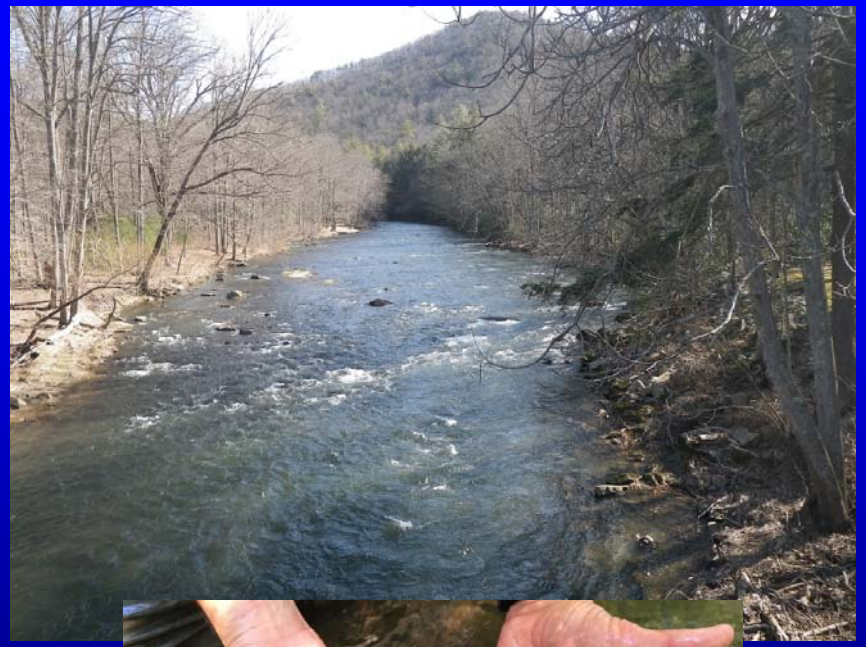
Addition of Penns Creek, Section 05, Union County, to the Catch-and-Release Artificial Lures Only program (58 Pa. § 65.5)

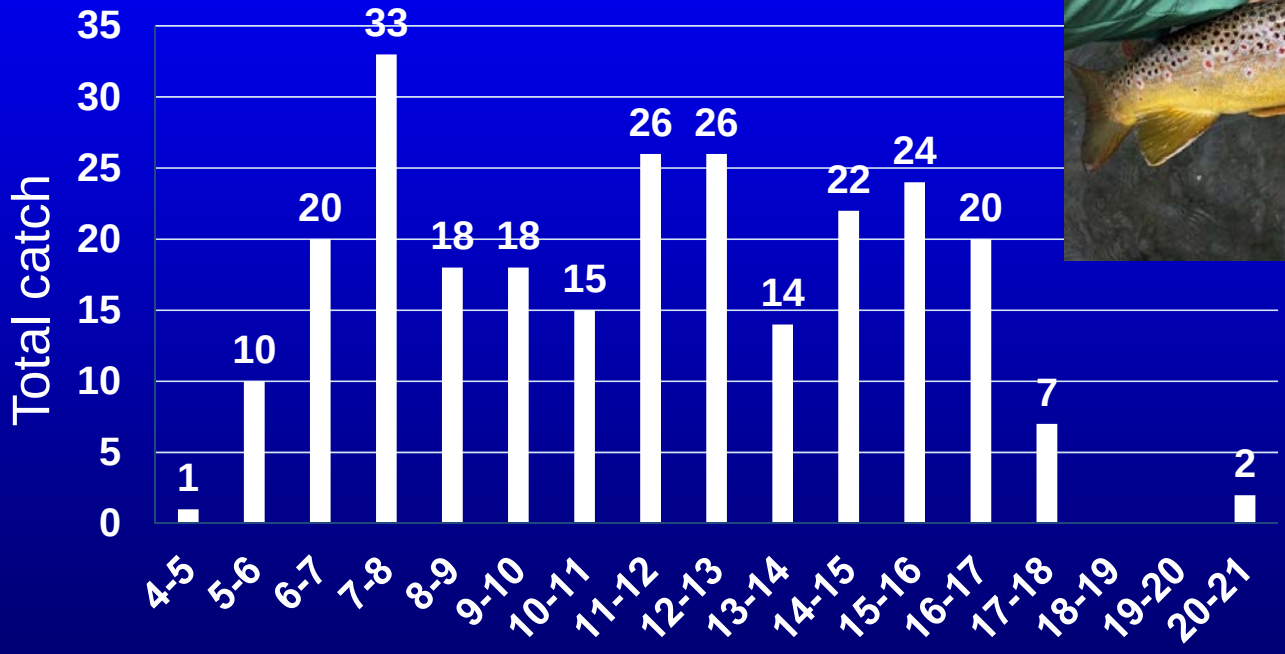
Mission: To protect, conserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's aquatic resources and provide fishing and boating opportunities

