

Brook Trout Action Team Conference Call
Wednesday, September 28th - 1pm

Present

Alan Heft – MD DNR

Matt Sell – MD DNR

Scott Scarfone – MD Trout Unlimited/Upper Gunpowder BT Conservation Partnership

Steve Perry – EBTJV Coordinator

Than Hitt – USGS Leestown, Research Ecologist

Steve Faulkner – USGS Leestown, BTAT Leader

Kyle Runion – HGIT Staffer

Peter Tango – CBP Monitoring Coordinator

Jennifer Greiner – USFWS/HGIT Coordinator

Paige Hobaugh – HGIT Staffer

Seth Coffman – Trout Unlimited

Action and Decision Items/Considerations

Action: Steve Faulkner will further address the Brook Trout Outcome Indicator decision in a follow up email to BTAT members.

Decision: The Brook Trout Action Team (BTAT) will use current state representatives on the EBTJV Science and Data Committee as points of contact for BTAT for state level actions that are tied to the action plan.

Action: Paige will obtain list of EBTJV State Science and Data representatives from Steve Perry.

Action: Steve Faulkner will reach out to EBTJV Science and Data state representatives and ask that they agree to represent their states as members of the BTAT.

Action: Steve Faulkner and Paige will add Matt Sell to the BTAT member list and email list.

Action: Steve Faulkner asks that BTAT members recommend to him potential new members.

Action: Steve Perry will compose list of EBTJV identified “Priority Level 1” patches to send to JV state representatives and collect each state’s top two “Priority Level 1” areas with the best potential for sustaining resiliency (2 areas for restoration, 2 areas for protection).

Action: Steve Perry will ask EBTJV state representatives how each state determined their priority patches and compile a list of their criteria.

Consideration: Steve Faulkner suggests that managers and tool developers gather to discuss how to use managers can use the many tools available to them (e.g. TU’s EBTCPA, Downstream Strategies’ FHDS, and Ben Letcher’s SHEDS).

Action: Steve Faulkner will follow up with Trout Unlimited in November for an update on Eastern Brook Trout Conservation Portfolio Analysis Tool progress and a possible presentation.

Action: Steve Faulkner will obtain the Healthy Watersheds map from Renee Thompson.

Action: Steve Faulkner will follow up with Gene Brennan and the GIS Team at the Appalachian LCC to inquire about storing BTAT “story maps” on a webpage or repository.

Action: Alan, Matt, Scott, and Seth will create a template for states exhibiting how to compile maps and data to create “Best of the Best” maps following the Maryland example and present at the December EBTJV meeting.

Action: Scott, Steve Faulkner, and Than will discuss the various aspects of the UOG and AMD layers at a later date.

Action: Than will send the BTAT an “in press” link to the USGS Brook Trout study.

Decision: TU’s Home River Initiative progress will be reiterated for a larger BTAT audience (specifically including state representatives) via a call or meeting.

Action: Steve Faulkner will reach out to the Cacapon and Lost Rivers Land Trust Executive Director, Kelly Watkinson, to initiate collaboration.

Action: Steve Faulkner and Seth will summarize TU’s work on the Home River Initiative as an output from the BTAT for 2017.

Action: Steve Faulkner will follow up with EBTJV state representatives to decide on a broad management question to be exemplified by NALCC’s RCOA suite of tools.

Decision: No workshop or dialogue is necessary to complete Key Action 7 of Management Approach 3.

Action: Seth will provide Paige the state and National Park points of contact necessary to complete this task.

Action: Paige will contact and request Brook Trout regulation and protocol information from states and National Parks.

Action: Alan and Matt will create a short document describing each state and National Park’s approach to Brook Trout regulation.

Action: Steve Faulkner and Paige will update the Brook Trout Outcome Work Plan and provide a summary of the changes to BTAT members.

Decision: The next BTAT call will be held sometime during the second quarter of 2017.

Notes

Brook Trout Outcome Indicator

The Chesapeake Bay Program’s Brook Trout Outcome Indicator will be the EBTJV’s 3-5 year Occupancy Census. Steve Faulkner mentioned that there is not a lot of money going to states for monitoring, so the CBP and BTAT need to work within the framework that the states are already using to collect and update their data. This will require coordination that will be most efficient if the state representatives on the EBTJV Science and Data Committee are also the state representatives on the BTAT.

Action: Steve Faulkner will further address the Brook Trout Outcome Indicator decision in a follow up email to BTAT members.

