

JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2021



# INTO THE STREAM

Official Newsletter of the Australian Trout Foundation



## From our President

ATF PRESIDENT TERRY GEORGE

Covid-19 has again derailed many of our plans and activities that were meant to occur over the last three months. The Newsletter is necessarily brief due to Covid restrictions. It contains mostly news of what had to be cancelled. However we have continued to work on a number of very important activities, particularly the Regional wild trout fishery promotional web page. This is a very exciting development for the ATF, working in conjunction with the Victorian Fisheries Authority and the soon to be released Victorian Regional Tourism Development Plan. Stay tuned for further information on this exciting development.

We will hope to catch up with our riparian and river restoration projects once Covid restrictions are eased, anticipated to be by the end of October. Stay tuned for updates on activities.

Meanwhile most of our trout streams have had excellent rainfall over the winter and early spring months and the forecast is for more of the same up until December. With little fishing pressure the streams and the fishery should be in great shape for trout fishing during this season

Donnelly River WA



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## Trees for Trout

Regrettably the next big event for the “Trees for Trout” program run by the ATF in conjunction with CMA’s and local communities has had to be cancelled. This event was to take place around the Nariel and Thowgla Creeks near Corryong from the 17th to 20th Sept. This event was meant to be a follow-up to the first plantings of about 3000 trees that occurred in May of this year in the same area.

Over 4,500 trees were to be planted at this latest event by volunteers. Due to lock-down and many volunteers coming from Melbourne, this was not going to be possible. In order that the seedlings are not wasted the North East Catchment Authority has organised contractors to undertake the plantings.

This is disappointing since every dollar we save using volunteers means money saved can be spent on more trees and rehabilitation works.

Another “Trees for Trout” planting for the Nariel Valley is planned for Autumn 2022.



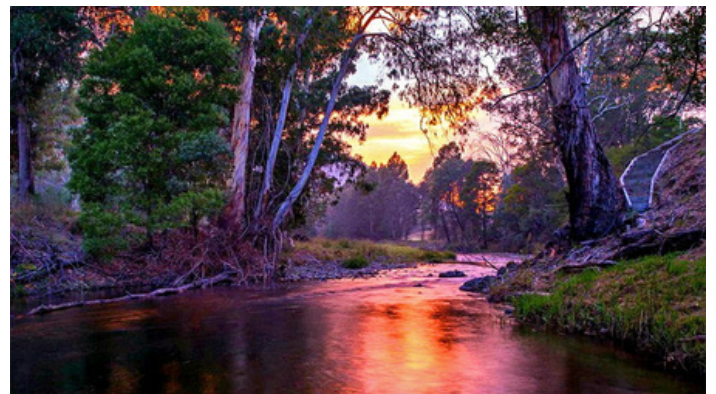
## Southwest Habitat Workshop

This habitat workshop, run jointly by the ATF and the Southwest CMA, was designed to identify priority areas for water quality and riparian improvement for trout streams in Southwest Victoria. The workshop was to be held at Deakin University on September 11th in Warrnambool attended by local anglers, fishing groups, the Southwest CMA and others. Once again, the Covid curse has struck and the workshop has had to be cancelled. A new date will be nominated once greater predictability returns to the Victorian Calendar.

## Victrorian Government Regional Development Tourism Plan

The Victorian Government has produced a Regional Tourism Development Plan. This plan has coincided with the ATF developing a promotional webpage for wild trout fisheries across Victoria. This webpage will have wild trout fishing destinations listed with catchment description, access points, maps and local businesses all represented in a sophisticated planning tool.

The webpage was meant to be launched with the Regional Tourism Plan in early September by Minister Horne in the North East of Victoria. Due to Covid this event has had to be postponed. However it has provided the ATF with time to develop the webpage further with greater sophistication. This development is due in part to a generous contribution of \$10,000 from the VFA. It is intended on trialling this page in the North East and if, successful, across relevant state locations. Businesses and the local shire have been enthusiastic to participate when approached.



