

JUNE 2021



Eastern Brook Trout
JOINT VENTURE
A Fish Habitat Partnership

HABITAT NEWS

protect. enhance. restore.



photo by Ryan Hagerty,
USFWS

EBTJV receives \$258,333 from FWS for projects and operations in 2021

The EBTJV received a competitive slate of applications for our 2021 funding cycle through the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHAP) and Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The proposed brook trout habitat projects requested over \$700,000 from NFHAP/FWS, and totaled over \$3,000,000 with partner funds included, reflecting the tremendous efforts underway across the Eastern US to reconnect fragmented stream reaches, reduce sedimentation, and restore in-stream and riparian habitat. Thank you!

We were awarded \$173,333 for three projects in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Maine, and an additional \$85,000 for operational support. The EBTJV relies on time contributed by our Steering Committee members, and these operational funds are critical for coordination. We thank NFHAP and FWS for continuing to help us advance our mission. (See pg 3 for projects.)

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FEATURED LINKS

Brook trout expansion makes gains

Georgia fish art contest

Cornell Brook Trout conservation field day

Lovely Mid-Atlantic geology

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E-NEWS AND NEWSLETTERS

Tracking brook trout occupancy

Dr. Jason Coombs is in the process of updating the web interface of the EBTJV catchment database to allow credentialed users to update salmonid occupancy data online. This should streamline the process of keeping the map up-to-date (the last major update was in 2016). Creating this interface was the focus of a NFHAP operational grant in 2019, and in Spring 2021, the USDA Forest Service provided funding to support USGS and USFS Northern Research Station partnering together to finalize it.

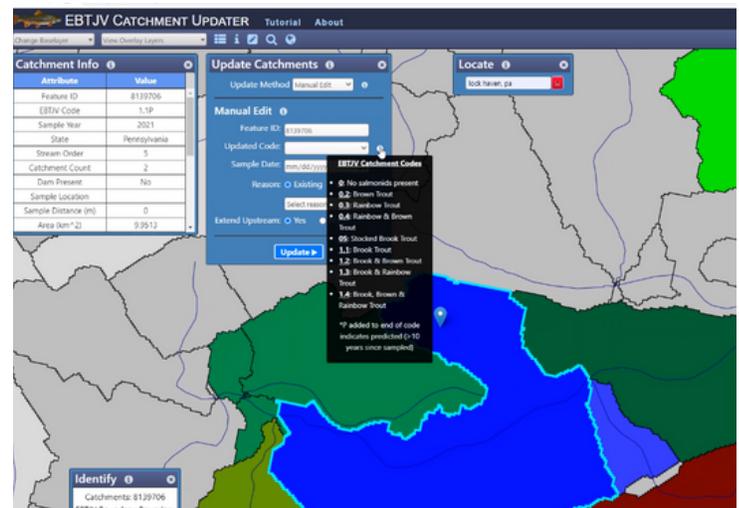
Recently, the EBTJV Steering Committee had a chance to see what the interface will look like, ask questions, and provide feedback. When the project is complete there will be a tutorial available for end users. Anyone will be able to download the data, and timestamped versions will be available at least on an annual basis.

**Wait, remind me:
what's the catchment
database?**

The catchment database is an assessment of brook trout populations at a scale that captures local differences in distribution. On average a catchment contains 2-3 miles of stream.

In response to a need for guidance in setting wild Brook Trout conservation priorities, in 2006 The EBTJV completed a range-wide assessment of wild Brook Trout distribution and status at the subwatershed-level. While this initial assessment provided an understanding of the current "state" of wild Brook Trout in the eastern portion of its U.S. range, many EBTJV partners felt that an assessment at a finer scale would be more useful to management. Therefore, the EBTJV conducted a second range-wide assessment of wild Brook Trout at the catchment scale which was completed in 2015.

[Click here to see EBTJV's current spatial data on Ecosheds](#)



EBTJV's 2021 habitat projects connect over 6 stream miles, reduce sedimentation

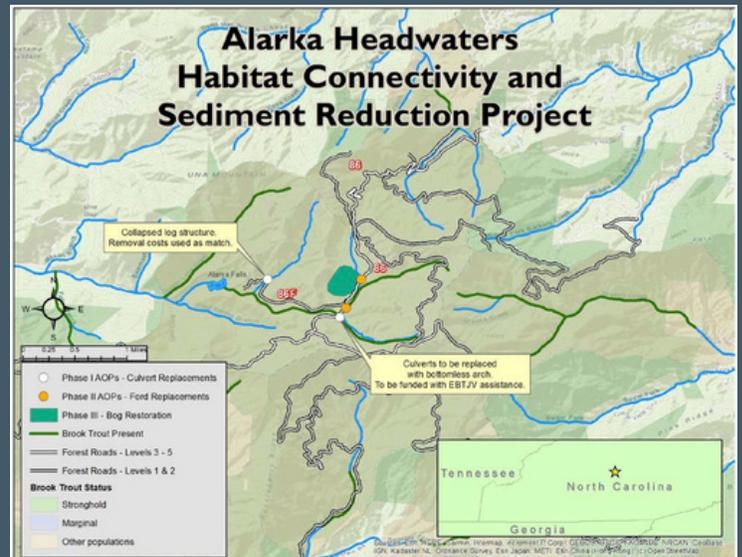
The US Fish and Wildlife Service has awarded **\$173,333** in funding for EBTJV partners through the National Fish Habitat Partnership Program. These projects bring an additional **\$669,887** in partner contributions for a partner:NFHAP ratio of **3.9:1**. In all, the FWS and NFHAP funded 85 successful projects across all Fish Habitat Partnerships.

Improving Connectivity for Reintroduced Native Brook Trout in Trail Fork of Big Creek, Cocke County, TN



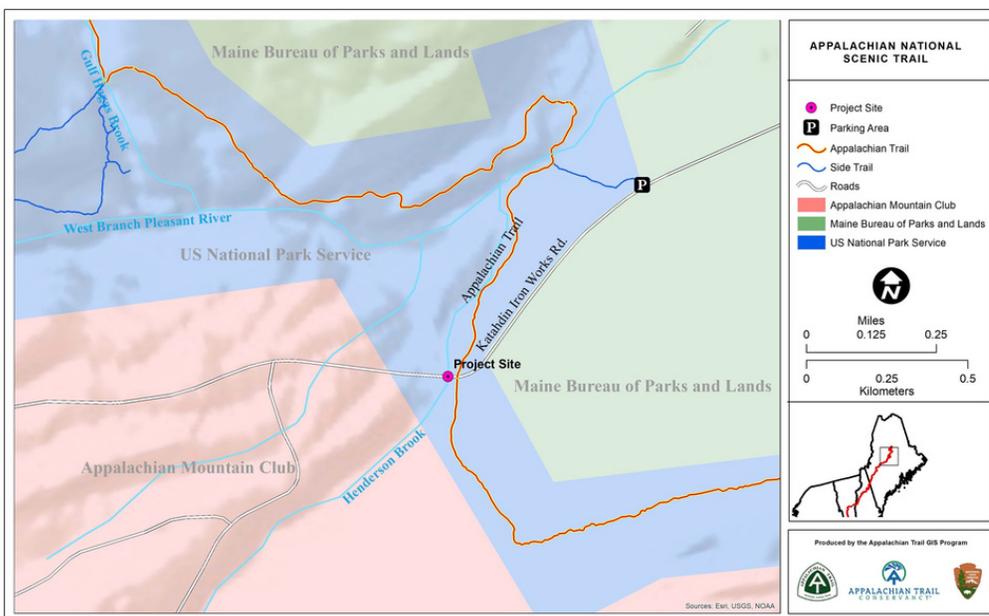
Undersized culverts on Trail Fork of Big Creek will be replaced with a natural-bottom structure that allows for full passage of brook trout and aquatic organisms. This will also connect 2.5 miles of Trail Fork.

Organization: [Tennessee Wildlife Resources Foundation](#)



This project in Swain County, NC directly addresses two major stressors of brook trout in the Southern Appalachians by replacing a double-piped culvert stream crossing on a National Forest System Road with a bottomless arch pipe (AOP) over Alarka Creek and adjusting the elevation and drainage features on the graveled road approaches to alleviate existing storm sediment inputs. This project will reconnect 0.8 miles of habitat.

