



**EBTJV Conservation Strategy and Science & Data Committee Joint Meeting  
December 5-7, 2016  
160 Lemon Instructional West Building  
National Conservation Training Center**

**Meeting Agenda**

**December 5, 2016**

- 2:00 p.m. Welcome and Introductions (Doug Besler)**
- 2:15 p.m. Meeting Objectives (Doug Besler)**
- 2:30 p.m. Overview of Catchment/Patch Assessment Summary Report (Steve Perry)**
- 3:15 p.m. Break**
- 3:30 p.m. Coordination with the Chesapeake Bay Brook Trout Management Strategy (Steve Faulkner)**
- 4:30 p.m. Adjourn**

**December 6, 2016**

- 9:00 a.m. Review Current Brook Trout Conservation Strategies (Jake Rash/Jason Detar)**
- 10:00 a.m. Review Tools Available for Tracking/Quantifying Brook Trout Conservation Progress/Success (Steve Faulkner)**
- 10:45 a.m. Break**
- 11:00 a.m. Update on TU's Brook Trout Conservation Portfolio Analysis (Shawn Rummel)**
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch**

- 1:00 p.m.      Develop a System/Process for Identifying Priority Focal Areas for Brook Trout Conservation (Jake Rash/Jason Detar)**
- 3:00 p.m.      Break**
- 3:15 p.m.      Develop Brook Trout Conservation Objectives (Jake Rash/Jason Detar)**
- 4:30 p.m.      Adjourn**
- 7:00 p.m.      EBTJV Web Portal Demonstration (Rose)**

**December 7, 2016**

- 9:00 a.m.      Develop Brook Trout Conservation Objectives (cont.)**
- 10:45 a.m.      Break**
- 11:00 a.m.      Planning the Next Range-Wide Assessment & Managing Assessment Data (Jake Rash/Jason Detar)**
- 12:00 p.m.      Lunch**
- 1:00 p.m.      Meeting Wrap Up and Next Steps (Doug Besler)**
- 2:00 p.m.      EBTJV Steering Committee Meeting**



## **Annual Meeting Summary, December 5-7, National Conservation Training Center**

### **Attendees:**

Steve Perry – Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture Director  
Doug Besler and Jake Rash, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Department  
Steve Reeser – Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fish  
David Thorne – West Virginia Division of Natural Resources  
Mark Staley – Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
Pat Hamilton – New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife  
Jason Detar and Aiden Simpson – Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission  
Tim Pokourny – New York Department of Environmental Conservation  
Neal Hagstrom – Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection  
Corey Pelletier – Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management  
Rich Kirn – Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department  
Dianne Timmins – New Hampshire Department of Fish & Game  
Merry Gallagher – Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife  
Shawn Rummel and Kurt Fesenmeyer – Trout Unlimited Science Team  
Geoffrey Day – Sea Run Brook Trout Coalition  
Jonathan Niles – Susquehanna University, Freshwater Research Initiative  
Callie McMunigal – US Department of Fish & Wildlife Service  
Steve Faulkner and Nathaniel Hitt – US Geological Survey, Leetown Science Center  
Mark Hudy – EBTJV Science & Data Committee (USFS and USGS retired)  
Nat Gillespie – USDA Forest Service

**Thanks to Steve Perry and Doug Besler** for organizing and holding an excellent meeting. Doug has reached the end of his term as the President of the EBTJV Steering Committee - Thank you Doug for all your leadership with the Joint Venture. Nat Gillespie was elected as the new president of the Steering Committee for the next two years. Steve Reeser from Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries has accepted the nomination to serve as the Vice President for the next two years. Thank you Steve!

**Welcome Rhode Island!** Corey Pelletier from Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management attended his first meeting and now RI has officially joined the Joint Venture.

Also we welcome Adam Kautza to the Joint Venture, coldwater fisheries project leader for Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. Adam, along with longtime active member and contributor Steve Hurley, are working with Geof Day of the Sea-Run Brook Trout Coalition on a number of restoration and monitoring projects in and around Cape Cod.

**Science and Data Committee** – Jason Detar and Jake Rash presented the updated catchment and patch data for the entire Eastern Range completed by Mark Hudy (USFS/USGS retired, Keith Nislow (USFS) and Jason Coombs (University of Massachusetts-Amherst). The summary of the data was presented to the group by Steve Perry. Take-aways are the scale of occupied territory, now defined by catchments and patches (single or contiguous brook trout occupied catchments), is smaller than the area of occupied

subwatersheds. About 1/3 of all brook trout occupied catchments are also occupied by rainbow and/or brown trout. Mean patch area of allopatric (brook trout only patches) ranges from 2-59 km<sup>2</sup> for Northern region states, and 4-19 km<sup>2</sup> for the Southern region states (VA and south). The data should be ready to approve by the states and be published in coming few months. Jason Coombs has agreed to provide state scale maps illustrated current brook trout patches for use by each member state. Other maps that may prove useful to the Joint Venture states include Brook trout patches that overlap with brown and rainbow trout, and wild trout (brown and rainbow) patches.

Mark Hudy announced he is stepping down as Science Coordinator for the Science and Data Committee. The Joint Venture Steering Committee will be working on a scope of work and funding for a contract position to fill the void, possibly as a shared science coordinator with another Fish Habitat Partnership. Thank you Mark for all your leadership and work building the subwatershed and catchment level assessments since the creation of the Joint Venture 13 years ago.

