



Keith Curley
Vice President for Eastern Conservation

March 7, 2016

Via email to agreement@chesapeakebay.net

Mr. Nicholas DiPasquale
Chair, Chesapeake Bay Program Management Board
410 Severn Avenue, Suite 109
Annapolis, MD 21403

RE: Chesapeake Bay Program Management Strategies and Work Plans

Dear Mr. DiPasquale:

I write on behalf of Trout Unlimited to thank the Chesapeake Bay Program for the opportunity to comment on its management strategies, and to underscore the close alignment between Trout Unlimited's mission and the goals of the Bay Program. Trout Unlimited is dedicated to ensuring that the headwaters of the Chesapeake Bay are clean, cold and supporting thriving trout fisheries. We appreciate the Chesapeake Bay Program's recognition of the importance of trout fisheries in the Bay headwaters through its management goal for brook trout, and we look forward to working with Chesapeake Bay stakeholders to promote management strategies that align with brook trout conservation in the Bay headwaters.

The Chesapeake Bay's only native trout, the brook trout, represents healthy headwaters, fishable streams, functioning ecosystems, and excellent water quality. The presence of brook trout, by definition, means fishable waters, and when breeding is established, these waters receive the highest quality classification under the Clean Water Act. The restoration of rivers and streams to brook trout standards is desirable by landowners because it is something they can realize on their home waters. A thriving brook trout population provides that landowner with the knowledge that they are being good stewards, that they have fishable waters, and that the land they own is passing good water quality and a verdant ecosystem to downstream neighbors. Brook trout are a local symbol of land stewardship and a meaningful indicator of success, both for the landowner and for the conservationist.

Trout Unlimited has been working in the Chesapeake Bay watershed since 1998, and has developed a team of skilled professionals to efficiently implement projects in a strategic, targeted, and landscape scale restoration program across a wide area of Bay headwaters. Our staff is located in Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia, and Trout Unlimited chapters are also active in Maryland. We have collected the best brook trout science available, prioritized watersheds and concentrated our conservation efforts to achieve measurable results along high value, ecologically significant tributaries. These projects are comprised of multiple landowners (both publicly and privately held) and diverse interests. Our program makes it easy for the landowner to do the right thing. Trout Unlimited's staff and programs are equipped to provide everything from direct landowner outreach, technical assistance, and project effectiveness monitoring, to full turnkey services for implementing conservation projects.

A mission to conserve, protect, & restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

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Trout Unlimited's staff in the Chesapeake Bay states have provided specific comments to several of the management strategies and work plans through the Chesapeake Bay Program's online feedback form as they relate specifically to our individual programs in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. Overall, our comments are meant to improve and expand conservation program delivery, and articulate the significant role TU has played and will continue to play in seeing more meaningful conservation accomplished on the ground in the Bay watershed. TU's objectives support many of the Chesapeake Bay Program's focus areas because the habitat needs of brook trout align with many other management goals.

Trout Unlimited's comments are based on the landowners' acceptance of brook trout as an indicator of successful conservation on their properties. But, brook trout restoration extends much further and represents success for the Chesapeake Bay Program as well. We offer our comments in support of the aligned interests of Trout Unlimited's mission, local stakeholders, and the greater Chesapeake Bay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Curley', written in a cursive style.

Keith Curley