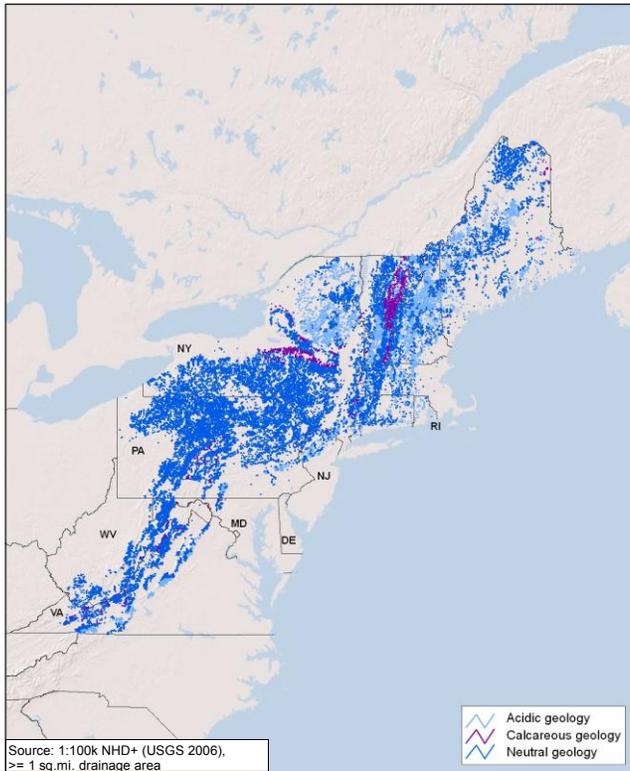


# High Gradient, Cold, Headwaters and Creeks

## Macrogroup: Headwaters and Creeks

This map is based on a model and has had little field-checking. Contact your State Natural Heritage Ecologist or State Fish Game Agency for more information about this habitat.



©Josh Royte

### Description:

Cold, fast-moving headwaters and creeks of steeper slopes at moderate to high elevations. These small streams of northern regions or high elevations occur on steep slope in watersheds less than 39 sq.mi in size. The cold fast moving water has high water clarity and is well oxygenated. Instream habitats are dominated by riffles and cascade and step-pool systems. Channels are usually narrowly confined, high-gradient, and surrounded by upland forests. Bed materials often consist of bedrock, boulders, cobbles, and coarse gravel. The predominant source of energy to the stream is terrestrial leaf litter or organic matter (these are allochthonous streams). Permanent cold water temperatures in these streams means coldwater fish species, such as brook trout, likely represent over half of the fish community. Additional variation in the stream biological community is associated with acidic, calcareous, and neutral geologic settings where the pH of the water will limit the distribution of certain macroinvertebrates, plants, and other aquatic biota. The habitat can be further subdivided into 1) headwaters that drain watersheds less than 4 sq.mi, and have an average bankfull width of 16 feet or 2) Creeks that include larger streams with watersheds up to 39 sq.mi. and have an average bankfull width of 32 feet.

### Similar Habitat Types:

Headwaters and creeks may also occur at lower elevations but these tend to be warmer, flatter, and slower. Coastal examples of high gradient headwaters are rare. Cold high gradient streams typically flows into moderate or low gradient cold and cool rivers in areas of less topography.

### Places to Visit this Habitat:

Dry Brook, Satans Kingdom WMA | MA Warner Creek, Phoenicia Wild Forest | NY Lamentation Run, Allegheny National Forest Non-Reserved | PA Dish Mill Brook, Victory State Forest | VT Leatherwood Creek, Monongahela National Forest | WV

