

Comments on “Comments of the Responsible Party to the March 9, 2006
Athos I/Delaware River Lost Use Valuation Report”

George R. Parsons
5/9/2007

With respect to the RP’s first comment, I think they raise a good point about the consistency between the first round open-ended questions and the second round spill-specific questions. One would hope to find consistency. You never actually compare the data from the two rounds. You could compare changes in trips and quality ratings across the two rounds. At the same time, I see no inherent bias toward reporting an inflated trip loss in the spill-specific questions. Respondents are not pushed one way or the other, and I see no incentive to be untruthful. Also, the first round question asks people to compare trips since December 2004 to ‘typical use’. This is rather vague and an angler’s typical use is likely to be variable. A change in visitation, even due to the oil spill may be viewed as within the range of ‘typical use’. I am inclined to put more stock in the second round questions. I would keep in mind that there are also reasons why you may have an understatement of impacts – missing those who have not returned to the site, understatement of degraded trip values, and some missing categories of impacts to mention a few.

Concerning the second comment, the methodology laid out on pages A-7 through A-9 strikes me as a quite reasonable way to designate areas. Also, it is not clear how a change in area designations would affect the results. While it might lower the loss to the medium-impact areas, it would raise the loss to the low-impact areas since you be averaging in some heavier hit areas. The lost trips will show up somewhere. I see no compelling reason to adjust.

On the final comment about the assumed decline in the number of trips into period three, there is simply not much information to go on here. Yes, it is plausible that trips continue to rebound into period 3, but we really cannot say for sure. It is purely an extrapolation as far as I can tell. Even if trips do rebound, you have people returning to areas that appear to be still degraded and those offsetting effects are excluded (top of page A-16). Those effects may not be trivial, since respondents actually report that conditions have not returned to normal at a rate of 71% in period 1 and then up to 82% in period 2.