FISHING IN NONTIDAL WATERS - Trout
(Governors Bridge Pond and Waterworks Park Pond)

What was proposed?
The Department proposed to update the rules for trout fishing at the following areas:

1. Governors Bridge Pond (Prince George's County)
   The proposed action adds this area to the list of put-and-take trout fishing areas and establishes a closure of zero, which means that the creel limit is five trout per person per day and the area is open to trout fishing year-round.

2. Waterworks Park Pond (Anne Arundel County)
   Currently, this area is designated as a catch and return area for all species, however, the Department would like to allow the harvest of trout.

   The proposed action adds this area to the list of put-and-take trout fishing areas and establishes a closure of zero, which means that the creel limit is five trout per person per day and the area is open to trout fishing year-round.

   The proposed action also modifies the catch and return rules for this area to allow an individual to keep their limit of trout, but maintains the rule that all other species must be returned to the pond.

Why is this change necessary?
By designating Governors Bridge Pond and Annapolis Waterworks Park Pond as put-and-take trout fishing areas, law enforcement will be simplified by making the regulations consistent with all other trout-stocked ponds in the region and will give anglers in those urban areas an increased opportunity to harvest trout.

Who will this affect?
This action will affect nontidal anglers fishing in the affected area.

What is the specific regulatory action?
Amend Regulations .01 and .03 under COMAR 08.02.11 Fishing in Nontidal Waters.

Was this change discussed with advisory bodies or other interested or impacted individuals?

1. These changes were discussed with representatives from the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, owners of Governors Bridge Pond and the City of Annapolis Parks and Recreation, owners of Waterworks Park Pond. Both groups support the changes.
2. The ideas were presented to the Coldwater Fisheries Advisory Committee at their April 2026 meeting and received general support.
3. The ideas were presented to the Sport Fisheries Advisory Committee (SFAC) and the Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission (TFAC) at their April 2026 meetings. The commissioners did not raise any concerns.

4. This idea was scoped with the general public from May 14, 2026, through June 4, 2026.

Regulatory Process
Fishing rules in Maryland may be created by either the General Assembly or the Department. When the Department creates a fishing rule, it is called a regulation. When the General Assembly creates a rule, it is called a statute. The Department often has to create a regulation to implement a statute. The regulatory process begins with scoping and the Department follows normal procedures as concepts move forward.

During the scoping process, the Department gathers suggestions and ideas from stakeholders and others about how to solve a fishery problem or address a need. The goal of scoping is to identify issues, potential impacts, and reasonable alternatives associated with the issues so that management actions can be developed. After the public has had an opportunity to comment on possible management actions during the scoping process, the Department considers these comments and develops an appropriate management strategy.

At the conclusion of the scoping process, the Department determined that the action is necessary and appropriate. The rules are being promulgated following the Administrative Procedures Act described in Title 10, Subtitle 1 of the State Government Article Annotated Code of Maryland.

- The General Assembly's Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review Committee reviews the regulatory proposal for fiscal and legal analysis.
- The proposal was printed by the Division of State Documents in the Maryland Register on October 2, 2026.
- A 30-day public comment period began on the day of publication. The comment period ends November 2, 2026.
- After reviewing the comments, the Department may adopt the changes.
- If the Department adopts the changes, they become effective after a notice is published in the Maryland Register that announces the adoption and effective date.

When could this be effective?
The Department projects that this change could be effective January 1, 2027. However, the exact date cannot be determined at this time.