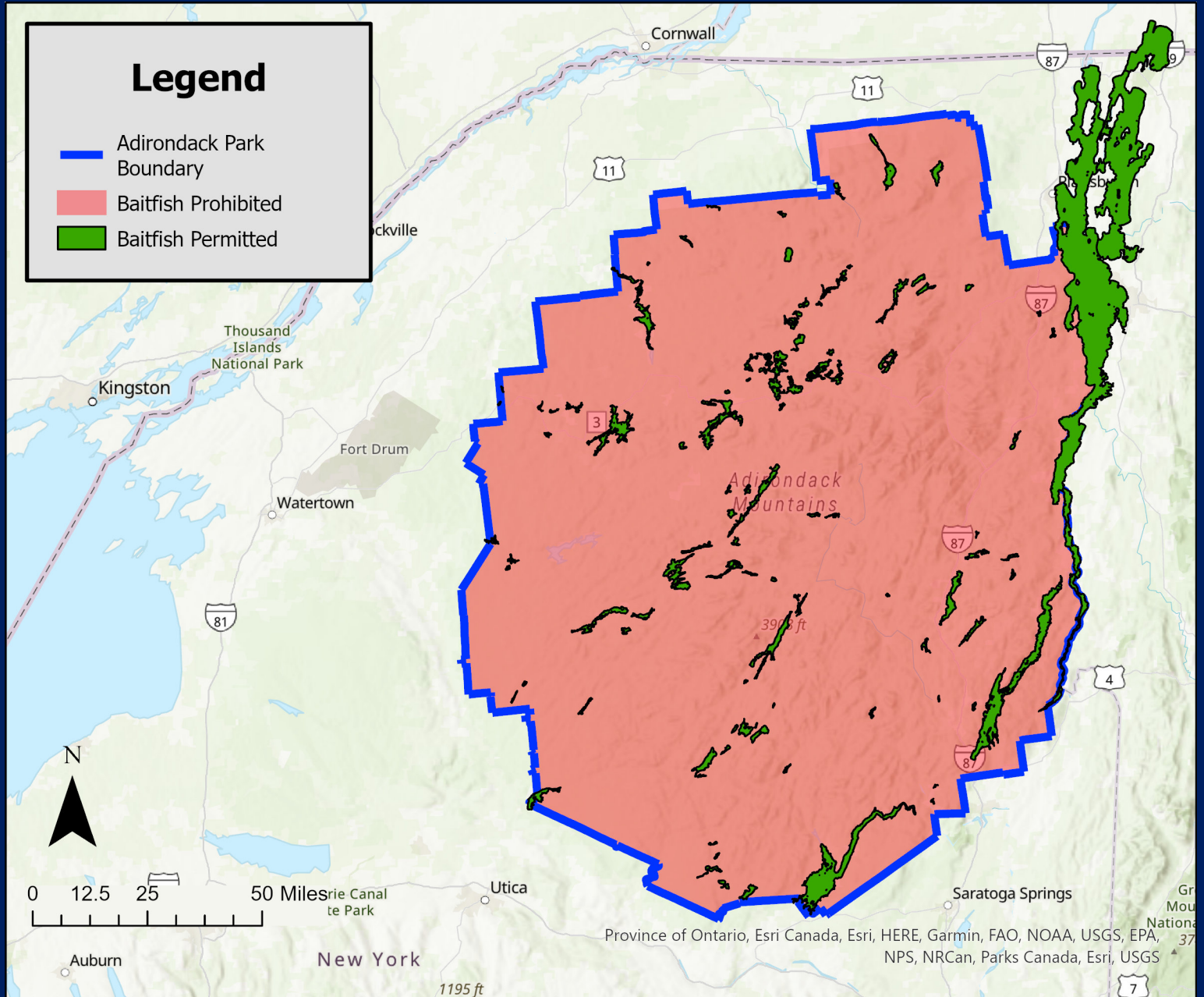
> 90% loss



# Proposal

- The use of baitfish within the Blue Line of Adirondack Park is prohibited

*with few exceptions (152)*





# Waterbody Selection

Based on:

- Currently stocked with other species
- Popular ice fishing water
- Popular water for warmwater species
- Close to major roadway
- Publicly accessible

*No ponds under 50 acres included*

# Proposed Approach

- Use of baitfish prohibited except for.....  
*a very few waters*
- 152 waters (143 lakes, 9 stream reaches)
- 2 pages in guide
- ½ as many entries
- Waterbodies only
- Easier to figure out where the use of baitfish is Allowed

