

# Trout Stream Access Verification Plan FAQs

## Why is the DEC conducting Trout Stream Access Verification?

New York and its partners stocked more than 950,000 yearling and larger trout into streams each year. Many of these fish are stocked in water that flows through private land where we do not have verified public access. Responsible government dictates that hatchery trout, which are the public's resource, are stocked into stream reaches that provide a benefit to the angling public in a transparent and unbiased manner.

## What is the goal of the Trout Stream Access Verification Plan?

The goal of the [Trout Stream Access Verification Plan](#) is to ensure that trout raised with public funds are only stocked into stream reaches where public access is available, and anglers can be directed to those accessible fishing opportunities.

## What are the objectives of the Trout Stream Access Verification Plan?

The Trout Stream Access Verification Plan has 4 objectives:

1. Determine where the public has fishing access on currently stocked stream reaches that flow through privately held lands.
2. Confirm that fishing access that is allowed on private lands is verified as open to all anglers.
3. Ensure that the number of trout stocked is commensurate with the amount of stream that is publicly accessible.
4. Let all anglers know where they have access to trout streams.

## What is the basic approach the DEC is taking to verify access?

The basic approach the DEC is taking to verify access is to contact landowners to determine if they are interested in allowing public access or not. Once public access along a stream reach has been verified, the stocking policy for that reach is reevaluated and, if necessary, adjusted in accordance with the [Trout Stream Management Plan](#). The stream banks within verified accessible locations are posted for public fishing access. Additionally verified access is shown on map-based products such as the Tackle Box module of the HuntFishNY mobile App or the Trout Stream Fishing Map on DECinfo Locator.

## Which counties had Trout Stream Access Verification completed in 2022?

Trout Stream Access Verification was conducted in the following counties during 2022:

- Putnam (Region 3)
- Montgomery and Schenectady (Region 4)
- Franklin (Region 5)
- St. Lawrence (Region 6)
- Tioga (Region 7)
- Stueben (Region 8)
- Erie (Region 9)

## Which counties are planned to have Trout Stream Access Verification done in 2023?

Due to the magnitude of parcels/stream miles with unverified public access, DEC is taking an incremental approach of verifying access in 1-5 counties annually for each Region through 2025. Trout Stream Access Verification is planned to be conducted in the following counties in 2023:

- Dutchess, Rockland, Westchester (Region 3)
- Columbia, Rensselaer, Otsego (Region 4)
- Fulton, Hamilton, Saratoga (Region 5)
- Herkimer, Jefferson (Region 6)
- Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Oswego (Region 7)
- Chemung, Schuyler, Seneca, Yates (Region 8)
- Allegany, Chautauqua (Region 9)

## What was the process for contacting landowners?

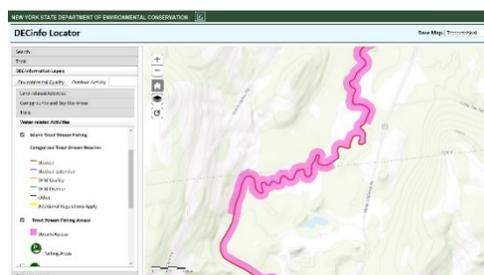
Landowners at potential access points such as bridge crossings or where stream reaches are close to the road will be sent a letter asking if they are interested in continuing to allow the public access to their land for the sole purpose of fishing. Landowners that do not respond will receive a second, follow up letter. Landowners that respond as interested in allowing public access are contacted by Regional Fisheries staff that will explain how and where signs will be posted and let them know that their parcel will be identified as accessible on DEC's "Tackle Box" module of the HuntFishNY App and DECinfo Locator. Once access is verified for a bridge crossing or roadside access parcel, adjacent landowners may be contacted to expand the length of verified public access available to anglers.

## What is considered verified public access?

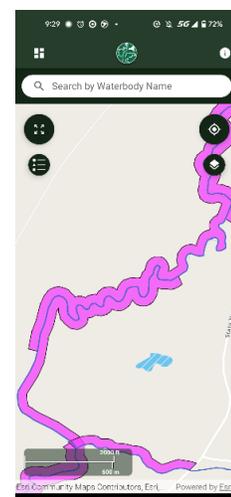
Verified access is when a landowner agrees to allow the DEC to post their property as open to anglers and allow the DEC to display fishing access in the "Tackle Box" App module of the HuntFishNY App and DECinfo Locator.



