



## Brook Trout Workgroup Fall 2021 Meeting

Tuesday, October 19, 2021, 11:00-13:00 ET

\*Meeting Materials can be found on the CBP Website ([LINK](#))\*

### PARTICIPANTS:

<b>Stephen Faulkner,</b> <i>*Workgroup Co-Chair*</i> USGS	<b>Katie Ombalski,</b> <i>*Workgroup Co-Chair*</i> Woods & Waters Consulting	<b>Katlyn Fuentes,</b> <i>*Workgroup Staffer*</i> Chesapeake Research Consortium	<b>Chris Guy,</b> USFWS
<b>Dan Goetz,</b> MD DNR	<b>Gina Hunt,</b> MD DNR	<b>Jason Detar,</b> PA Fish & Boat Commission	<b>Jonathan Leiman,</b> MDE
<b>Lori Maloney,</b> EBTJV	<b>Matt Lawrence,</b> MD DNR	<b>Nathaniel Hitt,</b> USGS	<b>Peter Tango,</b> USGS
<b>Scott Scarfone,</b> Trout Unlimited		<b>Seth Coffman,</b> Trout Unlimited	

### MEETING NOTES:

#### 11:00 – INTRODUCTIONS & WORKGROUP PRESENTATION TO MANAGEMENT BOARD:

- **PRESENTATION:** *This is the SRS presentation that was given at the September Management Board meeting. It describes the current status of the outcome, successes and challenges that the workgroup is facing, and requests to the Management Board.*
- **QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:**
  - **Peter Tango:** Do we include working with DOTs on culvert replacement for fish passage considerations that reconnect quality habitats and offer expansion opportunities by fixing the habitat fragmentation issue, thereby opening acres and miles of streams?
    - **Stephen Faulkner:** This will be addressed in the interconnection/collaboration effort both at the Management Board level and in the workgroup Action Plan.
  - **Dan Goetz:** One of the challenges that's important to note is the temporal component of brook trout restoration. One of the "low hanging fruits" is restoration of riparian forest cover – but this will take 10-15 years for the stream habitat conditions to become suitable for brook trout. In this workgroup, we have limited instant successes that we can implement, short of limited reintroduction opportunities and barrier replacements that may be preventing recolonization into isolated tributaries. *Time is a key limiting factor for a lot of this work.*
    - **Recommended literature:** Merriam, E. R., J. T. Petty, and J. Clingerman. 2019. Conservation planning at the intersection of landscape and climate change: brook trout in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. *Ecosphere*. ([Link to paper](#))

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### 11:15 – BROOK TROUT WORKGROUP SCIENCE NEEDS:

- **AGENDA:** *In collaboration with the Strategic Review System (SRS) process, the Brook Trout Workgroup is updating our science needs. These “science needs” are necessary in making progress towards the outcome of an 8% increase in occupied brook trout habitat by 2025.*
- **REGARDING SCIENCE NEED #8:** *“Determine how interactions between climate change and land use will affect brook trout.”*
  - **Jason Detar:** It seems that one of the areas that we’re really coming up short in is the public communications campaign. There are current discussions in the Joint Venture on how this could be addressed and how this workgroup could work with the Venture on this – not only for climate projects, but also habitat loss, etc. The goal would be to get the public and other decision makers to not only understand but learn how to use the available science. Perhaps this could be added to row 8.
    - **Stephen Faulkner:** Agreed, this is something that we could add to either this science need or to a different one.
- **REGARDING POTENTIAL OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES:** *\*these ideas may be better addressed by incorporating into the new Work Plan\**
  - **PUBLIC LANDOWNER EDUCATION** (Scott Scarfone): Trout Unlimited (TU) has been hosting a virtual lecture series; a total of four monthly lectures were planned for this fall and two have already been completed. TU used a variety of platforms to advertise the lecture series including Facebook, news press releases, and MD DNR articles and newsletters. The intent of the lecture series was public outreach for the intent of educating landowners. In the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, 85% of the land is owned by private landowners – outreach and education are critical for conservation and restoration efforts. Topics of these lectures focused on not only the mission of TU, but also featured guest speakers who spoke on their work at partner affiliations such as NRCS, Alliance for the Bay, etc. TU identified property lists that were “high priority” for restoration and worked with their partners at NRCS and MD Forestry to then reach out to these property owners. It’s unknown if federal agencies could do something like this, it may be needed to find a non-profit/NGO partner to do the work for the workgroup.
  - **FOR-PROFIT RESTORATION CREDITS** (Scott Scarfone): There’s a huge for-profit market for capturing restoration credits. Companies such as Resource Environmental Solutions, LLC. (RES) directly contacts landowners to convince them to do a conservation effort on their property – the company covers the upfront project costs then upon project completion, collects and sells the restoration credits on the market.
  - **EPA ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION GRANT:** Currently, EPA has an open environmental education grant that EBTJV is considering applying for project funding. Lori Maloney is brainstorming potential project ideas for EBTJV to work with partners on a grant to reach out to landowners in creative ways.
    - **ACTION: If anyone is interested in collaborating on this, or has any potential project ideas related to this, please reach out to Lori Maloney.**
- **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:**
  - **The genetics workshop summary will be complete by December 2021.**