## Waters Where Baitfish is Allowed in the Adirondack Park

Use of baitfish is prohibited within the Adirondack Blue Line except for the following waters:

### CLINTON COUNTY

- Chazy Lake
- Fern Lake
- Silver Lake
- Taylor Pond

### CLINTON/FRANKLIN COUNTIES

- Chateaugay Narrows
- Union Falls Pond
- Upper Chateaugay Lake

### ESSEX COUNTY

- Butternut Pond
- Eagle Lake
- Harris Lake
- Johnson Pond
- Lake Placid
- Lincoln Pond
- Long Pond
- Minerva Lake
- North Pond
- Paradox Lake
- Putnam Pond
- Rich Lake

### ESSEX/FRANKLIN COUNTIES

- Franklin Falls Pond
- Lake Flower
- Oseetah Lake

### FRANKLIN COUNTY

- Buck Pond
- Clear Pond
- Clear Pond
- Deer River Flow
- First Pond
- Fish Creek Ponds
- Fish Creek Ponds
- Floodwood Pond
- Follensby Clear Pond
- Indian Lake
- Jones Pond
- Kiwassa Lake
- Lake Clear

- Lake Clear Outlet
- Lake Colby
- Lake Kushaugua
- Lead Pond
- Little Wolf Pond
- Lower Chateaugay Lake
- Lower Saint Regis Lake
- Lower Saranac Lake
- Meacham Lake
- Middle Pond
- Middle Saranac Lake
- Mountain View Lake
- Mud Pond
- Osgood Pond
- Polliwog Pond
- Rainbow Lake
- Rollins Pond
- Second Pond
- Simon Pond
- Spitfire Lake
- Square Pond
- St. Regis Falls Impoundment
- Stony Creek Ponds
- Upper Saint Regis Lake
- Upper Saranac Lake
- Weller Pond

- Lake Clear
- Lake Colby
- Lake Kushaugua
- Lead Pond
- Little Wolf Pond
- Lower Chateaugay Lake
- Lower Saint Regis Lake
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- Square Pond
- St. Regis Falls Impoundment
- Stony Creek Ponds
- Upper Saint Regis Lake
- Upper Saranac Lake
- Weller Pond

- Canada Lake
- East Caroga Lake
- Lily Lake
- Mayfield Lake
- Peck Lake
- Pine Lake
- West Caroga Lake
- West Lake
- West Stoner Lake

### FULTON COUNTY

- Canada Lake
- East Caroga Lake
- Lily Lake
- Mayfield Lake
- Peck Lake
- Pine Lake
- West Caroga Lake
- West Lake
- West Stoner Lake

### FULTON/HAMILTON COUNTIES

- Stoner Lake

### HAMILTON COUNTY

- Blue Mountain Lake
- Eagle Lake
- Echo Lake
- Elm Lake
- Fawn Lake
- Forked Lake

- Grampus Lake
- Indian Lake
- Lake Abanakee
- Lake Adirondack
- Lake Algonquin
- Lake Durant
- Lake Eaton
- Lake Pleasant
- Lewey Lake
- Long Lake
- Mason Lake
- Oxbow Lake
- Piseco Lake
- Raquette Lake
- Rock Lake
- Rock Pond
- Sacandaga Lake
- Seventh Lake
- Sixth Lake
- South Pond
- Utowana Lake

