

# Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

IAFWA Conference Room, Hall of States  
Washington, DC

APRIL 25, 2005 – Day 1, 1:00 – 4:00 pm

Welcome and introduction by Steering Committee Chair, Eric Schwaab

Work Group Reports – Summary of Work Group Reports was handed out (see attached)

Data Work Group: Mark Hudy and Doug Beard

- Mark Hudy presented data collected to date (Powerpoint)
- Hard to define extirpated vs. never there
- Goal is to preliminarily complete all states by June 6. Complete results with GIS layers should be done by August 1.
- Doug Beard presented webpage design and asked for comments. If anyone has any design suggestions or ideas about what to have as defaults or option variables for building maps, let him know.
- Expressed a need to have a mechanism in place to update annual gains in data.
- Steering committee expressed interest in trying to identify which human uses were most problematic for brook trout.
- Steering committee expressed interest in trying to develop a triage process
- Before the next meeting the work group will have new protocols worked out to present to states so they can institutionalize data reporting updates
- Other layers will change over time also
- All members of the Steering Committee were impressed with the amount of work and effort that had been done thus far

Habitat Work Group: Hannibal Bolton

- Group has been waiting for the Conservation Strategy and Steering Committee Meeting
- Next Steps:
  - Growing interest within the federal government to support the national fish habitat initiative.
  - Hannibal wants to plan Habitat Work Group meeting
  - Habitat group tasked by rest of committee to develop a triage protocol so they can evaluate where to go with the available money to help the most
  - The committee also asked the group to find out what is going on now for habitat restoration and report if it is addressing the greatest threats.
- Report due date to the Steering Committee is June

Conservation Strategies Work Group: Doug Besler

- Presented comments received to date on the group's draft document (powerpoint)
- Working group wants direction on how to proceed from steering committee
- Questions raised by Steering Committee (discussion about what the document should be and what role it plays)

- Is it to be the final implementation document? A grant document?
- Is it to include strategies by state? Region? What level?
- Steering Committee suggested various options:
  - Short (2pg) executive summary of strategy, incorporate data results, and protocol for assessment (triage?) into strategy then use appendix for extra information.
  - Need to make unique to brook trout
  - Keep audience in mind
  - Strategy is the plan – the action plan
  - Assessment and strategy need to be tied together closely
  - Include different strategies for each state or region (different problems, e.g., acid rain vs. small mouth bass suggest regional strategies will be different)
  - Document should lay out the links/joint ventures, etc. that are necessary for each region to address brook trout needs
- Ended discussion by deciding that the Steering Committee will give more guidance during the facilitated discussion the following day.
- The group may need support helping to pull the document together. Is there funding in the budget? Can CMI help?
- Suggestion to keep brook trout the focus, but try to get other groups interested by relating to the larger Eastern, coldwater, headwater aquatic community

Outreach and Education Working Group: Kim Ryals

- The group has surveyed educational tools currently being used in the region and there isn't much out there
- They have completed a 1 page fact sheet and cover letter and requested comments
- The group is waiting for direction from the Steering Committee
- Steering Committee comments:
  - Need a communications plan (document). What are the target audiences? How to approach? What is the message?
  - What is the timeline for actions?
  - Discussion about significant changes in the TU subcontract and what that requires – decided to deal with this the following day.
  - Need to get earned media sooner
  - Materials should include info on the problem, strategy, and what EBTJV doing about it
  - Kim suggested the material be shorter and less complicated

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm and it was decided to come back at 8:30 am tomorrow.

**ATTENDEES:**

Eric Schwaab	Mark Hudy	Patrick O'Rourke
Steve Moore	Doug Beard	Doug Besler
Bob Carline	Jarry Kosa	Fred Harris
Steve Perry	Kim Ryals	Dave Cross
Leon Szeptycki	Tom Sadler	Jeff Waldon
Hannibal Bolton	Steve Kline	Lila Borge Wills
Mike Weimer	Gordon Robertson	Karen Hockett

**APRIL 26, 2005 – Day 2, Steering Committee Meeting EBTJV**

**ATTENDEES:**

Eric Schwaab, Kim Ryals, Steve Perry, Steve Kline, Pat O'Rourke, Dave Cross, Fred Harris, Bob Carline, Steve Moore, Doug Besler, Jarry Kosa, Doug Beard, Hannibal Bolton, Mike Weimer, Leon Szeptycki, Karen Hockett, Jeff Waldon, Lila B Wills

**FACILITATOR:** Andy Loftus

**GOALS:** Targets for next 6 months

1. Data work – database and summary of data work. DUE DATE: August 1, 2005
2. Conservation Strategies developed
3. Initiate Communication strategies. DUE DATE: May 25, 2005  
Measure and document response.
4. Fund a pilot project (?)
5. Send data back out to the states DUE DATE: September 1, 2005
6. Meeting with the states (at NCTC) DATE: November, 2005
7. Incorporate comments into Conservation Strategy document

\*\*\*Need to get draft conservation strategy out to states with the data

There was a general consensus that goals needed to be firmed up with well defined products and timelines so that we can build support.