**USGS Chesapeake Bay Basin Work and Chesapeake Bay Strategy** – Steve Faulkner is active within the Chesapeake Bay Brook Trout Management Strategy and the Habitat Goal Implementation Team. He gave the group an update on the Chesapeake Bay brook trout outcomes, which will remain catchments of brook trout only (allopatric) restored. There remain performance targets assessed at 5 year intervals [http://www.chesapeakebay.net/managementstrategies/strategy/brook\\_trout](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/managementstrategies/strategy/brook_trout). The Chesapeake Bay Basin is using the Decision Support Tool developed through the North Atlantic LCC developed by Downstream Strategies for project prioritization and evaluating project success: <http://northatlanticlcc.org/products/chesapeake-bay-brook-trout-assessment> as well as the riparian buffer prioritization tool developed by the USFS Northern Research State, UMass, USGS and partners for prioritization of riparian projects <http://applcc.org/plan-design/gis-planning/gis-tools-resources/riparian-restoration-decision-support-tool-1>. Chesapeake Bay Program noted that they will use the EBTJV prioritization protocol as that is finalized over the coming months and will adopt brook trout priorities of the EBTJV as they are decided.

**Steve Faulkner and Than Hitt from the Leetown Science Center** gave an update on the USGS effort to develop a matrix for the Joint Venture of all the various GIS-based tools available to the Joint Venture and member states related to brook trout, habitat, climate change vulnerability, prioritization, etc. There was discussion about the possible benefit of holding a training for fisheries management professionals from states and NGO partners in use of the various models for prioritization at various scales. Than recently completed some outstanding research on the interaction between brook trout, brown trout, water temperature and habitat that helps inform the management of brook trout populations across the range: <http://www.nrcresearchpress.com/doi/abs/10.1139/cjfas-2016-0255#.WFQY6nK7q70>

The group also held a moment of silence to honor and remember Tim King, USGS genetics scientist from Leetown Science Center, who tragically passed away this fall. Tim was a great leader in the microsatellite DNA world and brook trout was one of his greatest passions.

**Trout Unlimited's Conservation Portfolio** – Kurt Fesenmeyer and Shawn Rummel from TU's Science Team presented the latest iteration of their Conservation Portfolio, a GIS-based spatial analysis and prioritization of the current brook trout catchments and patches across the Eastern Brook Trout range. The Conservation Portfolio approach adopts a 3-R Framework that considers population resilience, representation and redundancy, and models climate change and other stressors and risk to help information habitat restoration, reconnection, protection and reintroduction work at the catchment scale. Here's a link to the scientific publication on this approach used on several western trout species <http://www.tu.org/sites/default/files/science/pdfs/Haak-Williams%20NAJFM%202012.pdf>. The Joint Venture agreed to incorporate the models findings and data into range and state level prioritization recommendations. The model will be completed in the next few months. Kurt and Mark Hudy discussed a strategic to engage Joint Venture members on using the data and possible training in determining priorities for conservation action.

**Sea-Run Brook Trout Coalition** – Geof Day gave a great presentation about the Sea-Run Brook Trout Coalition, based on Cape Cod, MA – a relatively new member to the EBTJV. They are doing some interesting research and inventories on sea-run or salter brook trout. Cape Cod is home to a relict sea-run brook trout population in 5 or so streams that represent nearly the southern extent of the sea-run brook trout range (there are a couple populations left on Long Island). The Coalition has led and been involved in great habitat restoration projects in partnership with MADFW involving dam removal and culvert replacement, cranberry bog and wetland restoration, instream channel restoration and land protection, and some large projects on the horizon. See <http://www.searunbrookie.org/> for more details and links to some great film footage. Don't forget that Merry Gallagher reminds the group they are still finding sea-run brook trout populations up and down the coast of Maine!

**2017 Projects** and funding through the National Fish Habitat Action Partnership – Steve Perry presented the rankings for the proposals for NFHAP funding for 2016. As always there were a number of excellent proposals from NGOs and states across the Eastern range. The Joint Venture will learn soon if we are indeed ranked as a Tier 3 partnership by the US Fish & Wildlife Service. If that is the case our funding allocation will increase to over \$300,000 and the number of funded projects should increase from 2-3 to 5-6. Stay tuned for an update from Steve Perry on our funding status for the 2016 proposals.

**EBTJV Website** – Rose presented planned updates the [www.easternbrooktrout.org](http://www.easternbrooktrout.org) website. Dianne is managing this contract.

**Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture film by Freshwaters Illustrated** – Jeremy Monroe from Freshwaters Illustrated has been working on a 25 minute film that seeks to tell the story of the brook trout, efforts through the EBTJV to protect and restore this beloved fish, and the people and cultures who are passionate about this important part of our natural heritage and this indicator of high water quality and healthy watersheds. Freshwaters Illustrated has raised \$58,200 out of \$98,700 through grants from NFWF and EBTJV. They are working to raise the remaining \$40,500, and requesting help from the EBTJV partners toward that effort. If you have a story you want to tell to Jeremy or potential people he and his crew should talk to please let him know: [jeremy@freshwatersillustrated.org](mailto:jeremy@freshwatersillustrated.org)

Here is a short fundraising trailer to aid in the fundraising effort, and they intend to launch a starter project website / social media campaign in early 2017.

Fundraising Trailer - ROUGH CUT: <https://vimeo.com/194045334>  
Password: charr

**Action Items to Consider** – The group held some discussion about possible outputs from the Joint Venture to benefit the members and the larger brook trout network. These possible action items include:

- EBTJV official guidance on a variety of topics to be used by the public, stakeholders, partners, such as Riparian Management and Protection Guidance, Aquatic Organism Passage Guidance, Brook Trout and Competing Species, Genetics and Genomics.
- A clearinghouse on the website of all brook trout-related research to inform management decisions. There are many great publications and studies from USGS, USFS, various states and NGOs on all things related to brook trout.

Any comments or thoughts please let the steering committee know.