

Summary of Proposed Regulation Changes for Greers Ferry Tailwater-October 2016

1. Remove 16-24 inch Protected Slot for all trout species on Greers Ferry TW, Replace with a five fish per day, one trout over 16 inch, regulation;
Slot limits have been used on Greers Ferry TW since at least 1995. The intent of the protected slot limit was to improve growth and size structure by allowing harvest of smaller fish (thereby reducing competition) while protecting medium-to-larger fish that reached lengths more desirable to anglers. However, harvest rates of small brown trout have not increased over the last 20 years and are currently very low (6-8%). Rainbow trout harvest rates have also decreased over the last 20 plus years, from 75% to only 20%. The overall lack of harvest has caused an increase in the numbers of both Rainbow and Brown Trout in the 8-16 inch size range and we have failed to see improvements in the overall size structures of the trout populations. By removing the slot and proposing a new regulation, we hope to reduce densities and observe better growth. Anglers past and present have expressed an interest in increasing the numbers of large trout available for capture. Keeping a restrictive regulation would be counter-productive to achieving that objective in the management plan.
2. Enact a no culling regulation for all trout species on the Greers Ferry Tailwater;
It is currently unlawful for anglers fishing at Greers Ferry Tailwater to release a rainbow trout after it has been placed on a stringer, within a fish basket, live well, ice chest or retained by any other device. However, this “no culling” regulation does not apply to the other trout species (i.e., Brown Trout, Brook Trout) found in Greers Ferry Tailwater. Due to concerns about potential mortality post-retention by anglers, we are proposing a “no culling” regulation for the Greers Ferry Tailwater that will be applicable to all trout species in order to protect large (>16 inch) trout.
3. Allow Mobility Impaired anglers to fish downstream of wooden vehicle bridge in JFK Park; Currently, only youth anglers (less than 16 years old) and adults accompanying an actively fishing youth are permitted to fish downstream of the wooden vehicle bridge in JFK Park. In order to increase the number of accesses available to the public, we are proposing a regulation change to allow mobility impaired anglers to fish from the piers on Collins Creek downstream of the wooden bridge in JFK Park; will include a mobility impaired card requirement (these regulations are similar to the regulations used on Dry Run Creek).
4. Convert the JFK and Mossy Special Regulations Areas (SRAs) into year-round catch-and-release areas; Anglers who participated in the 2016 Greers Ferry management plan re-visit requested that AGFC create additional “Trophy Areas.” In 2007, the two areas were converted from catch-and-release areas to special regulations areas, where anglers are permitted to harvest trout. However, the ongoing creel survey indicates that the areas are still functioning almost exclusively like catch-and-

release areas. Only 0.4% of all fish caught during the first nine months of the current creel survey were harvested in JFK SRA and no fish were harvested in Mossy SRA. Therefore, converting them back to catch-and-release areas to satisfy the participants of the workshops should have no adverse effects on the number of fish caught or harvested from the areas.

5. Convert the Cow Shoals Seasonal Catch and Release Area into a year-round catch and release area; Anglers who participated in the 2016 Greers Ferry management plan re-visit requested that AGFC create additional “Trophy Areas.” Participants of public workshops also expressed a desire to see more restrictive regulations created for Cow Shoals. Currently, the area is open to harvest from January 1st-September 30th, but converts to a catch-and-release only area from October 1st to December 31st. Converting the area to year-round catch-and-release area will satisfy desires of anglers who wanted 1) more trophy areas; and 2) the area to be more restrictive (to protect large trout). As proposed, the regulation will be less confusing to anglers not familiar with the area (i.e., will have consistent regulations year-round) and will still allow anglers to fish the area.
6. Clarification on Sunset – Sunrise times for Cow Shoals Catch-and-Release Area; Code book terminology currently says the area is closed from one-half hour before sunset to one-half hour before sunrise. We are seeking to change/clarify this regulation so that anglers may fish from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour *after* sunset (i.e., the area would be closed from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise).

CHAPTER N1.00 - GAME FISH RESTRICTIONS AND LIMITS

N1.01 Game Fish Daily Limits

N1.02 Length and Protected Length Limits on Certain Lakes and Rivers

N1.03 Specific Trout Water Regulations

N1.01 GAME FISH DAILY LIMITS

Trout (including not more than: 2 brown trout, 2 cutthroat trout, 2 brook trout) 5

EXCEPTIONS:

(9) TROUT (BROOK, BROWN, CUTTHROAT, RAINBOW):

(A) Brown trout:

White River from Bull Shoals Dam to Highway 58 Bridge (Bull Shoals Tailwater) and North Fork White River (Norfork Tailwater) – minimum length 24 inches, daily limit one.

Spavinaw Creek (Benton County) west of Arkansas Highway 59 and Spring River – minimum length 16 inches, daily limit two. Little Red River (Greers Ferry Tailwater) from Greers Ferry Dam to Arkansas Highway 305 Bridge – ~~protected slot limit of 16-24 inches~~, daily limit of five (only one of which may be longer than 24 16 inches).

