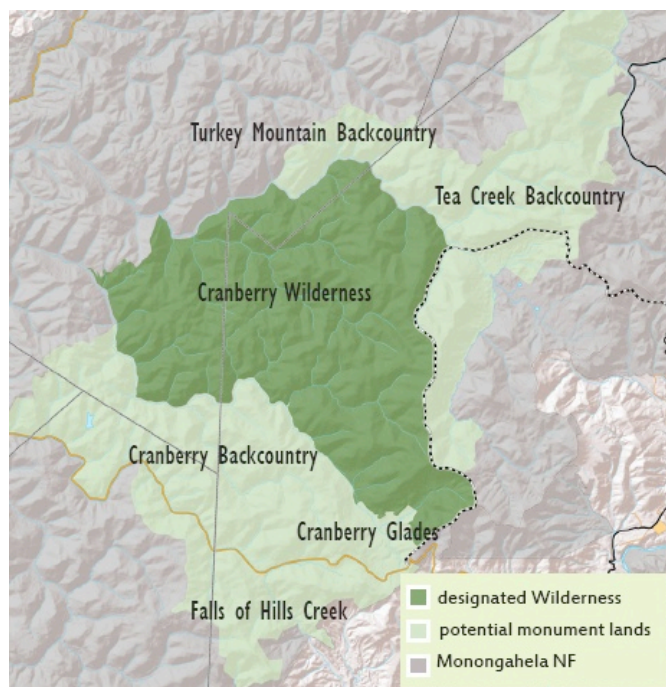




West Virginia Council of Trout Unlimited Support for the Birthplace of Rivers National Monument

The West Virginia Council of Trout Unlimited is dedicated to the mission to conserve, protect and restore our coldwater fisheries. In light of this context, we support the proposal to designate the following areas of the Monongahela National Forest as The Birthplace of Rivers National Monument. We believe that the area in question is one of West Virginia's greatest assets for trout, particularly for our state fish, the native brook trout, and we believe that a Monument designation would provide needed protection from degradation activities for this important resource and symbol of our sporting heritage.



This support is contingent upon the following requirements:

1. That the National Monument continues to be managed by the United States Forest Service.
2. The management strategy is consistent with the current Monongahela National Forest Management Plan in regards to watershed and fisheries management.
3. WVTU supports continued management of the trout fisheries by the WVDNR and USFS as partnering agencies. While TU strives for the health and sustainability of native and wild fisheries through management and habitat restoration, TU also supports the stocking of hatchery trout where appropriate. WVTU's focus and wishes for this Monument is for fisheries and watershed management plans that result in more sustainable populations of native and wild trout.
4. No additional wilderness area management is created and restoration activities as they exist currently be permitted under the National Monument.