



Blueprint for Building Partnerships and Recommendations for Scaling Brook Trout Restoration in Stronghold and Persistent Patches

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Formal Request to the Management Board

| Brook Trout Outcome (Attainability: Off Track) | |
|---|---|
| Where Help is Needed | Follow On Response |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Management Board directs the Bay Program to develop a cross programmatic strategy that can be adopted by County, State, and Federal Agencies to develop agreements that promote brook trout habitat in priority counties that currently have stronghold or persistent Brook Trout patches. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Management Board will identify at least one interested state who will convene the Brook Trout Workgroup co-chairs and partners in their jurisdiction (including brook trout, acid mine drainage, <u>county</u> and local interests) to collaborate on an approach for promoting restoration and conservation in Brook Trout strongholds or persistent Brook Trout patches. The lead jurisdiction and co-chairs will report back to the MB on the approach and any potential for replication throughout the watershed.• Maryland, Pennsylvania agreed to take leadership <u>positions</u> |

Next Steps-From 2024 SRS Update

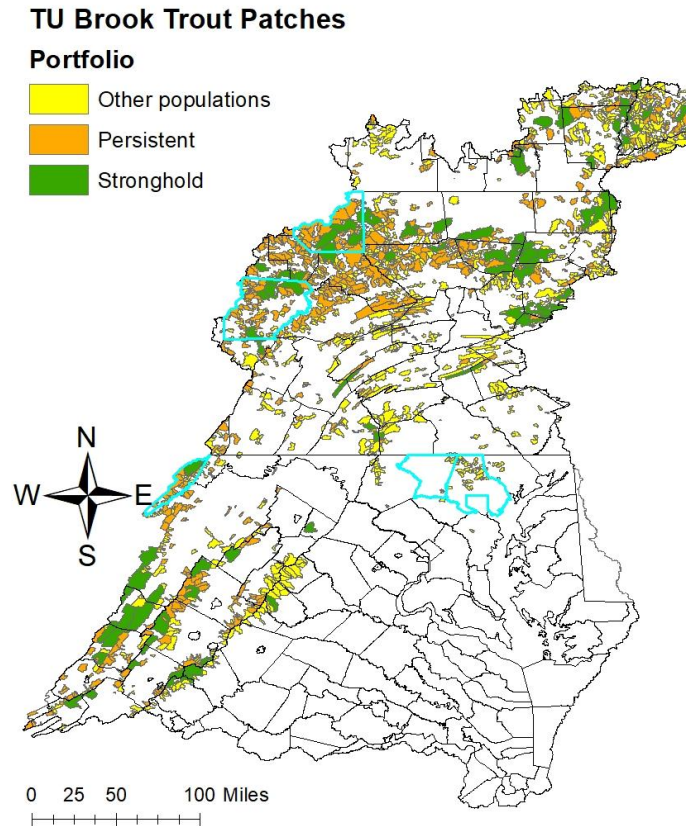
- ☑ Following completion of FY2022 GIT Funded tracking tool, will meet with Local Jurisdictions
 - ☑ Will work with Strategic Engagement Team (SET) and Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) to identify contacts within these jurisdictions
 - ☑ In Fall 2024, will apply for a STAC Workshop to facilitate a discussion with these jurisdictions to identify funding sources, overlapping local priorities, and recommended actions
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Where are Brook Trout?

- Brook Trout Patch area makes up 22.7% of CB Watershed land area
- Stronghold and Persistent Patches make up 13.7 %

[Eastern Brook Trout Conservation Portfolio - Trout Unlimited](#)

***Next update Dec. 2026



How Did We Get Here?

Brook Trout Outcome Goal 2014-2024: Increase Brook Trout (BKT) occupied habitat by 8 percent by 2025.

- 2024 GIT Project, 0.5% Increase through 2025,
 - 5,419 Projects in Bay watershed
 - Only 94, 1.7% of projects BKT were known to be present at site
 - 1,645 Projects BKT presence unknown
 - 3,557 BKT data missing

STAC identified the need for accelerated coldwater conservation

The **2023 STAC Rising Temperatures report** recommended that Chesapeake Bay Program partners move faster to protect coldwater streams that still support healthy aquatic life, especially native BT; key recommendations included:

- Accelerate conservation and restoration in coldwater streams currently supporting BT.
- Use resiliency analyses and mapping to focus restoration in the most strategic places.
- Restore forests and aquatic habitats in rural watersheds while supporting agricultural practices that reduce heated runoff.
- Develop state-level coldwater conservation strategies that bring together federal, state, NGO, private, and landowner resources.
- Work with local governments to improve land use planning and protection of high-quality habitat areas.

