**A Fish Habitat Partnership**

**Annual Partnership Meeting**

**October 26-28, 2010**

**Mountain Lake Hotel**

**Tuesday October 26th**

**Welcome, Introductions & Meeting Goals (Doug Stang)**

**Review and Update Membership Lists (Doug Stang)**

All EBTJV members and partners were asked to review the membership list and provide updated information for contacts. Doug also encouraged attendees to participate on a subcommittee and / or workgroup. These are the functional bodies of the EBTJV where most of the work is accomplished each year. A sign-up sheet was passed around the room for various subcommittees. Anyone that wants to add their name or email address to the email distribution list, partnership contact list, or one of the subcommittees or workgroups can contact Callie McMunigal (callie\_mcmunigal@fws.gov) or Dianne Timmins (Dianne.timmins@wildlife.nh.gov ). Keith McGilvray will develop a state contact list for the partnership. This list will consist of the primary contact for each state within the partnership.

**Update on NFHAP Board Activities (Tom Busiahn)**

Tom acknowledged that the EBTJV has become an example partnership in NFHAP and commended the partnership for all it has accomplished.

NFHAP Board - The NFHAP Board (Board) recently celebrated its 4th Anniversary. Kelly Hepler is the current Chair. The Board has approximately 20-22 members with a fair amount of turnover each year particularly in the state and federal government seats. Recent changes include Steve Perry, the new NEAFWA representative, and Doug Boyd, representing the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council. John Frampton of South Carolina represents SEAFWA. Richard Leopold (MWAFWA) recently left the Board and will need to be replaced. Tom acknowledged that we still need to increase tribal representation on the Board.

The Board recently participated in a full day facilitated session on how the Board serves the fish habitat partnerships. In a recent survey of members and representatives of the various fish habitat partnerships, the Board scored low in setting national measures of success, and in developing criteria for funding. Steve Perry is the Chair for the committee that will recommend ways for the Board to improve in these areas.

The next meeting of the NFHAP Board will be held in April 2011 in conjunction with the National Casting Call. This is the event where the Board announces the 10 Waters to Watch and the recipients of the NFHAP Awards. The NFHAP Board plans to release the 2010 Status Assessment of Fish Habitats in the U.S. at the Casting Call event in April, 2011. The document is available now for review and comments by members of the NFHAP community.

Funding – Tentative decisions for USFWS FY2011 funding for NFHAPs have been made and hold EBTJV constant at $600,000. The timing of the funds may be problematic this year as allocations could be very late because Congress has not passed a budget and is operating under a continuing resolution. The use of project funds for operations of fish habitat partnerships (as opposed to strictly on-the-ground projects)is still unresolved, but Tom hopes that a decision will be made soon. There are currently 17 recognized partnerships in NFHAP engaging all 50 states. There are 4 candidate partnerships of which one (Pacific Coast CFHP) is likely to be the next one recognized. A key question for the future of NFHAP is how we support the operations (coordination, staff, travel funds, meeting costs, etc) of the FHPs.

NFHAP has achieved, or is close to achieving, all of its Action Plan Objectives and Milestones for 2010 including recognizing at least 12 fish habitat partnerships and conducting a national assessment and report. The Science & Data Subcommittee, led by Gary Whelan and Andrea Ostroff, oversaw the assessment.

The Data Committee is developing an online data repository and mapping system. A beta version is available online. The tool that shows the location of NFHAP projects on a map already includes some EBTJV projects.

Ryan Roberts, the NFHAP Communications Coordinator, manages the website (www.fishhabitat.org). The NFHAP website provides a link to individual FHP websites. It also contains a 4-page update on NFHAP. They will be reviewing the NFHAP website and revising it to make it easier to navigate.

The National Fish Habitat Conservation Act is the top priority for the Board. We are approaching the end of the 111th Congress, but there is still a chance that it will be enacted this Congress. Organizations / individuals can call or fax their congressional office and offer support for the legislation to pass this year. The NFHAP website has a legislative toolkit with a draft support letter and other tools for those that are interested. The American Sportfishing Association website also has an examples support letter.

