Orebed Creek, flowing through southern Allegany County, provides a fishery for wild brook trout. Property along the stream is a mix of posted and unposted, privately-owned property. The stream is not stocked with trout. In 2018, as part of region-wide trout population monitoring, Orebed Creek was sampled by electrofishing at two sites. The lower site was upstream of Graves Road and the other 0.5 miles below the Pennsylvania line, totaling 1,025 feet of stream. Both sites had been sampled previously, in 1989, 1999, 2006 and 2017. To estimate the trout population abundance, we utilized two electrofishing passes in 2016 and 2017, while prior to this we utilized single pass CROTS methodology.

In 2018, at our two sites combined, we captured 68 yearling-and-older (adult) wild brook trout. They ranged in length from 4.6 to 11.8 inches, with an average length of 6.7 inches. This small average size is typical of low productivity wild brook trout streams in Western NY. If angler harvest is low, some fish will live long enough to achieve quality size, but the average size of adult fish will be small.

At the lower site, we found a moderate adult brook trout abundance of 242 fish/mile (±21). This value was the lowest we have measured in any of the five survey years, following the highest abundance in 2017 (Figure 1). At our upper site in 2018, we saw a higher abundance of adult brook trout (474 fish/mile (±31)). This value, however, was also the lowest we have measured in any survey year (Figure 1). Western NY brook trout streams saw healthy levels of reproduction in 2015 and 2016, leading to generally good abundance of yearling and two-year-old brook trout in 2017. However, reproduction of brook trout in Orebed Creek in 2017 was very poor, likely resulting in lower abundance of yearling brook trout this year. Reproduction of brook trout in 2018, while slightly higher than 2017, was still far below the levels seen in 1989 and 1999 (Figure 2). Reproduction in 2006 was also found to be very poor. This is not unusual, as brook trout reproductive success in headwater streams has been found to be closely tied to winter and spring stream flows, with high flows leading to poor reproduction. Based on this year’s sampling, it appears Orebed Creek
will provide good fishing for anglers wishing to pursue wild brook trout in a wooded, small stream setting.

Figure 2. Number of YOY brook trout captured (number per mile) in Orebed Creek, 1989-2018

- Lower site
- Upper site