Penns Creek

- 66-mile long tributary to Susquehanna River flowing through portions of Centre, Union, Mifflin, and Snyder counties
- Large, limestone-influenced stream that supports strong numbers of wild Brown Trout throughout much of its length
  - 29 miles designated Class A
- One of the most popular wild trout streams in PA and eastern U.S.



Penns Creek, Section 05: wild Brown Trout – 2017

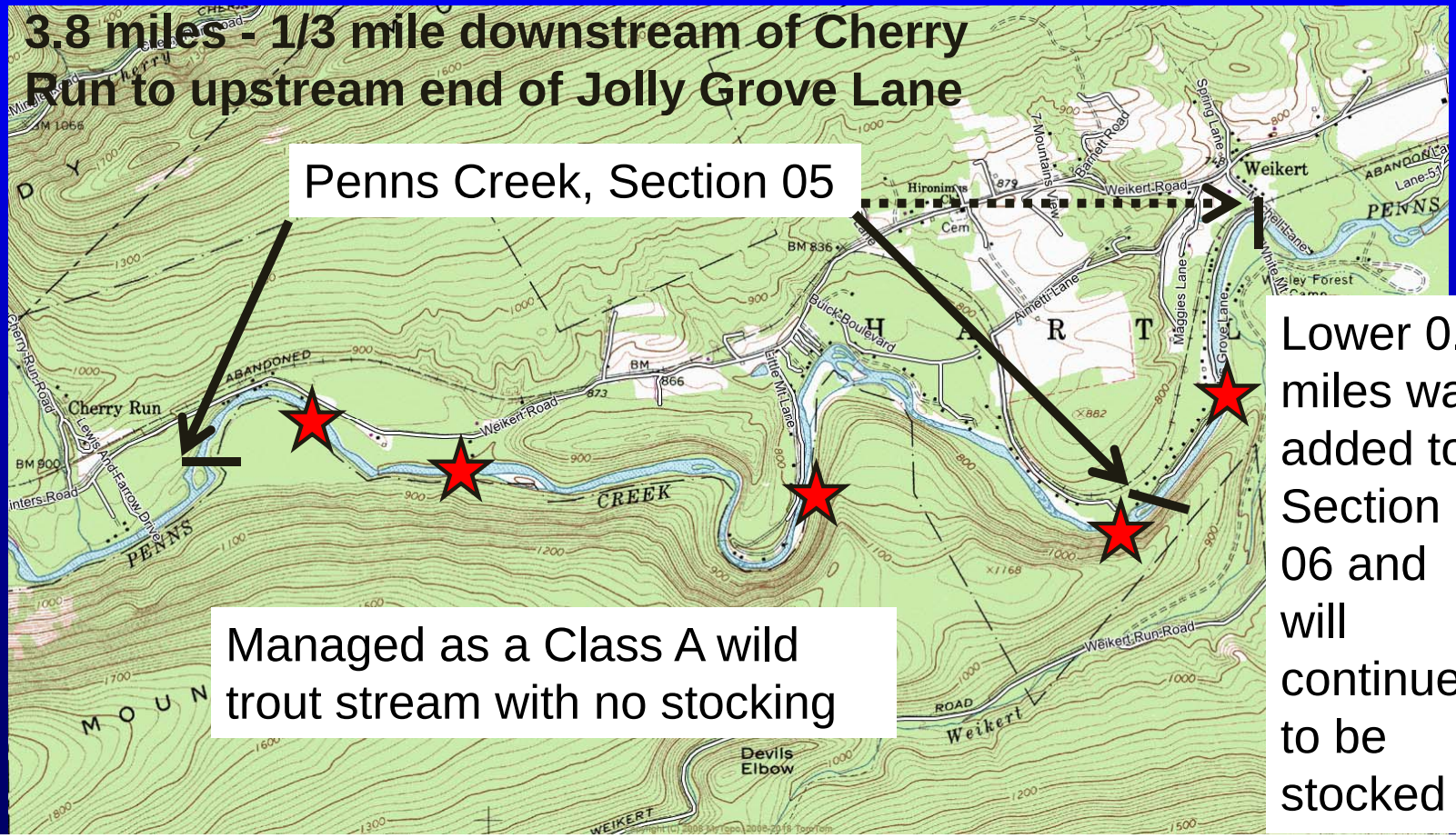


n = 256 wild Brown Trout

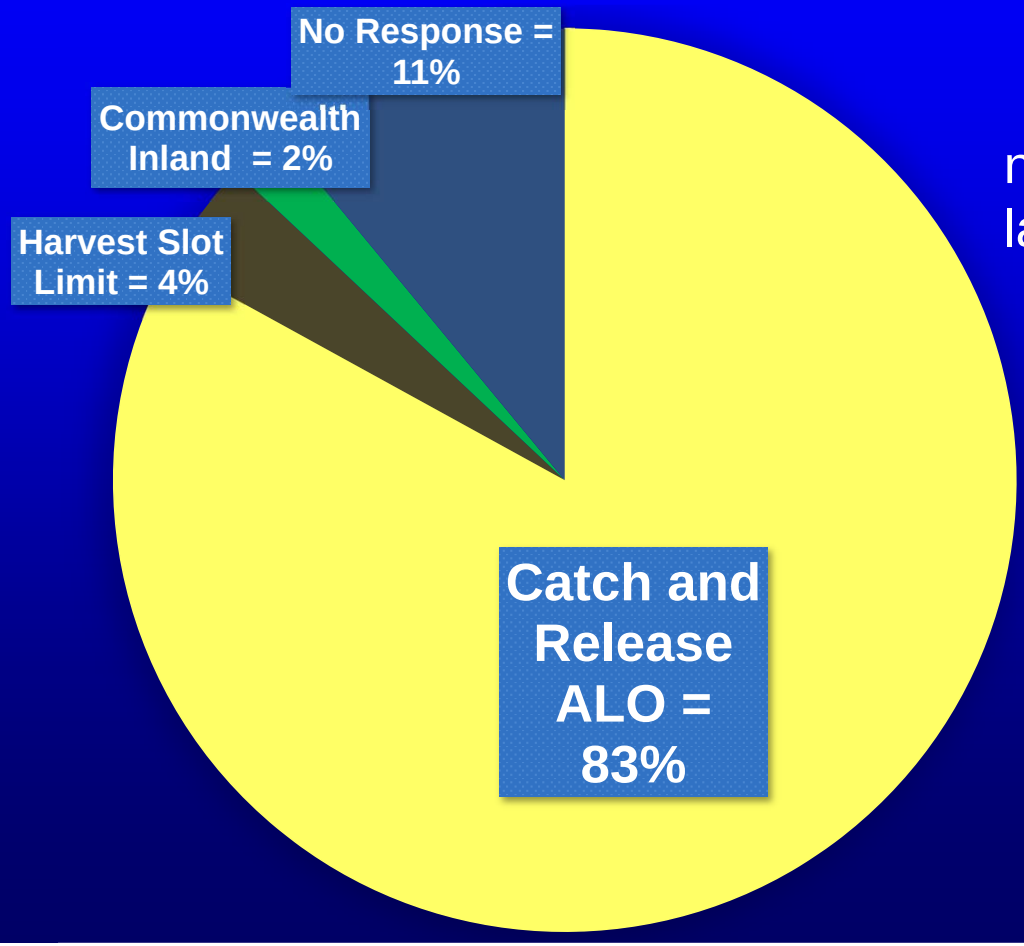
Section 05 biomass = 45 kg/ha

Designated Class A in July

Section 05 – limits following Class A designation in July 2018

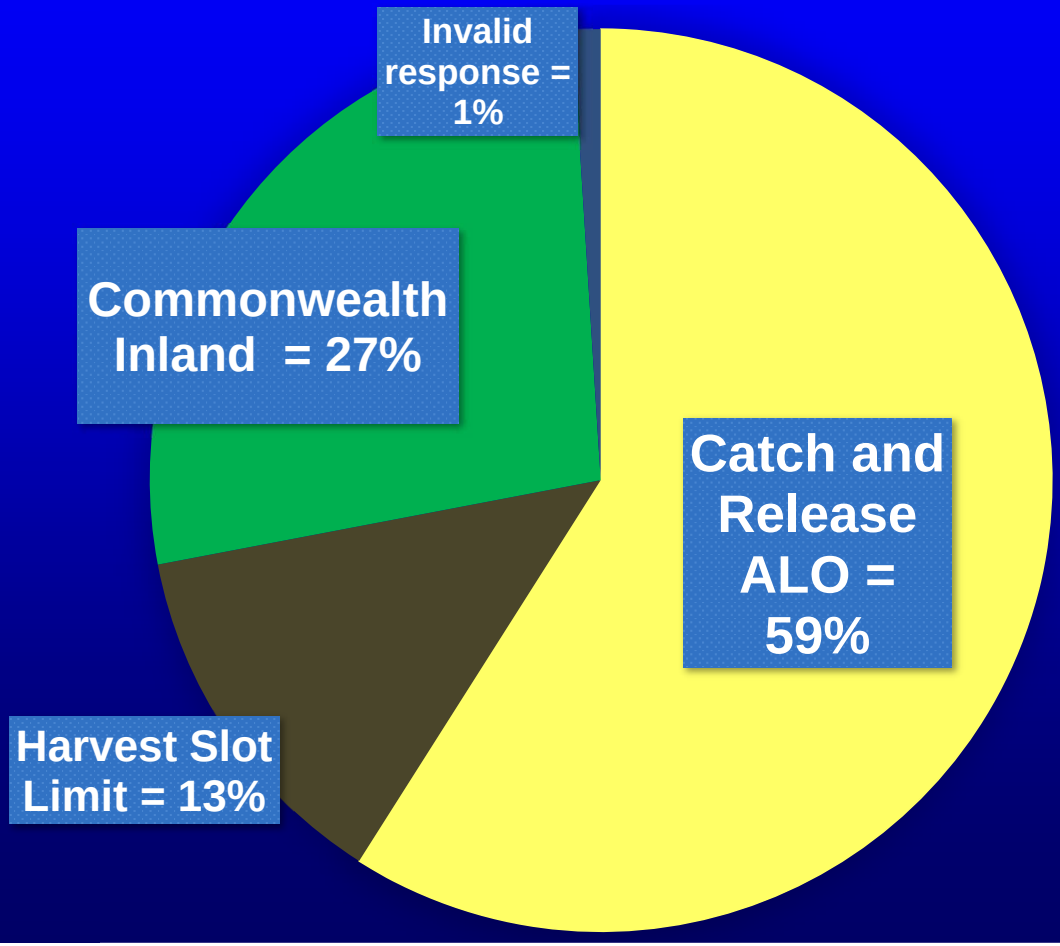


Fall 2017 mailed riparian landowner survey results



n = 43 riparian landowners contacted

