

EASTERN BROOK TROUT JOINT VENTURE

Steering Committee Meeting Notes

June 2023



Eastern Brook Trout
JOINT VENTURE
A Fish Habitat Partnership

Chairman Jacob Rash opened the meeting at 1:02 pm on 6/20/23. He began with a round of introductions and a count for quorum, which was established with 13 SC members present at the start.

- Jacob Rash - NCWRC coldwater research coordinator, EBTJV Chairman
- Jason Coombs - Geneticist with the FWS
- Colby Denison - recently replaced Dianne Timmins on SC for NH
- Hailey Goyette - Sitting in for Dan Rankin. Creel biologist with the South Carolina DNR and field biologist has worked on the Pigpen Creek project, and they will be applying Antimycin this summer.
- Steve Faulkner USGS, and Ches Bay bkt Goal Implementation Team lead
- Brad Fink - VADWR coldwater fisheries biologist
- Greg Kozlowski - NY inland fisheries section head
- Matt Kulp - biologist with the NPS - Great Smoky Mtns National Park
- Matt Lawrence - MDDNR statewide coldwater fisheries manager
- Shawn Rummel - TU Science advisor on TU's NE coldwater habitat program
- Lee Simard - VC - VT FWD and EBTJV Vice Chairman
- Steve Perry - at large SC member and NFHAP board member
- Lori Maloney - EBTJV Coordinator
- Shannon White - USGS research biologist at EESC
- Callie McMunigal, FWS, Appalachian Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office
- Than Hitt, research ecologist, USGS -EESC
- Geof Day, Sea Run Brook Trout Coalition

The EBTJV steering committee approved the summary of the March 2023 meeting. There were no comments.

- March meeting summary (as slides and text document) available here:

<https://easternbrooktrout.org/groups/steering-committee/conference-call-notes/2023-steering-committee-mtg-files>

EBTJV Science and Data Committee Update

Jason Coombs gave a brief update on the catchment updater (available at <https://ebtjv.ecosheds.org>)

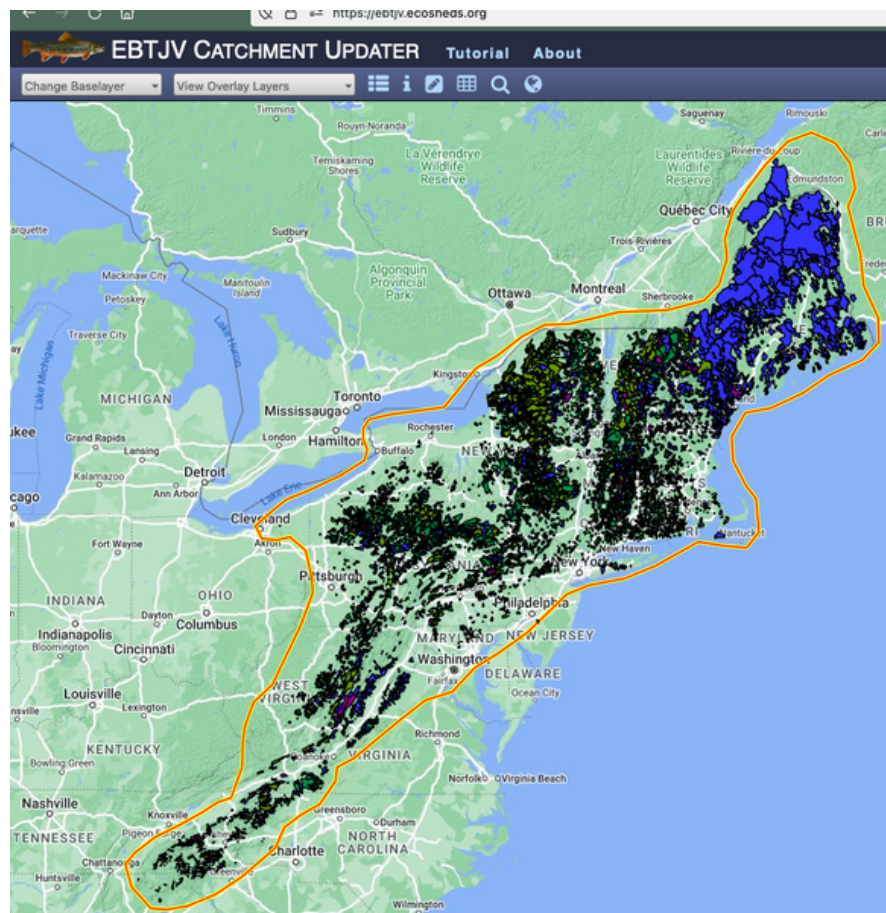
There have been about 7 states who entered/uploaded data, and more that have been working on data. Some have encountered issues, and Jason Coombs noted that we need people testing the program to help identify and remedy any bugs.

