A fish with orange and yellow spots

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**EBTJV Steering Committee Meeting Agenda**

**March 19, 2024 1-3pm ET**

Participants:

Lori Maloney, EBTJV Coordinator

Jacob Rash, EBTJV Chairman; NCWRC

Lee Simard, EBTJV Vice Chairman; VFWD

Ross Shramko NJFW

Leon Brotherton, Georgia DNR

Matt Kulp, GSMNP

Dan Rankin, SCDNR

Jason Coombs, USFWS

Nat Gillespie, USDA FS

Jaime Masterson, USFWS

Brian Eltz, CT DEEP

Brad Fink - Virginia DWR

Adam Kautza, MassWildlife

Than Hitt, USGS – EESC (EBTJV SDC)

Dalton Coutermarche, NH Fish and Game

Jud Kratzer - AFS Liaison to EBTJV; VFWD

Matt Lawrence - Maryland DNR

Jason Cessna, Maryland DNR

Jerrod Parker, Maine DIFW

Merry Gallagher Maine DIFW

Greg Kozlowski, NY DEC

Anne Kinsinger, USGS (NFHP Board Buddy)

Bryan Moore, Trout Unlimited (NFHP Board Buddy)

Taylor Woods, USGS- EESC

Karli Rodgers, USGS- EESC

Kelly Maloney, USGS- EESC

Forrest Vanderbilt, USGS - EESC

John Young, USGS – EESC

The following notes summarize the business conducted during the meeting held on **March 19, 2024:**

This Zoom meeting was called to order by Chair Jacob Rash at ~1:00 p.m. ET.

* **Steering Committee Roll Call (intros) & Establishment of Quorum** (**Jake Rash**)
  + The first order of business was for the Chair to establish a quorum (≥10 SC members), which was achieved as 17 Steering Committee (SC) members participated in the meeting.
  + All attendees introduced themselves. In addition to current EBTJV Steering Committee members, there were several guests present. Leon Brotherton announced that he was filling in representing Georgia DNR, because Sarah Baker left the DNR recently. Several members of the USGS Eastern Ecological Research Center were in attendance: John Young, Forrest Vanderbilt, Kelly Maloney, Than Hitt, and Taylor Woods.
  + At the end of the introductions, Lori Maloney introduced Anne Kinsinger and Bryan Moore, and explained their attendance in context of the Board Buddy system.
* **Meet NFHP ‘Board Buddies’ (2 of the 5 named liaisons)**
  + In December, the National Fish Habitat Partnership board initiated a ‘board buddy’ system to allow board members and FHPs to get to know each other better.
  + Five NFHP board members expressed an interest in being a board buddy of EBTJV, including: **Steve Perry**, EBTJV Steering Committee member, and NFHP Board member, and past EBTJV Coordinator; **Mike Leonard**: Vice President of Government Affairs, American Sportfishing Association ([articles](https://asafishing.org/advocacy/policy-updates/americas-conservation-enhancement-reauthorization-act-includes-big-wins-for-sportfishing/)), and **Doug Austen**, Executive Director, American Fisheries Society ([link](https://fisheries.org/about/meet-the-staff/)), who were not present but will attend future EBTJV meetings. Anne Kinsinger and Bryan Moore were in attendance.
  + **Bryan Moore** is TU's Chief Intergovernmental Officer and is deeply active in the National Fish Habitat Partnership. He has been involved in EBTJV as well. See Bryan’s bio [here.](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fkenlockwood.tu.org%2fabout-tu%2fstaff-board-directory%2fsenior-staff&c=E,1,YsqNg7sqLOQbkl4r0d6ogyctcxMrrvRECJNiYdSLZ9_MvME5ldm2D54lEe_xfDA0sjHqEhF9xc5qcN3gvsUjotgtPNP1KNavVMOgs5vf55Q,&typo=1)
  + **Anne Kinsinger,** Associate Director, Ecosystems Mission Area, US Geological Survey. She is responsible for USGS research and monitoring on freshwater, terrestrial, and marine ecosystems, and the human and fish and wildlife communities they support. ([Anne's bio](https://www.usgs.gov/staff-profiles/anne-kinsinger)).
  + Lori noted that Anne is working with NFHP to bolster the connections between USGS and NFHP. Ways in which EBTJV recognizes USGS work include:
  + Direct involvement:
    - EBTJV Steering Committee;
    - EBTJV Science and Data Committee;
    - Invited presentations to EBTJV meetings;
    - Lunch n' learn;
    - Chesapeake Bay Brook Trout Workgroup
  + USGS (ecosystems mission area) work that EBTJV benefits from:
    - Ecosheds products (including northeast [Stream Temperature](https://ecosheds.github.io/northeast-temp-model/) and [Brook Trout Occupancy](https://ecosheds.github.io/northeast-bto-model/) models)
    - Citizen science (including individual brook trout identification by anglers);
    - AI/ML tools;
    - Thermal modeling/mapping;
    - Interspecies dynamics and ecology studies;
    - Ongoing and future vulnerability of Chesapeake Bay watershed stream fish communities to climate and land-use change;
    - Ecohydrology;
    - Chesapeake Bay fish habitat assessments;
    - NE and SE CASC funding and studies.
* **Announcements**
  + There were no announcements.
* **(Action)The steering committee approved the following two sets of meeting notes:** 
  + [November 1-2 2023 partnership meeting summary](https://easternbrooktrout.org/groups/steering-committee/conference-call-notes/2023-steering-committee-mtg-files/2024-partnership-meeting-day-1-and-2-combined-notes/view) (3 files combined in 1 pdf)
  + [December 2023 SC meeting summary](https://easternbrooktrout.org/groups/steering-committee/conference-call-notes/2024-steering-committee-meeting-files/march-19-2024-sc-meeting-files/december-19-2023-sc-meeting-notes/view)
* **(Action) Conservation projects process and package to NFHP.**
  + Lori Maloney gave a review of the funding timeline for FY25, with awards to happen in spring of 2025, and noted that the awards for FY24 have not been made yet, but we should hear from FWS and NFHP within the month.
  + A map of a road with a mountain range in the background

