



WILDLIFE RESOURCES DIVISION

CHRIS CLARK
COMMISSIONER

DAN FORSTER
DIRECTOR

September 16, 2010

Mr. Tripp Bolton
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
P.O. Box 69
Wadmalaw Island, SC 29487

Dear Tripp:

Thank you for your consideration of the current funding request for brook trout restoration work in Georgia, in response to the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture's FY11 call for project proposals. Please include this letter of support by the Georgia Wildlife Resources Division in your review of the proposal and hopeful forwarding to the Joint Venture's evaluation committee.

The current proposal builds upon the progress made in recent years by the Georgia brook trout conservation cooperative, which includes the U.S. Forest Service, Trout Unlimited, my agency, the Soque River Watershed Association, and other contributors. Joint Venture funds have contributed greatly to the work done to "drought-proof" numerous Georgia brook trout streams by increasing pool habitat and overhead cover, thereby enhancing the carrying capacity for adult fish, while also restoring selected stream reaches by removing non-native trout species. The current proposal includes work on stream connectivity (culvert replacement), continued brook trout population restoration, and additional habitat enhancement.

This proposal is consistent with the Georgia Brook Trout Management Plan, a working document developed in consultation with the U.S. Forest Service. Enhancing Georgia's brook trout populations is also consistent with Joint Venture regional goals, since our state has served as a brood source for recent South Carolina DNR brook trout restoration efforts. This proposal also has strong support from the Georgia Council of Trout Unlimited.

The FY11 proposal will also enhance recreational angling opportunities for Georgia brook trout. Restoration and enhancement of fishable brook trout populations in these target streams will improve angling opportunities for this species, recognized as the official coldwater game fish of this state. While these headwater brook trout streams may not support the fish density, fish biomass, or total fishing pressure of our lower elevation streams, they are a unique

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resource that is prized by a significant portion of the Georgia trout angling constituency. Those specialist anglers place very high value upon opportunities to fish for this state's only true "native" salmonid in remote, scenic areas of the north Georgia mountains.

This is a valued angling heritage and one that has brought considerable public attention to our overall trout conservation cooperative in Georgia, of which our brook trout initiative is a component. For example, the momentum created in part by our Back the Brookie program helped launch a successful fundraising campaign last year to acquire a vital tract of private property within a state wildlife management area, just north of Atlanta. It contained 1.5 miles of designated trout waters, Amicalola Creek.

Our Georgia partnership hopes that you and the Joint Venture evaluation committee will find this proposal worthy of funding. Your assistance with Georgia brook trout population enhancement and restoration has been truly appreciated. If you have any questions regarding this letter of support, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey P. Durniak
Regional Fisheries Supervisor

CC: John Biagi, Chief of Fisheries