Updater Recommended steps:

- Only use sample data that has been collected since the last catchment update
- Parse the sample data into hydrologic units (e.g. HUC8 or HUC10) to avoid overwriting previous edits
- Import data using the file import method first, followed by manual edits to prevent overwriting updates.
- For file imports, download the 'Confirm Edits' table as a CSV file to keep as a record of the updates.

Jake Rash expressed appreciation for the hard work, and acknowledged the summer is a difficult time to work on this, but please reach out to regional contacts (Jason Detar, Jake Rash, Lee Simard) or Jason Coombs if you need help.

Lori Maloney noted that the catchment updater deadline had been this spring, but given the issues, we should aim for September so that we have time to incorporate data into our update to the strategic plan at the November meeting.



EBTJV Science and Data Committee Update

Co-chair Stephen Faulkner reviewed the SDC-curated list of Science and Data topics which is also being used to identify potential speakers for the lunch n learn series.

Greg Kozlowski asked if we should rank just the top 5 or all topics. Steve F. suggested that we add broad categories to the top and rank those. He also suggested we send this back through the SDC, however Lori suggested we can send this to everyone to give a rank score of the broad topics, which are copied below, but table can be voted on at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wgTs5oKvDI0I9nOVihJYafUUULHf6BY3GJWYmWfVQL0/edit>

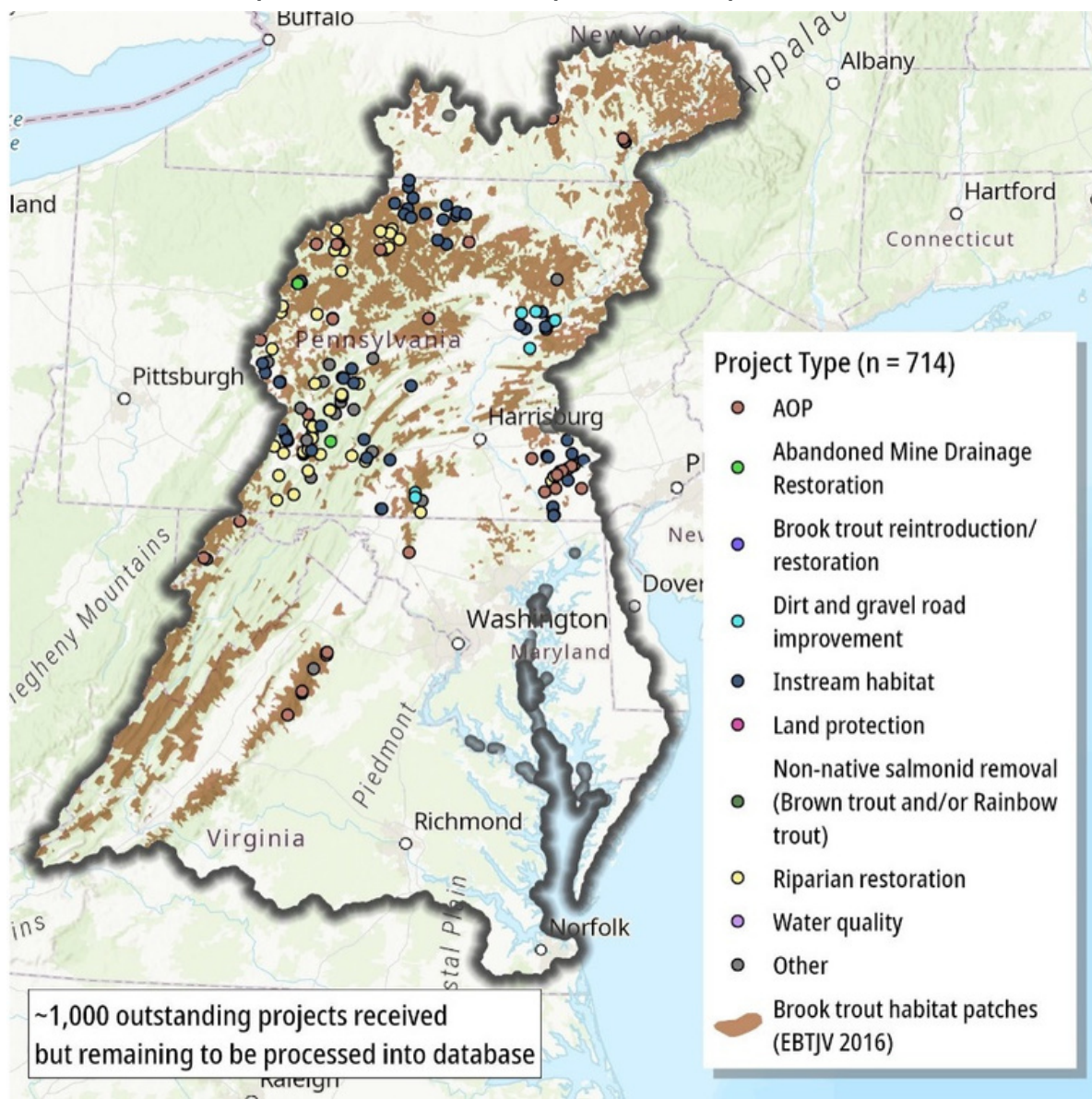
The LnL series will pick back up again in the fall. Shannon White mentioned that we want to bundle several speakers on a similar topic in back to back sessions.

