

Big Wilson Creek

Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture Project

Mount Rogers
National Recreation Area
George Washington &
Jefferson National Forests



Headwaters of Big Wilson Creek Watershed

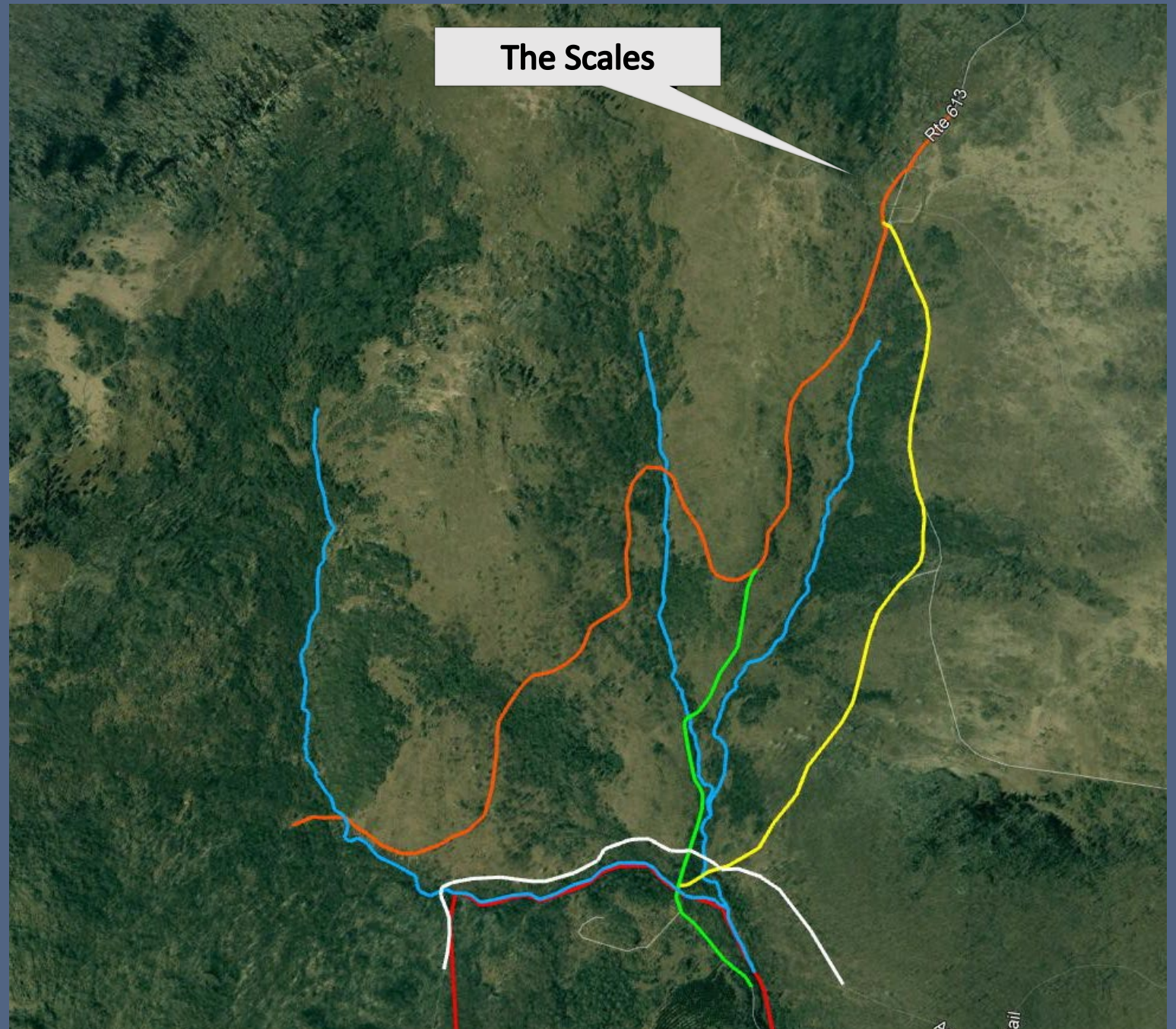
The headwaters of Big Wilson Creek comprise numerous small springs and seeps that form three distinct branches before combining along the boundary with Grayson Highlands State Park. With the addition of Quebec Branch and Little Wilson Creek, it drains the eastern half of the Crest Zone.



Phase I

The project was primarily funded with a grant from United States Fish and Wildlife Service through the Eastern Brook Trout joint Venture, with the purpose of improving habitat for eastern brook trout in the headwater region of Big Wilson Creek. Additional funding came from the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and US Forest Service.

The initial phase focused on reducing sediment delivery to the stream from the heavily used trail system. Direct sediment delivery was occurring as the soil eroded from the steep approaches to the stream crossings on the Virginia Highlands Horse Trail, Wilson Creek Trail and the Scales Trail.



Before

Crossing #1 Lower West Fork Big Wilson Creek

(Looking North away from Grayson
Highlands State Park)

Note: Larger jagged rocks in foreground



After

Crossing #1 Lower West Fork Big Wilson Creek

(Looking South toward Grayson
Highlands State Park)



Crossing #2 – East Fork Big Wilson Creek

Left – Down Slope toward stream Right – Upslope

Note that the trail is entrenched nearly 3 feet



After Crossing #2

This is an “in progress” photo as we were not quite finished when I snapped it.

A side benefit of this project is the incorporation of limestone into this acidic stream system.



Crossing #2
Just upslope of the
previous pictures

The upslope portion
of this trail was
completely reworked
with erosion control
structures rebuilt and
a heavy layer of gravel
put down.







Bye-Bye Autumn Olive

A little Non-native
Invasive Control as we
passed by.....



Before

Typical appearance of the steeper sections of these trails. The heavy horse traffic had cut through all of the water control structures.



After

Wilson Creek Trail

The water control structures were completely rebuilt using our small trail dozer.



Before

Crossing #3

Lower Middle Fork
Big Wilson Creek

Wilson Creek Trail



After

Crossing #3

Lower Middle Fork
Big Wilson Creek

Wilson Creek Trail



Before

Crossing #4
Upper Middle Fork
Big Wilson Creek

Virginia Highlands
Horse Trail



After

Crossing #4
Upper Middle Fork
Big Wilson Creek

Virginia Highlands
Horse Trail



Crossing #5 Upper crossing of the West Fork on the Virginia Highlands Horse Trail

We elected to not rework this crossing and concentrate on the more serious issues at the other crossings. It is hoped that we can continue a trail reconstruction project like this each summer.



Phase II

Will begin in Spring 2020 and will focus on reconstruction of the riparian exclusion fencing to keep the permitted livestock out of the sensitive riparian areas.

Phase III

Has already begun with the collection of spruce cones/seeds from Whitetop Mountain this fall. Phase III will focus on planting spruce seedlings into this watershed. We hope to have about 2,000 seedlings ready to plant in a couple years.