

Fishing Potentialities of the Gunpowder River

Presented below is a report from the State Game and Inland Fish Commission on the potentialities of the Gunpowder rivers for fishing, which points up admirably the possibilities inherent in the splendid resources and unpolluted waters of these two rivers for greatly augmenting this recreational activity in the Baltimore region.

GUNPOWDER WATERSHED RECREATIONAL STUDY INLAND FISHERY PROGRAM

Present Resources

The Gunpowder River watershed, extending from the coastal plain of the broad, marshy waters of the lower Gunpowder River and traversing the fall-line at the B. & O. Railroad, extends upward through the heart land of Baltimore County some sixty miles. The river basin is fed by many meandering streams nourished by underground springs.

Impoundments

Major impoundments, on this watershed, which are now providing limited fishing recreation to more than 2,000,000 people of this area are: Loch Raven Reservoir, Prettyboy Reservoir, Oregon Pool, Parkton Mill, Sheppard Pratt Pond, Druid Ridge Lake, Baltimore Fish and Game Association Pond and Gwynnbrook Community Pond, and numerous other private lakes, of which more than 600 are ponds on farm lands. Many of these areas are now being managed and stocked by the Maryland Game and Inland Fish Commission.

(a) Running Waters (Cold Water) Trout Stream:

The Gunpowder is amply provided with many cold running streams adequate to the management of trout fishing. Those now partially or wholly open to public fishing are: Little Falls, Gunpowder River, Beetree Run, George's Run, Oregon Run, Black Rock Run, Western Run, Piney Run, and Mine Branch Run. With the acquisition of additional lands for park and public use, numerous other streams could be added to this list.

(b) Warm Water Streams:

Considerable warm water fishing for smallmouth bass and related species such as sunfish, perch, crappie and catfishes, is to be found on the Gunpowder River and tributaries. The streams now being fished for these warm water fish are: Little Gunpowder River, Gunpowder River, Third and Fourth Mine Branch, Charles Run, Saw Mill Branch, Long Green Creek, Sweathouse Branch, Board Run, Mine Bank Run, Piney Creek, Bush Cabin Run and south branch of the Gunpowder Falls.

Present Use

The greatest concentration of population in the State is located in the Gunpowder River watershed, where 30,000 City fishermen and equal number of country fishermen reside. 15,000 neighboring fishermen from Pennsylvania, Harford, Carroll and Howard counties,

Maryland, swell the total fisherman population to about 75,000 persons interested in participating in fresh water fishing activities in the watershed. Present limited facilities on Prettyboy and Loch Raven Reservoirs, and access areas at some of the major highways crossing the river basin system, are the only facilities now available to this vast potential of outdoor recreation enthusiasts.

Future Development

It is apparent that the Fishery Division of the Maryland Game and Inland Fish Commission, with the cooperation of other active recreational agencies, must look to the development of many opportunities that this area affords. In the planning and development of this important work, it would seem necessary to hire a fishery manager or biologist to assist in the development and implementation of the many technical programs which must evolve from this type of work. We foresee the need for development of access sites at all of the major crossings of the river, such as, Parkton, Graystone, Monkton, Sparks, Phoenix, Cromwell Bridge, Somerfield, U. S. Highway No. 147 (Harford Road), U. S. Highway No. 1 (Old Philadelphia Road) and U. S. Highway No. 40. Parking areas and boat ramps would be a part of this overall plan to provide more fishing opportunities. Low flow dams to improve the rivers and streams and deepen the stream channel for cold water species, should be considered. Stream improvement devices to accelerate water-flow or create deep pools in shallow water areas are noticeably needed. Retention reservoirs on small streams throughout the watershed would be very desirable for the purpose of flood control, agricultural water use, municipal town water supply, fishing recreation and fire suppression. Additional access roads, to areas not now available to citizens, stands high on the list of priorities, for the recreational needs of the watershed. Boat liveries, adequate patrol and picnic facilities should be expanded at both Prettyboy and Loch Raven Reservoirs. Winter fishing, on these reservoirs, could be developed by the use of floating bathouses with heat and lighting utilities, which would provide excellent crappie and carp fishing. The Fishery Division sees the need for the initiation of a guide service on the reservoirs, for those unfamiliar with the how, when and where of good angling success.

The possibility of making these Baltimore City reservoirs a two-layer management program, where warm and cold water fishery programs could be developed, will be in the future picture.

Multiple Use Conflict

The development of swimming pools, playgrounds and other recreational facilities, which frequently conflict with public fishing, should be given serious preliminary priorities. These conflicts can frequently be resolved through seasonal operations, zoning of interest, and a restriction on method and administration of fishing areas. In the majority of cases, fishing will go hand in hand with most other outdoor recreation and fit into an urban recreational program.