Stoddard Creek, a tributary of Red House Lake, in Allegany State Park, provides a fishery for wild brook trout. This is a small stream, averaging 15 feet in width, and containing large-boulder adult trout habitat typical of State Park streams. As part of our regional trout population assessment, two sites were sampled by electrofishing on June 20, 2018. Both sites had previously been sampled in 1995, 1998, 2008 and 2017. In 2017 and 2018, trout population abundance was estimated from two electrofishing passes while earlier surveys utilized CROTS single-pass methodology.

In 2018 at our lower site (600 feet long), we captured 27 adult brook trout ranging from 4.5-9.3 inches along with 115 young-of-year (YOY). This resulted in an adult brook trout population estimate of 237 fish/mile (±9). At our upper site (600 feet long), we captured 28 adult brook trout and 94 YOY, resulting in an adult brook trout population estimate of 254 fish/mile (±35). The adult brook trout captured at this site ranged from 4.4-8.1 inches long.

Adult wild brook trout populations typically show substantial year to year variation based on weather-influenced (winter/spring flooding) variation in the success of previous year’s reproduction. At our lower site on Stoddard Creek in 2018, the adult brook trout abundance was not significantly (P>0.05) different than we found in 2017. The 2018 value was slightly lower than we found in 1998 and 2008, 2010 and 2012, but substantially higher than in 1995 (Figure 1). Adult brook trout abundance at the upper site on Beehunter Creek in 2018 was slightly higher than we found in 2008 and 2017, but lower than we found in 1998 (Figure 1). Reproduction of brook trout (number of fish/mile captured on the first shocking run) at our lower site in 2018 (860/mile) was the second highest we have seen behind 1998 and many times higher than 2008 and 2017 (Figure 2). The number of YOY captured at our upper site in 2018 was also very good (579 fish/mile), substantially higher than 2008 and 2017, but lower than 1995 and 1998 (Figure 2). Based on this year’s sampling in Beehunter Creek, the stream should continue to provide good fishing for anglers wishing to pursue wild brook trout in a scenic, forested setting. Brook trout from this naturally infertile stream seldom exceed eight inches and these fish may take at least 3-4 years.
to reach this size, thus anglers are encouraged to limit their harvest of brook trout to provide anglers with sustained quality fishing in future years.

Figure 2. Young-of-year captured (per mile) on the first sampling run at the lower (red) and upper (blue) sites on Stoddard Creek, 1995-2018.