



Eastern Brook Trout **JOINT VENTURE** A Fish Habitat Partnership

2023 Project Request for Proposals (RFP)

The Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV) is [requesting project proposals](#) that are focused on Brook Trout conservation actions. Federal funding is available through the National Fish Habitat Partnership as outlined under the America's Conservation Enhancement Act of 2020. You can find the full Act [here](#). EBTJV will score and rank proposals for consideration by the NFHAP board and the Department of the Interior.

This RFP opens on November 15, 2021. The **deadline** for submitting your Brook Trout conservation project proposal is **5:00 pm (Eastern Time) on January 21, 2022. Incomplete applications will not be considered, and late applications will only be considered in rare circumstances.** Funding for FY2023 projects will likely not be appropriated by Congress until after January 2023 and will likely not be available to project leaders until March 2023 or later. Actual project start date will be the date grant agreement funding documents are signed. Project objectives must be met within the program timeline once the grant agreement is executed.

The maximum award amount for an individual project is \$50,000. These funds can only be used for on-the-ground brook trout habitat conservation and restoration projects in the native eastern range, and related design and monitoring activities; **they may not be used for research projects.** All projects must also have a minimum of a 1:1 contribution from non-federal funding sources. To meet the 1:1 non-federal match requirement, non-federal funds contributions must not come from, be matched to, or otherwise tied to a federal source. Match can be generated at any time but must be spent during the project performance period, which is expected to begin in the summer of 2023. EBTJV will prioritize projects whose deliverables are expected to be completed within two years of the start of the project period.

To ensure available funding is being directed most effectively, proposed projects must be geared toward meeting the EBTJV's [range-wide habitat goals and objectives, as well as its key conservation actions](#). Projects must also fall under at least one of the [NFHAP National Conservation Priorities](#). EBTJV prioritizes projects that are most likely to be fully implemented in the 2-year EBTJV/NFHAP project performance period. Additionally, the ACE Act places an emphasis on projects that increase recreational fishing opportunities through habitat improvements, that benefit the local economy, and that have a public educational component. EBTJV projects have historically incorporated each of these elements. **New**

requirements under the ACE act include the 1:1 nonfederal match and an evaluation plan for assessing the results of the project and for measuring the associated improvements to fish populations, recreational fishing opportunities, and the local economy. Project applications will be reviewed and ranked based on their ability to meet these and other key factors that can be found in the [EBTJV's 2023 Project Scoring Criteria](#).

The ACE Act included special considerations for Indian Tribes that we are still awaiting interpretation of. Please contact the EBTJV Coordinator if you have a project on Tribal land.

The ACE Act allows a state, local government, or other non-federal entity to receive NFHP funds for the acquisition of real property from willing sellers if the acquisition ensures public access for fish and wildlife-dependent recreation or contributes a scientifically based, direct enhancement to the health of fish and fish populations as determined by the NFHP Board. All real property acquisition projects funded with NFHP funds must be approved by the state agency in the state in which the project is occurring. EBTJV has not yet incorporated property acquisition into its project selection. Please contact the EBTJV coordinator if you have a project request that includes real property acquisition.

Project application requirements:

1. [2023 Project Application Form](#)
2. **Letter of Support from the State Fisheries Management Agency** - You must obtain a letter of support from the appropriate State Fisheries Management Agency for your project in advance of the application deadline (and realistically you should contact your Agency early in the process of designing your project). This letter should be from the individual that represents the state in the EBTJV whenever possible ([EBTJV State Contact List](#)). In addition, if project is located on private land, a landowner consent letter is needed. EBTJV does not currently have a template landowner consent letter, but you may provide your own.
3. **Photographs and [USFWS Copyright Release Agreement](#)** - Photographs in JPEG or TIFF format should be uploaded into your project folder independently of the application. A USFWS Copyright Release Agreement needs to be completed and uploaded for each photo submitted.

Project application packets must be submitted electronically via the EBTJV website in the folder labeled [Upload your 2023 Project Application Packet Here](#) . Only the Coordinator and you will be able to see the folder you create.