Membership

Steve Faulkner states that he would like to coordinate membership between BTAT and the EBTJV to make future dialogue regarding the Brook Trout Outcome Indicator more efficient. Jennifer would like 1 representative from each state (preferably the EBTJV Science and Data state representatives) serve the BTAT.

Decision: The Brook Trout Action Team (BTAT) will use current state representatives on the EBTJV Science and Data Committee as points of contact for BTAT for state level actions that are tied to the action plan.

Action: Paige will obtain list of EBTJV State Science and Data representatives from Steve Perry.

Action: Steve Faulkner will reach out to EBTJV Science and Data state representatives and ask that they agree to represent their states as members of the BTAT.

Action: Steve Faulkner and Paige will add Matt Sell to the BTAT member list and email list.

Action: Steve Faulkner asks that BTAT members recommend to him potential new members.

Work Plan Review

Management Approach 1: Key Action 1: Performance Target 1

The Work Plan identifies lead as the EBTJV with assistance from state biologists to be complete ASAP. Jennifer offered reasons for identifying these locations- 1. To be able to direct funding for projects and 2. A way for the partnership to show progress annually.

Each state will be sent a list of “Priority Level 1” patches that are identified in the Brook Trout Outcome Management Strategy and will be asked to identify their top two priority areas with the best potential for sustaining resiliency (2 areas for restoration, 2 areas for protection). There is no criteria for which states must use to determine these priority areas- Steve Perry suggested to defer to states to use their local knowledge to choose their priority areas. There is consensus that this will not be difficult to accomplish.

Action: Steve Perry will compose list of EBTJV identified “Priority Level 1” patches to send to JV state representatives and collect each state’s top two “Priority Level 1” areas with the best potential for sustaining resiliency (2 areas for restoration, 2 areas for protection).

Action: Steve Perry will ask EBTJV state representatives how each state determined their priority patches and compile a list of their criteria.

Management Approach 1: Key Action 1: Performance Target 2

Trout Unlimited (TU) is identified as the lead of this performance target. The Eastern Brook Trout Conservation Portfolio Analysis (EBTCPA) Tool will allow conservation managers to identify specific patches of Brook Trout habitat for a number of different management strategies (e.g. protection, restoration, water quality, and reforestation). Trout Unlimited is finishing up the Susquehanna Basin portion of the tool and focusing on the BT habitat of Shenandoah, Potomac, and Upper James headwaters next. There will be opportunities for presentations on this tool once it is complete.

Jennifer mentioned TU’s EBTCPA, Downstream Strategies’ Fish Habitat Decision Support (FHDS) tool, and Ben Letcher’s Spatial Hydro-Ecological Decision System (SHEDS) tool as possible resources with which states can identify their two “Priority Level 1” areas and suggested it would be wise not to mandate the use of a single tool.

Consideration: Steve Faulkner suggests that managers and tool developers gather to discuss how to use managers can use the many tools available to them (e.g. TU’s EBTCPA, Downstream Strategies’ FHDS, and Ben Letcher’s SHEDS).

Action: Steve Faulkner will follow up with Trout Unlimited in November for an update on Eastern Brook Trout Conservation Portfolio Analysis Tool progress and a possible presentation.

Management Approach 1: Key Action 2: Performance Target 1

The CBP GIS team, Local Government, Advisory Committee, Maintain Healthy Watersheds GIT, Upper Gunpowder Watershed Conservancy are identified as the leads of this action. Jennifer said that the Healthy Watersheds map is generated and ready for distribution. The aim of this task is to overlay the “Best of the Best” of Brook Trout patches per state with the Healthy Watersheds map to convey the Brook Trout conservation story.

Steve Faulkner mentioned his concern with where these overlay “story maps” will reside. The Chesapeake Bay Program GIS Team is too busy at the moment to take on this project. He mentioned that the Appalachian LCC has the capability to store and build upon the capacity of this project in the form of a webpage or repository.

Maryland created their “Best of the Best” catchment level presence/absence maps to overlay with the Healthy Watersheds map by compiling maps and data made available by the EBTJV and Maryland Fisheries. These maps are stored on the Upper Gunpowder Brook Trout Conservation Partnership’s Facebook page and can serve as an example for other states in creating their “Best of the Best” maps.

Action: Steve Faulkner will obtain the Healthy Watersheds map from Renee Thompson.

Action: Steve Faulkner will follow up with Gene Brennan and the GIS Team at the Appalachian LCC to inquire about storing BTAT “story maps” on a webpage or repository.

Action: Alan, Matt, Scott, and Seth will create a template for states exhibiting how to compile maps and data to create “Best of the Best” maps following the Maryland example and present at the December EBTJV meeting.