### HAMILTON/HERKIMER COUNTIES

- Fourth Lake
- Limekiln Lake

### HERKIMER COUNTY

- First Lake
- North Lake
- Old Forge Pond
- Second Lake
- Third Lake

### HERKIMER/LEWIS COUNTIES

- Beaver Lake

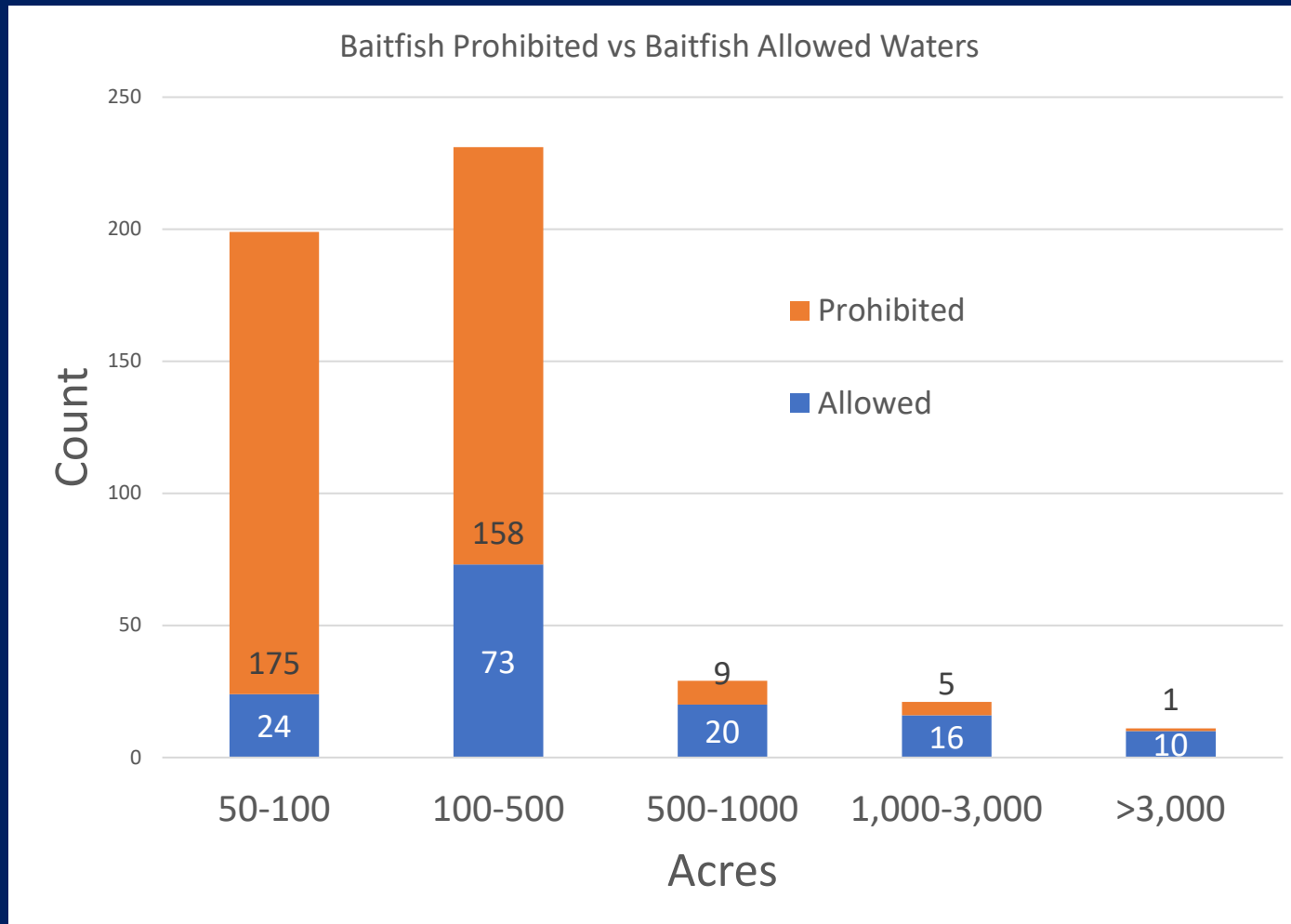
### LEWIS COUNTY

- Francis Lake
- Soft Maple Reservoir
- Unnamed Water (Soft Maple Reservoir)

