

Project Title

Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture: Sustainable Infrastructure Development

Applicant

Jeff Waldon, Exec. Director Conservation Management Institute, Virginia Tech 1900 Kraft Dr., Suite 250 Blacksburg, VA 24061 540/231-4540 540/231-7019 Fax fwixchg@vt.edu	Lila Borge Wills Conservation Management Institute, Virginia Tech 1900 Kraft Dr., Suite 250 Blacksburg, VA 24061 540/231-8996 540/231-7019 Fax lborge@vt.edu	Stephen G. Perry, Chief Inland Fisheries Division NH Fish and Game Department 11 Hazen Drive Concord, NH 03301 (603) 271-1745 (603) 271-1438 Fax Stephen.G.Perry@wildlife.nh.gov
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MSCGP Requirements

- This proposal address National Conservation Need 4 – “Formation and Operation of Fish Habitat Partnerships to Facilitate National Fish Habitat Action Plan Implementation”
- Project length: 2009-2011
- States benefited: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia
- Estimated cost: \$ \$425,040
- Funding source: MSCGP - \$425,000 State Partners – \$85,000

Summary of Request

This proposal will allow the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV) to build and strengthen its Fish Habitat Partnerships at regional and state-wide levels by increasing organizational capacity to meet the following EBTJV long-term strategic objectives: implementing priority-based watershed-scale habitat protection, restoration and enhancement projects; building partner capacity to guide mitigation of threats and stressors affecting brook trout habitat, and generating awareness and stakeholder commitment to conserve brook trout populations and their habitats.

Project Details

Addressing NCN 4. The EBTJV, one of the first Fish Habitat Partnerships to be recognized under the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, has successfully brought together 17 states, 5 federal agencies, 4 non-governmental organizations, and 2 universities to formulate and implement a conservation strategy to protect, enhance, and restore brook trout populations throughout its eastern U.S. range. In just a few short years, the EBTJV has completed a comprehensive assessment of brook trout status and has forged a strategy to significantly improve this valued resource. Successful implementation of the EBTJV's conservation strategy is dependent upon the maintenance of a strong operational organization that will provide guidance and assistance to all partners who are implementing on-the-ground projects to improve critical habitat for brook trout.

States involved. All 17 states along the Appalachian chain where brook trout have historically occurred.

Project goals.

1. External communications – produce outreach materials to increase public and policy-maker awareness and commitment to conservation of brook trout.
2. Internal communications – develop communications vehicles, e.g., web site, newsletter, to transmit technical, organizational, and financial information to partners to help them address conservation goals.
3. Infrastructure capacities – provide support to functional subcommittees: Conservation/Habitat strategies; Data Resources; Outreach and Education; Science and Research; Grants and Development.
4. Regional work groups – organize and support regional teams of partners who will develop annual action plans, formulate and track regional conservation goals, establish funding goals, and evaluate proposed projects.

Goal-oriented actions.

1. The Outreach and Education Committee will reprint and distribute the popular and educational document Eastern Brook Trout: Status and Threats and reprint selected state brochures for the EBT: Status and Threats. The committee will also develop and produce six other brochures that will address targeted educational themes.
2. The Outreach and Education Committee will redesign the web site and design and develop a newsletter that addresses partnership needs.
3. The Steering Committee will recruit a part-time Coordinator who will be responsible for ensuring that subcommittees are continuing to work on assigned charges and are regularly communicating with all elements of the partnership.
4. The Coordinator will assist regional work groups in developing and implementing regional action plans.
5. The Steering Committee will organize annual meetings of all partners to review progress, identify new needs, and assess progress towards achieving conservation goals.

Project timeline.

- 2009 Reprint Status and Threats document; design two new educational documents. Recruit newsletter editor and begin publication; redesign web site. Support a part-time Coordinator. Formalize subcommittees, recruit members, and begin to address charges.

- Formalize regional work groups and recruit members.
- Conduct regional work group meetings.
- Adopt long-term goals for each functional subcommittee.
- 2010 Print two new educational documents; design two new education documents.
- Publish and distribute a quarterly newsletter.
- Organize partnership meeting; review and adopt regional annual work plans.
- 2011 Print two new educational documents; design two new education documents.
- Organize partnership meeting.
- Assess progress on attainment of regional conservation goals.
- Assess progress on attainment of long-terms goals of functional subcommittees.

Project Budget

Salaries (including benefits):	\$164,200
Lila Borge Wills, Research Associate:	\$95,000
Shelia Crowe, Administrative Support:	\$5,200
Jeffrey Dobson, Programmer	\$14,000
Coordinator (TBA)	\$50,000
Expenses: Travel grants + contractual	\$175,000
Equipment:	\$15,000
Direct costs:	\$354,200
Indirect (20%)	\$70,840
Total: requested from MSCGP Sport Fish Restoration	\$425,040
Partnership funds:	\$85,000

Products and Outcomes. Outreach products include reprints, six new documents, a quarterly newsletter, and a redesigned web site. The capacity of the EBTJV will be substantially increased through the operation of existing subcommittees and the formation of two ones. Newly formed regional work groups will be formulating and implementing annual work plans.

Enhancing project results. All products will be distributed through EBTJV partner organizations and through the website. Sustainability of the regional organizations will be cemented through MOUs, Cooperative Agreements or Letters of Intent. The effectiveness of this project will be gauged by the number of individuals reached by the outreach materials; the programs and projects implemented that further the goals and objectives of the EBTJV Partnership; the number of partners enlisted in the regional workgroups; and the contributions of resources garnered through the regional partnerships.

Proposal strengths. Instituting a comprehensive communications process is a critical element to our partnership’s ability to inspire both the public and policy makers to take actions that conserve brook trout. Equally important is the need for a focused educational component designed to provide the public and policy makers with relevant information on the status of brook trout, EBTJV partnership projects, and opportunities to be involved. Our partnership’s website, which is maintained by the Conservation Management Institute, is a key outreach tool for information sharing. The outputs of the regional workgroups are going to be a crucial to achieving the short-term (5-year) habitat objectives identified in the Brook Trout Conservation Strategy. These regional workgroups will also play a pivotal role in prioritizing EBTJV projects.

Qualifications

Jeff Waldon and Lila Borge Wills are employed by the Conservation Management Institute (CMI), which has extensive experience both in managing large complex projects and developing information management programs for state and federal fish and wildlife agencies. Recently, the Conservation Management Institute and the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture teamed up on a Multistate Grant Program to establish baseline conditions for eastern brook trout with state and federal agency biologists, develop and initiate an outreach and education program with Trout Unlimited, and provide mapping and data management services with USGS. The result has been the successful launch of the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture. Based on the experience and management of the initial grant, CMI has been requested to manage and host the current proposal of building and initiating strategic partnership development. The Conservation Management Institute agreed to coordinate and submit the proposal and serve as the prime contractor if the proposal is funded.

Stephen Perry is Chief of the Inland Fisheries Division, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department. For the past 3 years he has served as Chair of the Steering Committee for the EBTJV and was instrumental in bringing public and private interests together to forge a regional effort, resulting in the formation of the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV). The early success of the EBTJV was significantly related to a multi-state conservation grant on which Perry served as the co-principal investigator. The grant provided resources for several key projects including a comprehensive range-wide assessment and development of an interactive database. The assessment led to several publications providing the basis for a range-wide strategy and planning to restore, protect and enhance brook trout habitat. As a member of the EBTJV Steering Committee, Perry helped launch the National Fish Habitat Initiative and subsequent Action Plan (NFHAP). Through his leadership, the EBTJV became one of the first of five Fish Habitat Partnerships under the NFHAP.