Please contact the Coordinator immediately if you experience technical difficulties with the website or need assistance with your application. If you are a first time user of the website, you will need to create a username and password. Please register [here](#).

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Applicants will be notified of their project's ranking and funding status as that information becomes available. Successful applicants will be required to complete a separate series of documents to receive the funds, in coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). NFHP funds are federal funds, administered through the FWS. All organizations that receive NFHP funding are required to complete all requirements for federal grants, including registration on the federal [System for Award Management \(SAM.gov\)](#), Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP), Grants Solutions grant management system, and provide interim and annual reports to the FWS and EBTJV. If your organization is not yet registered in the SAM system, please do so as soon as EBTJV notifies you of your award. NFHP funds are processed through a grant agreement completed through the USFWS Regional Offices or local FWCO office. Grants are paid on a reimbursable basis. If requesting indirect funds, applicants will need to submit a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, take the de minimis cost rate, or bill everything directly. All applicants are required to complete environmental compliance documents, including National Historic Preservation Act Form, [National Environmental Policy Act](#), and [section 7 of the Endangered Species Act](#) in collaboration with US FWS. EBTJV will also require a project end report with photos. Please see [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Fish Habitat Partnership Program \(NFHP\) Application & Award Requirements October 2021 for more information.](#)

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact their state EBTJV representative *early in the process* ([EBTJV State Contact List](#)). Applicants are also encouraged to contact their regional Fish and Wildlife Service office, although formal coordination with FWS during the application process is no longer a requirement. However, applicants that plan projects in coordination with or with input from these experts are much more likely to be successful.

For questions, please contact:

Lori Maloney, Coordinator
Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture
Email: lori.maloney@canaanvi.org

APPLICATION GUIDANCE

This document provides instructions and guidance for each of the items on the application form. Applications MUST be complete, including a letter from the state contact, to be considered. A blank application form can be found on the EBTJV website (2023 Project Application Form).

COVER PAGE (1 page)

The cover page should contain the required information in the sequence and format specified. Do not attach a transmittal letter, executive summary or any additional documentation not requested.

Project Title

The title must be 100 characters or less and follow the following format: Type of project, river, city, state. project, river, city, state. Example: Millers Dam Removal, Millers River, Millers River, MA

Type of project (protection, enhancement, restoration)

Protection: Conservation actions that maintain, or prevent the decline of, aquatic habitat.

Enhancement: Conservation actions that heighten, intensify, or improve specific functions of aquatic habitat.

Restoration: Conservation actions that return natural/historic attributes or functions to aquatic habitat.

Congressional District of Project:

Please list the congressional district where the Project is located.

Congressional District of Applicant:

Please list the congressional district in which the applicant's office/organization is located.

NFHAP/EBTJV Funding Request

This is the amount of EBTJV/NFHAP funding you are requesting for the Project.

Total for Other Federal Contributions

The value (cash and in-kind services) of contributions from federal sources; do not include the amount of EBTJV/NFHAP funds you are requesting.

Total for Non-Federal Contributions

The value (cash and in-kind services) of contributions from non-federal sources. To qualify as non-federal, these cannot be matched to another federal grant.

Total Project Cost

Total cost of the Project including EBTJV/NFHAP request and other federal/non-federal contributions.

Applicant

The applicant should be the entity that will receive the money should the Project be selected for funding. The Project Officer is the person within the organization that will be the primary point of

contact for the Project and its funding. Please include your entity’s mission statement in the space provided.

1. Project Narrative (12 points of 100)

A. Statement of Project Need: Explain why your project is necessary and how it fulfills the purposes of conserving wild Brook Trout.

B. Project Purpose: Describe the desired future state that addresses the Project need in whole or part.

C. Project Objective(s): The objectives should state the desired outcome of the proposed project in terms that are specific and quantified. Objectives are meant to be realistic targets or benchmarks that, if achieved, will resolve the project need and are written in an active tense and use action verbs such as construct, survey, train, research, establish, repair, conduct, provide, acquire.