### ONEIDA COUNTY

- Long Lake
- Otter Lake

# Prohibited vs Allowed by Lake Size



## Waters Allowed (152)

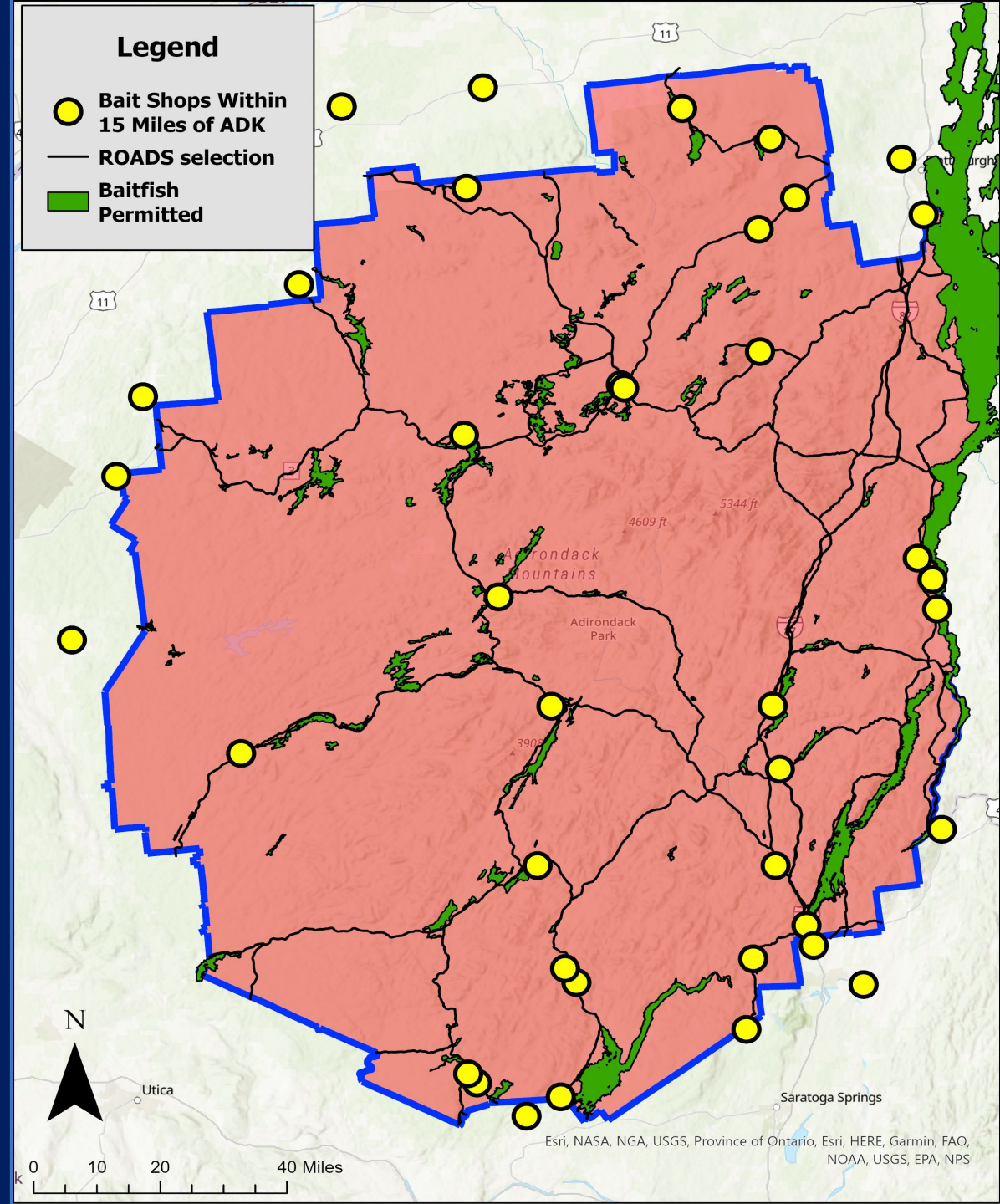
- No waters under 50 acres
- 68% are < 500 acres
- 32% are > 500 acres

## Waters Prohibited (3,555)

- ~90% of prohibited waters are under 500 acres (3,226 waters)

# Proposed Approach: Baitfish Shops

- 40 shops in or immediately surrounding the blue line
- Economic impacts unknown
- More outreach needed





# Proposed Approach

## Pros

- Simpler regulations
- Easier enforcement
- Clearer messaging
- Improved outreach
- Enhanced conservation

## Cons

- Perception of opportunity lost
- Some actual opportunity lost
- May not (*appear to*) make sense for some waterbodies
- Change is hard

*No significant loss in opportunities*

*Fishing is not prohibited – just the use of baitfish*

# Vision

An Adirondack landscape where ponded populations of brook trout remain an integral and unique component of New York's natural heritage, providing ecological and recreational value for generations to come.



