Frequently Asked Questions Concerning the Savage River Reservoir Dam Repair

1. **Will DNR conduct a fish recovery of reservoir fish prior, during or after the Reservoir draining?**

   MDDNR is not planning to conduct a fish recovery in the reservoir proper. An emergency draining of Savage River reservoir in January of 1963 resulted in a total elimination of fish and water from the reservoir. After the reservoir was drained, no holding water to support captive fish was observed. DNR anticipates a similar impact resulting from the proposed draining that will be necessary to accommodate the emergency repair of the dam. DNR has not considered transfer of select fish species into other waters of the State due to issues of disease, parasites, and invasive species and or resulting population imbalance of fish communities in receiving waters.

2. **Will the wild trout fishery in the tailwater below the dam survive the dam repair and construction impacts and will DNR attempt to salvage or re-establish the wild trout fishery in the tailwater following the construction?**

   DNR biologists anticipate disruptions to spawning and loss of the yearclass but do not anticipate total loss of the adult populations if the proposed schedule can be adhered to. They are investigating potential sites in the river, primarily close to the dam and out of the direct impact of high sediment loads exiting the reservoir due to the drawdown, which can serve as a holding or "reserve" site for brook trout. DNR will coordinate with UPRC and USACOE staff to determine a low flow opportunity immediately prior to final drawdown to collect a number of brook trout from key locations in the tailwater. The brook trout will then be placed in the holding area and monitored throughout the project to ensure conditions prevail to support the fish in a healthy state.

3. **Will DNR consider a temporary removal or a more liberal creel or size limit on fish in the reservoir or tailwater immediately prior, during and following the construction period to allow anglers the opportunity to harvest the fish before they are lost?**

   DNR is not planning to make temporary changes in the creel or size limits. Temporary changes will only marginally reduce biomass in the lake and may encourage people to take more risks once access is compromised by topography and large areas of soft sediments. Many the target species will pass downstream and will likely be available to anglers in the North Branch of Potomac. Anglers should be aware that certain fish species caught from the Savage River Reservoir have "Fish Consumption" advisories due to contaminants and they are posted by MDE on their web page at (www.mde.state.md.us/fishadvisory/ or call 410-537-3906).

Similarly, DNR will not change fishing regulations or creel limits for the tailwater during the repair period. DNR is hopeful that enough trout will be left in the tailwater following repairs to re-establish the wild trout fishery. Encouraging additional harvest of trout from the tailwater would be counter productive to this objective.

4. **Does DNR have a plan to restock the reservoir following construction? When will restocking efforts begin and what species will be stocked and what will the sizes stocked be?**

   DNR has developed a restocking plan for targeted fish species identified in the reservoir. The plan will inevitably be adjusted as new information is made available from sampling efforts in the Savage River upstream of the reservoir. A number of species have recently been found in the Savage River upstream of the reservoir that include prey, panfish and sportfish species that are expected to help re-colonize the reservoir when it refills. Of those species, some will receive additional stockings to ensure more complete and rapid re-colonization in the reservoir.

5. **Will DNR attempt to monitor the tailwater following the draining of the reservoir to determine if certain large reservoir species remain? The concern is that large predatory species may take residence in the tailwater and negatively impact the already compromised trout populations.**

   DNR doesn't anticipate any large-scale effort to remove large predatory fish species. DNR is planning to investigate the habitats which these species may be attracted to. Target interests would include large predatory fish such as walleye and bass. The high water velocity, lack of large deep pools and very low water temperatures are expected to cause lake species to pass through the tailwater fairly quickly.

6. **How does DNR plan to manage the Trophy Trout Area in the tailwater below Savage River Dam if all trout perish and we are forced to start up the wild trout fishery from ground zero?**

   Firstly, it would be premature to assume that the dam repair activities will result in a total trout kill. We fully expect that some wild brown and brook trout will remain and are optimistic that populations will be significant. When wild trout management first begun in the very early 1980's, DNR fish survey work identified small populations of wild brown and brook trout in the tailwater. Following an agreement with UPRC and USACOE to manage the tailwater for a constant flow of cold water with an annual minimum of 20 cfs and a provision for no warm spillover, a thriving wild brook and brown trout fishery quickly developed within a couple of years. It is our belief that following the dam repair activities, we will be left with enough wild trout to quickly re-establish this fishery. Since the tailwater is open the North Branch of the Potomac River other

trout species would eventually enter this reach as well. DNR has no plan to try and eliminate these other species. However, DNR may impose various fish management strategies following restoration activities that will favor brook trout dominance.