

Fishing for the Future

By David A. Ramsey

As I am writing this, it has now been several months since a “tropical hurricane,” with the benign-sounding name of Helene, ripped across the Southern Appalachian landscape, destroying homes, businesses, infrastructure and, most tragically, precious human lives in many of our beloved mountain communities. Recovery has been steady and strong in some places, yet slow and/or erratic in others.

Just what havoc this catastrophe wreaked on our vital mountain waters and their inhabitants is not yet fully known, therefore, 2025 presents a rare opportunity for mountain fishers to contribute to that critically important body of information and possibly to the restoration and recovery of some of our creeks and rivers. For this reason we have undertaken to conduct a simple survey, the information of which will hopefully prove useful in that effort.

If you would like to participate, simply print several photocopies of the survey from this page and fill one out on each of your mountain stream fishing trips through September 2025. After a form is completed for a trip, just email a copy to me, David Ramsey at: mtnstreamsurvey@gmail.com or text a photo of each survey to: 423-560-0868. I will then add it to the aggregate of information and promptly forward it to the appropriate fisheries professionals for that area. Survey information WILL NOT be shared with the public. All survey contributors will be updated on survey usage and action plans for related streams.

This is a great chance for those of us who love plying the blue line waters of Western NC and Eastern TN to provide key information to the stewards of those waters for restoration work and/or vital data collection.

2025 Southern Mountain Trout Survey

Send to: mtnstreamsurvey@gmail.com or 423-560-0868

*** PLEASE BE AS ACCURATE AS POSSIBLE ***

Name of respondent _____ Date _____

Stream _____ Section _____ County/State _____

Gen. stream condition post-Helene _____

Blowdowns in and along stream (few, dozens, many dozens) _____

Degree of stream bed scouring from flood waters (minor, moderate, heavy) _____

Degree of steam bank erosion (minor, moderate, heavy) _____

Trash and pollution apparent from flooding (minor, moderate, heavy) _____

Apprx. num. of fish seen in stream: Rainbow _____ Brown _____ Brook _____ Size range _____

Number of fish caught: Rainbow _____ Brown _____ Brook _____ Size range _____ Largest _____

Apparent health of fish caught _____

Presence of aquatic insects and other species _____

NOTES: (use additional blank page if needed) _____