

Trophic Modification Task Team (TMTT) of the SRST ROPs

Expert Panel Meeting
October 5, 2010

TMTT Members

- Don Kain, Calvin Jordan – DEQ
- Paul Bugas – DGIF
- Greg Murphy – URS
- Mike Liberati, Bob Hoke, Nancy Grosso – DuPont

Trophic Mod Concept

Innovative ROPs Tech Memo (Jan 2010)

- Bass currently have higher Hg concentrations and feed higher in the trophic web than trout. Trout stocked in the current put-and-take program are highly valued and can be eaten by anglers.
- Increased availability of trout would increase opportunities to catch and safely consume a sport fish in the South River
- While not a solution to the overall Hg issue, trophic modifications have the potential to provide benefits in the near term without being based on the long-term reduction of overall MeHg levels in the ecosystem
- Fisheries management practices that can positively engage the public, provide economic value to the region, and enhance/ protect the natural resources (including fisheries resources)
- Expand trout stocking program, modify the river habitat where practical to favor trout
- Depending on the value assigned to bass fishing by stakeholders, efforts could also be undertaken to reduce the bass presence in the South River

Trophic Modification Task Team Purpose

- Identify, explore, evaluate, and test options for the South River system that will increase the opportunity to catch a fish that is safe to eat (meHg < 0.3ppm), or provide other benefits for stakeholders.

Discussion Results

- Two broad categories of options
 - Increase the recreational opportunity to catch more fish, larger fish, and/or safe-to-eat fish
 - Manipulate the aquatic system to promote production of safe-to-eat fish

Increase Recreational Opportunities Options

- Expand trout stocking program
 - Create additional put and take trout areas
- Create a trophy/quality bass river
 - May need a more stringent consumption message, river may have limitations

Manipulate Aquatic System Options

- Increase fish growth rates to decrease fish tissue Hg burden
- In cold water areas, modify river habitat to favor trout

Next Steps

- BASS model predictions for stocked fish
- River temperature survey
- Recommendations to ROPs