D. Project Deliverables

A deliverable is a direct and immediately measurable activity of the project. Each deliverable has an ecological, restoration, or outreach outcome associated with it. In many cases, outcomes will match the objectives stated above. However, because deliverables are linked to the budget, describing deliverables helps us evaluate if your timeline and budget match project expectations. For example (not an exhaustive list):

Deliverable (examples)	Outcome (examples)
2 culverts replaced	10 miles of in-stream habitat re-opened
Brook Trout translocated	brook trout re-established in 2.4km of stream
streambank stabilization	1,000 m stream habitat enhanced
BKT assessment	15 km of stream reach assessed for Brook Trout presence and abundance
Riparian planting	5 acres riparian habitat
2 workshops/webinars held	50 municipal officials reached
non-native competitor removed & replaced with brook trout	2 km brook trout habitat restored
Large woody material added	0.25 mi in stream habitat

E:

Project

Methods/Approach: Describe the methods that will be used to achieve the Project’s stated objectives. For cooperative agreements, please specify the tasks/deliverables where the Service will be substantially involved in carrying out the objectives of the award. The Project approach is a description of the specific conservation actions or efforts necessary to accomplish the Project’s objectives; it answers the question of

“how” the objectives will be accomplished by describing the actual work that will be done and demonstrates the use of sound design, appropriate procedures, and accepted fish and wildlife conservation, management, or research principles.

F: Evaluation/monitoring plan: Describe the type and duration of monitoring/evaluation following completion of the restoration efforts. Given the preferred project duration (2 yrs), some aspects of project monitoring may be beyond the scope of project funding but are often planned in coordination with state or other agency biologists. (Applicant may expand on this in question 24). Note: EBTJV has always asked for a description of post-project monitoring, however the ACE Act outlines a requirement for a plan and that project awardees will be required to submit a post-project report of these to the Fish Habitat Partnership (EBTJV).

2. Project Planning (6 points)

A: Timeline. Provide a brief timeline for the Project including the targeted month and year of completion. If the proposed project is designed to be implemented over multiple years please identify in your timeline Year 1 as Phase 1, Year 2 as Phase 2, etc. Also include baseline and post conservation action assessment and any long term monitoring for population responses, even if funding for these is not requested. EBTJV will prioritize projects whose proposed deliverables will be completed within 2 years of award paperwork (the period of performance). Timelines may use an April 1, 2023 starting date for purposes of the application, but the actual start date will be determined by completion of the contract document. Funding is not likely to be available prior to March 2023 and may as late as early summer. Congress must appropriate funds for the program annually and is not expected to begin that process until after January of the respective fiscal year.

B: Project Milestones Describe significant milestones in completing the project and any accomplishments to date.

C: Environmental Compliance Review Requirements. Provide information about the Project’s environmental compliance review requirements – the Service has the responsibility for making sure the proposed Project complies with Federal laws - National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); Endangered Species Act (ESA); National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA); and other applicable laws or permits.

D. Describe the status of the project with design, permitting, and planning. Does the proposal reflect a reasonable timeline and expectation of activities, from design and permitting, through implementation, being completed in the timeframe of this grant?

Describe the level of planning completed to date including the permitting necessary for the project and the status of the permit applications. How long will it take to initiate the project once grant agreements have been forged in Grantsolutions? Note that the performance period will begin in spring/summer 2023 and extend forward two years.

E. Is there a letter of support from the state/federal fish and wildlife agency (required), and landowner if the project is located on private land?

Project proposals **must** be supported by state and/or federal fish and wildlife management/natural resource agencies. In addition, if project is located on private land, a landowner consent letter is also needed. Applications cannot be processed without these letters.

3. Partner Information (2 points)

A. Key Project Personnel Provide information about the Project’s Principal/Lead investigator.

B. Provide a list of all partners and their cash and in-kind contributions to the project in a table. Please identify the contributions that are in-hand and those that have been requested and are still pending.