Management Approach 2: Key Action 3: Performance Target 1

Steve Faulkner and Todd Petty are identified as leads for this action. They have updated the Downstream Strategies’ Brook Trout Occupancy Model on behalf of USGS’s effort to monitor Unconventional Oil and Gas (UOG). The model now includes UOG data at a 1-24,000 scale, but it is difficult to identify specific signal or effect of UOG on Brook Trout occupancy because the model is still dominated by temperature, agriculture, and other stressors.

Alan stated that acid mine drainage (AMD) damaged areas of stream offer some of the quickest and easiest improvement potential for restoring extirpated Brook Trout populations and could add to the progress of the Brook Trout Outcome. Scott recommends focusing on AMD areas and noting the proximity of the damaged streams to intact Brook Trout patches to decide whether or not BT would naturally move into an extirpated area. AMD layers exist for West Virginia and Pennsylvania, but not Virginia.

Action: Scott, Steve Faulkner, and Than will discuss the various aspects of the UOG and AMD layers at a later date.

Management Approach 2: Key Action 4: Performance Target 1

USGS and the Mid Atlantic Panel on Aquatic Invasive Species are identified as leads for this action. Than stated that the study that the Work Plan lists as a reference (Snyder et al 2015) is a

thermal resiliency study and not about invasive species. Than's work at USGS in the Experimental Stream Lab looks at Brook Trout and Brown Trout interactions. Their studies show that Brown Trout have an effect on the way Brook Trout structure their use of thermal habitat and suggest that management of Brown Trout will possibly extend the downstream distribution of Brook Trout or open up allopatric Brook Trout populations.

Action: Than will send the BTAT an "in press" link to the USGS Brook Trout study.

Management Approach 2: Key Action 5: PT 1, 2, and 3

Trout Unlimited and their work on the Home River Initiative is tied to this action. Dustin is working in the Potomac Watershed, Seth is working in the Shenandoah Watershed, and Sammy Vest is working in the Upper James Watershed. They have completed several restoration projects and have several coming up.

Since there weren't many state representatives on this call, Jennifer suggested that this progress be reiterated to a full BTAT via a call or meeting to hopefully hear about the progress of other partners doing similar work. Steve Faulkner mentioned that the Cacapon and Lost Rivers Land Trust (part of the Potomac Watershed) also doing landowner outreach and easement activity related to Brook Trout and they are interested in interacting with the BTAT.

Decision: TU's Home River Initiative progress will be reiterated for a larger BTAT audience (specifically including state representatives) via a call or meeting.

Action: Steve Faulkner will reach out to the Cacapon and Lost Rivers Land Trust Executive Director, Kelly Watkinson, to initiate collaboration.

Action: Steve Faulkner and Seth will summarize TU's work on the Home River Initiative as an output from the BTAT for 2017.

Management Approach 3: Key Action 6: PT 1, 2

This Action is being done at the patch level as a part of the TU Home River's Initiative Conservation Plan. Steve Fuller of NALCC is offering to develop an RCOA use case scenario related to Brook Trout to demonstrate at the Habitat GIT Fall Meeting. Jennifer suggested proposing a broader management question that is applicable to all 5 Brook Trout states.

Than mentioned that he sees BTAT's role as an entity that provides support and background knowledge, but that doesn't direct to partners where to implement on the ground management decisions. Steve Fuller said that he is unsure of BTAT's path regarding this specific action and that it may be a task better suited to the Forest Service. Scott stated that the most efficient action BTAT could take regarding this Action is to disseminate RCOA's Brook Trout use case scenario suite of tools to partners that have the capacity to implement projects and programs.

Action: Steve Faulkner will follow up with EBTJV state representatives to decide on a broad management question to be exemplified by NALCC's RCOA suite of tools.

Management Approach 3: Key Action 7: Performance Target 1

BTAT is listed identified as the lead of this action. Target date is 12/16. All that is necessary is an email request for each state and its National Parks to provide a list of protocol and regulations they use regarding Brook Trout. A document listing the different regulations will be compiled and stored.

Decision: No workshop or dialogue is necessary to complete Key Action 7 of Management Approach 3.

Action: Seth will provide Paige the state and National Park points of contact necessary to complete this task.

Action: Paige will contact and request Brook Trout regulation and protocol information from states and National Parks.

Action: Alan and Matt will create a short document describing each state and National Park's approach to Brook Trout regulation.

Action: Steve Faulkner and Paige will update the Brook Trout Outcome Work Plan and provide a summary of the changes to BTAT members.

Decision: The next BTAT call will be held sometime during the second quarter of 2017.