

**Title:** 12-month petition finding under the Endangered Species Act for the coaster brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*).

**Description of Document:** This document contains the Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) analysis and finding about whether the coaster brook trout qualifies for listing as threatened or endangered, with critical habitat designated, under the Endangered Species Act.

**Estimated Dissemination Date of 12-month Finding to the Public:** May 19, 2009

## About the Peer Review Process

**Type of Peer Review:** In Summer 2008, the FWS solicited peer review of several unpublished research reports regarding coaster brook trout. The FWS further solicited the opinions of these peer reviewers regarding some current questions surrounding coaster brook trout biology and ecology. The FWS also convened a group of experts in a January 2009 to gather expert opinion regarding uncertainties surrounding coaster brook trout biology and ecology. All peer reviewers and experts considered scientific information only. They did not advise on, nor assess, the decision recommended by FWS biologists and managers.

An opportunity was provided for public comment on the FWS's 90-day petition finding in March 2008.

**Anticipated Number of Reviewers:** Four reviewers were consulted for the summer peer review and nine experts comprised the panel for the January expert elicitation.

**Reviewer Selection Method/Expertise of Reviewers:** The Service reviewed published literature and consulted internal salmonid and genetics experts to compile a list of potential participants for both the peer review and expert elicitation. Final participants and reviewers were selected for their outstanding expertise, diverse viewpoints, and Great Lakes brook trout expertise.

**Handling of Peer Review Comments:** The FWS considered the results of the expert elicitation and the peer review comments in its analysis and during decision making. The expert elicitation proceedings and peer review comments will be public documents upon publication of the 12-month finding; however, peer review comments will not be specifically addressed in the published 12-month finding.

**Estimated Start Date of Peer Review:** Peer review – May 2008. Expert elicitation – January 2009.

## About Public Participation

The public is asked to provide comments on this peer review process. Comments must be received by July 17, 2009. Comments on this peer review plan should be sent to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services, Attn: Peer Review, 1 Federal Drive, Fort Snelling, Minnesota 55111. Comments on this plan may also be submitted by electronic mail to [espeerreview\\_r3@fws.gov](mailto:espeerreview_r3@fws.gov). The subject line should read "Coaster brook trout – 12-month Finding."

A notice of availability of the 12-month finding will be published in the Federal Register and posted on the Region 3 Web site.

## Contact

For more information, contact Region 3 Ecological Services at (612) 713-5350.