February 2018 public meeting survey results



212 attendees

n = 163 responses

Rationale for Catch-and-Release Artificial Lures Only regulations

- This would be a downstream extension of existing Catch-and-Release Artificial Lures Only regulations currently in Section 04 located immediately upstream, providing for consistent management along a longer continuous reach of stream
- Similar management on Penns Creek, and other popular wild trout waters, has yielded a positive fishery response in the past
- High profile, high use waters such as Penns Creek have potential for overharvest
- Based on the results of PFBC's opinion surveys, this approach meets the collective desires of the majority landowners and anglers fishing Penns Creek
- This approach is consistent with PFBC Resource First policy

Public Comments

- A notice of proposed designation was published at 48 Pa. B. 4367 on July 21, 2018
- The Commission received a total of 549 public comments
  - 369 supported (67%)
  - 75 opposed (14%)
  - 71 supported Catch-and-Release, but opposed Artificial Lures Only (13%)
  - 31 did not pertain to the proposal (6%)
  - One commenter submitted 511 signed form letters dated 2008
  - Docket of 112 signed form letters in opposition

Staff recommendation

- Staff recommend the Commission add Penns Creek, Section 05, Union County, to the Catch-and-Release Artificial Lures Only program (58 Pa. § 65.5)

- If formally approved, the designation will go into effect on January 1, 2019