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- **Peter Tango:** If we're going to support an indicator to track progress, it seems that we need a cohesive agreed-upon network style sampling design – this seems like a foundation to progress for the workgroup. Additionally, agreed-on communications support that translates our science into a variety of media is a program-wide need, very cross cutting need.
- **Peter Tango:** Regarding the status of the applicability of eDNA work, I remember in one of the last meetings, there was fieldwork and progress that seemed like it was almost ready for presentation. Is there an anticipated target date for this kind of update?
  - **Stephen Faulkner:** Specific dates and deliverables will be listed in the updated Logic & Action Plan.
- At the end of this discussion, members agreed to submit this draft of the Science Needs table. Please note that this will not be the last opportunity for revisions. **Following the next STAC meeting, the workgroup members will be sent a new draft containing comments from the STAC meeting. At that time, workgroup members can send any "red flag" edits via email to the workgroup co-chairs and staffer, for consideration prior to the final submission deadline.**

### 11:45 – WORKPLAN DISCUSSION AND UPDATES:

- **AGENDA:** *The Brook Trout Workgroup – part of the Healthy Watersheds Cohort – is currently undergoing the SRS review process. As part of this biennial review cycle, the workgroup is updating the workplan. During this time, the workgroup members revised the existing workplan and the co-chairs facilitated comments or suggestions on ways to improve the document.*
- This document was drafted two years ago and contains 28 action items that are listed and are broken down from broader management approaches to other smaller categories such as performance targets and expected timelines.
- **MANAGEMENT APPROACH 1 – “Identify and communicate priority focal areas for brook trout conservation”**
  - **Scott Scarfone** encourages fisheries folks to look to the State of Maryland as a model for achieving restoration goals via tree plantings. MD just passed a plan to plant 5,000,000 trees over the next five years. While tree plantings won't solve brook trout problems extensively, it can benefit this outcome. Those in fisheries in other states (PA, WV, VA) should begin dialogue with sister agencies within your state (e.g., DNRs, USFS, etc.) to see what can be done to encourage state Legislators to pass bills that plant trees.
    - **Seth Coffman:** This might already be happening in other states. TU in WV and the work I do in VA is collaborative with state agencies and other NGOs. We work with our SWCD and NRCS to coordinate outreach, and "sell" riparian corridor restoration to landowners.
    - **A decision was made to incorporate this into Action 1.1.**
- **NATIONAL FISH & WILDLIFE FOUNDATION:** The National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) has funding for implementation work, in addition to their own tracking and monitoring needs. At this time, it's both important and strategic to bring in NFWF staff from the NE Region to talk about their current strategy for brook trout and the tools that they're using. The workgroup Co-chairs and staffer had a meeting a couple weeks ago with NFWF staff to discuss science needs and

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potential collaboration ideas. NFWF staff expressed great enthusiasm in this potential partnership.

- **ADDITIONAL FUNDING:** **The workgroup chairs will reach out soon with more information and a request for member-input on these and other funding opportunities.**
  - **SMALL WATERSHED GRANT:** The next RFP for the small watershed grant will come out in February and most likely be due in April or May.
  - **CHESAPEAKE WILD** is likely to be a new funding program through NFWF.
- **The workgroup chairs will be coordinating a meeting either the end of this year or first quarter of next year to discuss this collaborative work with NFWF in greater detail.**
- **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:**
  - **GRANT FUNDING:** Is there any merit to coordinating grant proposals within this group? That way if we're all competing for the same funding source (separately proposing projects into the same grant), then there can be an opportunity to support or collaborate on these projects?
    - **Katie:** we can talk about this more moving forward.
  - **PETER TANGO:** A few years ago, the monitoring team put together a synthesis on "[New Insights: Lessons learned for Management](#)". We identified case studies showing what worked in the watershed, what didn't, and what additional information was needed. This document has been a reference for many years, and this (or a similar document) could be very helpful for brook trout management.

### **12:35 – OTHER UPDATES & MEETING WRAP-UP:**

- **BROOK TROUT WORKGROUP RESTORATION TRACKING DATABASE DOCUMENT:**
  - Given the limitations of our current methods for tracking our outcome status, this restoration tracking spreadsheet was developed to better identify and collect information on restoration and conservation practices.
  - The objective is to implement a system to provide accurate outcome status by the next SRS review cycle.
  - **NEXT STEPS:**
    - The Chesapeake Bay Data Management Team has agreed to work with the Brook Trout Workgroup to develop this database. This project will begin January 2022.
    - **In the near future, the workgroup co-chairs will be reaching out to the membership to fill out and verify the information entered into this document.**
- **GIT Funding:** A GIT Funding proposal was submitted to the Chesapeake Bay Trust in early October to provide a contractor to build and identify collaborative opportunities with other CBP teams. **Final decisions as to whether this project will be funded will be announced late-November.**
- **STAC WORKSHOP REPORT:** there is a STAC Workshop report coming out on Climate Resiliency with BMPs. A draft was presented yesterday (10/18) at the Climate Resiliency Workgroup Meeting.
- **HEALTHY WATERSHED COHORT – MANAGEMENT BOARD REQUESTS:** During the August and September Management Board (MB) meetings, select outcomes (including Brook Trout) presented requests to the Management Board. This week, a document was sent out to

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Management Board members requesting their feedback to these questions via an electronic survey by **Friday December 17th**. This means that **MB members will be contacting Jurisdictional Representatives from the Brook Trout Workgroup to have a discussion regarding outcome attainability, as detailed in the questions contained within this document.**

- **ACTION: For those of you who are Jurisdictional representatives: please review this document (in particular questions 1-4) as soon as possible, so that you are prepared when you are contacted by your MB member.** As a reminder: you do not need to fill out the survey that is referenced in this form - that is only for the MB members to do, upon completion of their interviews. At this time, you are only to read this document, and begin preparing your answers to these questions.

**13:00 – MEETING ADJOURNED.**