

From: [DNR Comments](#)
To: [Carroll Westfall](#)
Subject: RE: Change in fishing regulations
Date: Wednesday, May 1, 2019 2:58:00 PM

Good Afternoon Mr. Westfall,

The Division of Natural Resources would like to thank you for submitting your public comments regarding proposed rule changes to 58CSR60 – Fishing Regulations. We currently have no plan to return to the old system of having a trout season with an opening day. The current practice allows for more fish to be stocked and more fishing opportunities for our anglers.

Again, we appreciate your input and your comments will be recorded for public record.

MARK T. SCOTT
ASSISTANT CHIEF OF FISHERIES
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From: Carroll Westfall <wvdeerhunter9455@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 27, 2019 8:16 AM
To: DNR Comments <DNRCComments@wv.gov>
Subject: Change in fishing regulations

An opening day of trout season was outsted some 20 years ago, why go backwards! I feel that the present day system allow fishermen to fish when wanting to fish and also allows men who work to go when when off work.

Thank You! I am Carroll Westfall Buckhannon W V

From: [DNR Comments](#)
To: [Crist, Charles J](#)
Subject: RE: Proposed change to Bluestone River-Trout
Date: Friday, May 3, 2019 11:50:00 AM

Dear Mr. Crist,

Thank you for submitting your comments concerning the changes to the fishing regulations rule regarding changing trout fishing on the Bluestone River in Pipestem Resort State Park from delayed harvest into year-round catch and release. Your comments are indeed appreciated, and we do use feedback from knowledgeable park users such as yourself to help us form management strategies to more effectively operate West Virginia State Parks.

Your comments regarding past use of the facilities at Pipestem Resort State Park and participation in the trout fishing made available there are gratifying and your experiences are an excellent example of the type of fishing adventure we have been trying to create at the park. West Virginia State Parks are in the recreation business and creating public recreation is part of our legislated mandate. Every year we invest substantial funds into creating recreational experiences for user groups such as golfers, swimmers, and boaters. What we realized a few years ago, was that our parks system was not making an equal investment into creating exciting and innovative recreation for one of our most important user groups – anglers. Being trout anglers ourselves, it didn't take long for us to look around and find that we had an outstanding opportunity to do just that at Pipestem Resort State Park.

Your comments about cold-water needs of trout are certainly true. Rest assured that we have no intention of stocking trout into the Bluestone River in the warm summer months. The purpose of extending the catch and release season was to afford our summer park guests the opportunity to catch spring stocked fish at the quality you described.

While the Bluestone River is primarily a warmwater stream, studies in recent years have shown that some trout do survive through the summer in the stretch where the special regulation has been in effect. It appears that some springs or perhaps side streams are providing enough cold water to provide a thermal refugia for the trout in this area.

Mr. Crist we sincerely hope that you and your family continue to use the facilities at Pipestem Resort State Park and enjoy the great fishing opportunities available there. We will monitor all conditions very closely and will indeed recommend appropriate changes to rules as circumstances dictate. I would also like to extend congratulations on your years of service and impending retirement with state government.

If you have further questions or comment, please let me know.

Bradley R. Reed
Deputy Chief
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West Virginia Division of Natural Resources

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From: Crist, Charles T <Charles.T.Crist@wv.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 30, 2019 12:50 PM
To: DNR Comments <DNRComments@wv.gov>
Subject: Proposed change to Bluestone River-Trout

Proposal to change the Bluestone River to year-round catch and release for trout:

It seems to me that the invitation from the DNR to invite public comments on a proposal that was voted on and finalized last year lends absolutely no credence to those comments except to the commenter, so, for the sake of having my say, I am becoming one of them.

I can stipulate that the guided trout trips at Pipestem State Park are very likely being well received, are making money for the park, and that is a viable revenue stream and great news for Pipestem! The problem here is that you cannot legislate a warm water stream into a cold water stream. A trout here or there may survive in a cold water surface influx like Mountain Creek, or a cold spring welling up from the riverbed, but in general, every trout in the Bluestone River in Pipestem State Park will be dead by mid-July. The river just gets too warm to support them.

I am a 65 year old WV state employee and I am retiring soon. I caught my first trout at the lower gate campground in the Cranberry back country when I was 5. I have continued to fish for trout in many places these past 60 years, and during my post-secondary schooling, in addition to many other natural sciences, I did course work in Ichthyology, Limnology, Lentic and Lotic systems, Aquatic and Riparian Habitat Management, and I have worked at a WV cold water trout hatchery, so these comments are not the rantings of an individual that does not know the subject material.

Trout like and need cold water, and they cannot survive very long in warm water. The catch and release designation made perfect sense for the Bluestone River, a designated warm water stream, because beginning June first every year, when the river was beginning to warm, the trout became available for any fisherman to catch and keep. Now they will simply rot away like spawned out salmon and die of organ shutdown/asphyxiation in the warm water. This is a biological fact and no amount of legislation can change it. The park will be able to back a truck down to the water in July or August and stock trout into the river, that is true, but within weeks, perhaps days, depending on the water temperature in the river, those trout will sicken and die, and those deaths will be VERY ugly. I wonder how the public will view that sight...

These last several years my wife and I have rented lodging at Mountain Creek Lodge for at least 5 nights from May 31 on just to fish the trout in the Bluestone and keep a couple to grill by the lodge. The trout on June first are always still very healthy and feisty. This has become an annual pilgrimage for us and we have been doing this for so long that when we started, NO ONE ELSE at all was participating in this delayed harvest fishery for the first 2 years. We started the Delayed Harvest craze on the Bluestone River. We have had days on June 1 in the Bluestone when we have caught more than 20 fat rainbows of 5 pounds or more in one day, keeping a legal limit but returning most to the river...of all the streams on this planet, only in a wild, unspoiled, remote place like Kamchatka,

Russia can that feat be sure to be duplicated.

Seven years ago 2 people were fishing, paying for tram rides, renting rooms at Mountain Creek for multiple nights to catch those trout...last year over 100 people were riding the tram and fishing and many were staying at the park for multiple days (also a viable revenue stream). All of that will end this year on June first in favor of allowing the trout to die very slowly in the most horrible way anyone can imagine. That is a shame...

Many things pertaining to trout in this state have changed much since Trout Unlimited has been able to rise to the level of executive decision making here, and most of those changes have not been in favor of average fishermen.

Tom Crist
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"The Tree of Liberty must be watered at times by the Blood of patriots and tyrants." Thomas Jefferson