# End of Presentation Comments and Questions



Thank you

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(518) 402-8924







# Process

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- Fred Henson – Coldwater Unit Leader
- Jim Daley – Superintendent of Fish Culture
- Jana Lantry – Region 6 Fisheries Manager
- Greg Kozlowski – Inland Section Head
- Anthony Bruno – Region 6 Fisheries Biologist
- Rob Fiorentino – Region 5 Fisheries Manager
- Chris Powers – Region 5 Fisheries Biologist
- Dave Erway – Region 6 Fisheries Biologist
- Steve Hurst – Chief of Bureau of Fisheries

Two years  
Team approach



# Current angler perspectives

- 2022 Online Survey
- 1,902 responses
- 33,593 fishing days



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## Angler Perspectives on Brook Trout Pond Fishing in New York State SUMMARY OF ANGLER SURVEY RESULTS NOVEMBER 2022

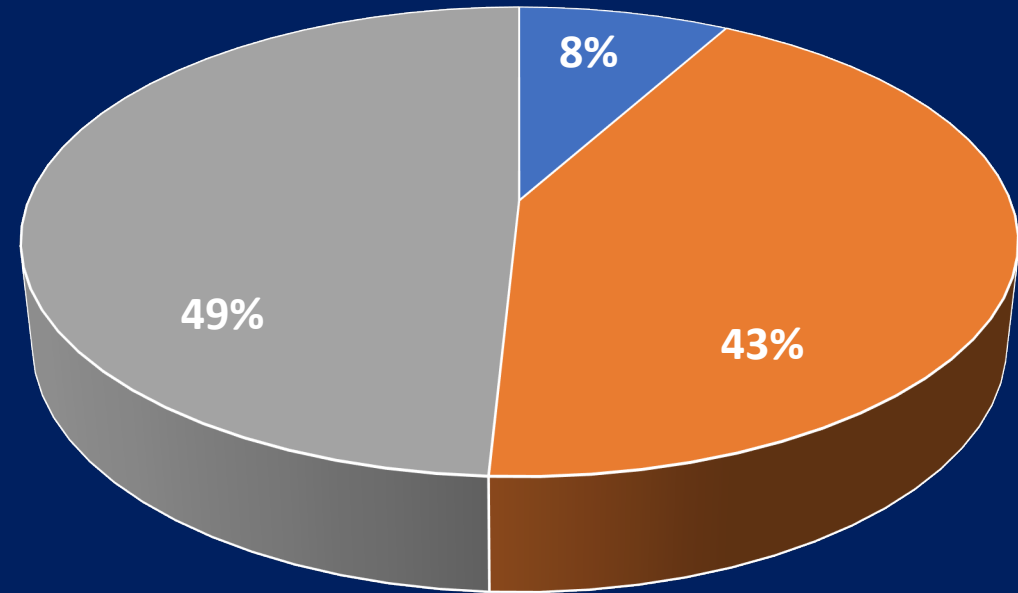
Kathy Hochul, Governor | Basil Seggos, Commissioner





# Current angler perspectives

What size brook trout do anglers seek to catch in Adirondack ponds?



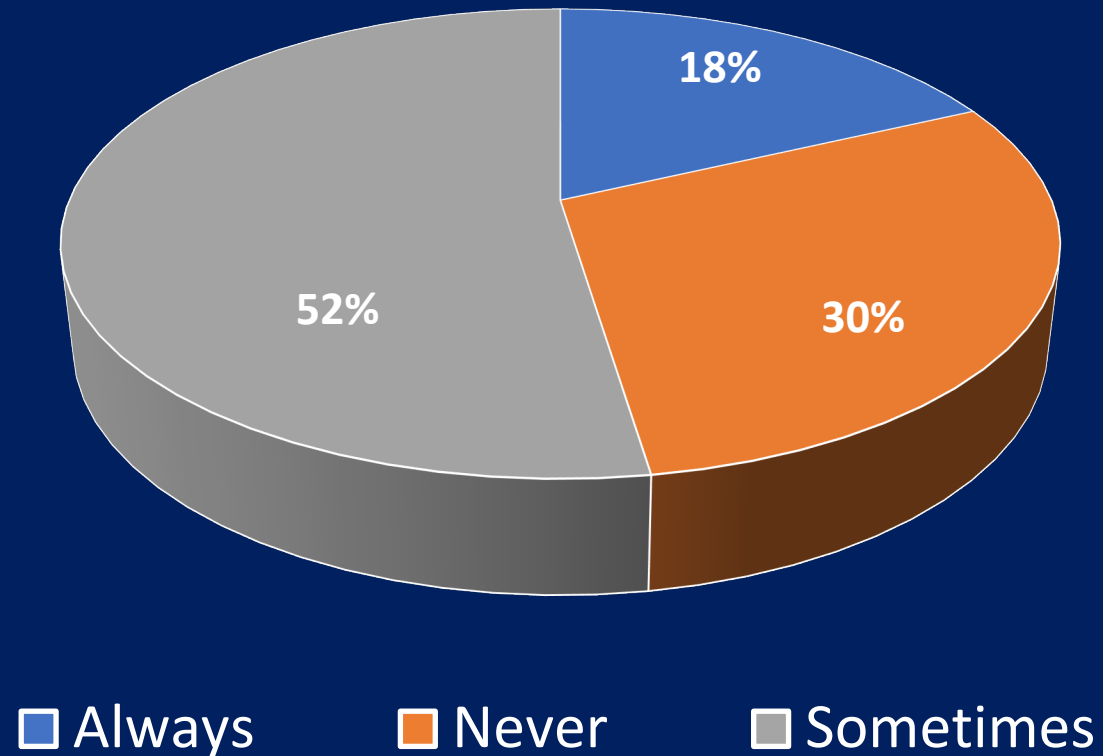
■ Trophy  
(≥ 18")

