



# NFWF

## **NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE FOUNDATION**

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### **Agreement #F17AC00855**

**National Fish and Wildlife Foundation**

**NFWF Project ID: 0405.17.056443**

**Project Title: Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture Coordination and Operations**

**Submitted by Stephen Perry on 4/16/19**

**Project Period 8/11/2017 - 3/31/2019**

### **Project Status and Accomplishments**

The Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture Coordination and Operations Project (Easygrants ID 56443) consists of 5 tasks: 1) Assist with refining the EBTJV's strategic objectives and key conservation priorities using the results of the partnership's recently completed assessment of wild Brook Trout at the catchment scale; 2) Liaise and collaborate with the National Fish Habitat Partnership, neighboring Fish Habitat Partnerships and other conservation entities to ensure that strategic conservation actions among this community are synchronized; 3) Solicit and rank fish habitat conservation projects that address priority wild Brook Trout conservation needs and coordinate and compile information on wild Brook Trout conservation activities and improvements in wild Brook Trout habitat condition for use in measuring progress towards conserving wild Brook Trout; 4) Promote the accomplishments being achieved in conserving wild Brook Trout to targeted audiences; and, 5) Conduct routine business function for the EBTJV and assist in convening at least one meeting per year to further the goals of the partnership. The following task accomplishments occurred during the period of August 11, 2017 through March 31, 2019.

**Task 1 -** The EBTJV's 2015 range-wide Brook Trout status assessment findings were used to refine the partnerships strategic Brook Trout conservation priorities, which are contained within an EBTJV document titled "[Conserving the Eastern Brook Trout - Action Strategies](#)". A condensed version of this thirty-two-page document was developed in order to produce an eight-page booklet, [The Eastern Brook Trout: Roadmap to Conservation](#), which succinctly summarizes the EBTJV's blueprint for wild Brook Trout conservation. This roadmap was distributed to EBTJV members, publicized in the National Fish Habitat Partnership's February 2019 Newsletter, and uploaded to the EBTJV website.

**Task 2 –** The EBTJV's collaborative working relationship with the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP) and Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP) continued as we collectively advance our Whitewater to Bluewater Initiative. Efforts during this Project segment were keyed towards identifying the Rivanna HUC 8 in Virginia as a priority focal area for jointly addressing fish habitat connectivity issues. A team consisting of members of EBTJV, ACFHP, SARP, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries was also formed to identify and prioritize specific habitat connectivity needs within the Rivanna as well as developing strategies to address these priority needs. There are four [wild Brook Trout](#) patches identified within the Rivanna and the EBTJV has a range-wide habitat goal that calls for increasing connectivity within and among wild Brook Trout catchments, so

the partnership is interested in focusing on enhancing connectivity within these four patches by addressing road-stream crossings (culverts and bridges) that negatively impact aquatic organism passage. These four wild Brook Trout patches collectively have eighty-two road-stream crossings, and none have been surveyed to determine if they currently impede aquatic organism passage. As such the EBTJV is keenly interested in supporting efforts to assess these road-stream crossings and using the survey results to identify high priority bridges and culverts for upgrade or replacement.

**Task 3 –** The EBTJV released a Request for Proposals for Brook Trout conservation projects that resulted in ten project proposals being submitted by partners for potential funding support provided by the US Fish and Wildlife Service’s (FWS) fiscal year 2019 National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) budget appropriation. These ten proposals were reviewed and scored by a team of EBTJV members, with the results being forwarded to the EBTJV Steering Committee for their considerations and actions in early December 2018. The EBTJV will submit its list of priority ranked Brook Trout conservation projects to the US Fish and Wildlife Service for funding considerations in April/May 2019.

