

Brook Trout Action Team Conference Call
Wednesday, April 5th 10am-12pm

Present

Steve Faulkner- *USGS Leetown, BTAT Lead*
Jennifer Greiner- *USFWS, HGIT Coordinator*
Paige Hobbaugh- *HGIT Staffer*
Seth Coffman- *Trout Unlimited*
Alan Heft- *MD DNR*
Fred Henson- *NY DEC*
Than Hitt- *USGS Leetown*
Dave Kazyak- *USGS Leetown*
Tim Pokorny- *NY DEC*
Steve Reeser- *VA DGIF*
Matt Sell- *MD DNR*
Peter Tango- *USGS, CBP Monitoring Coordinator*

Action Items

Decision: The EBTJV 5-year occupancy census will be used as the indicator with which to measure progress toward our outcome goal

Action: Matt Sell will edit “Best of the Best” draft template and seek feedback

Action: Steve will follow up with “Best of the Best” team for further conversation

Action: Paige/Steve will share GIS overlay once prepared (State identified healthy watersheds, areas of low fish habitat degradation, brook trout occupancy)

Action: Action team members will send Steve AMD and UOG GIS layers

Action: Than Hitt will redistribute Brown trout/Climate Change/Brook Trout study

Action: Steve will work with Trout Unlimited and other restoration groups to develop reporting metrics/protocol for projects that quantify progress toward 8% goal

Action: Trout Unlimited will provide list of goal progressing complete/ongoing restoration projects

Action: Action team members will send feedback on decision support tool workshop to Steve

Consideration: Action team to possibly hold an all-day in person meeting to evaluate priorities and revise new edition of work plan

Action: Action team members will send SRS Document/Work Plan Revision thoughts and questions to Steve **before 4/26**

Work Plan/Action Item Updates

- Brook Trout Indicator

Decision: The EBTJV 5-year occupancy census will be used as the indicator with which to measure progress toward our outcome goal

- Management Approach 1

- *Key Action 1, Performance Target 1*

Complete as of 3/2017.

- *Key Action 1, Performance Target 2*

See *Key Action 3, Performance Target 1* and *Key Action 6, Performance Targets 1-2* below.

- *Key Action 2, Performance Target 1*

Trout Unlimited has developed a draft template for states to use in order to communicate “Best of the Best” brook trout watershed information to the public and local decision makers. It is comprised of 4 components; a map, an image, and two sections of text that explain why a certain watershed is considered the best and important for protection. This draft template is in its early stages and needs to be reviewed.

In preparation for reporting our outcome progress to the CBP management board, the GIS Team is creating an overlay to show areas of low risk to fish habitat, state-identified healthy watersheds, and brook trout presence. It could be helpful to develop a second template document regarding watershed priorities for potential increases in habitat based on the information gleaned from this overlay.

Action: Matt Sell will edit “Best of the Best” draft template and seek feedback

Action: Steve will follow up with “Best of the Best” team for further conversation

Action: Paige/Steve will share GIS overlay once prepared (State identified healthy watersheds, areas of low fish habitat degradation risk, brook trout occupancy)

- Management Approach 2

- *Key Action 3, Performance Target 1*

Steve Faulkner and partners from PA and Trout Unlimited are in the process of creating a layer identifying acid mine drainage impacted streams.

The Downstream Strategies Brook Trout Occupancy Model has been updated to incorporate UOG development in the Upper Susquehanna River Basin. There is no way possible at the moment to compare for changes over time between the previous UOG layer and this most recent update. It is possible for the model to be updated to include UOG development for the entire watershed. In addition, there will be some studies soon released regarding the impact of UOG on brook trout occupancy in the Upper Susquehanna River Basin.

Action: Action team members will send Steve AMD and UOG GIS layers

- *Key Action 4, Performance Target 1*

The reference study identified by this performance target is irrelevant to invasive species. Than Hitt’s research on the effects brown trout and climate change on brook trout forage and habitat use suggests the possibility of managing brown trout populations downstream in order to expand brook trout populations.

