



## Arkansas Chapter of Trout Unlimited

PO Box 4588  
Fayetteville, AR 72701

June 15, 2009

Dear Arkansas Game and Fish Commission,

After reviewing the new proposed AG&F fishing regulations, we as a chapter are concerned about the pending proposal to “allow the use of artificial lures with barbed hooking points and treble hooks in special regulation areas on the Bull Shoals and Norfork tailwaters.

Trout Unlimited is a conservation organization with a 50-year history with the sole commitment of conserving cold-water fisheries. Our commitment includes the tail waters of Beaver, Bull Shoal, and Norfork tail waters. We are very excited about the prospect of increasing the catch and release section of the Norfork River. We were the instigators in a class action lawsuit against a developer on the Norfork who allowed dumping of silt and other substances into the river that damaged the trout habitat that we love. We won that lawsuit and have monies available to help the AG&F in their habitat plan for the Norfork River. We are also working with the AG&F in helping to provide labor and monetary assistance in the developing plan of improvement at the Beaver Tail Water. Recently we approved a donation to the AG&F to help purchase a side-scan radar device that will allow an accurate mapping of the rivers in Arkansas in case of future disruptions in pollution, silt, etc. We are strong supporters of the Arkansas AG&F!

Recently, the National TU program ‘On The Rise’ filmed an episode on the White River in Arkansas with a caught and released 35” brown trout which is the largest trout to be caught and landed on television. This national program has provided Arkansas with national attention and recognition with increased tourism to our great state.

The proposed use of barbed hooks and treble hooks in the catch and release areas of the White and Norfork tailwaters has our greatest concern. Even though the research in this area reports a morality rate up to 10%, we find this research dated and substantial with a 10% mortality rate. Further research indicates more fish mortality increased with the use of barbed and treble hooks due to the increased time of release and the damage to the fish with the use of these devices. Please refer to our website [www.arkansaschaptertu.org](http://www.arkansaschaptertu.org) and the blog site at [www.flyflinger.com](http://www.flyflinger.com)

for more information. Since your organization has removed any information on your web site regarding the impending changes, we are referring our members to these sites. We are disappointed in the agency in removing these impending changes to the public for review.

Input from the Game & Fish has indicated that these changes are necessary to allow easier enforcement of the catch and release areas as well as more opportunity for all fishermen to these areas. Since the White River is a world-known fishery with over 60 miles of trout water but with only 4 miles of catch and release single-barbed hooks, there is plenty of access to water for fisherman making the choice to use bait or treble hook jigs. With the proposed loss of the Sylamore Catch and Release area, there will be less than 4 % of catch and release single barbed hook areas on the tailwater below Bull Shoals Dam. We ask that you keep the regulations the same in these areas.

The Arkansas Chapter of Trout Unlimited has the longest history in the state of Arkansas in supporting and protecting our great trout habitat for our future generations as well as supporting the fishing community in our great state. Hopefully, you will take our considerations for review.

Kerri Russell, President  
Arkansas Chapter  
Trout Unlimited