

**National Wildlife Federation * Izaak Walton League of America
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership * Trout Unlimited**

October 16, 2014

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)
Department of the Army
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310

Re: Clean Water Rule Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2011-0880

Dear Administrator McCarthy and Assistant Secretary Darcy:

As sportsmen-conservation organizations representing millions of hunters and anglers nationwide, we strongly support your administration's vital effort to clarify and restore longstanding Clean Water Act protections for headwater streams and wetlands across the country.

Headwater streams provide important spawning and rearing habitat for fish, and they are incredibly important to water quality in downstream lakes, rivers, and bays that also provide important fish and wildlife habitat. These streams also supply drinking water for 1 in every 3 Americans.

Wetlands, even so-called isolated ones that are not adjacent to streams, are used by breeding, migrating, and resident waterfowl. They are the bedrock of our waterfowl hunting and conservation traditions. They also provide important habitat for a diversity of wildlife, filter pollutants, provide rural and coastal communities with critical flood control, and replenish ground and surface waters during drought.

America's 47 million sportsmen and women rely on clean water for hunting, angling, and other outdoor recreation. Yet the Clean Water Act -- the primary tool for maintaining and restoring the water quality of streams and wetlands -- was unnecessarily weakened by agency guidance following two confusing Supreme Court decisions. As a result, 60 percent of stream miles in the United States are at increased risk of pollution and destruction. Also, the rate of wetlands loss increased by 140 percent from 2004 to 2009 -- the years immediately following the Supreme Court decisions. This is the first documented acceleration of wetland loss since the Clean Water Act was enacted more than 40 years ago.

When wetlands are drained and streams are polluted, it imperils America's hunting and fishing economy -- which accounts for over \$200 billion in economic activity each year and 1.5 million jobs. These impacts are felt by rural communities in particular.

We commend your administration's proposed Clean Water Act rule for the protections it restores to headwaters streams and adjacent wetlands, and ask that the final rule offer similar protections for other important yet presently unprotected waters. We also support your administration's efforts to preserve longstanding Clean Water Act exemptions for farmers and foresters that encourage wise stewardship of land and water resources.

The current rulemaking is our best chance to restore protections for streams, wetlands and other waters critical to our hunting and fishing traditions and outdoor economy. We look forward to working with your administration to finalize and implement the Clean Water Act rule. Our economy and way of life depend on it.

Sincerely,

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Fisheries Society
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
National Wildlife Federation
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Trout Unlimited
Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation
Izaak Walton League of America
B.A.S.S. LLC

ALABAMA

Alabama B.A.S.S. Nation
Bluff City Bassmasters

ARIZONA

Arizona Council of Trout Unlimited
Arizona Wildlife Federation
Old Pueblo Chapter, Trout Unlimited
Gila Trout Chapter #530 Trout Unlimited
Trout Unlimited - Zane Grey Chapter
Grand Canyon Chapter 190, Trout Unlimited

ARKANSAS

Arkansas Audubon Society
Arkansas Canoe Club
Arkansas Chapter of the American Fisheries Society
Arkansas Chapter of The Wildlife Society
Arkansas Stream Team #443
Arkansas Wildlife Federation
White River Conservancy
Yell County Wildlife Federation
Friends of the North Fork and White Rivers
Arkansas Public Policy Panel

CALIFORNIA

California Council of Trout Unlimited

COLORADO

West Denver Trout Unlimited
Angler's Covey
Boulder Flycasters/Trout Unlimited

Colorado Tackle Pro
Denver Bassmasters
Pikes Peak Outfitter
Rocky Mountain Flycasters Chapter - Trout Unlimited
Colorado Wildlife Federation
North American Grouse Partnership
Bull Moose Sportsmen's Alliance (Rocky Mountain West)
Colorado Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

FLORIDA

Bonefish & Tarpon Trust
Snook & Gamefish Foundation
Florida Wildlife Federation

GEORGIA

Blue Ridge Mountain Chapter Trout Unlimited 626
Cohutta Chapter Trout Unlimited 242
Coosa Valley Chapter Trout Unlimited 519
Georgia Council Trout Unlimited
Georgia Foothills Chapter Trout Unlimited 629
Georgia Wildlife Federation
Gold Rush Chapter Trout Unlimited 733
Middle Georgia Chapter Trout Unlimited 435
Oconee River Chapter Trout Unlimited 661
Rabun Chapter Trout Unlimited 522
Savannah River Chapter Trout Unlimited 592
Tailwater Chapter Trout Unlimited 532
Chattahoochee/Nantahala Chapter 692 of Trout Unlimited

IDAHO

Idaho Wildlife Federation

ILLINOIS

Champaign County Izaak Walton League of America
Illinois Council Trout Unlimited

INDIANA

Indiana Wildlife Federation
Porter County Chapter
Tippecanoe Watershed Foundation

IOWA

Floyd County Ikes
Iowa Driftless Chapter, Trout Unlimited
Iowa Trout Unlimited
Iowa Wildlife Federation
Living River Group, Sierra Club
Northern Prairies Land Trust
Spring Creeks Chapter, Trout Unlimited

Trout Unlimited North Bear Chapter

KANSAS

Kansas BASS Nation

Kansas Wildlife Federation

KENTUCKY

Trout Unlimited, Kentucky

LOUISIANA

Louisiana Wildlife Federation

MAINE

Maine Council Trout Unlimited

MARYLAND

Free State Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America

Maryland Bass Nation

MICHIGAN

Dwight Lydell Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America

Michigan United Conservation Clubs

MINNESOTA

Cass County Minnesota Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America

Headwaters Trout Unlimited Chapter #642

Hiawatha Trout Unlimited

Minnesota Conservation Federation

Minnesota Trout Unlimited

Trout Unlimited, Minnesota Gitche Gumee Chapter

Trout Unlimited, Minnesota Waybinahbe Chapter

Twin Cities - Trout Unlimited

MISSOURI

Conservation Federation of Missouri

MONTANA

MOBASS Federation Nation

Montana Wildlife Federation

NEBRASKA

Lincoln Chapter 65, Izaak Walton League of America

Nebraska Wildlife Federation

NEVEDA

Nevada Wildlife Federation

NEW MEXICO

New Mexico Wildlife Federation

NEW YORK

Rome NY Chapter of Izaak Walton League

NORTH CAROLINA

Blue Ridge Trout Unlimited

Pisgah Chapter Trout Unlimited

Albemarle Conservation & Wildlife Chapter

Charlotte Reconnecting Ourselves With Nature
Concord Wildlife Alliance
Fayetteville Increasing Sustainable Habitat
Gaston County Piedmont Area Wildlife Stewards
Greater Raleigh Outdoors and Wildlife
Habitat and Wildlife Keepers
Lake James Area Wildlife and Nature Society
Lake Norman Wildlife Conservationists
Mountain Island Lake Wildlife Stewards
Mountain Wild!
North Carolina Trout Unlimited Council
North Carolina Wildlife Federation
Protecting, Advocating, and Conserving Together in the High Country
Rocky River Trout Unlimited
South Wake Conservationists
Table Rock Trout Unlimited

OHIO

Headwaters Chapter Izaak Walton League of America
Izaak Walton League, Capitol City Chapter

OKLAHOMA

Conservation Coalition of Oklahoma

OREGON

Oregon Division, Izaak Walton League of America
Berkley Conservation Institute

PENNSYLVANIA

Hokendauqua Chapter Trout Unlimited
Central Pennsylvania Conservancy
Cumberland Valley Chapter Trout Unlimited
God's Country Chapter Trout Unlimited
Lackawanna Valley Trout Unlimited
Lloyd Wilson Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Monocacy Chapter Trout Unlimited
Pennsylvania State Council, Trout Unlimited
Stanley Cooper Sr Trout Unlimited
Trout Unlimited Tiadaghton chapter 688
Valley Forge Chapter Trout Unlimited
Allegheny Mountain Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Penns Creek Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Caldwell Creek Chapter, Trout Unlimited
Trout Unlimited, Pennsylvania North-Central Region
Adams County Chapter Trout Unlimited 323
Donegal Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Schuylkill County 537

Arrowhead Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Doc Fritchey Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Forks of the Delaware Chapter #482 of Trout Unlimited
Fort Bedford Trout Unlimited
Ken Sink Chapter Trout Unlimited
Little Lehigh Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Mountain Laurel Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Neshannock Chapter Trout Unlimited #216
Perkiomen Valley Trout Unlimited
Seneca Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Spring Creek Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Western Pocono Trout Unlimited #203
Trout Unlimited, Forbes Trail Chapter 206
Chestnut Ridge Trout Unlimited

SOUTH CAROLINA

Mountain Bridge Trout Unlimited
South Carolina Wildlife Federation
Campbells Farm Rod Co.
Chattooga River Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Trout Unlimited, South Carolina

SOUTH DAKOTA

Friends of the Big Sioux River
Kampeska Chapter, Izaak Walton League
Northeastern S.D. Walleye Club
Rapid City Chapter, Izaak Walton League
Sioux Falls Izaak Walton League
South Dakota Wildlife Federation
Sunshine Chapter, Izaak Walton League

TENNESSEE

Tennessee Council of Trout Unlimited

TEXAS

Dallas Safari Club
Guadalupe River Trout Unlimited
Texas Conservation Alliance

VERMONT

Greater Upper Valley Trout Unlimited Chapter
Trout Unlimited of Southwestern Vermont

VIRGINIA

Trout Unlimited, Mountain Empire Chapter
Bill Wills Southeast Virginia Chapter Trout Unlimited Chapter
Commonwealth Chapter Izaak Walton League of America
Massanutten Chapter (171), Trout Unlimited
New River Trout Unlimited

Northern Shenandoah Valley Trout Unlimited (Chapter 701)
Rapidan Chapter Trout Unlimited
Roanoke Valley Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America
Roanoke Valley Chapter of TU (no. 308)
Smith River Trout Unlimited Chapter 264
Virginia Division Izaak Walton League

WEST VIRGINIA

Blennerhassett Chapter 304 of Trout Unlimited
Sal Font Chapter of Trout Unlimited
KYOVA Chapter, Trout Unlimited
Recreation Department, Beckley, WV
Upper Ohio Valley Northern Panhandle Chapter Trout Unlimited

WISCONSIN

Antigo Chapter Trout Unlimited
Aldo Leopold Chapter Trout Unlimited
Blackhawk Trout Unlimited
Brown County Chapter of the Izaak Walton League
Central Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Fox Valley Trout Unlimited
Northwoods Chapter Trout Unlimited
Oconto River Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Marinette County Chapter of Trout Unlimited
SEWTU - Southeast Wisconsin Trout Unlimited
Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Wisconsin Council of Trout Unlimited
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation