

Unnamed Tributary of Chautauqua Creek Trout Survey
Scott Cornett, Region Nine Fisheries

2/5/2024

On June 14, 2023, a site on T-19 of Chautauqua Creek was electrofished to monitor a wild trout population first discovered in 2016. T-19 is a small stream, averaging eight feet in width. The stream had been sampled by NYSDEC at the mouth in 2013 when no trout were found. In 2016, an angler informed us he had caught several wild brook trout in this stream in the area upstream from the mouth. A subsequent survey in 2016 (#916034) found both wild brook trout and wild rainbow trout. In this year's survey, Region 9 Fisheries staff electrofished 500-feet of stream, starting at Nettle Hill Road just above its junction with Chautauqua Creek.

Sampling efforts in 2023 captured two yearling rainbow trout but no brook trout despite finding suitable habitat. Seven other fish species were captured, three of which were warm-water indicator species (creek chub, northern hogsucker and redbreast dace). The stream bottom was heavily silted at this site, indicating upstream impacts from logging, agriculture, or beaver dams. We encountered an active beaver dam within our sampling site that had not been present in 2016. It is possible water temperatures are also limiting for trout at this location, though water temperatures were not indicative of it on the day of sampling due to low air temperatures. It is possible that a more abundant population of brook trout and/or rainbow trout exists farther upstream on this two-mile-long stream. However, the headwater areas are nearly inaccessible for effective sampling.