Shifting Focus

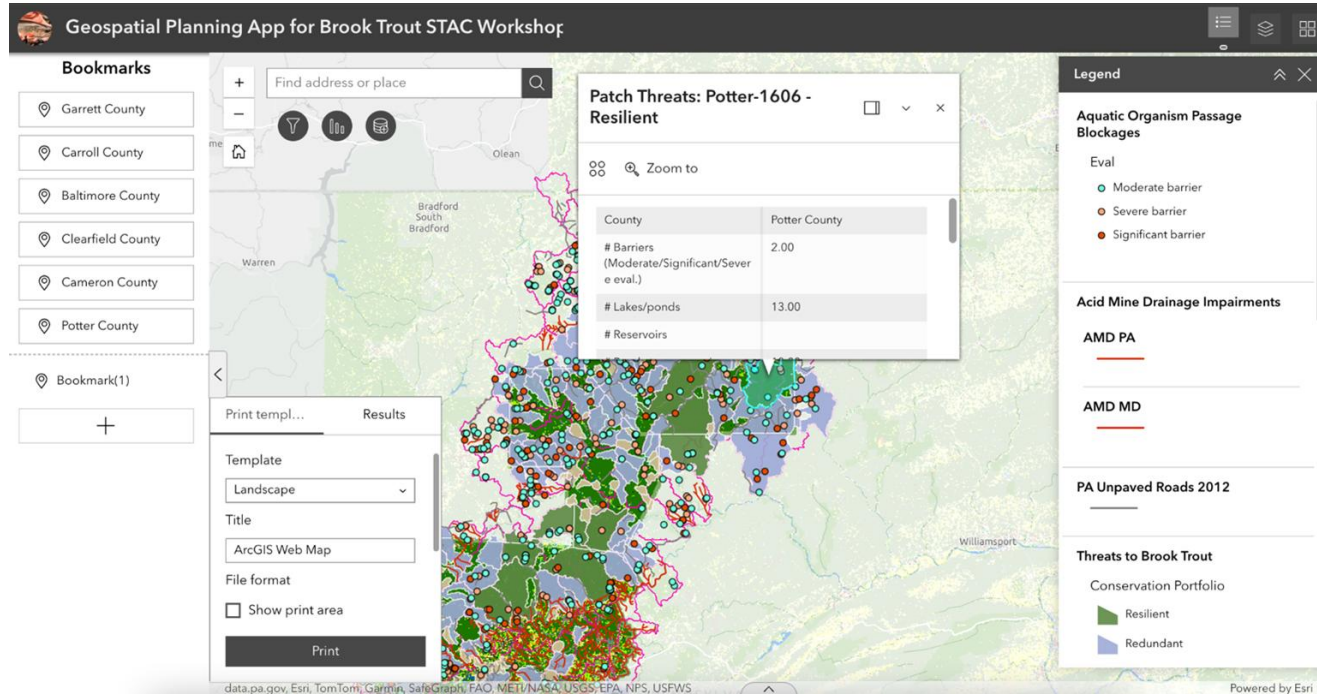
- Direction of the workgroup is to increase brook trout conservation efforts on the ground in priority watersheds by working with local jurisdictions and across all levels of government and funding sources.
 - Recommended working with counties to MB in 2023. PA and MD supported our recommendations
 - PA: Potter and Clearfield Counties
 - MD: Garrett, Carroll and Baltimore Counties

Beyond 2025 Brook Trout Outcome

Protect and enhance brook trout within the Chesapeake Bay watershed by increasing occupancy, abundance and resilience to changing environmental conditions.

- By 2040, increase brook trout occupancy by 1.5% (233 miles) in watersheds supporting healthy populations while achieving no net loss in other watersheds.
 - By 2040, increase abundance at 10 long-term monitoring sites.
 - By 2040, reduce identified threats by 15% to increase brook trout resilience in watersheds supporting healthy populations.
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Threats to Brook Trout



Total impairments in Healthy Watersheds

- Miles of AMD impaired within watershed supporting healthy brook trout populations were 333 miles (PA) + 43 miles (MD) + 18 miles (WV) = 394 miles
- Stream miles & acres without intact buffer (35ft buffer) = 2,376.6 miles or 33,498.4 acres
- Miles of Unpaved Roads within watershed supporting healthy brook trout populations in 2025 = 2,265.
- Focusing on just assessed culverts, there are 500 structures associated with 740 miles of potential habitat reconnection in watersheds supporting healthy brook trout populations.
- The protected lands indicator dataset was used to calculate the percent (~43%) and acreage (~2,065,676 acres) of non-protected natural lands within watersheds supporting healthy brook trout populations.

Workshop Recommendations

- Formalize a **Brook Trout Collaborative** - continuation of regularly scheduled meetings with workshop attendees. Increase collaborative membership as things progress.
- Create a **Brook Trout Restoration Coordinator** position to facilitate and grow the Brook Trout Collaborative and provide technical assistance to partners.
- Leverage the Brook Trout Collaborative to **improve communications** between stakeholders involved with brook trout restoration and conservation.
- Develop a **GIS-driven prioritization framework** to prioritize brook trout patches for restoration within and among states and counties.
- **Improve project tracking and monitoring** to better understand where brook trout restoration is occurring, evaluate biological response, and guide future investment.

PA and MD STAC Partners

State

- PA Fish and Boat Commission
- PA DEP
 - Chesapeake Bay Program Office
 - BAMR
- PA Center for Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies
- MD DNR
 - FABS
 - Forestry
- MDE AML

Local

- Conservation Districts
- Public Works
- SCDs

NGOs

- Stroud Water Research Center
- EBTJV
- TU
- Western PA Conservancy
- Watershed Associations
- Alliance for Chesapeake Bay

PA and MD STAC Partners

Federal

- NRCS
- USFWS
- USGS
- SRBC

Funders

- PA DEP Growing Greener
- Foundation for PA Watersheds
- Private Foundations
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation



A photograph of three brook trout swimming in a shallow stream. The fish are positioned horizontally across the frame, with one in the foreground and two slightly behind it. They have greenish-brown upper bodies with numerous yellow and white spots, and reddish-pink lower bodies. The water is clear, revealing a sandy bottom with scattered brown leaves and a few rocks. In the upper right corner, there is a light blue rectangular box containing the text "Questions?".

Questions?