## WA News

After a very wet July throughout the Southwest of the State, the rivers are still running high in late September. With so much water, fishing has been hard work, but those who know the rivers well are still catching fish. Late spring and early summer are likely to produce some great fishing this year.

## More from WA...

### Southern Forests Irrigation Scheme hits a snag

The ATF WA Branch has been a vocal critic of the proposed Southern Forests Irrigation Scheme which would entail damming Record Brook and taking off 9GL of winter flow from the Donnelly River. The Donnelly River is one of the few rivers left in the SW where it is possible to have a near pristine fishing experience. The ATF WA also believe the economic viability of the scheme is based on gross overestimates of the reliable annual yield of water from the river. The ATF and many other organisations and individuals have lobbied hard for an independent review of the water yield modelling. The government agreed to a review and commissioned the CSIRO to assess the suitability of the modelling. The review has concluded the modelling was not fit for purpose. We have heard the SFIS proponent is now considering alternatives. We will continue to lobby the government about the folly of promoting thirsty irrigation crops like avocados in a region where annual average rainfall has already fallen over the last two decades and is forecast to decline further.

### Blackwood River Guide

The Blackwood River Guide has been completed and is being printed. The guide will be available at Troutfest on Oct 2nd and will also be distributed to tourist bureaus and angling shops in the region. The Blackwood Guide will shortly be available on the ATF website. The branch is now preparing a community grant application to Recfishwest for the next in our planned series: Trout Fishing on the Warren River and Lefroy Brook.

