

# URGENT NOTICE

## The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department has proposed stocking Rainbow Trout in the Battenkill.

The State of Vermont conducted a 6-year study on the Battenkill from 1999-2005 to determine why the wild brown trout population, particularly fish in the mid-size, 6-12" range, fell by 70% in the early 1990s. The study found the brown trout population decline was the result of lack of cover/woody debris (trees, stumps, root systems, etc.) Fingerling and small trout live fine in the riffles. Larger trout, many up to five pounds, are also fairly numerous, living in what large cover there is. The study goes on to explain that the missing mid-size fish become exposed to mergansers, kingfishers, carnivorous big brown trout, and other predators, as well as to drought and high water stress as soon as they move out of the riffles in search of better cover.

The State of Vermont, Orvis, Trout Unlimited, the Battenkill Watershed Alliance, and many others are at work to return cover to the stream and restore the river to health. This will mean the return of wild trout populations. A chance for all of us to see a day when the river once again holds many wild trout, and we, our kids, and grandkids can catch and even keep them if the numbers increase sufficiently.

However, the state has proposed stocking 1000 rainbows along the stretch where much cover (see the article on Battenkill Twin Rivers Farm Habitat Restoration Project on TOSWVT.org) work is to be done. This will have a negative impact to the Battenkill being once again the best river in the state, perhaps all of New England.

## Why is stocking rainbows the **wrong** approach?

- The state of Vermont is responsible for managing the Battenkill River as a wild trout fishery. Stocking rainbow trout is in direct conflict with this responsibility. Make sure they live up to their responsibility to the river, and to us.
- Stocking rainbows goes against the state's very own biological and scientific findings that the wild trout in the Battenkill NEED every bit of cover they can get.
- Stocked rainbows will compete for the very cover the state proved the wild trout need to survive.
- Rainbows are susceptible to disease and can pass disease to other trout and potentially decimate wild populations.
- Stocking trout over wild trout has proven to result in fewer numbers of wild trout
- Rainbows migrate and may go into our prized wild brook trout tributaries, upsetting the balance of wild brook trout in the Roaring Branch, Lye Brook, Bourne Brook, and others

- A return of healthy numbers of WILD brown and brook trout will have more of a beneficial economic impact on the area.
- Anglers will return again to catch the legendary trout of the Kill. Will they return and travel from afar to fish for 11" stocked rainbows they can catch in their home waters, or anywhere else? Not likely.
- The return of cover in the river and especially along the river banks will help flood control and slow bank erosion that leads to loss of property along the river.

## Help the Battenkill Be the River it Once Was.

WE ALL WANT THE BATTENKILL TO RETURN TO ITS FORMER GLORY, as much as this is possible. This may take time, but who amongst us, when we think of the "Good Old Days" of the Battenkill envisions silvery, 11" stocked rainbows with clipped fins? How many of us think of colorful, fat and feisty wild brookies and monster browns?

## Three things you can do **right now** to help us stop the stocking and say "No!" to Rainbows in the Battenkill:

- Sign our online petition against stocking rainbows in the Battenkill (see [www.TUSWVT.org](http://www.TUSWVT.org))
- Join us for a Special TU Meeting Tues. May 16, 2006, 7pm – at the Battenkill Inn, Sunderland, VT.
- Contact your local elected and appointed officials and let them know you **DO NOT AGREE** with the State's proposed stocking of rainbows in the Battenkill.