



Eastern Brook Trout

JOINT VENTURE

A Fish Habitat Partnership

**Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture
Steering Committee Conference Call Summary
17 September 2013
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

EBTJV Steering Committee Participants: Doug Besler (Chair), Steve Reeser, Mike Shingleton, Dianne Timmins, Michael Hopper, Tai-Ming Chang, Jim Habera, Doug Stang, Merry Gallagher, Gary Berti, Nat Gillespie, Callie McMunigal, and Rachel Muir

Other EBTJV Participants: Steve Perry, Neal Hagstrom, and Jason Coombs

- EBTJV SC Chair Doug Besler called the teleconference to order and determined there was a quorum of SC members participating in the call.
- Doug Besler discussed the need to replace Bob Carline as the AFS representative on the SC as Bob recently stepped down.
Action: Doug Besler agreed to send a letter to the current presidents of the Southern and Northeast Divisions of AFS to solicit their recommendations for a replacement.
- Doug Besler called for motions to approve the SC teleconference summaries for the 3-19-13, and the 6-4-13 calls and the summary of the SC Meeting that occurred on 6-12-13.
Action: The SC approved the three SC teleconference/meeting summaries.
- Doug Besler and Steve Perry presented a proposal to hold a face-to-face EBTJV SC and Standing Committees Meeting in the late fall of this year. This proposal was made because there are a number of activities that will be completed or nearing completion by the end of the year that would benefit from focused discussions by the Steering Committee and Standing Committees, so that a work plan can be developed for 2014. These activities include the catchment scale assessment and how the outcomes will drive the need to revise the Conservation Strategy, EBTJV conservation priorities, and regional habitat objectives; the EBTJV organizational assessment outcomes/recommendations that will be developed by River Network; the EBTJV Business Plan; outcomes from the various MSCP Grants and next steps; and further discussions about the EBTJV operations budget in response to where things stand from a funding perspective due to changes in the FWS-NFHAP allocation process as well as the 2013 and 2014 MSCPG.
Action: Doug Besler will send out a doodle poll to determine which meeting dates work best (Dec. 2-5 or Dec. 9-12). The meeting will be held at Cacapon State Park in WV and Steve Perry will work with Callie McMunigal to make the necessary meeting arrangements.

- Steve Perry provided a brief overview of the Fish Habitat Partnership (FHP) half-day session that was held during the AFS annual meeting in Little Rock, AK on September 11, 2013. Topics discussed during this session included FHP organization development, FHP communications and FHP funding.
- Steve Perry provided a brief update on the EBTJV Business Plan. An initial draft of the EBTJV Business Plan was distributed to members of the Business Planning Committee back on August 19th for their in-depth review and feedback. Once the feedback has been received from each of the Business Committee members a second draft will be developed and distributed to the SC members for review and comment. The final draft of the EBTJV Business Plan is expected to be completed by December. Additionally, a copy of the initial Business Plan draft was also sent to River Network as part of the packet of material forwarded to them to assist with their organizational assessment of the EBTJV.
- Steve Perry provided an overview of the organizational assessment of the EBTJV that River Network will be conducting as part of our partnership's fulfillment of the 2012 MSCPG (Whitewater to Bluewater-Phase I). The scope of work that will be performed by River Network includes assessing the structure and function of the EBTJV in the arenas of operations, philanthropy, external affairs, communications and partnerships; developing a detailed report describing the strengths and weaknesses of the EBTJV program delivery systems, recommendations for improvements, along with examples and implementation steps; and, reviewing the EBTJV communications program to identify strengths and weaknesses (to be completed by Water Words That Work).
- Steve Perry provided an update on the status of the EBTJV's 2012, 2013, and 2014 Multi-State Conservation Program grants (MSCPG). The 2012 MSCPG (Whitewater to Bluewater-Phase I) is nearing its completion date (12-31-13) and all grant deliverables are on track to be completed by that date. The deliverables in the 2012 MSCPG that will gain the most attention among the three Eastern FHPs during the final months of this grant deal with gaining a better understanding of on-going science and data projects among the three FHPs to determine how the outcomes of these various projects can assist each FHP address their needs, identifying mechanisms for reporting the benefits of fish habitat conservation projects to a wide range of audiences, and developing project outcome tracking processes. The 2013 MSCPG (Whitewater to Bluewater-Phase II) will most likely be extended into 2014; while the EBTJV has been completing a number of tasks identified in this grant, any costs associated with these tasks have been covered by other funding sources. It's expected the EBTJV will fully expend the \$65k associated with this grant by the end of 2014. The 2014 MSCPG (Whitewater to Bluewater-Phase III) was selected for funding at the AFWA annual meeting last week, however, the total ask for this grant was \$544k while the grant was only allocated ~\$360k. Originally, the 3 Eastern FHPs were to split \$175k in funds from this grant though with the overall reduction in funding it's not clear at this point what the Eastern FHPs will see for funding from this grant.
- Jason Coombs reported that the catchment-level assessment of brook trout status is on track to be completed by year's end. All EBTJV partner states have gotten, or are in the process of getting (VT and RI), their data to Jason. Rachel Muir raised the issue about the different

methodologies the States are using to acquire their brook trout data and so there is need to investigate the various methodologies being used and to determine what that means as far as data compatibility is concerned.

- Steve Perry discussed the need for the partnership to gain a better understanding of the ongoing EBTJV-related science and data projects. A list of these projects has been developed in an effort to track down written descriptions, or determine the specific purpose of, each of these projects along with identifying who the principle investigators are, whether the EBTJV has directed any funding towards supporting the project, and if so how much that funding is, as well as the current status/expected completion date for each project.
Action: Callie McMunigal will work off the list of science and data projects Steve Perry compiled in an effort to identify the projects being supported by EBTJV directed funds and fill in the requisite information about these projects. Rachel Muir committed to doing the same for on-going USGS research projects that will produce benefits towards brook trout conservation.
- Steve Perry provided a brief summation of the EBTJV accomplishment report he is preparing for the years 2004-2013. Steve expects the first draft to be completed before the end of September and he will distribute the draft to the SC members for their review and feedback.
- Dianne Timmins reported on the web portal development work that has been occurring.

The SC teleconference adjourned at 12:05 p.m.