Category #	Broad Category	Specific Description	Rank order (type in your # from 1-7)
1	Genetics	Monitoring, caveats, adaptation, conservation planning adaptations, eDNA, guidance, where to start, YY males, genomics	
2	Habitat Improvement	Large wood, new approaches, assessing effectiveness, prioritization, hyporheic zone processes	
3	Movement/adaptation/connectivity	Patterns, impacts of changing flow, cost-effective fish passage	
4	Climate change/water quantity/quality	Groundwater connectivity, beyond temperature (eg changes to flow), temp monitoring, temp/precip modeling,	
5	Communication	Relationship between Brook Trout and socioeconomic benefits; communicating stressors, work with planners and municipalities, looking at 2050 how do we face challenges that are outside the traditional purview of fisheries managers	
6	EBTJV Rangewide Assessment Update	<u>Results of EBTJV rangewide assessment update once its completed</u>	
7	Other science	Fish health and pathogens; non-native species/competition; angler harvest; monitoring populations	

EBTJV Science and Data Committee Update

Shawn Rummel gave a very high-level overview of a current Chesapeake Bay Program Goal Implementation Team-funded project with TU and EBTJV to track the brook trout outcome for the CBP (8% increase in occupied km² by 2025). This update is for EBTJV awareness; the project is in data gathering at the moment but the team will likely seek EBTJV feedback at a later date as there are many questions about restoration outcomes and metrics (how to define and track progress) that should be of mutual interest.

The project will utilize the EBTJV catchment data from 2016 and the new update once completed. The project is also looking at on-the-ground restoration projects (riparian, bkt restoration, land protection, AMD, etc, see below), and hopes to use those to explain gains or losses. The project will also create and populate a dataset that will continue into the future with periodic data input from partners.



Website project

Shannon White introduced a project to improve EBTJV's website.

The main question is how to put our best foot forward in digital platform. The goal will be to re-package existing information, give it more info where needed, condense and bring the most relevant information forward. Make it relevant to diverse audiences such as landowners, public, funders, land trusts.

The first meeting will be held 6/22, to look at first impressions and the "about us" section.

