Spring Mills Creek, flowing through far southeastern 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 has not been stocked with trout since 1992. In 2018, as part of region-wide trout population monitoring, Spring Mills Creek was sampled by electrofishing at one site. Our site was located at the County Route 19 crossing near Cobb Road. This site had been sampled previously, in 2009, 2016 and 2017. To estimate the trout population abundance, we utilized two electrofishing passes in 2016 and 2017, while in 2009 we utilized single pass CROTS methodology.

In 2018, over the 565 feet of stream sampled, we captured 28 yearling-and-older (adult) wild brook trout. They ranged in length from 5.4 to 8.8 inches, with an average length of 6.5 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.

In 2018, we found a moderate adult brook trout abundance of 262 fish/mile (±9). This value was significantly (P<0.05) lower than we found in 2016 and 2017, but higher than we found in 2009 (Figure 1). We also captured a moderate number of young-of-year brook trout this year (224/mile), similar to 2016 and much higher than 2009 and 2017 (Figure 1). Reproduction of brook trout in Spring Mills Creek in 2017 was very poor, likely resulting in lower abundance of yearling brook trout this year. Based on this year’s sampling, it appears Spring Mills Creek will provide good fishing for anglers wishing to pursue wild brook trout in a small stream setting. No changes in regulations are recommended at this time and the stream should continue to be managed as a wild trout fishery.