**State Distribution:** CT, DE, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT, VA, WV

**Total Habitat (mi):** 36,183

**% Conserved:** 26.3 Unit = Acres of 100m Riparian Buffer

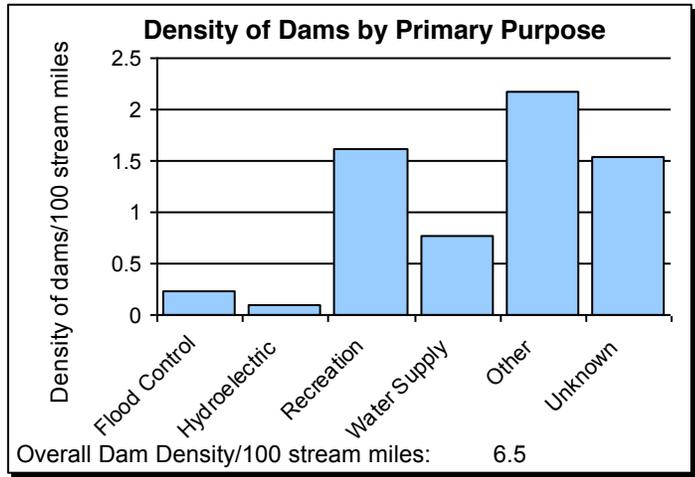
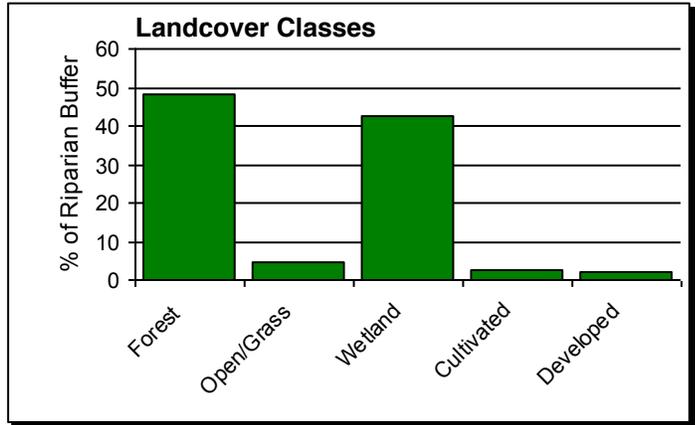
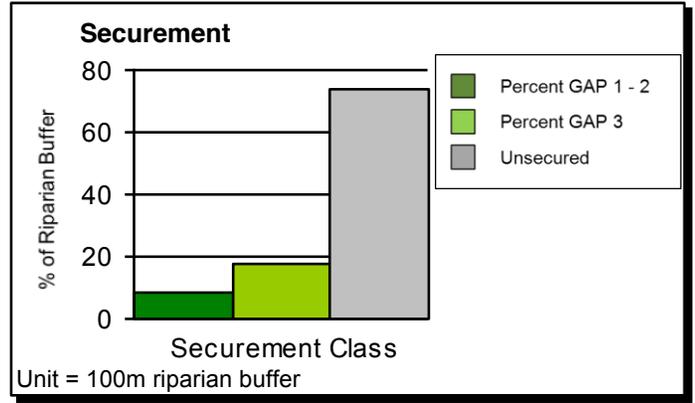
State	State Habitat %	Miles of Habitat	Acres GAP 1 - 2	Acres GAP 3	Total Acres Unsecured
NY	29	10443	1008	696	6458
PA	24	8847	293	1935	4756
ME	10	3799	180	454	2380
VT	10	3552	109	345	2313
NH	8	2868	265	594	1396
VA	6	2143	296	394	1004
WV	5	1692	58	273	1006
MA	3	1196	41	231	669
CT	2	816	37	74	526
NJ	1	403	65	28	224
MD	1	376	21	71	204
RI	0	47	1	9	28
DE	0	0	0	0	0

**Associated Fish:**

Most Abundant: brook trout, slimy sculpin, longnose dace, longnose sucker, eastern blacknose dace, creek chub Less Abundant: mottled sculpin, white sucker, fantail darter, common shiner, lake chub, fallfish, atlantic salmon.

**Species of Concern (G1 - G4):**

Fishes: black sculpin  
Crayfish, Mussels, and Snails: eastern pearlshell  
 See Appendix 2 for scientific names



**Crosswalk to State Names:**

Vermont: Brook trout, Brook trout-slimy sculpin, Blacknose dace-Slimy sculpin. New Hampshire: High gradient, very cold streams; Very steep scour streams. New York: Rocky headwater stream. Maryland: Cold Water Streams. Pennsylvania: Atlantic Basin Fish Coldwater Community, Ohio-Great Lakes Basins Fish Coldwater Community.



Brook trout, © USFWS Southeast