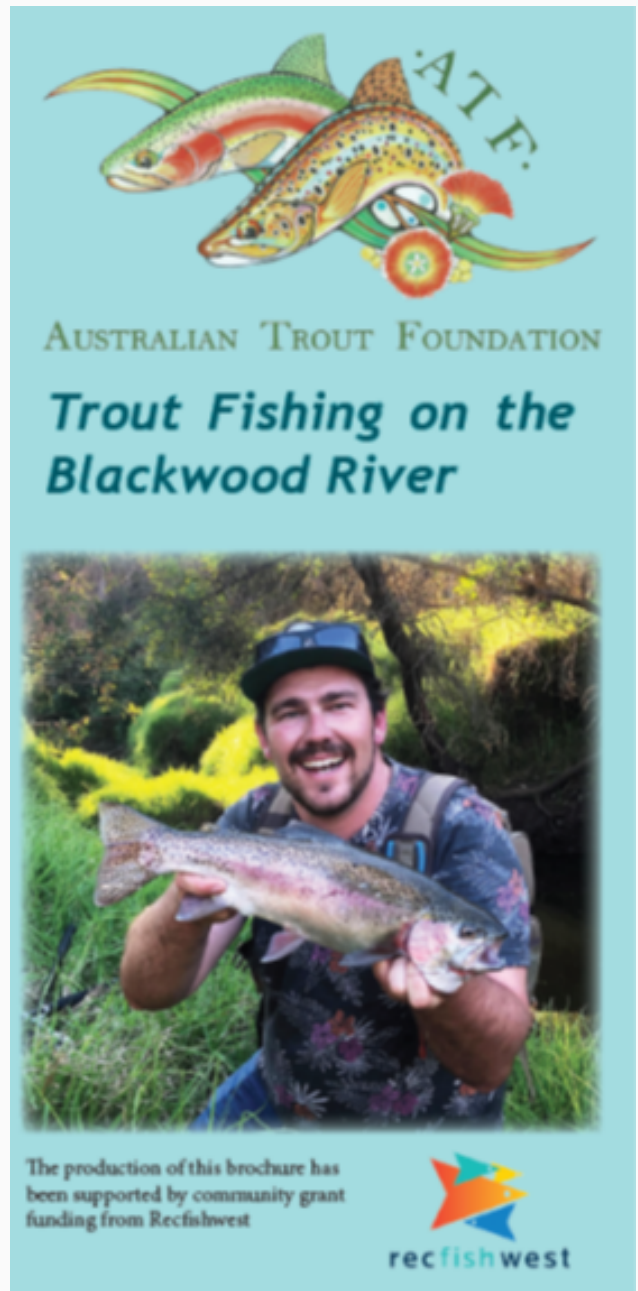
### Angler Access Stiles

The ATF WA is preparing a community grant application to Recfishwest for the construction and installation of 3 stiles that will improve angler access at two popular angling locations. We have negotiated agreement with the landholders for sites at Harvey Reservoir and Lefroy Brook. If the grant application is successful we hope the stiles will be the first of many to be rolled out throughout the Southwest in coming years.

The ATF Annual General Meeting will be held on:  
November 15th, 7.30pm via zoom

all members are welcome to attend,  
please register your interest by emailing  
for a zoom code link.

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*New ATF Blackwood River Fishing Brochure*

# The important Things

*(This is an abridged version of an article appearing on [www.troutbitten.com](http://www.troutbitten.com) It is written from an American perspective but has many relevant points for what the ATF advocates in the Australian wild trout fishery.)*

We believe wild trout populations should be protected, wherever they are found. Struggling wild trout populations should be helped — by strengthening their numbers by improving water quality and habitat.

We believe that wild trout, wherever they are found, should be given a chance.

## But Why?

I asked some of my fishing friends why wild trout matter, and I thought their answers would be similar. Surprisingly, they weren't. Their reasons for loving and caring about wild trout vary significantly in message and tone.

In truth, there are hundreds of reasons why wild trout matter. And my friends gave me impassioned answers. Here are some of their words.

## Josh D.

I love this topic. But I don't love how we've come so far down this path that it's now a big concern.

Stocking over wild fish was a hot topic in the fisheries management classes I've taken.

The moment we resort to stocking as a means of balancing out or restoring a fishery, the chain of events that are set off is scary. It's as if we're saying "Screw you!" to evolutionary adaptation and forcing our own agenda and timeline.

Trout will adapt to survive in water that's suited for their life at even the most basic level. And they will do so with the cunning, spunky, energy, strength and a brilliance that demands our reverence.

Wild trout adapt. They learn what they need. They learn what the stream can provide and what it can't. They don't wreak havoc on the fishery's biodiversity the way pellet-heads can when they're introduced in high numbers.

Wild trout represent what trout are supposed to look and act like.



## Bill D.

Maybe it's more of the exploring to find them. While they're common in many streams across the state, they're not so common in my area. That makes all wild fish special to me.

Wild trout aren't easy, and the big ones are hard to come by. I've come to embrace that challenge over the years.

It's the total experience: find a place on a map, go explore and see if it has wild fish. For me, that's better than someone taking fish down to the stream and dumping buckets into all the big holes.

Also, I often hear that wild trout fishing will take you to beautiful places. That kinda makes me laugh sometimes — like when I am fishing behind some big saw mill or in a town. What's more amazing is that wild fish thrive in some places that are pretty damn bad. These wild fish find a way to survive.

Stocked trout do have a useful purpose in many parts of Pennsylvania and in other states. Some rivers cannot support wild trout. And in those places, hatchery fish are a reasonable solution.

The coal industry of Pennsylvania spoiled many of the waters around my childhood home. Wild trout could no longer reproduce, and stocked trout were the only option. I'm thankful for those stocked trout. But I'm frustrated by much of the stocking I see in many of the outlier streams around my current, central Pennsylvania home. Wild trout are prevalent here. Yet, some of these populations are damaged or stunted because either the state or private clubs see fit to stock over them.

Wild trout should be given a chance to thrive wherever they're found.

Stocking should be eliminated on streams that support wild trout. Instead, we should begin managing them with direct efforts to enhance the wild fishery.

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