White River (~~Beaver Tailwater~~) from Beaver Dam to boundary signs at Houseman Access (Beaver Tailwater) – protected slot limit of 13-16 inches, daily limit of five (only one of which may be longer than 16 inches). Little Missouri River, (Narrows Tailwater) from Narrows Dam to Arkansas Highway 27 Bridge – all brown trout must be released immediately.

(B) Cutthroat trout:

White River (Bull Shoals ~~Lake~~ Tailwater), North Fork White River (Norfork Tailwater), Spavinaw Creek (Benton County) west of Arkansas Highway 59, Spring River – minimum length 16 inches, daily limit of two.

(C) Brook trout:

White River (Bull Shoals ~~Lake~~ Tailwater), North Fork White River (Norfork Tailwater), Spavinaw Creek (Benton County) west of Arkansas Highway 59, Spring River – minimum length 14 inches, daily limit two. Little Red River (Greers Ferry Tailwater) from Greers Ferry Dam to Arkansas Highway 305 Bridge – protected slot limit of 16-24 inches, daily limit of five (only one of which may be longer than 16 inches).

(D) Rainbow trout:

Lake Atalanta (Benton County) – daily limit five. Little Red River (Greers Ferry Tailwater) from Greers Ferry Dam to Arkansas Highway 305 Bridge – protected slot limit of 16-24 inches, daily limit of five (only one of which may be longer than 16 inches). White River (Beaver Tailwater) from Beaver Dam to boundary signs at Houseman Access – protected slot limit of 13-16 inches, daily limit of five (only one of which may be longer than 16 inches).

All fish measurements must follow procedures listed in Code 01.00-C Length Limit definition.

N1.03 SPECIFIC TROUT WATER REGULATIONS

01-16

(D) **Greers Ferry Tailwater** (Little Red River from 100 yards below Greers Ferry Dam to the Arkansas Highway 305 Bridge).

(1) No fishing, boating or wading within 100 yards of Greers Ferry Dam.

(2) An angler shall use no more than one fishing rod or pole and must attend it at all times. No other devices shall be used to catch fish. Only a single hooking point per pole may be used for bait-fishing.

(3) Special Regulation Areas:

(a) JFK ~~Special Regulations Area~~ Catch-and-Release Area (at John F. Kennedy Park below Greers Ferry Dam) – from 100 yards downstream from Greers Ferry Dam to approximately 0.5 miles downstream to the last Greer's Ferry National Fish Hatchery effluent outfall in John F. Kennedy Park, as indicated by signs.

(1) ~~Only artificial lures with barbless hooks shall be used.~~ All trout caught must be immediately released

(2) Only artificial lures or flies shall be used. All hooking points must be barbless. Natural or scented baits are prohibited.

(3) Chumming is prohibited.

(b) Cow Shoals ~~Seasonal Catch-and-Release Area, Oct. 1-Dec. 31.~~ – From the head of Cow Shoals to the mouth of Canoe Creek, as indicated by signs.

(1) All trout caught must be immediately released.

(2) Only artificial lures with a single, barbless hooking point per pole shall be used. Natural or scented baits are prohibited.

(3) Chumming is prohibited.

(4) Closed to night fishing (~~half hour before sunset to half hour before sunrise~~ No fishing one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise).

(c) Mossy Shoals ~~Special Regulations~~ Catch-and-Release Area – from the head of Dunham Shoals downstream to the end of Mossy Shoals, as indicated by signs.

(1) ~~Only artificial lures with barbless hooks shall be used.~~ All trout caught must be immediately released

(2) Only artificial lures or flies shall be used. All hooking points must be barbless. Natural or scented baits are prohibited.

(3) Chumming is prohibited.

(E) **Collins Creek** (from its source in John F. Kennedy Park below Greers Ferry Dam to the confluence of the Little Red River).

(1) An angler shall use no more than one fishing rod or pole and must attend it at all times. No other devices shall be used to catch fish.

(2) Catch-and-Release Stream. All trout caught must be immediately released.

(3) Only artificial lures with a single, barbless hooking point per pole shall be used. Natural or scented baits are prohibited.

(4) Chumming is prohibited.

(5) Fishing is limited to youths upstream of the wooden vehicle bridge in John F. Kennedy Park.

(6) Fishing is allowed from sunrise to sunset.

(7) Downstream of the wooden vehicle road bridge in John F. Kennedy Park, fishing is limited to youths under age 16, anglers with a fishing license and a trout permit ~~may fish~~ when who are accompanying a youth under age 16 in the act of fishing, and mobility impaired anglers.

(8) Mobility impaired anglers shall fish from the mobility impaired access piers only.

(9) Mobility impaired card is required for mobility-impaired anglers in compliance with Addendum C1.11.

27.05 ~~Rainbow~~ Trout Retention Restricted (08-02, 08-04)- It is unlawful to release a rainbow trout after it has been placed on a stringer, within a fish basket, live well, ice chest or retained by any other device. On the Greers Ferry Tailwater, it is unlawful to release any trout after it has been placed on a stringer, within a fish basket, live well, ice chest or retained by any other device.

EXCEPTION:

Rainbow trout longer than 16 inches may be temporarily retained (for no more than 30 minutes) in a live well for measurement, weighing and photographing before release on Bull Shoals and Norfork tailwaters.

PENALTY: Class 1