**EBTJV Assessment (Mark Hudy)**

Mark Hudy (U.S. Forest Service) gave the partnership an update on the effort to update the assessment at the catchment level. Data necessary for the catchment analysis is available from PA south, but the northern states will be more difficult. The assessment at the catchment level would provide a gap analysis for those areas, provide a more refined assessment of brook trout status, and allow more specific tracking of the results of EBTJV efforts. Mark reminded everyone that it is important to match the scale of the data to the questions being asked. Converting from subwatersheds to catchments will allow us to report at all scales from the catchment level up. In order to complete the assessment, Mark needs state / district biologists willing to spend a few days meeting with him so that he can get the necessary data from each state. The catchment data source is NHD+. The catchments average 260 hectares, which is 1/30th finer scale compared to the subwatersheds.

**Brook Trout Climate Change Resiliency (Mark Hudy)**

Mark is currently working on a project in VA, WV and MD to assess the vulnerability of brook trout populations to climate change. He provided an update on that effort and discussed plans to expand the analysis to cover the entire partnership boundary.

**Chesapeake Bay Executive Order Brook Trout Outcome & Indicator (Mike Slattery & Jennifer Greiner)**

Chesapeake Bay Executive Order Brook Trout Outcome & Indicator (Mike
 Slattery & Jennifer Greiner)
Executive Order 13508 – May 12, 2009

See: <http://executiveorder.chesapeakebay.net/>

The strategy for protecting and restoring the Chesapeake Bat watershed was published in May 2010 and includes 4 goals:
· Restore Clean Water
· Recover Habitat
· Sustain Fish & Wildlife
· Conserve Land and Increase Access

The supporting strategies are:
· Expand Citizen Stewardship
· Develop Environmental Market Credits
· Respond to Climate Change
· Strengthen Science

Strategy articulates 12 measurable environmental outcomes, several of which can be associated with brook trout. The outcomes related to Brook Trout include:

1. Brook Trout Outcome – Restore naturally reproducing brook trout
populations in headwater streams by improving 58 sub-watersheds from
‘reduced’ classification (10-50% of habitat lost) to ‘healthy’ (less than
10 % of habitat lost) by 2025.
2. Forest Buffer Outcome – Restore riparian forest buffers to 63%, or
181,440 miles, of the total riparian miles (stream bank and shoreline
miles) in the Bay watershed by 2025.
3. Agricultural Conservation Outcome. - Work with producers to apply new conservation practices on 4 million acres of agricultural working lands in high priority watersheds by 2025. Improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.
4. Stream Restoration Outcomes – Improve the health of streams so that 70% of sampled streams throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed rate 3,4 or 5 (corresponding to fair, good or excellent) as measured by the Index of Biotic Integrity by 2025.

The Brook Trout Outcome (58 sub watersheds) was developed by stepping down the EBTJV Mid-Atlantic Goal of improving reduced sub watersheds. Three hundred eighty-eight of the approximately 1200 brook trout sub watersheds within the Chesapeake Baywatershed are in reduced status. Chesapeake Bay Program partners felt it is reasonable to try to contribute half of EBTJV’s Mid-Atlantic Goal of improving 30% of the subwatersheds (15% of 388 = 58). Since this outcome was established, the EBTJV merged the Mid-Atlantic Workgroup objectives into the Northern and Southern Workgroup
objectives.

FY2011 Action Plan

The FY2011 Action Plan was released 9/30/2010. It describes the various
actions that federal agencies have committed funds and or personnel to leading in pursuit of achieving the 12 measurable outcomes. The following actions in the “Sustain Fish and Wildlife” section of the action plan apply to brook trout and / or the EBTJV:

1. FW6 Restore Stream Habitat Through Partnerships:
Restore / Enhance 10 miles of brook trout habitat.

Improve brook trout status in 4-8 sub watersheds

1. FW7 Consider Climate Change
Develop a database / framework for prioritizing actions
2. FW14 Conduct drainage level assessment of genetic differences to guide restoration strategies.
3. FW16 Establish a Watershed Monitoring Program for Brook Trout
Work with states to establish a program for brook trout monitoring.

Ches Bay Needs that EBTJV can assist with:

1. Develop indicator of progress. The indicator should be able to be
displayed graphically.
2. Identify a subset of EBTJV watersheds within the Chesapeake Bay watershed for which to provide brook data status data and commit to periodic assessment.
3. Increase monitoring for accountability, align with stream outcome.
4. Targeting - Identify 5 sub watersheds to focus in FY11, preferably one in each of the Chesapeake Bay watershed states (VA, WV, MD, PA, and NY).

Funding to support brook trout actions in the Chesapeake Bay watershed:
Approximately $421,000 in the FY11 presidents budget for FWS is committed for the brook trout outcome. This is an addition to work being conducted with FWS FY 10 base funds. NFWF is committing funds through its brook trout Keystone Species Initiative. Additionally, Jennifer and Callie have been discussing the possibility of applying for NRCS, CCPI grant; however a preliminary action is to identify target watersheds, ideally aligning somehow with NRCS priority watersheds for nutrient sediment load reduction.

Discussion:
· How do we measure brook trout abundance in Chesapeake Bay watershed? Do we need population targets for specific stream segments? Are colors on a map a meaningful way to indicate change in a sub watershed status? Or do we need to develop geographically based population targets for brook trout. (Segments, catchments, sub watersheds, Chesapeake Bay, Southern region?)
· Acid mine drainage (AMD) impacts to water quality / nutrient processing in streams should be captured under the Chesapeake Bay program.· Education – We need to make a stronger case on the connections
between brook trout, water quality, shading, etc. The indicator species, inthis case- brook trout, are representative of a larger problem and ecosystem health.
· In fisheries, we are striving towards self sustaining populations. How can we turn that into a population objective?

**Joint Meeting with Appalachian Mountain Joint Venture & Appalachian LCC Coordinator**

Brief introductory presentations were given by Brian Smith (AMJV) and Doug Stang (EBTJV). Dr. Jean Brennan, Appalachian LCC Coordinator, gave a presentation on LCCs including the national picture, the Appalachian LCC, and looking forward. These presentations are available on the EBTJV website and facebook page.

Eight LCC’s (Landscape Conservation Cooperatives) were funded in 2010 by FWS. Two additional LCCs (including the Appalachian) were initiated with regional FWS funding support.

The role of the LCC is to provide self-directed, applied conservation science that informs on-the-ground strategic conservation efforts at landscape scales. LCCs should inform management decisions, provide a forum for continuous information exchange, provide science / management tools, and leverage fiscal, staffing and intellectual resources.

Partners in the LCC will develop a consensus list of needs including research, outcomes and outputs from studies and actions, decision support tools, etc. The LCC will have a science panel that will ensure that will review plans / proposals, recommend grant awards / funding allocations and ensure that top science is being conducted.

The EBTJV and AMJV then held a joint discussion on the following topics:

* Potential Roles and responsibilities of respective partnerships within a LCC
* Strategies to develop collaborative relationships with the LCC
* Strategies for identifying shared research needs for the region

The AMJV Board fully supports the LCC and offered to help stand it up. There is a huge array of science needs that they don’t have the resources undertake on their own. Many of these science and research needs support multiple species/taxa.

**Energy Presentation – Thomas Minney TNC**

The Issue:

* The Central Appalachians is a center of biodiversity and a focal area for energy development.
* Energy development in several sectors will expand rapidly and at an increasingly faster pace.
* There is substantial overlap between significant natural areas and areas where energy development and impacts will be occurring.

The Project and Needs

* The Nature Conservancy in PA has undertaken analyses to help show how energy development and significant / unique natural areas overlap in PA.
* The TNC Central Appalachians Program would like to explore expanding the PA energy analysis to a Central Appalachians Analysis to encompass the scale of the energy sectors’ potential impacts across the region.
* TNC will need to work with partners in the various states and agencies to gather data and get expert input and review of the future work.
* TNC will need to work with partners to identify funding streams and opportunities to accomplish the work .

What Can this Project Help Do?:

* Mapping out the overlaps and developing future impact scenarios will help give a better understanding of where and what the impacts may be.
* Understanding where and what impacts may occur will help in giving context to develop strategies for engaging stakeholders and industry to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts.

**Wednesday October 27th**

**Brook Trout Population Persistence (Ben Letcher)**

Ben’s presentation is available on the EBTJV website and facebook page. You can also find a list of publications from Ben.