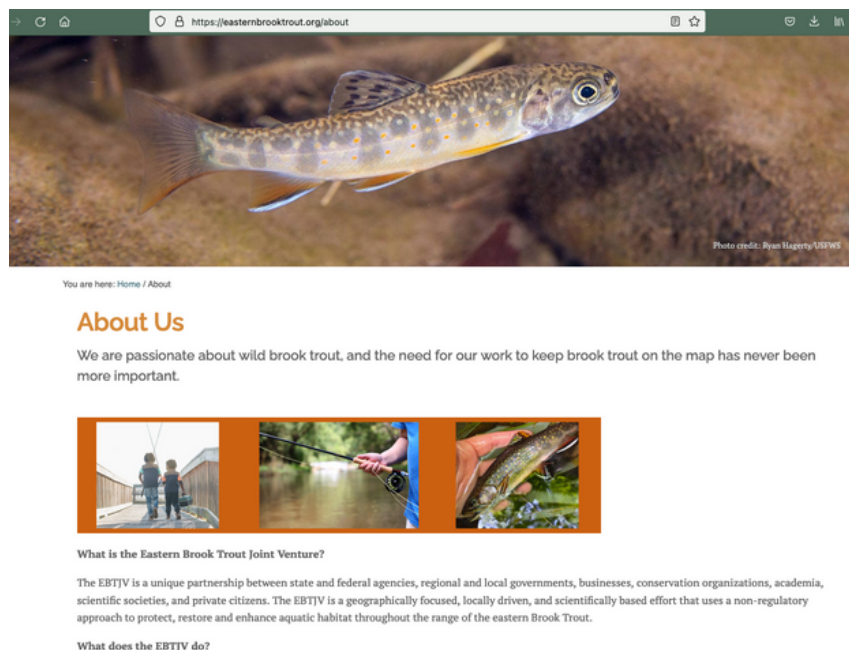
Approximate timeline: fall - a template of what the updates will look like. At that point the SC can give final suggestions before the updates go live.

The team is comprised of

Shannon White <slwhite@usgs.gov>;
Benjamin Harris <ben.harris@tu.org>;
Matt Lawrence <james.lawrence@maryland.gov>;
Dalton Courtemarche <dalton.f.courtemarche@wildlife.nh.gov>;
Sarah Baker <sarah.baker@dnr.ga.gov>;
Denison, Colby <Colby.D.Denison@wildlife.nh.gov>;

If you'd like to help, please contact Shannon or Lori.

Steve Perry noted he is happy to see membership re-engaged with the website. He provided a little history of the website including that in the past they had contracted some communications to Trout Unlimited in development of the site. However it is time to make the website better serve the people it needs to serve.



NFHAP update

Steve Perry gave an update from the last National Fish Habitat Partnership board meeting (June 13).

The Board Voted on FY 24 funding. All 20 FHPS applied for funding, 1 applied only for the \$85,000 in operational support funding.

The board review team scored based 80% on how the FHP's project list met criteria related to ACE act. 20% was quality of application package overall. Scores ranged from 95 to 86. EBTJV's score was the 3rd highest of the 20. 12 FHPs including EBTJV received Tier 1 funding, \$300,000. 7 fhps scoring in the 80's got Tier 2, ~\$200,000. 1 FHP got \$85K. Thank you to the review team and all who helped with this application.

The NFHAP review team also created and shared a report card of how the application was scored.

NFHAP board submitted 134 projects to DOI by July 1, totally an ask of \$8.6M, with \$20.2 in nonfederal match. Not all will be funded. Approximately \$6.2M is available.

Corporate industry seat had been vacated, and Jake Salinger of Cocoa-Cola was appointed.

Board approved the application of the FHP designation by Congress. App form will come to FHPs shortly.

Timeline is: Draft Dec 31 2023, team of board/staff review and feedback for improvements, final app due June 1 of 2024. Board will submit all FHPs together.

Must do by 2025 to continue getting NFHAP funds.

Next NFHAP board meetings:

Sept 1 virtual

Dec 5-7 in person/hybrid, Charleston SC.