Need to complete data project, summarize results, prioritize threats, take to states, and set goals for conservation.

Jeff Waldon began the meeting by giving a recap of the grant.

Notes:

1. Data work preliminarily done by early June for meeting in Lochhaven. Rest of analysis completed by August.

Data needs to be summarized by state and over entire range.

After refining data need to identify gaps.

4. Fund pilot project based on strategic plan and triage protocol. Consensus was that this was probably not possible within the next 6 months.
5. Need to get data to the states with enough time for them to digest before the next meeting.  
Need to clearly define to states what EBTJV expects them to do with the data – i.e., set guidelines (e.g., conservation goals and strategies, annually update data, monitoring, evaluation, etc.)
6. Meeting will include Shepherdstown participants, state fish chiefs, coldwater coordinators. Meeting is not wide open to anybody. Target date is 2<sup>nd</sup> week in November or 1<sup>st</sup> two weeks of December. Hannibal Bolton will check out NCTC availability. Meeting will be planned and organized by CMI.

## DEFINITIONS OF SUCCESS:

1. Improved population success
  - a. Watershed basis
  - b. Habitat loss basis
  - c. Percentage watershed improved
  - d. Community supports effort
    - i. Federal
    - ii. State
    - iii. NGO
    - iv. political
2. Measures of Success
  - a. MOU between States and Feds
  - b. Adoption of Resolution of support
  - c. Coordination for support as partners are already participating
3. Refined data (based on gaps)
  - a. Identified in next 6 months
4. Build capacity to continue data input

### Notes:

- 1a. Population goals will likely be different for different states/regions (e.g., improved populations vs. no net loss).

There was some discussion over who should set the goals: states vs. EBTJV. Consensus was to let states participate in setting goals, but not limit goals to what states can achieve by themselves. The role of the EBTJV should be to aid states in reaching beyond the goals they alone could accomplish by helping them get additional funding.

Data set up for watershed analysis.

- 1d. Need to institutionalize process –acceptance and support from political (state, federal, NGOs, policy makers) and biologist communities.
2. Need a champion on the Hill
4. Need to get every state/agency to participate in annual updates to keep the database current. This can be used to measure success. May need to have a permanently funded coordinator to maintain contact with states and receive updates.

## CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

1. Analyze ongoing efforts
2. Goal Statement – revise based on Steering Committee’s input
3. Revise goal statement based on state’s input
4. Need a threats document
5. Need to include options for action
6. What value does the Joint Venture bring to the table?
7. Need triage component (Habitat Work Group)
8. Current draft of Conservation Strategy:
  - a. Does not prioritize threats (part of triage? Part of item 4?)

### Notes:

There was quite a bit of discussion about what the document should include. There was also discussion about how specific to get with the strategies and priorities (i.e., overall, by region, or by state). Some felt this was an interim document that would be followed by the action plan that would be the final document for implementation.

Need to incorporate results from data analysis – strategy and data work groups need to work closely. In meantime, write general document and add specific data results later.

There was a discussion of possibly needing help to add the data analysis results to the document in August in order to get the document completed by September 1.

Work group needs to have a meeting. Jeff, Eric, and Doug will coordinate any necessary extra help needed to complete the document.

1. Need to catalogue current efforts by states and evaluate effectiveness. This needs to happen in less than 12 months in order to inform conservation strategies. Role of EBTJV should be to facilitate sharing of information between the states about what has worked in the past and what hasn’t.
2. Group offered editing suggestions to Doug Besler for the goal statement and preceding paragraph. It was decided to specify “native” and “Eastern” brook trout populations. It was decided to change the goal to increase healthy populations, not “implement strategies.” Also, it was agreed to edit to be more general about raising awareness about brook trout instead of producing specific outreach and education materials.
3. Goal is to incorporate data into conservation strategies and get feedback from states about what they are doing, and revise the strategies based on state input. It is not the role of the EBTJV to dictate to the states priorities and strategies.
4. Need to incorporate threats data into document and prioritize. Use threats data to frame key actions and options.

5. Need to suggest triage for each state with options, while leaving door open for their inputs. Articulate potential actions/tactics to improve populations to help states think about in advance of the November meeting.
6. How can EBTJV help states achieve their goals?
7. Habitat work group will work on triage protocols.  
Need a face-to-face group meeting.
8. Need to distinguish between past and current threats and prioritize. Also, include geographic variation. Include % watershed at risk from different threats.

## COMMUNICATION:

Internal:

1. Fact Sheet (edit and make changes agreed upon by Steering Committee)
2. Cover Letter (revise and recognize NE Technical Committee)
  - a. Add the following:
    - i. Resolution of Directors
    - ii. Thank you recognizing state support in data gathering
    - iii. Update on data work
    - iv. Conservation strategy document in process
    - v. Meeting plans in November
  - b. Send letter to Directors and copy Chiefs
3. Quarterly Reports and updates
4. MOU or Action Plan to sign on in November
5. Recruit Champion (Director) in Northeast
6. Strategic Communications Plan      DUE DATE: May 25, 2005

Notes:

It was decided that Eric Schwaab, Steve Moore, and Fred Harris would all cosign the cover letter and would all be listed as contacts.