■ Some Large  
(12-16")

■ Any Size

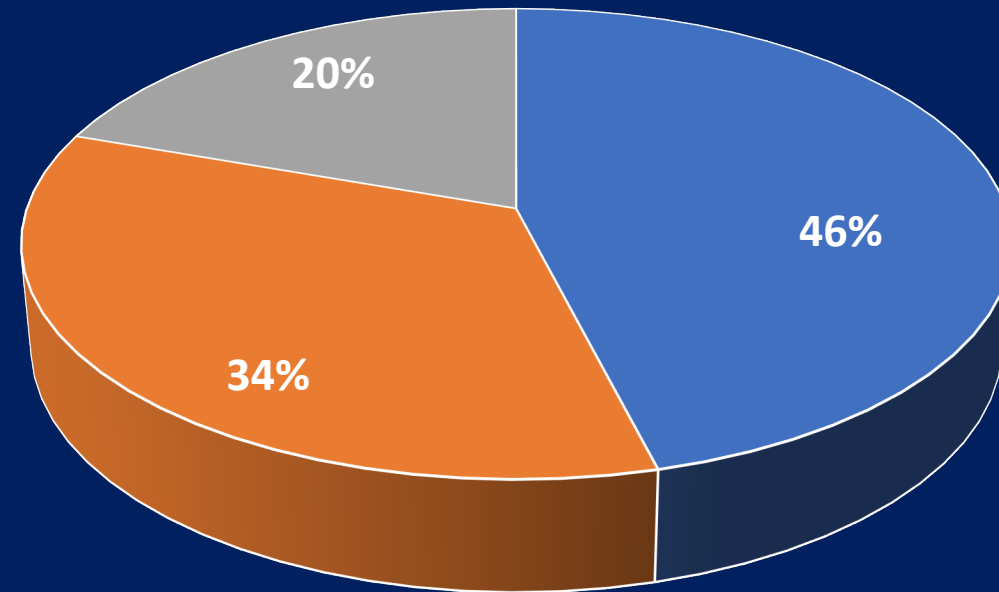
# Current angler perspectives

How often do anglers harvest brook trout caught in Adirondack ponds?



# Current angler perspectives

Are baitfish a serious problem?



■ Major problem ■ Minor problem ■ No problem

# Fishing Regulations:

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## 5 any size

Pro – greater harvest opportunity in some ponds

Pro – may waste fewer released fish

Con – doesn't communicate value of resource

Con – enforcement issues

# Fishing Regulations:

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## 5 (no more than 2 > 12")

Pro – communicates value of resource

Pro – aligns with stream reg

Pro – may provide greater opportunities to catch larger fish

Con - may unnecessarily restrict harvest

Con – may waste more released fish

# Prohibited Waters - > 500 acres

Elk Lake	513.3
Cedar River Flow	584.1
Nehasane Lake	641.6
Catlin Lake	644.6
Follensby Pond	646.6
Little Moose Lake	691.9
Round Lake	744.5
Honnedaga Lake	824.1
Brandreth Lake	893.3
Woodhull Lake	1,087.6
Big Moose Lake	1,230.1
Lake Lila	1,428.2
Little Tupper Lake	2,289.8
Lows Lake	2,513.9
Stillwater Reservoir	6,224.7