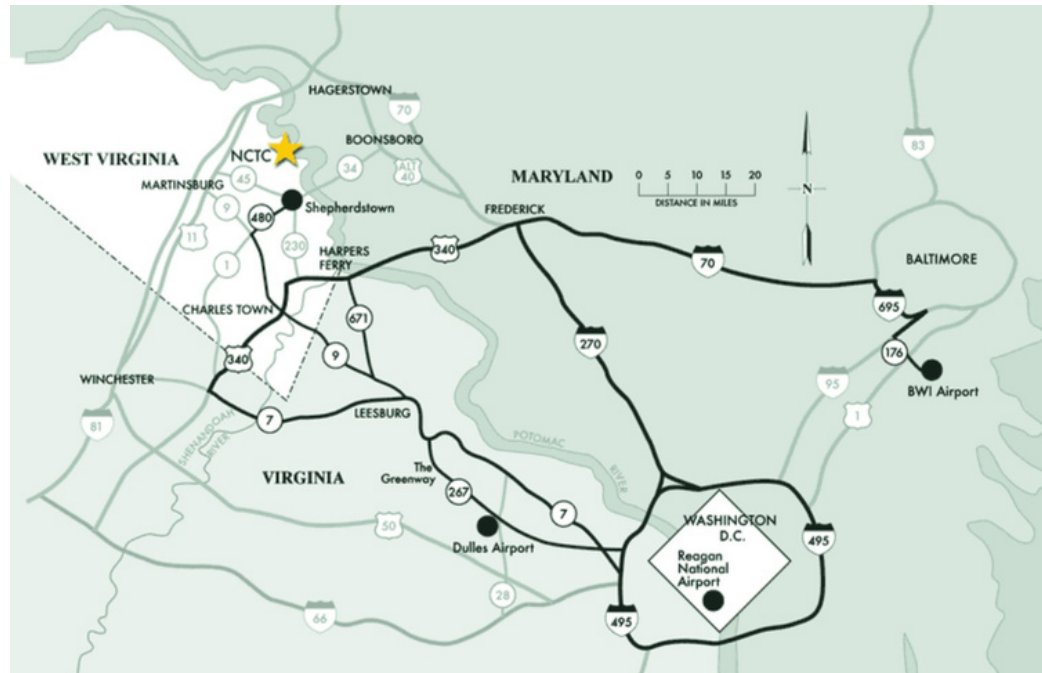
Dec 4-5 FHP workshop (SC).



EBTJV Annual Meeting - Nov 1&2 NCTC

Hybrid

- \$500 travel support for SC members
- ~1.5 hrs outside BWI, DCA, Dulles
- \$165/night for lodging and meals



Agenda in development

Day 1 - EBTJV and members/partners, Day 2 EBTJV SC only

Day 1 possible ideas include:
segment on Chesapeake Bay initiatives
temperature segment (models, monitoring)

Lori sought feedback on Day 1 discussion topics on a Jamboard [link here](#)

EBTJV Annual Meeting ideas - click on image to add your ideas to the Jamboard

What discussion topics would you like for Day 1 of our November Meeting?

**Multi-state funding
collaboration
opportunities/interests**

**Funding. Large- and
small-scale
opportunities
(multi-state to
local). How do we
diversify our
funding model?**

**SPF - appropriate
metrics for measuring
success of brook trout
conservation/restoration?
Is occupancy
sufficient?
Abundance? more
patches? stronger
patches?**

**Habitat
conservation
planning at
watershed
level**

**Establishing a
reasonably priced
lab to do basic
genetic metrics
panels.**

**How do we
generate the
resources to
do genetic
studies?**

**Genetics: when are
detectable genetic
differences
meaningful at a
management level?**

**CBP Rising
Temperatures STAC
workshop Report.
How to proceed with
recommendations,
particularly regarding
engagement with
local policy
makers/permitting.**

Annual meeting Day 2 - Strategic Plan update, building off of catchment update

Lori presented an option for facilitation

Need a few volunteers to help guide this.

More details/ informal memo for use of \$15K of funds. Linda Manning of Council Oak

- Development of survey design for key members to be administered by phone.
- Phone survey to membership and analysis of results prior the meeting to collect data and perspectives pertinent to the strategic plan including: challenges, changes in the landscape, suggestions for new opportunities, priorities, etc. (assume 10, 1-hour interviews).
- Design, agenda development, facilitation and notetaking for 1-day strategic planning located at the National Conservation and Training Center. This includes 3-4 planning calls with EBTJV leaders and one call to discuss how results from new assessment could inform the strategic effort.
- Draft update of 2014-2018 Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture Business Plan including incorporation of 2 rounds of edits.

Additional support that could be included if additional funding were available.

- Expand interviews to include all signatory parties (33)
- Follow-up facilitated calls to discuss next steps including: rollout of the plan/strategy, tracking next steps, etc.
- Drafting and professional layout and publication of public-facing strategy (similar to the Roadmap to Conservation)

Steve Faulkner asked for clarification on which document(s) to look at for the EBJTV Strategic Plan.