Action: Than Hitt will redistribute Brown trout/Climate Change/Brook Trout study

- *Key Action 5, Performance Targets 1-3*

Seth in VA, Dustin in WV, and Amy in the Susquehanna are all implementing brook trout restoration projects. Trout Unlimited and other restoration partners will collate theirs and states’ data before reporting it to the EBTJV. To document movement toward the goal of 8% increase in occupied brook trout habitat, projects that increase the amount

of total brook trout habitat will be distinguished from projects being done at already occupied habitat.

Action: Steve will work with Trout Unlimited and other restoration groups to develop reporting metrics/protocol for projects that quantify progress toward 8% goal

Action: Trout Unlimited will provide list of goal progressing complete/ongoing restoration projects

- Management Approach 3

- *Key Action 6, Performance Targets 1-2*

There is a surplus of decision support tools that could assist partners and state agencies in answering their brook trout management questions. It is not clear which tools are most beneficial to us in reaching our outcome goal. There is a need to organize those tools and to train conservation partners on when and how to use them- such training could take place during a BTAT sponsored decision support tool workshop.

Tools:

- CBP Model
- Downstream Strategies' Brook Trout Occupancy Model
- Ecosheds/EBTJV Patch Model
- Nature's Network (f.k.a. Regional Conservation Opportunity Areas (RCOA))
- Possible NY state riparian forest layer

There are plans for a CBP Partnership tailored Nature's Network training in the future that will include but not be limited to brook trout management question demos.

Note that the Spring 2017 Habitat GIT meeting will take place May 9th at the PA Fish and Boat Commission and will include a lunchtime presentation on PA Trout Unlimited restoration efforts

Action: Action team members will send feedback on decision support tool workshop to Steve

- *Key Action 7, Performance Target 1*

A spreadsheet with pertinent brook trout angling regulation information has been compiled and will be synthesized into a reference document.

It was noted that brook trout angling isn't a significant stressor that affects our ability to achieve the outcome goal and this key action should be reviewed during work plan revision.

- Management Approach 4

- *Key Action 9, Performance Targets 1-2 and Key Action 10, Performance Target 1*

The EBTJV funded genetic information collection continues to be a funded, ongoing effort. It is possible that the monitoring efforts described by these key actions may be supplemented with genetics studies currently being worked on by Than Hitt, Ben Letcher, and Andrew Whitely.

Strategic Review - Logic Table and Narrative Template

The CBP is initiating their Strategy Review System (SRS), a biennial review of the 31 outcomes under the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. Workgroups and Action Teams will present an overview of work plan progress at a designated meeting within the 2-year period. Work plans are to be revised according to “Logic Table” format within 90 days of our May 11th biennial review meeting.

- Narrative Template Questions
 - *What is our progress to date?*
See **Work Plan/Action Item Updates** above.
 - *Which management approaches are most critical to making progress?*
 - Scientific understanding, monitoring, and managing for invasive species
 - Hemlock woolly adelgid threatens to destroy riparian cover and protection of established brook trout habitat
 - The ability to identify key conservation and restoration opportunities
 - Culverts on private land
 - Downstream areas
 - Fragmented brook trout populations
 - AMD streams
 - *What barriers exist that impede outcome goal progress?*
 - Funding
 - Seek brook trout representation in revision NFWF Chesapeake Bay Business Plan
 - Lack of decision support tool access/understanding
 - Lack of communication/relationship with decision makers
 - DOTs- Work with closely to encourage the installation of fish friendly culverts, possibly locate funds to cover extra costs
 - Land use planners
 - Local governments
 - NRCS- Work together to coordinate riparian restoration projects to occur in watersheds with brook trout populations
 - *Considerations for Work Plan revision*
 - Consider how to quantify change to EBTJV established baseline more often than every 5 years
 - Possibly rethink goal of increasing habitat occupancy, shift toward maintaining existing habitat
 - Consider best ways to take advantage of “low hanging fruit” as brook trout work is generally opportunity driven
 - Consider ways to connect better with partners, NGOs, and local agencies doing ground work to tie their projects with our outcome goal and CBP priorities

Consideration: Action team to possibly hold an all-day in person meeting to evaluate priorities and revise new edition of work plan

Action: Action team members will send SRS Document/Work Plan Revision thoughts and questions to Steve **before 4/26**