**Wildlife Tracs (Hannibol Bolton & Karl Hess)**

Hannibal and Karl presented Wildlife Tracs, the new Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration database that will replace FAIMS. The website for the new database is [www.fws.ekosystem.us](http://www.fws.ekosystem.us). Data is currently available for the State of Washington and users can test the system. All data in FAIMS will be migrated to Wildlife Tracs. Each state will have its own portal to the database that can be customized to meet its needs. FWS will provide training for everyone on the new system. Each state will have a security manager that will be in charge of providing access to state users.

**Reports from the EBTJV Subcommittees**:

**Conservation Strategy & Habitat (Jake Rush)**

Habitat Objective Tracking Form –

* It is a way to track progress towards meeting objectives and with funding.
* They have collected information from several states to see if the tracking tool is worth the effort. The group agreed that it was worth the effort with a few minor tweaks.
* Plan to track progress on a calendar-year basis with requests coming out in January for previous year. It is completely dependent on responses of partners. They will also tap into the FWS database for information.

Integration of Mid-Atlantic Workgroup –

* Still figuring out how to allocate objectives from Mid-Atlantic group to the Northern and Southern workgroups.
* “DRAFT” Habitat Objectives:

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| **Southern Region Habitat Objectives\*** |
| 1. Maintain the status, or no net less, of 124 subwatersheds classified as "Healthy" by 2012. |
| 2. Strengthen brook trout populations in 11 subwatersheds classified as "Healthy" by 2012. |
| 3. Establish self-sustaining brook trout populations in 6 subwatersheds classified as "Extirpated" by 2012. |
| 4. Improve 5 "Reduced" subwatersheds to "Healthy" classification by 2012. |
| 5. Strengthen brook trout populations in 33 subwatersheds classified as "Reduced" by 2012. |
| 6. Maintain 208 "Reduced" subwatersheds in existing condition by 2012. |
| 7. Validate the predictive brook trout status model by assessing 92 predicted subwatersheds by 2012. |
| 8. Determine the status of 50 unknown subwatersheds by 2012. |
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| **Northern Region Habitat Objectives\*** |
| 1. Maintain the status, or no net less, of 493 subwatersheds classified as "Healthy" by 2012. |
| 2. Strengthen brook trout populations in 20 subwatersheds classified as "Healthy" by 2012. |
| 3. Improve 2 "Reduced" subwatersheds to "Healthy" classification by 2012. |
| 4. Strengthen brook trout populations in 30 subwatersheds classified as "Reduced" by 2012. |
| 5. Prevent further degradation in 505 subwatersheds currently classified as "Reduced" by 2012 |
| 6. Gather data on 700 of the predicted subwatersheds by 2012 for use in validating the predictive brook trout status model. |
| 7. Maintain the status, or no net loss, of healthy pond and lake watersheds, and assess the status of 50 unknown waters by 2012. |

Project Application / Evaluation –

* Jake Rash is leading a team to revise the scoring sheet / application. All comments can be sent to him. He will work with the review team to revise the document.
* Discussion on opening project submittal opportunity earlier in the year with a similar deadline around August / September. Funding allocation and awards would still occur at the same time each year as they are dependent on the federal budget.
* Ensure core components of the application are turned in on time and how to enforce this. Options include removing points for not turning in a complete application or not accepting the application.
* Scoring sheet needs to be better tied to the assessment.
* Do we need to separate NFHAP funding into separate pots for protection, enhancement, and restoration? This would allow us to highlight our priorities and also allow different types of projects to compete against similar projects.
* We also need to determine how to handle non-habitat projects (research / assessment).
* Recommendation to look at the short list of ranking criteria that has been developed by other, newer partnerships across the country.

Mapping Issue –

* This sub team will work with the outreach team to ensure that the maps and mapping tools on the web are appropriate and functional.

**Outreach & Education (Dianne Timmins)**

Website

* Adding point & click maps of all projects, project information sheets. They are going to update the website with all of the latest subcommittee / workgroup members and chairs.
* Website – Waiting on word from Andrea as to whether we can use current URL for the website they will create for us.
* Add life history video (FWS / Bob Michelson) to the website.
* EBTJV has funding to create a brook trout movie of its own. Dianne Timmins distributed draft scripts for the movie for all partners to review. Comments should be directed to her as soon as possible.
* Project update page on website – what was done, funding, partners, photos, etc.
* Overall Success Page – updated on an annual basis to show total accomplishments (miles, acres, costs, etc).
* Scroll Banners – Two are available per state. Keith will check with OH, RI, SC about the banners. The general banner is finalized.
* Logo – Finished! Application for trademark has been submitted.
* Facebook / Twitter – Tom Sadler is maintaining these sites and posting all data / info from the partnership there.
* Mapping Program – Remove from the website and place PDFs of maps there instead.

**Data / Science / Research (Jason Detar)**

* Co-Chairs – Jason Detar & Rachel Muir
* The subteam took the opportunity to talk with Jean Brennan to discuss how EBTJV can take advantage of any opportunities provided by the Appalachian LCC.
* Recommend having a representative from the partnership at the LCC meetings.
* Will develop a prioritized list of research needs for the EBTJV. This list will be available to the person that will represent the EBTJV at the LCC meetings in the future. LCCs are meeting next week at NCTC and we need to provide some information to Jean prior to that meeting.
* Draft list of science and research priorities from Northern Workgroup from 2008. They will update this and add in priorities from the Southern Workgroup.
* Updated Assessment – Mark Hudy plans to start this in the beginning of 2011.
* LCCs have done a pretty good job with outreach to state directors, but they have not reached out to the JV’s and there seems to be a disconnect between the state directors and the JVs.

**Grants & Development (Fred Harris)**

* Three people attended the Grants and Development Subcommittee. They need more participation and support from members.
* They are going to organize the list of outside funding sources.
* Callie will dig up the older grants / funding table and send it to Fred.
* They need guidance from the SC on whether we need a paid coordinator. If so, the grants & development committee will try to raise money for the position. One idea is for each state to contribute a few thousand dollars through the federal aide program.
* Need confirmation from the SC on undertaking the new assessment. What is the cost and where will funding come from?
* Need to develop an annual spending plan that would include all expenses for the year for travel, meeting support, activities, etc. to establish desired funding target(s).
* Project Review System – There is concern that really good projects may not always rank near the top of the list. If we can identify these projects, they may be good candidates for the Grants and Development Subcommittee to consider funding with outside funding sources. They can develop grant applications for funding if necessary.
* Recommendation to use the Fisheries Conservation Foundation for grant management. They have a financial management board whose members are also anglers and support the mission of the EBTJV.

**Northern Work Group (Jim Daley)**

Action Plan

* Have not yet prepared an action plan. They are thinking of abandoning the action plan and focus efforts on adopting the Southern Workgroup’s worksheet.
* There was discussion on what to include in that effort. Do we include all activities by everyone? That can be very difficult and time consuming. As a first cut, they will capture what they have done as state agencies. They will also try to include larger partners.
* Starting point would be 2006. Data call would be done on a calendar year basis.

Modification of Habitat Objectives:

* The habitat objectives for the northern workgroup were modified to account for the states from the old Mid-Atlantic Workgroup that have become part of the Northern Workgroup.
* Add 16 subwatersheds to the 1st objective – 493 subwatersheds.
* Rest of objectives would stay the same

Group Discussion on Accomplishments

* PA has done surveys on 265 streams that found brook trout in 140 of them. 7 dam removals, 14 habitat improvement projects.
* ME – 60 subwatersheds surveys, 5-6 lake / pond surveys, 2 habitat rest projects, 10 culvert removals, 1 major pond reclamation.
* NH – 15 subwatersheds sampled (310 catchments – almost 200 had brook trout), chop and drop projects,
* VT – 355 staff days stream regulatory protection, triploid trout evaluation work for stocking program,
* NY – surveys on 2000 streams (700 had brook trout with 335 were new occurrences of brook trout), pond linings, reclamations, rearing of heritage strain brook trout, 1 habitat project, FWS – 5 culvert replacements & 4 culvert retrofittings
* Ohio was added to the northern workgroup.

Research Priorities

* Reviewed northern workgroup research priority list from 2008.
* Table handed out - Red / Pink = high priority research needs for LCC consideration
* Orange = should be considered by EBTJV during next status assessment
* Green = already being done

**Southern Work Group (Jim Habera)**

Revision of Habitat Objectives

* Reviewed habitat objectives in light of new states from Mid-Atlantic Workgroup joining the Southern Workgroup.
* Decided that most of the Mid-Atlantic numbers were attributed to PA’s objectives and decided to add 10% to every objective to incorporate efforts from the other [former] Mid-Atlantic Work Group states.

Water Quality Monitoring Programs for Brook Trout to Assess Acidic Deposition

* VA is doing some monitoring for this. WV has historically done this but are not currently. TN, NC, NJ are not.
* Decided this would be a good thing to add to the list of items for the data / science / research subcommittee.
* Include pH, flow, population, etc.

Research List

* Reviewed draft research list and recommended adding these:
	+ Economic assessment of impact of brook trout (focus on angling, but not exclusively).
	+ Genetic inventories are needed for some states (desirable to have range-wide or region-wide genetic database / inventory).

**Thursday October 28th**

**Steering Committee Report to Partnership (Doug Stang)**

* Doug Besler is the new Vice-Chair of the Steering Committee
* The SC is editing the Bylaws / Management Structure document to reflect current operations and include a few new changes. The document will be circulated to the SC members for a 60 day review.
* The SC will meet quarterly by conference call and once per year in person.
* Workgroup and Subcommittee Chairs are now included in the Steering Committee meetings and conference calls.
* Coordination support will be provided by FWS Appalachian Partnership Coordination Office (Callie / Keith). The SC Chair / Vice-Chair will meet with them soon to discuss roles and expectations.
* The FY11 project ranking list was approved as submitted by the Ranking Team.
* We will provide our research / science needs list to all four LCCs within our boundaries.
* We agreed to move forward with the updated assessment (catchment scale). The SC will send a letter to the Forest Service to advocate for Mark Hudy’s time for this assessment. Grants and Development Subcommittee will look for funding for the travel and other aspects of the assessment.
* Project coordinates are needed for all projects. The Science / Data and Outreach Subcommittees will gather and post monitoring information on all past NFHAP projects.
* Outreach committee would like new photos from old projects. We have pre- and post- project photos, but it would be nice to have a series of photos a few years down the road too. Send photos to Dianne / Tom and / or post them on the facebook page.

**EBTJV Actions / Goals for FY2011**

* The workgroups are going to update accomplishment list following the southern workgroup’s model by January 2011.
* FWS will develop criteria for cooperative agreements to require applicants to provide project completion report, photos, and monitoring information.
* FWS / Jason will call all previous NFHAP project applicants and gather project completion reports and monitoring information.
* Send Callie actions from workgroups / subcommittees for upcoming year.
* Complete banners and send them to states.
* Send final high res logo to all partners.
* Updating (members, committees, subcommittees, listservs, etc) & migrating website to new web manager.
* FWS will work with their field offices / sponsoring offices to increase support to applicants during the application process.
* FWS will open the opportunity for application early next eyar and leave it open longer.
* Tom & Doug Stang will advocate for NFHAP legislation. We will consider sending a letter in support of the legislation. We can also remind folks of the Tool Kit that is on the NFHAP website.
* National Casting Call in April 2011 is an opportunity for NFHAP to showcase its successes. Everyone is invited to attend and there are opportunities to put up banners and information displays. There will be a NFHAP reception on the Hill as well. If you want to attend, talk to Tom Sadler.
* We should update our conservation strategy document to reflect the change in regional workgroups and habitat objectives. Jake and Doug Besler will update the document and make it available on the website.
* We will update subcommittee / workgroup / members contacts lists.

We may want to have a team composed of the states within the Chesapeake Bay EO to interact with the program and seek funding opportunities. We should look for ways to encourage NRCS participation in EBTJV (state conservationists, state biologists). Send our mid-atlantic projects (12,14,15) that need funding to Ches Bay Program funding sources. NRCS step-down meetings are planned in multiple states. Tom Sadler will take the lead on passing our projects on to the Ches Bay Program with assistance from Callie / FWS. Sandy Davis will offer support. There is a stream team within the Ches Bay Program that we can participate on. Anyone interested in the team can ask Callie for contacts for that team.