

Draft National Fish Habitat Board Meeting Summary: October 17-18, 2018

Board Members Present:

Chair Ed Schriever (At-Large State Seat)
 Vice Chair Chris Moore (MAFMC)
 Peter Aarestad (NEAFWA)
 Stan Allen (PSMFC)
 Alison Bowden (TNC)
 Doug Boyd (At-Large Sportfishing Seat)
 Clay Crabtree *for* Mike Leonard (ASA)
 David Hoskins *for* Jim Kurth (USFWS)
 Tom Lang (AFS)

Bryan Moore *for* Chris Wood (TU)
 Doug Nygren (MAFWA)
 Christy Plumer (TRCP)
 Kevin Pope *for* Doug Beard (USGS)
 Sam Rauch (NOAA Fisheries)
 Ron Regan (AFWA)
 Dan Shively *for* Rob Harper (USFS)
 Bobby Wilson (SEAFWA)

Board Members Absent:

Benita Best-Wong (EPA) and Sean Stone (CCA)

Other Meeting Attendees:

Jeff Hastings (Driftless FHP)
 Steve Perry (EBTJV)
 Tim Troll (Southwest Alaska FHP)
 Daniel Wieferich (USGS)
 Gordon Smith (Hawaii FHP)
 John Netto (FWS Regional Coordinator)
 Jessica Speed (Mat-Su Basin FHP)
 Tim Birdsong (TX Parks and Wildlife Dept.)
 Lisa Havel (ACFHP)
 Mike Daigneault (FWS)
 Jeff Boxrucker (Reservoir FHP)
 Alicia Marrs (CA Fish Passage Forum)

Christina Wang (Pacific Lamprey FHP)
 Stephanie Vail-Muse (Desert FHP)
 Heidi Keuler (Fishers and Farmers Partnership)
 Donovan Henry (Ohio River Basin FHP)
 Collin Moratz (Ohio River Basin FHP)
 Debbie Hart (Southeast Alaska FHP)
 Therese Thompson (Western Native Trout Initiative)
 Joe Nohner (Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership) **on phone*
 Susan Wells (NFHP Staff)
 Gary Whelan (NFHP Staff, SDC)
 Alex Atkinson (NFHP Staff) **on phone*

Future Board Meetings:

- January Board Webinar – tentatively January 16, 2019 from 2-4 PM
- March Board Meeting – tentatively March 20-21, 2019 hosted at Trout Unlimited in Washington, D.C.
- June Board Webinar – tentatively June 19 from 2-4 PM
- October Board Meeting – late October (date TBD), hosted by Science and Date Committee in Traverse City, MI

Approved by Motion:

- June Meeting Summary; motion by Bryan Moore, seconded by Doug Boyd.
- October Board Meeting Agenda; motion by Stan Allen, seconded by Ed Schriever.
- Nomination of Ed Schriever (WAFWA) as the new Board Chair; motion by Chris Moore, seconded by Peter Aarestad.
- FWS to consider increasing the base funding amount for each FHP from \$75k to \$125k for FY19; motion by Stan Allen, seconded by Chris Moore (abstention: David Hoskins, Sam Rauch).
- NFHP to partner with AFS to offer the Stan Moberly Award for Outstanding Contribution to Habitat Conservation and new FHS student/young professional award ; motion by Sam Rauch, seconded by Doug Nygren.

Other Action:

- Doug Boyd and Christy Plumer elected as NFHP Board Members to join the Beyond the Pond Board (unanimous approval from non-federal Board members).

Day 1 – October 17, 2018 Notes and Discussion**Welcome, Attendance, Introductions, and Housekeeping**

Due to heavy rain and flooding in the area, Craig Bonds wasn't able to make it to the meeting. Tim Birdsong, TX Parks and Wildlife's Chief of the Habitat Conservation Branch, welcomed the group to Texas. Tim emphasized that most of the state's work occurs on private lands in collaboration with landowners and introduced Ryan Reitz, Kerr Wildlife Management Area manager. Ryan Reitz of the Kerr Wildlife Management Area provided some background about the area and its history highlighting the Management Area's role in hunting and research. Board members and meeting attendees introduced themselves. The Board approved the October meeting agenda and the June Board call summary. Ed Schriever, WAFWA, was nominated by the nomination committee to be the next NFHP Board Chair. The Board voted to elect Ed as the Board Chair and he chaired the remainder of the Board meeting.

