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August 11, 2011

Scott Craig
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Maine Fishery Resources Office
306 Hatchery Rd.
East Orland, Maine 04431

Mr. Craig:

I am writing in strong support of the grant application from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (MDIFW) to the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV) for funding the project titled ***Restoration of Native Charr in Big Wadleigh Pond Through Maine's EBTJV Conservation Strategy.***

As you are aware, the ramifications of illegal species introductions can be dire. In this case of Big Wadleigh Pond, the recent introduction of rainbow smelt (*Osmerus mordax*) is a serious threat to a Heritage designated population of brook trout and native arctic charr. We have already seen a severe population crash of both species in a similar situation – Big Reed Pond in Maine due to similar circumstances subsequent to a smelt illegal introduction. In that case, chemical remediation didn't occur until many years after the initial smelt introduction event. This tragically resulted in extremely few trout and charr remaining to be held for future release and to use as broodstock in the interim. We'd like to think that we learned a thing or two in that process and that moving more quickly towards reclamation before trout and charr numbers got so low, may have provided more assurance of maintaining the genetic integrity of these unique populations. In this case of Big Wadleigh Pond, chemical reclamation is our first remediation tactic and hence, there are adequate numbers of trout and charr to assure preservation of any uniqueness of these trout and charr. This is of course, contingent upon moving forward as quickly as we can on this project.

EBTJV support for our efforts will greatly facilitate our ability to implement this reclamation project as quickly as possible. Time is of the essence in a project such as this. Preliminary steps are already underway to collect spawning individuals this fall for holding in a partnering hatchery. EBTJV assistance with costs associated with such a large reclamation project will greatly assist our ability to implement this project within the proposed timeline.

If you have any further questions regarding this project, please do not hesitate to contact us further.

Best regards,

Merry Gallagher
Research Fishery Biologist
Maine Coordinator for the EBTJV