



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

2025

Stevenson Creek, Vilas County

WBIC: 2332800

Introduction And Objectives

Stevenson Creek, located in Vilas County, is classified as Class II trout water for its entire 1.7 mile length. The creek lies within the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest and is part of the Manitowish River watershed. This survey focused on the lower stretch of the stream near Trout Lake; the upper station could not be sampled due to beaver activity. Upstream, a water-control structure forms a spring-pond complex and does not allow for upstream fish passage. The stream bottom consists of muck and sandy loam, and the streambank remains undeveloped with natural vegetation. No brook trout were captured during the 2025 survey, which may be related to beaver activity and the warm water temperature. The 1975 survey documented young-of-the-year and adult brook trout, indicating natural reproduction and recruitment into the adult fishery.

DNR Contact

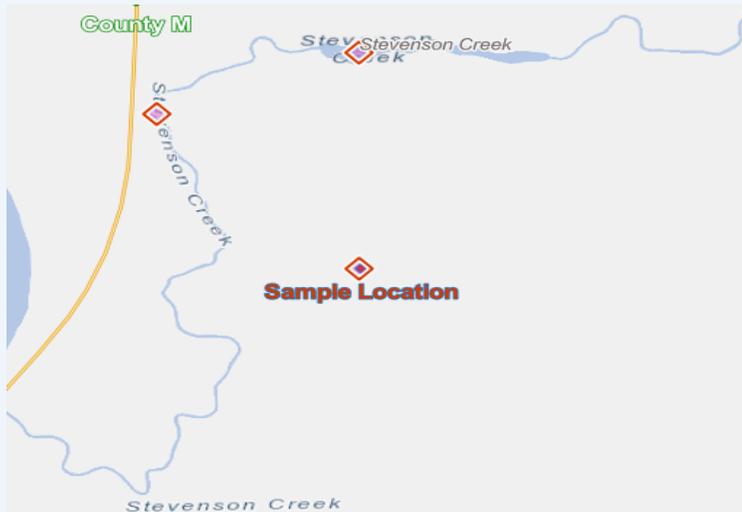
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Regulations

Category: Green
Daily Bag and Size Limit:
5 trout in total of any length

SURVEY INFORMATION

Station	Survey Date	Station Length	Temperature (°F)	Mean Stream (m) Width	GPS (Start/Finish)	Gear	Dippers	Coldwater IBI
Adjacent to County M	05/19/1975	1200 ft	67	7	45.065517, -89.6446333	Stream Shocker	2	
Adjacent to County M	07/14/2025	1200 ft	72	3	45.065517, -89.644633	Stream Shocker	3	20



Survey Method & IBI

- All streams are sampled according to DNR wadable streams monitoring protocols.
- All trout are counted and measured and all other species are counted in order to calculate an Index of Biotic Integrity (IBI) score.
- Metrics used to describe trout populations include average length, catch per unit effort (CPUE) and length frequency distribution.
- Index of Biotic Integrity (IBI) is a rating of environmental quality based on the fish assemblage. Scores of 90 - 100 indicate excellent stream quality, while scores less than 30 indicate poor stream quality. Our analysis utilizes the IBI for Wisconsin coldwater streams. Coldwater streams in Wisconsin are those in which the maximum daily mean water temperature is usually <22°C (71.6°F). A coldwater stream IBI may also be used when a stream doesn't fit the temperature criteria for a coldwater stream.

BROOK TROUT ABUNDANCE (CPUE) METRICS

Station	Total Number Sampled	Average Length (inches)	Length Range (inches)	CPUE (No. per Mile)					
				Total CPUE	Young-of-Year CPUE	≥5" CPUE	≥8" CPUE	≥10" CPUE	≥12" CPUE
Adjacent to County M-1975	32	7.2	1.5-12.4	141	13	79	26	18	4
Adjacent to County M-2025	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Summary

- No brook trout were captured during the 2025 survey, likely due to warm water temperature.
- Beaver activity has significantly altered the upper reach, preventing sampling and affecting stream conditions.
- A water-control structure upstream form a spring-pond complex, which blocks upstream fish passage, and is likely limiting brook trout movement and distribution.
- Stream conditions appeared to have deteriorated, although comparisons between surveys should be interpreted cautiously because they were conducted nearly 50 years apart, almost two months apart seasonally and under water temperature's that differed by about 5 degrees Fahrenheit.
- The following species were captured during the 2025 survey: smallmouth bass, yellow perch, central mudminnow, creek chub, bluntnose minnow, western blacknose dace, pearl dace, northern redbelly dace, rosyface shiner, common shiner, logperch, fantail darter, Johnny darter and white sucker.