Need to incorporate data summary into communications.

If TU is changing what they are doing for the subcontract the revisions need to be done ASAP.

It was decided that in addition to the cover letter there should be a broader group update to all participants from the first Shepherdstown meeting. This update could include meeting minutes from this Steering Committee meeting.

It was decided that the cover letter and fact sheet should be mailed out to federal agencies and NGOs. Steering Committee members would get the names of who to contact in each agency to Kim Ryals.

2. What does the EBTJV steering committee expect from the states following the letter? How is response going to be documented? Should Eric Schwaab follow up? It was also discussed that there be updates at the AFS meeting, and SE fish chiefs meeting.

What the states should expect from the EBTJV and what the EBTJV expects of states (buy-in) should be included in the cover letter to the fish chiefs. States should also be updated on the steering committee meeting and progress.

Also, add the expected target dates for products and meetings.



3. Quarterly reports and updates should go to everyone the cover letter goes to.
4. Plan a draft of an MOU or resolution to sign onto shortly after November meeting.
5. Champion could possibly become part of the steering committee and should be included in the November meeting.

External:

#### Phase 1

1. Media plan  
Earned media strategy
2. Define audiences:
  - a. General Public
  - b. Policy Makers (local, state, and federal)
  - c. User groups / anglers
  - d. Coalition of NGO's
    - i. Environmental groups
    - ii. Fishing groups
    - iii. Outdoor industry
      1. LL Bean
      2. REI
      3. Bass Pro Shops
      4. Patagonia
      5. Outdoor Writers Association
      6. Fisheries Professionals
    - iv. Groups causing some of the problems:  
Note: this needs to be defined in Conservation Strategy
      1. Home builders
      2. DOT's
      3. Road builders
3. Change name of EBTJV for public consumption
4. Create a standard Powerpoint presentation for Steering Committee to allow for modification to multiple audiences
5. Eastern Trout Workshop at Lochhaven

Phase 2: Did not lay this out

Notes:

1. There should be a media tour. Seek venues to talk about ourselves as a group.
2. The importance of reaching and engaging local officials and groups was discussed. Need to reach local planning commissions with data.

Should encourage the formation of a group of NGOs to support the EBTJV such as American Rivers, TNC, etc. It was suggested that TU plays a role to get other NGOs involved. Kim proposed that some sort of call to action was needed.

Seek help from outdoor industries in the NE (LL Bean, Orvis, Bass Pro) to help sponsor and advertise.

Fact sheet should go to outdoor writers and NGOs to include in newsletters/magazines. The Outdoor Writers Association is having a June meeting – good opportunity for contacts.

Coldwater fisheries professionals in each state should be encouraged to contact local reporters.

Groups causing declines should be contacted - should not be confrontational but proactive. Message shouldn't be "don't build" but suggest BMPs. Good idea – but decided this should be undertaken further down the road when threats assessed and specific outcomes are better defined. Ask Tom Sadler about thoughts he has had on who to involve.

3. Need to decide on a logo. It was proposed that the TU "Back the Brookie" logo be used, but no decision was made. EBTJV is too complex – need to find a name for public promotion, consumption, and recognition.
4. Should be a standard Powerpoint presentation geared toward professionals that can be modified for a specific audience.
5. Symposium on EBTJV. It was suggested that publicity be maximized there – possibly with a national figure.

Other comments:

History of EBTJV formation and future actions should be documented to help others trying to form similar groups. Kim Ryals said the Outreach and Education work group could do.

It was suggested a calendar of key dates should be developed for internal use.

Phase 2: This should be a more targeted media outreach effort that Kim proposes we launch after the November meeting.

**FUNDING:**

W-B match  
NGO housing  
Private funds

1. There is no specific funding, but could fit under existing sources:
  - a. Partners for F & W
  - b. National Fish Passage (barrier removal)
  - c. Possible FY 06 add-ons to FWS  
Pilot projects
2. Align with ongoing projects (identified by Communications Committee)
3. List of funding sources (Hannibal and Leon)
  - a. USDA (including but not limited to Farm Bill programs)
  - b. Private sources

Notes:

Problem with some states not being able to match Federal Aid funds.

Coop with University or NGO to drop rates

State wildlife money

NRCS opportunities

Tom Busiahn would be tasked with looking into opportunities.

Align with regional habitat initiatives when they overlap – need to identify opportunities soon. (Outreach and Education Work Group)

**NEXT STEPS:**

MAY 25: Outreach and Education Committee submit communications plan to Steering Committee

JUNE 21: Steering Committee conference call at 2:00 pm EST (CMI will set up)

AUGUST: Steering Committee Meeting in August at NCTC (CMI will set up) – will be a joint meeting with the Conservation Strategies work group

NOVEMBER: Full meeting with states at NCTC (Lila and Hannibal will set up)