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  + **The steering committee approved the** project ranking and list as recommended by the EBTJV Project Review Team, after Lori Maloney gave a summary of project submissions and [EBTJV Project Review Team recommendations](https://easternbrooktrout.org/groups/steering-committee/conference-call-notes/2024-steering-committee-meeting-files/march-19-2024-sc-meeting-files/fy25-project-recommendation-list/view)
    - The review team agreed that the EBTJV operations funding request should be increased to $125,000
    - The review team was extremely pleased with the quality of all eligible applications for this round and recommends that they are all funded. The review team agreed upon the following ranking:
    - 
    - *(correction: please note that the nonfederal match that we were able to include in the NFHP application was $74,727, not $125,000 as appeared in the table presented. Also the E. Calais Mill Dam project has $474,000 in contributions, not $524,000. Table included here is the same as was presented at the meeting. Numbers were corrected prior to sending to NFHP).*
    - The total for on the ground projects (excluding operations) is $299,870, and will bring an additional $1.1M in nonfederal funds (4:1 match) and a total of $1.87M in nonfederal and federal contributions. The total NFHP ask including EBTJV operations is $424,870.
    - The projects collectively:
      * Remove 9 barriers to aquatic organism passage, (2 dams, 7 culverts).
      * Reconnect 34.5 miles in priority brook trout catchments.
      * 9 acres of riparian habitat will be restored.
      * The majority of projects occur in allopatric brook trout catchments.
      * Two will restore (repatriate) brook trout.
      * Nearly all the projects address in-stream habitat and propose large wood addition.
    - The projects meet ACE Act requirements and are all expected to benefit recreational fishing for wild brook trout. Applicants utilized well thought out methods, timelines, and partners, addressed a state or local level planning need, contained a monitoring plan, and incorporated public outreach.
* **Bryan Moore gave an update of the NFHP/ACE ACT and the Congressional Designation process**
  + ACE Act reauthorization moving along through Congress. The proposed changes include:
    - Reduce the match requirements for operations.
    - Look at match across a grouping of projects instead of individually.
    - Asking for an increase in funding from 7.3M to 10M.
  + FHP Congressional Authorization: NFHP broke applications into 5 review teams, and are ahead of schedule. Will provide formal feedback in early April. Biggest issue for other FHPs is strategic plans. Sometime in August NFHP will make a formal submission of a summary of all FHP materials. We anticipate this to be reviewed by staff environmental committees and likely handled early in 2025.
* **Annual meeting update**
  + September 22-24, 2024
  + 1.5 day meeting followed by a half day field trip
  + Meeting will be held at the Northeast Outdoor Center in Millinocket, Maine.
  + Merry Gallagher is working with some partners to organize the site visit.
  + Some travel funds will be available. EBTJV has already paid the fee for the meeting space at NEOC.
  + 2 nights and 2 days room and board in a shared cabin at NEOC will be approximately $400 total, per person, which includes tax, gratuity, fees, etc. The costs might be higher depending on the # of people who attend and/or if you desire your own room.
