

SUMMARY
TROUT UNLIMITED POLICY
ON PISCICIDE USE FOR CONSERVING NATIVE TROUT AND SALMON

This summary of the “Trout Unlimited Policy on Piscicide Use for Conserving Native Trout and Salmon” provides guidance for Trout Unlimited actions regarding piscicide use for native fish conservation. Piscicides are substances used to kill fish and have been primarily used to remove undesirable fish species from various waters. Since TU's mission is to conserve, protect, and restore North America’s coldwater fisheries and their watersheds, the conservation of native trout and salmon is a TU priority. This Policy acknowledges that there are a variety of issues that are important in the conservation of native salmonids, but focuses specifically on the control of non-native species using piscicides because of their prevalence and significance in many native fish restoration efforts. Over the past 70 years, the practice of using piscicides in streams, rivers, ponds, lakes, and reservoirs has become an important fishery conservation tool. A number of evolving issues, particularly involving the elimination of non-native fish species that are impacting rare and endangered native trout, have recently challenged the continued use of piscicides in fishery conservation. Trout Unlimited involvement in these issues has prompted the development of this policy.

This summary builds on the philosophy and guidelines in "Trout Unlimited's North American Salmonid Policy" and is based on a scientific review of the impacts of piscicides on fish populations and aquatic ecosystems. The issues involved in non-native species control are complex and many of the problems facing resource managers have not been solved. As a result, the Policy serves as a foundation for TU actions until new and better ways to manage the negative impacts of non-native species on native aquatic fauna are developed in the future. A complete version of the detailed policy document is available on the TU website at www.tu.org.

CONSERVATION AND NON-NATIVE FISH - The following statements describe the general status of native trout and salmon, the threat posed by non-native species, and the conservation tools currently available to remedy non-native fish impacts:

1. The introduction of non-native species is one of the primary causes behind the dramatic reduction of native trout and salmon in North America.
2. Removing non-native species is an integral part of conserving native salmonids including many listed under the Endangered Species Act.
3. The physical, biological, and/or chemical methods that are used to suppress or remove non-native fish have different benefits and limitations.
4. Piscicides (antimycin, rotenone, TFM and niclosamide) are the dominant tool in restoration projects to control or remove non-native species existing in native salmonid habitat.
5. The future use of piscicides in native trout and salmon restoration efforts is becoming more uncertain.

PISCICIDE CHARACTERISTICS AND REGULATION - The following statements describe the status of piscicides as substances regulated by government agencies:

1. Piscicides are regulated by the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and have been intensively evaluated for environmental and human safety.
2. The risks to human health and the environment from piscicide use can be reduced to a level of insignificance when piscicides are applied in appropriate situations according to EPA label directions.
3. The use of piscicides for individual native trout conservation projects is subject to a broad array of state and federal directives, regulations, and permitting requirements to ensure safe and effective application.
4. The use of piscicides by state, tribal, and federal fish and wildlife agencies to recover native trout and salmon populations has sometimes become overly encumbered by redundant processes, uneven and irregular application of policies, and overlapping authorities.

POLICY STATEMENTS ON SAFE PISCICIDE USE AND NATIVE SALMONID RESTORATION - The following statements summarize Trout Unlimited positions and recommendation on the use of piscicides for native salmonid restoration:

1. Trout Unlimited supports active intervention to recover native trout and salmon species and to prevent, where possible, the invasion of harmful non-native species.
2. Trout Unlimited does not advocate the removal of wild, non-native salmonid populations from all ecosystems in which they are presently established.
3. Trout Unlimited recommends a comprehensive approach to non-native species control programs including a consideration of all physical, biological, and chemical alternatives.
4. Trout Unlimited supports the use of piscicides as a conservation tool to remove non-native fish species that are harming native trout and salmon populations.
5. Trout Unlimited endorses the use of risk assessment to evaluate the appropriateness of using piscicides and other non-native species removal methods for individual native salmonid restoration projects.
6. Trout Unlimited supports better project planning, improved personnel training, and the development of more consistent government policies for piscicide application and treatment projects.
7. Trout Unlimited recommends expanded public education programs that examine the ecological and economic costs of non-native species invasions and the role of piscicide use for native trout and salmon conservation.