Example:

Partner Name	Contribution In-Kind	Contribution Cash	Federal or Non-Federal	Partner Category
Acme Waders	\$5,000 (in-hand)		Non-Federal	Corporation
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation		\$10,000 (requested)	Federal	Conservation Group (National)

Partner Categories

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Federal Agency | State Agency |
| Local Government | Local Conservation Group |
| Conservation Group (National) | Native American Tribe |
| Private Landowners | Corporations |

4. Project Budget (2 points for appropriate budget; 10 points for nonfederal partner match to grant request ratio)

General Requirements

Describe and justify requested budget items and costs identified; provide sufficient information to show that the project is cost effective. Please explain expenditures in detail. Major equipment purchases, types of supplies, and specific contracts should be identified. The Project application should contain a detailed budget table showing total project costs in the following manner:

- Budget categories (a) are defined to allow these specific expenditures to be entered into NFHAP's economic impact calculator: Administration/Technical Services Expenditures; Construction Materials Expenditures, and Construction Labor Expenditures. Research expenditures will not be allowed, and pre-award expenditures are excluded as well. If indirect costs are requested, successful applicants will need to submit a NICRA or accept the de minimis rate at the time of the grant agreement.
- Under each category, list the project partner (b) and activity/task of partner (c) (e.g., acquisition, restoration) and apportion these costs among EBTJV/NFHAP funds, non-federal and other federal contributions being provided by each partner.
- For each of the project partner funds or in-kind contributions, please specify whether the funds/contributions are from a federal source or non-federal source. Indicate if project partner contributions are in-kind or cash along with which funds are in-hand (committed) and which have been requested but are still pending. All NFHP requested funds are now required to have a 1:1 non-federal match. Non-federal match can include cash and/or in-kind labor, materials, equipment if there are no federal ties to those funds. State agency funds can be used for the non-federal match if labor and/or materials are not being charged to another federal grant. State agency funds that are used to match other federal grants would not be eligible as NFHP match. Once the NFHP grant funds are matched with non-federal cash or in-kind, an unlimited amount of other federal contributions to the project are allowed. Match dollars must be used during the project agreement period. *Special note: Projects on Native American Tribal lands are subject to different rules governing match and awards. Please contact the EBTJV coordinator to discuss this.
- In column h., where applicable, provide the number of acres/miles to be affected by the monies expended in each project activity.

a. Budget category	b. Partner name or contractor	c. Task or Item	d. EBTJV Request	e. Non-federal contribution		f. Federal contribution		g. Total contribution (e + f)	h. Acres/miles affected
				In-kind	cash	In-kind	cash		
Administration/technical services									
Design									
Travel									
Other									
Indirect									
Supplies/Equipment									
Construction									
Construction materials									
Construction Labor									
Volunteer labor									
Contractual									
Other									
TOTAL									

Add rows or sub-categories as needed. Please make a reasonable attempt to track following expenditures separately: Administration/Technical Services; Construction Materials, and Construction Labor. Indicate if project partner contributions are in-kind or cash along with which funds are in-hand (committed) and which have been requested but are still pending. Estimated Value of Volunteers In-Kind contributions is \$28.54 per hour ([Source](#)). For each of the project partner funds or in-kind contributions, please specify whether the funds/contributions are from a federal source or non-federal source. To meet the 1:1 non-federal match requirement, non-federal funds contributions must not come from, be matched to, or otherwise tied to a federal source. If indirect costs are requested, successful applicants will need to submit a NICRA or accept the de minimis rate, at the time of the grant agreement (approx. spring/summer 2023).

5. List the specific EBTJV range-wide habitat goal(s) and objective(s) addressed by the Project and describe how the Project will contribute towards achieving them. (2 points)

EBTJV Range-wide Habitat Goals and Objectives

GOAL	OBJECTIVE
Increase the average size (km ²) of wild Brook Trout patches, which is currently 19 km ²	Increase the size (km ²) of 30 wild Brook Trout patches by the year 2022.
Restore wild Brook Trout to catchments where they were extirpated	Establish wild Brook Trout in 15 extirpated catchments by the year 2022.
Maintain the current number of wild Brook Trout patches (i.e. no net loss)	Retain at least 6,022 allopatric wild Brook Trout patches (1.1) across the EBTJV geographic range by the year 2022. Retain at least 3,838 sympatric wild Brook Trout patches (1.2, 1.3, and 1.4) across the EBTJV geographic range by the year 2022.
Increase connectivity within and among wild Brook Trout catchments	Complete Aquatic Organism Passage projects within 45 wild Brook Trout catchments by 2022.