Posted sign



DECinfo Locator



Tackle Box  
(HuntFishNY app)

## How can I find where verified access exists on New York's trout streams?

New York has two map-based products that displays verified trout stream access:

- Trout Stream Fishing Map on DECinfo Locator (<https://gisservices.dec.ny.gov/gis/dil/index.html?cat=WRL>)
- Tackle Box module on the HuntFishNY Mobile App (<https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/96470.html>) available for Apple and Android phones.

## Why is there no access shown on some stocked trout streams?

An objective of the Trout Stream Access Verification Plan is to show anglers where they can fish stocked trout streams in New York. Due to the uncertainty surrounding the actual access on private property, we cannot confidently portray stream segments as truly accessible. This effort will ensure that properties are truly accessible and portrayable on our map-based products.

## How are trout stream reaches adjusted after public access is verified?

The amount of public access along the reach is evaluated based on criteria established in the Trout Stream Management Plan. A stocked reach must start and end at public access. A reach may be shortened or eliminated if there is insufficient public access along the reach or may be expanded if public access is gained and angler use is sufficient to warrant that expansion. In some cases, a Roadside Access Stocking may be implemented at access points along streams with otherwise limited access to preserve fishing opportunity at that location.

## Can additional parcels be added to streams that have existing reaches?

Yes. A new parcel can be added to a stream that already has an established reach or reaches. Depending on the location and length of the parcel it may be added to an existing reach or stand alone as an independent reach. The stocking rate will be adjusted and implemented the following year.

## What is a Roadside Access Stocking (RAS)?

“Road Access Stocking” policies (RAS) are point stockings on a stream that allow for the stocking of a limited number of trout at both bridge crossings and areas where roadways are immediately adjacent to a stream reach. The intent of this new stocking practice is to provide for short-term, put-and-take fisheries within short sections of pool habitat with access posted as “Fishing Permitted.” Instead of eliminating stockings in Stocked reaches with limited public access, RAS policies will provide the public opportunities to fish on short, sections of private lands deemed publicly accessible within existing Stocked reaches.

## **What were the results after reaches were evaluated after the 2022 access verification was completed?**

Forty-five reaches were evaluated after access was verified in 2022. The results were:

- 15 Stocked reaches were unchanged
- 10 Stocked reaches were dropped
- 20 Stocked reaches were shortened or split
- 19 Roadside Access Stocking points were created
- 1 Stocked-Extended reach will be converted to a Stocked reach

## **Where are the trout no longer being stocked going?**

For decades DEC has had more trout stocking policies on the books than it had the capacity to raise. While trout streams have been stocked at 100% of policy since the implementation of the NYS Trout Stream Management Plan in 2020, pond stockings have not been able to be stocked at 100%. The trout no longer being stocked will allow DEC to stock remaining trout policies closer to 100%. Additionally, fewer trout raised in fish hatcheries allows the trout to be grown to larger sizes which will help meet the size objectives for stocked trout in the NYS Trout Stream Management Plan.

## **How many Roadside Access Stocking locations were implemented as a result of the 2022 access verification?**

19 Roadside Access Stocking locations were implemented for the 2023 stocking season to preserve fishing opportunity in Stocked reaches with very limited access.

## **How many miles of stream does DEC stock into Inland Trout Streams?**

New York and its partners stocked approximately 2000 miles Inland Trout Streams in 2022 (the start of the Trout Stream Access Plan).

## **How many miles of streams with private or unknown access did NY stock?**

New York calculates access by miles of bank privileges. In 2022 at the start of the Trout Stream Verification Plan, the access status of approximately 2,537 of the 4,000 miles of banks along stocked streams was unknown (63%).

## **How many miles of stream was verified as truly accessible during the 2022 access verification process?**

New York verified access to 164 parcels that were not previously mapped as public access for a total of 46.5 bank miles.

## **Is the DEC posting land with verified public access?**

Yes. To be considered verified public access, permission was granted to allow DEC to post the property as “fishing permitted.”

## **Does NY have a plan to manage Inland Trout Streams?**

Yes. New York implemented the New York State Trout Stream Management Plan in 2020. Information on the plan can be found at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/111015.html>.