



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF A EASTERN BROOK TROUT JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP

Preamble

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) confirms the intent of state and federal fishery resource agencies, as well as interested non-governmental organizations, to participate in and support a joint venture partnership that focuses on conserving brook trout and their habitats in the eastern portion of the United States. The vision of the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture partnership is “*healthy, fishable brook trout populations throughout their historic eastern geographic range*”, which will be achieved by conserving intact brook trout populations and habitats; enhancing or restoring brook trout populations and habitats that have been impacted by habitat modification or other disturbances; encouraging partnerships among management agencies and stakeholders to seek solutions to issues such as regional environmental and ecological threats; developing and implementing outreach and educational programs to ensure public awareness of the challenges that face brook trout populations; and, developing support for implementation of programs that perpetuate and restore brook trout throughout their historic range.

Background

The brook trout, *Salvelinus fontinalis*, is a recreationally and culturally important species, regional icon, and indicator of high water quality. Biologists have long known that brook trout populations are declining across their historic eastern range from Maine to Georgia. In recognition of this trend of long-term decline and continued vulnerability, over 50 representatives from state and federal fish and wildlife management agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and academia met in June 2004 to discuss the opportunity for a collaborative approach to the conservation of brook trout in the eastern United States. In addition to identifying threats to brook trout across their historic range, it was the group’s consensus that there was an opportunity to form an Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture. A collaborative approach to brook trout management is justified because (1) brook trout are declining across their entire eastern range; (2) causes for these declines are similar; (3) an integrated approach would be cost effective; (4) watersheds of concern span state borders and state and federal jurisdictions; and (5) federally managed lands along the Appalachian and Adirondack crest provide strongholds of many viable populations.

Purpose

The Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture partners agree that developing and implementing a broad-scale, geographic-based conservation strategy is necessary to stop brook trout declines, improve technology transfer, and effectively prioritize funds and projects to

restore this recreationally and culturally important species. The Conservation Strategy will be a goal-oriented and science-based action plan that states explicitly what the partnership wants to accomplish at local, regional and rangewide scales, and provides guidance for strategic decision-making and methods for consistently and systematically evaluating on-the-ground success. The Conservation Strategy will not address all brook trout problems, but will complement and help support other brook trout protection and recovery actions and initiatives.

Key Issue Areas

To conserve brook trout, the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture will focus its efforts in five key issue areas: 1) assessment; 2) protection; 3) enhancement and restoration; 4) recreational fishing; and, 5) outreach.

Commitments of the Partners

The partners to this Memorandum of Understanding hereby affirm and agree to use their best efforts to take the following steps:

1. To develop and implement a Conservation Strategy that will address on-the-ground actions that conserve, enhance, and restore naturally reproducing brook trout populations throughout the species' historic eastern range.
2. To collectively pursue funding initiatives to support the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture partnership through all available avenues.
3. To collectively pursue interagency agreements, cooperative agreements, grants, and/or contracts to fund and implement Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture sponsored projects.
4. To encourage and support the participation of additional partners.

Implementation

Partners in this MOU recognize the critical need to reverse the trend of long-term decline and continued vulnerability of brook trout through a collaborative conservation approach embodied by the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture. Partners acknowledge that successful brook trout conservation efforts must involve a broad range of strategies on multiple spatial scales. Partners also agree on the appropriateness of cooperative agreements and grants and/or contracts to fund approved projects subject to the availability of funds and in accordance with applicable partner administrative policies and procedures.

Amendments

Any changes to this agreement must be mutually agreed upon by all partners to this MOU. An addendum, signed by all partners will be attached to the original MOU denoting any and all changes.

Period of Performance

This MOU will become effective upon the date subscribed by the second signatory partner. The liability of the partners to this MOU, to each other, and to third persons shall be governed by applicable laws and regulations now and hereafter enforced. The agreement may be terminated or otherwise canceled by mutual agreement among signatory partners. Any individual signatory may end its participation by providing the other signatory partners no less than sixty (60) days written notice. After such an action, the MOU will no longer be in force for that signatory.

Signature Page
Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture Partnership

Signing the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture Partnership Memorandum of Understanding indicates an agreement to participate in the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture Partnership in accordance with conditions outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding.

The Agreement will become effective upon the date subscribed by the second signatory partner. Any individual signatory may end its participation by providing the other signatory partners no less than sixty (60) days written notice. After such an action, the MOU will no longer be in force for that signatory. Original signature pages for each partner shall be kept current and on file at a location determined by the Chairman of the Steering Committee.

This Agreement will terminate at the point when there are no longer two active signatories. The Agreement may be amended at any time by mutual agreement of the parties.

The liability of the partners to this MOU, to each other, and to third persons shall be governed by applicable laws and regulations now and hereafter enforced.

On behalf of the organization noted, the undersigned hereby agrees to participate as a member of the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture Partnership.

(NAME)	(TITLE)
(ORGANIZATION)	(DATE)

Please mail a completed signature page to:

Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture Steering Committee
c/o Lila Borge Wills
Coordinator, Fish and Wildlife Information Exchange
Conservation Management Institute
1900 Kraft Drive, Suite 250 MS 0534
Blacksburg, VA 24061

Anticipated Signatory Partners

- *American Fisheries Society
- *American Sportfishing Association
- Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
- *Bureau of Land Management
- Canaan Valley Institute
- *Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection
- Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
- Environmental Protection Agency
- *Georgia Department of Natural Resources
- *Izaak Walton League of America
- James Madison University
- *Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
- *Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- *Massachusetts Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Environmental Law Enforcement
- *National Park Service
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- *New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife
- *New Hampshire Fish and Game Department
- *New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- *North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
- Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- *DOI Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation and Enforcement
- *Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
- *Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
- *South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
- *Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
- The Nature Conservancy
- *Trout Unlimited
- *Trust for Public Land
- *USDA Forest Service (Eastern and Southern Regions)
- *US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Geological Service
- *Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife
- *Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
- *Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
- *West Virginia Division of Natural Resources

***Current Signatory Partners**