



Dear Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture Partner:

On behalf of the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV) Steering Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with an update on the status of our Fish Habitat Partnership, which was officially recognized by the National Fish Habitat Board in early October, 2007.

Established in 2004, the EBTJV is committed to its vision of ensuring healthy, fishable brook trout populations existing throughout their historic eastern United States range. To meet this vision, the EBTJV partnership has accomplished a number of significant actions, which includes completion of a range-wide status and threats assessment for brook trout and development of a strategic conservation plan (*Conserving the Eastern Brook Trout: Action Strategies, 2007*), which is firmly grounded in the outputs of the rangewide assessment.

The EBTJV's brook trout conservation action plan explicitly states our principal goals and key priorities, presents guidance for decision-making, and provides methods for evaluating success. Because of the large geographic distribution of brook trout in the eastern United States, this conservation strategy is organized into three primary levels of distinction: range-wide, regional, and state. The EBTJV believes this framework will result in a carefully focused, technically credible, and publicly accountable program linking EBTJV projects to specific strategies so that funding will be utilized most effectively. The framework of the conservation action plan is also intended to provide opportunities for partners to coordinate information gathering, planning, and implementing recovery actions for brook trout.

As a result of its work to date, the EBTJV partnership is tactically poised for implementation of its brook trout conservation strategies. We would like to fully engage all of our partners in this enormous effort at a meeting scheduled for April 21-23, 2008, at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center located in Shepherdstown, WV.

This 3-day event will provide a forum for EBTJV partners to be actively involved with one of three regional workgroups (Northern, Mid-Atlantic, and Southern). Each region will be charged with developing annual action plans that address short-term regional habitat objectives identified in the brook trout conservation action plan; obtaining accurate estimates of brook trout conservation costs at the state and regional levels; and reviewing and scoring proposed EBTJV projects. Additionally, this meeting will provide an overview of the work that needs to be accomplished by the EBTJV's established

workgroups (Data and Outreach & Education) as well as other newly formed workgroups (Science & Research and Grants & Development).

As a vital partner, we invite you to attend this crucially important meeting as it sets the stage for implementing brook trout conservation strategies that will allow the EBTJV partnership to achieve its vision.

PLEASE CONFIRM YOUR ATTENDANCE AT THE EBTJV MEETING
By the confirmation deadline March 21, 2008

Contact Lila Borge Wills
lborge@vt.edu
(540) 231-8996

Limited financial support is available to assist state agency personnel in covering travel costs, so if you are in need of travel assistance let Lila know when you confirm your meeting attendance.

I sincerely appreciate your support of the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture, and I look forward to our continued alliance as we move into the action phase of conserving brook trout in the eastern United States. As noted in a letter the EBTJV received from the National Fish Habitat Board, our Fish Habitat Partnership is widely considered the most advanced in terms of resource assessment and strategic planning. Now is the time to achieve effective results and we need the combined strength of all of our partners to be successful.

Please contact me by email at stephen.perry@wildlife.nh.gov or by phone at (603) 271-1745, if you have additional topics you would like the EBTJV Steering Committee to consider adding to the meeting agenda or if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Steve

Stephen G. Perry, Steering Committee Chair
Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture