



11 August 2011

Callie McMunnigal
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Appalachian Partnership Coordination Office
400 E. Main St.
White Sulphur Springs, WV 24986

Callie:

I am writing in support of the U.S. Forest Service project proposal **Partnering with the NFHAP and EBTJV to restore aquatic organism passage within Wolf Laurel Branch, NC**, being submitted for the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV) FY2012 call for project proposals. The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and U.S. Forest Service have documented significant impacts to trout populations in the Santeeelah Creek watershed. Currently, a Southern Appalachian strain brook trout population in Wolf Laurel Creek is impacted by a culvert that restricts fish passage.

This project is one in a series of identified efforts to enhance brook trout populations within the Santeeelah Creek watershed overtime. We believe this project on Wolf Laurel Creek will improve brook trout passage within the stream and strengthen viability of the overall population within the Santeeelah Creek watershed. As habitat in the watershed improves, recreational fishing opportunities for brook trout will expand and we expect that angling use will increase. This project directly supports the goals of our agency's trout management plan and helps meet the range-wide, regional, and state level habitat objectives of the EBTJV conservation strategy. This project also represents a great opportunity for collaboration with other partners and will provide educational opportunities.

Please let me know if you need me to provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

Doug Besler, Mountain Region Fishery Supervisor
Division of Inland Fisheries