6. List which of the EBTJV key conservation action(s) the Project addresses. (2 points)

EBTJV Key Conservation Actions

- Increase recreational fishing opportunities for wild Brook Trout
- Conserve and/or increase habitats that support robust wild Brook Trout populations
- Restore and reconnect suitable habitats adjacent to robust wild Brook Trout populations
- Conserve genetic diversity of wild Brook Trout populations
- Conserve unique wild Brook Trout life history strategies (e.g., lacustrine populations, large river populations, and coastal populations).
- Minimize threats to wild Brook Trout populations (e.g., degraded water quality, invasive species, altered hydrologic regimes)

7. List which of the National Fish Habitat Partnership’s National Conservation Strategies the Project addresses (2 points)

National Fish Habitat Partnership Conservation Strategies

- Protect intact and healthy waters
- Restore hydrologic conditions for fish
- Reconnect fragmented fish habitats
- Restore water quality

8. Map of project area (requirement, no points)

Provide one map of the project area in the following format:

- Color (preferred) or black and white (acceptable);
- Large-scale detail (e.g., 1 inch = 1 mile, or greater), clearly showing the scope and location of the project.
- It should include scale bar, north arrow, counties or other appropriate political boundaries, etc.
- Please provide the GPS Coordinates for the project. **(please use WGS 84.** Note: this is the Datum used when you search an address in Google maps)
- If the Project involves a passage barrier, please include the coordinates and name of the barrier. If it is a habitat project, please include coordinates of a representative location within the center of the project boundary.

9. Photographs of project area (requirement, no points)

At least one, but no more than two, photographs of the Project area is required. Each photo should be in JPG format and be accompanied by:

- A short, descriptive caption;
- Photographer's name/organization; and
- Signed USFWS Copyright Release Agreement.

10. What are the EBTJV Feature ID# and Classification Code for the catchment(s) where the Project work will be implemented? (5 points)

To determine the EBTJV Wild Trout Patch Feature ID# and Classification Code for the catchment where your Project work will be implemented, please follow these steps:

1. Click on this [Brook Trout Integrated Spatial Data and Tools](#) link;
2. Put a mark in the box next to the Legend label Wild Trout Habitat Patches to display this data layer;
3. Locate the catchment where your Project work will be implemented; you can increase or decrease the map scale by selecting the appropriate map scale (see drop down menu located in the lower left hand corner) or use the wheel on your mouse. You can also change the layer's transparency by clicking the yellow light icon that is associated with this layer in the Legend and sliding the opacity bar.
4. Once you have located the Project's catchment, find the Identify Features button at the top of the page (hovering your cursor over each button will identify its function). Open the drop down menu for this function and select the Wild Trout Habitat patches layer, and then click the Identify Features button once to turn it on.
5. Next move your cursor within the boundary of the Project's catchment and click once. A Feature Information box will appear on your screen and you will see the catchment's "feat_id" number and "ebtjv_code". Record both numbers in the appropriate locations in the Project Application Form.

11. Is/are the catchment(s) where the Project work will be implemented located in a Wild Trout Patch; if so what is the Wild Trout Patch Feature ID# and Classification Code? (5 points)

A description on how to determine both of these items is given above.

12. Will the Project result in re-establishing wild Brook Trout within the catchment? (10 points)

If Brook Trout are not currently present within the Project site's catchment, describe how the Project will result in re-establishing their presence, and how you are doing this in coordination with the state fisheries management agency, FWS, and/or other management entity.

13. Are there invasive fish species within the Project site or that have access (no barrier) to it? (2 points)

Consult with your state fisheries management agency to determine whether there are any invasive fish species within the Project site or have ready access to it. If there are, list the species. If a project goal is to remove invasive species, reiterate how this is being done in coordination with the state fisheries management agency.

14. Are hatchery-reared salmonids stocked within the Project site or that have access (no barrier) to it? (5 points)

Consult with your state fisheries management agency to determine whether hatchery-reared salmonids are stocked within the Project site or have ready access to it. If there are, list the species and note any species that are triploid.

