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Brook Trout on the Spawning Riffles



Last summer we reported on the spawning riffle project—an attempt to recreate trout spawning habitat in Rattlesnake Creek that no longer exists due to sedimentation. A spawning riffle consists of several rock sills with screened gravel between. The goal is to increase fish spawning success and emigration to the Black River. Tim Cwalinski, DNR Fisheries Biologist, saw an example of this in the Escanaba area of the Upper Peninsula several years ago, and was anxious to try it here.

Three sites were selected and the riffles were installed with the help of volunteers from Vanguard Trout Unlimited, Upper Black River Council, Montmorency County Conservation Club, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Montmorency Conservation District. Financial assistance was provided by Headwaters Trout Unlimited and the Montmorency County Conservation Club.

Tim Cwalinski has been making regular trips out to Rattlesnake Creek this fall to monitor the level of spawning activity on the newly created spawning riffles. He has documented seeing fish at all three sites and “multiple well used redds (trout spawning nests) directly above the sills”.

Carol Rose, chairman of the Upper Black River Council, also stopped to check the project and reported that two of the three sites were in use. She was able to capture a couple of the trout in photos.

There will be several years of follow-up study to determine the degree of success over time, but we are very excited about the initial positive signs for this unique project.

Additional information:

Tim Cwalinski’s complete 6 page project description.

http://www.upperblack.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5&Itemid=50

Scroll down and click on “about Rattlesnake Creek”