



Eastern Brook Trout
JOINT VENTURE
A Fish Habitat Partnership

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www.easternbrooktrout.org

Douglas Stang, Steering Committee Chair
625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4750

February 24, 2012

Mr. Jeff Horan
Strategic Habitat Liaison
United States Fish & Wildlife Service
Science Applications
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, Massachusetts 01035-9589

Dear Mr. Horan: *Jr. PA*

As discussed during the January 31, 2012 conference call, the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV) recommends that the measurable outcome for brook trout populations identified under *Restoring Fish and Wildlife Populations* to track progress in achieving goals of the Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration Executive Order be updated from "restoration at a sub-watershed scale" to "restoration at a catchment scale." This recommendation reflects ongoing evaluation of brook trout data and a reassessment of brook trout population status at a finer geographic scale since the Executive Order and associated outcomes were established.

The EBTJV supports updating the brook trout outcome to restoration at the catchment scale since it provides a more realistic assessment of the status of brook trout populations and enhances the ability to measure progress resulting from on-the-ground projects.

As funding allows, the EBTJV plans to update its range-wide brook trout status assessment at the catchment scale on a five-year basis. The initial assessment, at the sub-watershed level, was conducted during 2005-2006, and the first five-year update, at the catchment level, is currently in progress. This refined population status information can be provided to Chesapeake Bay Program partners (partners) to monitor brook trout population trends within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and measure progress toward attaining identified fish and wildlife population restoration goals. If the Chesapeake Bay Program (Program) adopts the recommendation to measure brook trout population status at the catchment level, the EBTJV catchment-level assessment can be directly used by the partners – saving valuable partner effort and fostering understanding of our combined efforts. In essence, we will be "singing from the same sheet of music" when discussing brook trout status.

The EBTJV Science and Data Committee is currently compiling and evaluating basic guidelines for brook trout surveys that will be made available should the Program choose to conduct surveys internally or through Partners to update status assessments and evaluate project benefits. These basic guidelines will help ensure that collected brook trout data is easily transferable, can be used to update the range-wide status assessment, and is on par with data collected by EBTJV partners within and outside of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

The EBTJV looks forward to working with the Program and its partners in restoring brook trout populations and fostering the long-term sustainability of this important component of the natural heritage of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Please contact me if you have questions or want to further discuss the EBTJV recommendation to update the outcome measurement for the Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration Executive Order and assess brook trout status at the catchment level. My contact information: 518-402-8920 or dxstang@gw.dec.state.ny.us.

Yours in Conservation,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Doug", written in a cursive style.

Douglas L. Stang
Chair, Steering Committee

Cc: EBTJV Steering Committee Members