Lori reviewed the conservation goals and range-wide goals and objectives within the document:

[Conserving the Eastern Brook Trout-Action Strategies_January 2018.pdf](#)

Steve Perry gave some history of the assessment going back to the Hudy analysis at the subwatershed level.

There is another report that is more public facing: [EBT Roadmap to Conservation_2018.pdf](#)

Conservation goals:

Conserve, enhance or restore wild Brook Trout populations that have been impacted by habitat modification, non-native species and other population level threats.

Encourage partnerships among management agencies and stakeholders to seek solutions to regional environmental and ecological threats.

Develop and implement outreach and educational programs to raise public awareness about the challenges that wild Brook Trout populations are facing.

Develop support for program implementation to perpetuate and restore wild Brook Trout populations throughout their historical eastern U.S. range.

Range-wide, quantifiable goals that will be revisited after we complete the catchment updater:

Brook Trout assessment.

Goal: Maintain the current number of wild Brook Trout patches (i.e. no net loss).

Objective: Retain at least 6,022 allopatric wild Brook Trout patches (1.1) across the EBTJV geographic range by the year 2022.

Objective: 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.

5

Goal: Increase the average size (km²) of wild Brook Trout patches, which is currently 19 km².

Objective: Increase the size (km²) of 30 wild Brook Trout patches by the year 2022.

Goal: Increase connectivity within and among wild Brook Trout catchments.

Objective: Complete Aquatic Organism Passage projects within 45 wild Brook Trout catchments by 2022.

Goal: Restore wild Brook Trout to catchments where they are extirpated.

Objective: Establish wild Brook Trout in 15 extirpated catchments by the year 2022.

Regional Funding

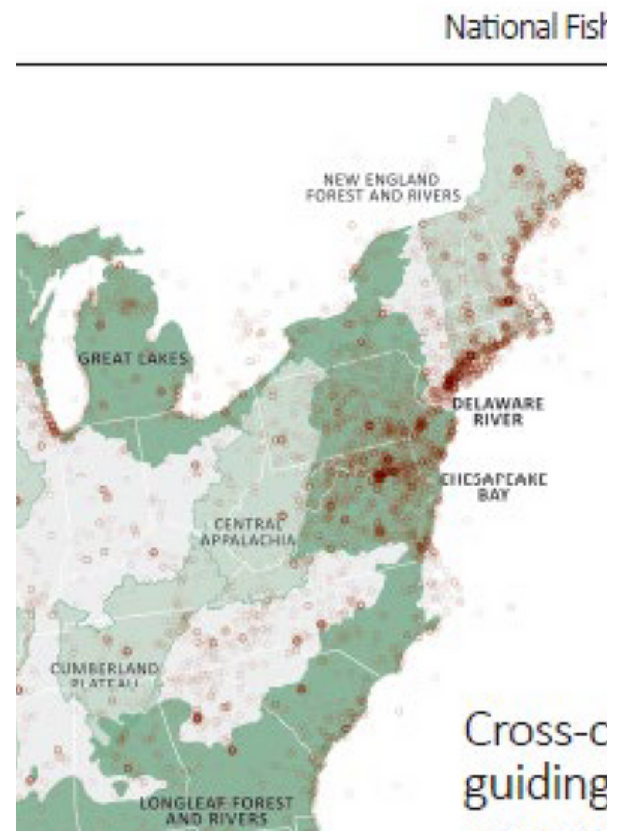
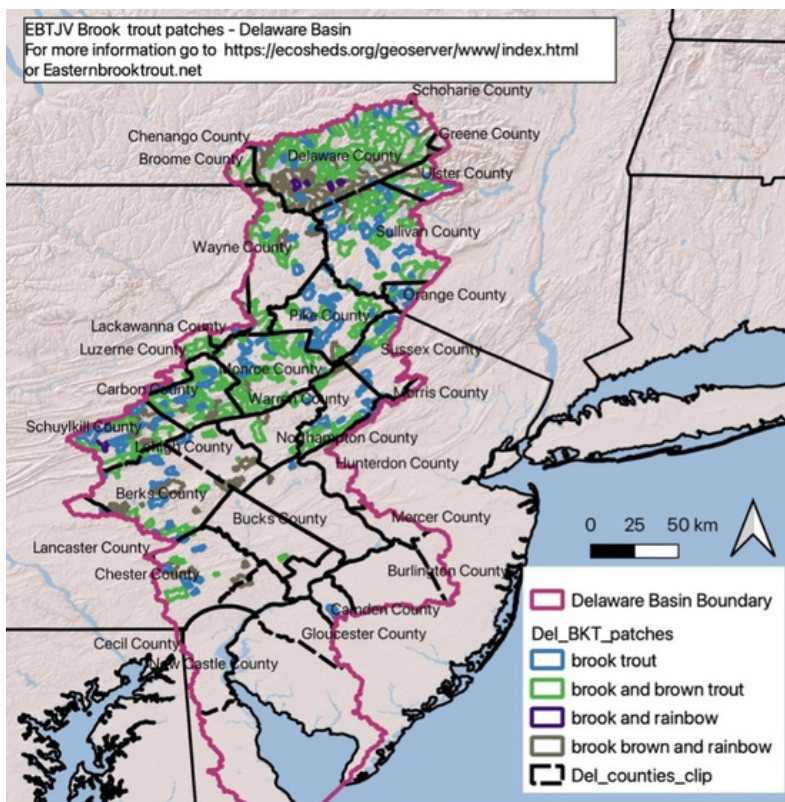
Lori reviewed a collaboration 'proposal' for the Delaware River Conservation Fund, beginning with some background on regional funding opportunities with NFWF.

