What is the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture?

The Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV) is a unique partnership between state and federal agencies, regional and local governments, businesses, conservation organizations, academia, scientific societies, and private citizens. The nation’s first pilot project under the National Fish Habitat Initiative (www.fishhabitat.org), EBTJV is a geographically focused, locally driven, and scientifically based effort to protect, restore and enhance aquatic habitat throughout the range of the Eastern brook trout.

Are there existing programs similar to EBTJV?

EBTJV has been modeled after the joint ventures that are aligned with the highly successful North American Waterfowl Management Plan, a strategy which was implemented in the 1980s to forge partnerships for the restoration and protection of millions of acres of wetland breeding areas for waterfowl.

What will EBTJV do?

EBTJV will function at multiple geographic and jurisdictional scales to achieve measurable on-the-ground conservation success while securing the adoption of policies favoring aquatic habitat protection. EBTJV seeks to maximize the energies, expertise and existing partnerships throughout Eastern brook trout range through a collaborative, non-regulatory framework.

Specifically, partners in EBTJV are working to:

- Assess the status, trends, and current vs. historical distribution of native Eastern brook trout populations from Georgia to Maine
- Identify data needed to facilitate species conservation and management
- Identify threats and potential solutions as part of a range-wide conservation strategy
- Prioritize actions based on measurable improvements for the least investment, in the shortest period of time, with a focus on common, critical, habitat threats
- Track, quantify and report, protection and restoration progress and results
- Share information and successes with partners and Congressional delegations
- Leverage existing funding by developing additional funding sources, including non-traditional revenue sources
- Develop, implement and manage a public outreach, education and advocacy campaign

Why a “Joint Venture”?

Historically, approaches to the conservation of Eastern brook trout have been fragmented. A comprehensive range-wide conservation and education strategy will assist all partners in effectively addressing common large-scale threats to brook trout and their habitat. EBTJV will promote recognition that aquatic habitat loss is a national problem and that quality and diversity of aquatic resources depend on habitat protection. EBTJV will demonstrate the effectiveness of broad collaborative endeavors to improve aquatic habitats and conserve valuable aquatic resources.

EBTJV will act as a forum that will use the strengths and expertise of many partners to achieve conservation successes while educating and attracting support from the public and elected officials. EBTJV will provide a model for other aquatic based regional and national conservation efforts. Ultimately, EBTJV will secure populations of native brook trout, aid in the restoration of watershed integrity, protect water quality, and enhance human connections to and stewardship of our natural environment.

What are the next steps?

The EBTJV is developing a draft Conservation Strategy that identifies current threats to Eastern brook trout, proposes a general strategy to deal with these threats, and outlines potential corrective measures. A subsequent document will provide a comprehensive overview of the status of Eastern brook trout populations. These two products will then be used to formulate an operational plan to begin implementation of high priority programs.

The EBTJV is working with management agencies to develop data on the status, distribution, and threats for brook trout at the watershed level. This critical range-wide information is being reviewed and should be available for use in late 2005. Partners in the EBTJV will participate in a working meeting to review the range-wide assessment and further develop the Conservation Strategy.

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