15. Will the completed Project benefit any federally listed threatened or endangered species or Service priority species? (3 points) If yes, list the species and describe how the Project will contribute directly to a federally listed threatened or endangered species recovery plan or will provide critical habitat for federally listed or Service priority species. Do not include indirect, minor, or unknown benefits related to such species that may use the Project's area. The Service maintains the list of [federally endangered or threatened species](#), which allows users to search for listed species by state and county. You can also contact your regional Service Fisheries Office for assistance in determining federally listed or Service priority species in your Project's area.

16. Will the completed project benefit any state listed threatened or endangered species or species of greatest conservation need (other than brook trout)? (3 points)

If yes, list the species and describe how the Project will contribute directly to a state listed species or species of greatest conservation need. Do not include indirect, minor, or unknown benefits related to such species that may use the Project's area. Do not list brook trout. Please speak to your state fisheries agency about this.

17. Is the Project located on/along private or public land? Is the land currently under any form of protection (e.g. conservation easement)? (3 points)

Describe the ownership of the land that the Project is on/along and whether it has any form of protection. Project site = footprint of the conservation action and does not include the surrounding areas upstream or downstream. Is the land currently under any form of protection in perpetuity (e.g. fee simple, public ownership, development restrictions, easements etc)? Approximately what % of the land is protected in perpetuity?

18. What percentage of the watershed above the proposed project is protected in perpetuity? (3 points). Estimate the amount of land upstream of the Project site that is protected through easement, public ownership, development restrictions, etc.)

19. Does/will the public have access at the project site? If so, what kinds of recreational activities are allowed – fishing, hiking, camping, wildlife viewing, etc.? (4 points)

Describe the type of public access available at the Project site, along with whether there will be any restrictions to public access and if fees will be charged for public use. Will the Project increase or maintain public access to land or water for fish or wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities? If so, describe. List the kinds of recreational activities that are allowed at the Project site.

20. What are the root causes of degradation in the catchment(s) where the Project is located and which of these are addressed by the Project? (3 points) Describe the root causes of degradation in the catchment and the degree to which this Project addresses/corrects those issues.

21. Does the Project support any goals in existing action plan(s) (e.g. state fish & wildlife, watershed protection, water quality improvement, land or water-use plan(s), or other regional plan(s))? (2 points) List the action plans and state the goals the Project is supporting.

22. Will the Project improve recreational fishing opportunities for wild Brook Trout? If so, how will the improvement be measured? (5 points)

If the recreational fishing opportunities for wild Brook Trout are improved by the Project, explain the scope of improvement and also how this improvement is being measured. For example, does the project support recreational industries and related economic activities? Provide any socioeconomic data that are available, e.g. dollar value of the fishery and/or the recreational value (in dollars) of the project area/stream reach to the local/regional/state area. Are creel or visitor data available, or will these be tracked? This question should also be addressed by the state fishery management agency in their letter of recommendation for the Project

23. Describe the outreach or educational components of the Project and how many individuals/students will be served. (3 points) Do these target the local and or regional community?

24. Describe the plans for evaluating the project functionality and measuring the biological, ecological, economic, recreational, or other results of the project. According to the ACE Act, an evaluation plan must be in place for a project to be funded.

Describe how the Project's success will be measured including references to any established protocols that will be used and the duration period for any post-project monitoring and/or evaluation. The plan should include both a) **immediate (3 points)** and b) **longer-term (3 points)** results/responses. Given the preferred project duration (2 years), some aspects of project monitoring may be beyond the scope of project funding but are often planned in coordination with state or other agency biologists. Please note the duration and who you are working with to track progress.

Are any baseline information available? Address how the evaluation plan will assess the biological, ecological, or other results of the habitat protection, restoration, or enhancement activities. Where possible, explain how the plan will identify improvements to existing fish populations, recreational fishing opportunities, and the overall economic benefits for the local community of the fish habitat conservation project.

Thank you for your interest in partnering with EBTJV to help us fulfill our mission to secure resilient populations of wild Brook Trout by protecting, enhancing, and restoring aquatic habitat and increasing human connections to, and stewardship of, our natural environment.