Organization: [Trout Unlimited SE](#)



Henderson Brook Culvert Removal and Stream Restoration, Brownville, ME

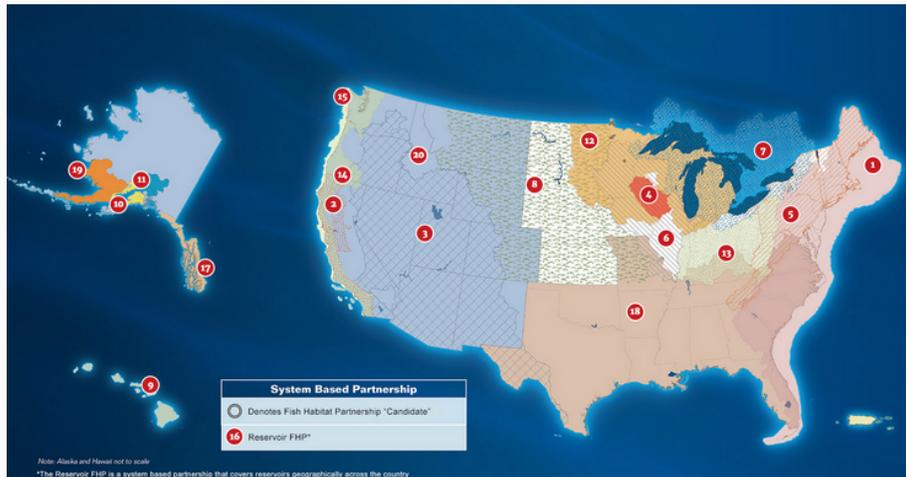
This project will rectify the final barrier to native fish passage on Henderson Brook, connecting an additional 3.3 miles of existing Brook Trout habitat to the West Branch, and opening access for Atlantic salmon. Removal of the existing culvert, and replacement with an open bottom bridge and stream restoration, will lead to improved habitat conditions, reduced stream sedimentation, reduced flooding and improved recreation opportunities.

Organization: [Appalachian Trail Conservancy](#)



NFHAP: updates and progress

The EBTJV has been a NFHAP Partnership since 2007. In 2020, the NFHAP program was recognized by Congress as part of the America's Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act. For more information, visit <http://fishhabitat.org/>. The NFHAP Board, which was newly instated this year, is currently undergoing a review process to determine recommended 2022 funding levels to each of the 20 national Fish Habitat Partnerships. The NFHAP Board will submit these decisions to the Secretary of the Interior by July 1, however the final decisions are dependent on the federal budget and appropriations, and as such will not be made for several months.



In May, EBTJV's project review team submitted a ranked list of brook trout habitat improvement projects to the NFHAP Board for 2022 funding. EBTJV submitted five on-the-ground projects which we had recruited from a list of unfunded applicants for EBTJV's 2021 funding cycle. All projects satisfied qualifications, including non-federal match, under the ACE Act.

Looking to submit a project for the next round? We hope to know about the 2023 cycle soon. Stay tuned.

EBTJV'S VISION

Healthy coldwater systems with fishable brook trout populations throughout their historic eastern geographic range



An enthusiast's perspective

"I've grown to greatly appreciate their resiliency, adaptability, and propensity to live through so much adversity. The fish of the fountain was made for our waters. They've been here since the glaciers receded and have faced down many obstacles that humans have thrown at them. To me, brook trout are a symbol of nature's ability to create stunningly beautiful, resilient creatures that thrive in environments that may be less than ideal. They're survivors, and for that, I have the utmost respect for the species"

-Philip Light, via Facebook

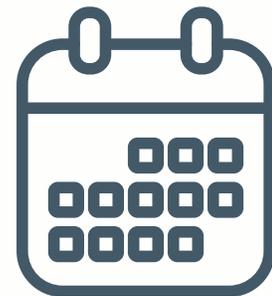


UPCOMING DATES

September 21: EBTJV steering committee meeting

September 28-29: STAC genetics workshop (for researchers, managers, and resource professionals)

Winter/Spring 2022 (TBD) EBTJV annual meeting



EBTJV's fiscal sponsor for operations is the Canaan Valley Institute, a 501 c(3) nonprofit. Donations to EBTJV are accepted through Beyond The Pond, a 501 c(3) nonprofit.



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