* **Jason Coombs gave an update about the EBTJV catchment updater process**
  + Catchment updater data team planning ([notes here](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZmYmYzHx08uRJLGyydS7s55L8G5C1Sm7LyukUYtdyy0/edit))
  + Status of state catchment updates – most states are complete but we are waiting on a few who had unexpected delays.
* **Lee Simard presented recent work by the communications workgroup** 
  + [Pitch language summary document](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GS5Yq2FO_nQArPuuiKT0RO3BVK99PI2W/edit)
    - Purpose
    - Example use
  + [EBTJV Catchment Updater release template language](https://docs.google.com/document/d/13OK5rC1A1Fc6WRHIQH2Qp4Hou0XL2K2xxCzs6XJcFDc/edit)
* **(Action)The Steering Committee approved a new EBTJV annual workplan**.
  + [Workplan draft document here.](https://easternbrooktrout.org/groups/steering-committee/conference-call-notes/2024-steering-committee-meeting-files/march-19-2024-sc-meeting-files/ebtjv-2024-draft-workplan/view)
  + The purpose of it is to set targets for activities of the Coordinator and key volunteers and contractors with the EBTJV. Activities are organized under each of the four “Conservation Goals” as outlined in the 2018 Action Strategies document, which ensures that activities are aligned with and advancing the EBTJV mission and plan.
* **Lori Maloney gave an update on the initiative to coordinate project funding and implementation in the Delaware watershed in NY, NJ, and PA.**
  + **Grant: Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund – NFWF**. **Applicant: Northeast Assoc. Fish and Wildlife Agencies, through Wildlife Management Institute (WMI)**
  + Goals:
    - Increase capacity (project coordination and management)
    - Build a replicable model for cross-jurisdictional, landscape-scale conservation
  + Methods include:
    - WMI to hire a landscape coordinator to help make the connections between groups and funders and to help convene states and others to prioritize work
    - TU to hire a project manager who can work primarily in PA and NJ, to implement projects.
    - EBTJV to participate in data and prioritization meetings
  + For those not in the Delaware Basin, the relevance is that we can learn how this unfolds and how the EBTJV can help serve a role in brook trout project funding in other regional programs.
* **Member updates** 
  + Dan Rankin, SCDNR – Hailey Goyette will give an update on Pigpen Branch restoration at the June 18, 2024 meeting.
  + Than Hitt, USGS – looking for feedback on a recent research in Shenandoah National Park
    - Looks at abundance trends
    - Two stories – see significant losses, more than 50% loss in mean annual abundance, and
    - Reiterated that it is a National Park, so changes not due to development; Strong losses in lower elevation; small watersheds, small populations plus warmer water = significant losses in brook trout abundance
    - Evidence of extirpations
    - Acid sensitive watersheds possible recovery of populations, possible influence of Clean Air Act improvements.
  + Kelly Maloney, USGS – lots of predictive modeling, machine learning approaches to understand landscape level changes.
    - Collaborates with Than Hitt, Taylor Woods, John Young, large landscape modeling, vulnerability of current and future climate and land use scenarios
    - Modeling altered flow scenarios for future LU and climate for both Chesapeake and Great Lakes watersheds.
    - Novel stressors like hydraulic fracturing and how that might affect habitat now and in the future.