

**Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture Fish Habitat Partnership Meeting
Cacapon State Park
Berkeley Springs, WV
10-12 November 2009**

Conservation Strategy/Habitat Subcommittee Report

The Conservation Strategy/Habitat Subcommittee (CS) met on Wednesday, November 11th, 2009 . Doug Besler (NCWRC, subcommittee chair) led the discussion focused on seven agenda items.

1. Review status of achieving short-term regional habitat objectives.

Short term (five year, 2007-2012) regional habitat objectives need to be quantified in order to measure overall EBTJV progress, revise goals, and develop strategies. Both the southern and northern work groups were charged with revising their short term regional habitat objectives, if needed, and to determine the status of achieving those objectives. Both groups met independently during the meeting and made significant progress.

2. Determine how the EBTJV will track project outcomes.

Discussion was held regarding tracking project outcomes, particularly those projects that might not have been completely funded through the EBTJV. The general consensus of the group was that any project completed by any partner or funded by any source, that contributes to a state-level, regional, or range-wide objective should be counted. This will more accurately reflect the work being done by EBTJV partners to protect and enhance brook trout populations in the eastern United States.

3. Determine the need for rangewide monitoring of long-term brook trout population trends at selected sites.

The group generally agreed that long term monitoring is a needed component of the EBTJV and should be integrated into the Conservation Strategy. Suggestions ranged from repeating the original range-wide assessment (Hudy et al.) at periodic intervals to developing stream specific sampling that would be conducted by state agency personnel. The group generally agreed that the Science and Research Subcommittee should probably take the lead role in developing the monitoring study design and protocol.

4. Determine the EBTJV's role in meeting NFHAP interim targets.

Discussion was held on the EBTJV's role in meeting NFHAP targets. It was generally agreed that actions undertaken by the EBTJV to meet priorities of the conservation strategy will also support NFHAP achieve interim targets. The Conservation Strategy/Habitat subcommittee will need to take the lead role in communicating EBTJV success with NFHAP.

5. Discuss how to determine EBTJV success.

Discussion was held on how to determine EBTJV overall success by measuring if the range-wide, regional, and state level objectives were being met. The northern and southern work groups are charged with evaluating their short term (2007-2012) regional objectives. Less obvious, is measuring the success of education and outreach efforts undertaken by the EBTJV. The Outreach and Education subcommittee is currently developing an outreach and education plan, which may address this issue.

6. Review project scoring criteria.

The project review team, consisting of members from the northern, former mid-Atlantic, and southern work groups, with representation from the USFWS is formally reviewing the EBTJV project scoring sheet and applicant instruction sheet. Callie McMunigal (USFWS) is leading the efforts. A revised application, applicant instructions, reviewer instructions, and scoring sheet will be developed prior to the 2010 grant cycle.

7. Discussing Merging Mid-Atlantic and Southern Region Workgroups.

The Conservation Strategy/Habitat subcommittee agreed to dissolve the mid-Atlantic work group and merge those member states into either the northern or southern work groups. This action was taken to better facilitate communication within the work groups and simplify organizational structure. The northern work group will consist of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. Jim Daley (NYDEC) will remain chair of the northern work group. The southern work group will consist of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, West Virginia, Maryland, and New Jersey.

Notes prepared by Doug Besler (7 January 2010).