Rationale: NFHAP funds to us remain extremely valuable but have declined as the NFHAP pie has been split.

How to extend EBTJV impact, also build nonfederal match?

And retain GA-ME cohesiveness of EBTJV?

There is a regional funding opportunity for Delaware, utilizing the existing Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund. Lori met with reps from NFWF as well as Steve Hurst (NYDEC) and Tim Schaeffer (PAFBC) at the NEAFWA meeting in Hershey last month and the group outlined some ideas for brook trout funding to or with guidance from EBTJV.



Regional funding opportunity for Delaware

Two models:

1) CVI (EBTJV's nonprofit sponsor) applies for a bucket of funds on behalf of many partners

Con: lacking capacity for program support but Pro: we'd have more control

2) NFWF sets aside a "box" of funding based on EBTJV driven priorities

Pro: we can set priorities and cherry pick projects, FWS likes that we'd help them drum up support for a watershed approach rather than get a series of disparate projects.

Con: funding remains in NFWF, not counted as "EBTJV" projects.

Ask of EBTJV SC

Next step: should we convene meeting of key partners (TU, States, NFWF and others) to set the priorities and develop the framework to get the funding out of the eastern brook trout 'box'.

If this goes forward, EBTJV would drum up support, work with applicants and encourage them to join together to maximize the 'connected watershed' approach. Some applicant review by EBTJV (how much?)

The discussion generated several questions and Lori suggested that the next step should not be to convene a meeting of regional fisheries leads, but rather to generate a list of questions and who we need to approach to answer them. This needs to work for EBTJV, NFWF, and the states.

Callie McMunigal cautioned about time requirements and asked if there could be funding to EBTJV for any portion of time working on this.

Steve Perry offered some past perspective on how EBTJV has sought to influence how NFWF funding programs prioritize brook trout projects, and the the Central Appalachian program (and others) have EBTJV priorities built in, intentionally. So, this proposal is consistent with our business plan.

Steve Perry also asked if NFWF's private funders would be agreeable to this - their support would be needed, and we'd also want to know about longevity of it.

Send any questions to Lori, please.

meeting adjourned 3pm ET

Recap:

We are seeking feedback on a few items, Email lori.maloney@canaanvi.org or post your edits to the links, (by July 28).

These are:

- providing your vote/rank order to the Science and Data (and lunch n learn) broad categories.
- adding your ideas for discussion topics for Day 1 of the EBTJV meeting in November (some overlap with #1!) If you use the Jamboard, everyone can see what has been suggested.
- voicing your outstanding questions about working with NFWF and FWS to add specific brook trout priorities (and watersheds) to the Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund's RFP, helping to establish a brook trout funding box

We are also seeking a few individuals to help develop the steps for using the updater results to update our strategic plan (including Day 2 at NCTC), and to shepherd the assessment update to publication, greater dissemination, use in regional planning etc. Is that you?

If you see any errors or omissions in these notes please let me know.

Next SC meeting is September 19 1-3 ET (will be a Zoom link this time)

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