The EBTJV also entered pertinent data from the eighty-eight Brook Trout conservation projects that received FWS NFHAP funding during fiscal years 2006-2018 into the National Fish Habitat Partnership’s Project Tracking Database. This database allows the EBTJV to generate project data-related reports as needed. Collectively these projects had 241 different partners involved at the local level, with 28% of these project partners being non-governmental organizations, 17% were state agencies, 13% were federal agencies, 10% were watershed councils or conservation districts, 9% were businesses, 8% were foundations or grant programs, 7% were educational institutions and 7% were municipalities. Projects have been implemented in sixteen of the EBTJV’s 18 member states, with RI and OH being the only two states that haven’t had projects. These projects received ~\$3.3 million in FWS NFHAP funding, while project partners contributed around \$17.5 million, providing a 5:1 ratio of project partner contributions to FWS NFHAP funds. These projects enhanced 240 miles of in-stream habitat and 157 acres of lentic habitat, enhanced or restored 357 acres of riparian habitat, and removed 103 fish barriers, re-opening access to 321 miles of stream habitat and provided \$317 million in socioeconomic benefits.

**Task 4 –** Seventy-one news articles about Brook Trout conservation efforts were posted on the EBTJV Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/EBTJV>), which has 2,893 followers and these posts reached more than 52,000 individuals.

**Task 5 –**Four EBTJV Steering Committee teleconferences were held to discuss and take action on a variety of business matters and the EBTJV organized and sponsored a Brook Trout Conservation Symposium held during the American Fisheries Society’s 2018 Annual Meeting in Atlantic City, NJ. Additionally, the EBTJV held a partnership meeting January 8-9, 2019 in South Kingstown, RI. Twenty-six individuals attended the meeting on January 8<sup>th</sup> and twenty on January 9<sup>th</sup>. During the morning of day 1, representatives from RI, MA, and CT state fisheries agencies provided short presentations highlighting Brook Trout management issues being addressed within their respective states. These presentations were followed by updates on Brook Trout catchment assessment news, patch-related effective breeding population findings, recent range-wide genetic analysis results, and future possibilities for making an updateable web viewer that combines genetic analyses and patches. During Day 2 of the meeting, group discussions centered on what the attendees felt were the biggest obstacles to wild Brook Trout conservation and what is being done to track progress being made to conserve wild Brook Trout. Outcomes from the meeting included initiating a process that results in allowing the Brook Trout catchment assessment database to be updated by the States; organizing a genetics workshop for EBTJV partners; starting a process for converting the Brook Trout assessment catchment delineation layer from HD+ V2 to HD+ HR when development of the new

catchment layer is complete; assess the strengths and weaknesses of the many Brook Trout-related decision support tools and hold a workshop that provides users with a better understanding of how and when to use these tools; and, develop a standard spreadsheet that would be sent to one contact for each of the EBTJV formal partners that would ask for several metrics for each conservation project that was completed during a calendar year. Metrics could include things like project name, general project location, project intent, project outputs/outcomes, and total costs. The EBTJV also participated on the Planning Committee for East Coast Trout Management and Culture Workshop VI that will occur June 10-12, 2019 in Frostburg, MD.

**Budget Table (April 11, 2017 – March 31, 2019)**

**Labor Costs by Task**

	<b>Budgeted Cost</b>	<b>Amount Spent</b>
<b>Task 1</b>	<b>\$ 3,264.00</b>	<b>\$ 5,032.00</b>
<b>Task 2</b>	<b>\$16,320.00</b>	<b>\$19,535.00</b>
<b>Task 3</b>	<b>\$19,584.00</b>	<b>\$18,224.00</b>
<b>Task 4</b>	<b>\$ 9,792.00</b>	<b>\$14,918.00</b>
<b>Task 5</b>	<b>\$16,320.00</b>	<b>\$16,946.29</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$65,280.00</b>	<b>\$74,655.29</b>

**Travel Costs**

<b>Budgeted Cost</b>	<b>Amount Spent</b>
<b>\$15,720.00</b>	<b>\$6,344.71</b>

**Total Project Costs**

<b>Budgeted Cost</b>	<b>Amount Spent</b>
<b>\$81,000.00</b>	<b>\$81,000.00</b>