FHP Workshop Summary

Jeff Hastings (Driftless FHP) and Christina Wang (Pacific Lamprey FHP) shared an update with the Board about the two-day 2018 FHP workshop. All FHPs appreciated that many Board members attended, but some FHPs would like future workshops to be more designed for active Board members participation and to encourage this interaction. There is a strong interest in continuing to host FHP workshops every other year for their valuable discussions and opportunities for relationship building among coordinators and Board members. There were presentations and discussions at the workshop about FHP capacity, communications and outreach, fundraising, and data and tools. An open discussion following the summary revealed that there is concern about insufficient Board staff capacity and a need to clarify Board operations and responsibilities as outlined in the Action Plan and Interdependence Document. There was some discussion about National NFHP communications and the use of the brand and how to better spread the message and mission of NFHP in hopes of gaining new funding partners.

NFHP Meeting Schedule

The Board discussed the upcoming meeting schedule. The January Board call will tentatively be held on January 16th, 2019 (to be confirmed in November). The next in-person Board meeting will be hosted at Trout Unlimited headquarters in Washington DC in March 2019 (likely March 20-21). The 2019 October meeting will be hosted in Traverse City, MI likely the week of October 21st (to be confirmed at the January Board call).

Update from the Fish & Wildlife Service

David Hoskins shared with the Board the internal adjustments that were made by the USFWS to provide additional funds to the FHPs in FY18. The USFWS allocated \$3,966,000 in funding to FHPs, this is an increase of \$794,125 from FY2017. USFWS reduced its overhead from FY18 which contributed to the increase from FY17 in FHP project funding. For the first time, all 20 FHPs received \$75k in operational support. Susan Wells, NFHP staff at USFWS, will be moving in November to the Green Bay, WI field office and there are plans to replace her with a GS-13 position who will work on both fish passage and NFHP. There was discussion about the need for USFWS to consider increasing the core FHP funding from \$75k to \$100k or \$125k given that many FHPs are in need of a stable source of operational funding (with the note that these funds could also be used for projects if operational funds were not needed). With this consideration comes the need to report

back on the use of those funds and report out on spending of those funds. FHPs and the Board also asked USFWS about what NFHP should expect in terms of reduction of services if the legislation is enacted.

Legislative Update

Christy Plumer shared an update with the Board about the NFHP legislation that has now been introduced in both the House (HR6660) and Senate (S1436). A Public Lands Bill could serve as a vehicle for the NFHP legislation, it could be incorporate as part of an end of year clearance bill or it could pass early in the next session. An educational toolkit, including a fact sheet, talking points and MOC request letter, has been developed and is being distributed to FHP Coordinators after the FHP Workshop.

Budget and Multistate Grant Update

Ryan Roberts shared an update primarily focused on the Multistate Conservation Grants. The FY19 award resulted in \$250,680 to fund a variety of FHP priorities and the NFHP project tracking database. FHPs have previously applied in regional groups and will have to decide how they would like to proceed with the FY20 application as the next National Conservation Need (NCN) is developed at AFWA. There was discussion about FHPs applying as a group to obtain funding for marketing training or to fund an FHP workshop. A more detailed NFHP budget, delayed due to the timing of the FY19 budget, will be distributed and discussed in more detail at the January Board call

Beyond the Pond Update

Ryan Roberts shared an update about the latest happenings with Beyond the Pond. Five of the eight Beyond the Pond Board members in person in July in Denver, CO for a strategy session. The Board is in the process of hiring a part-time development director, Kara Nichols, to assist with coordinated fundraising to secure funding for FHP projects. NFHP representation on the Beyond the Pond Board has been shifting and during this meeting Doug Boyd and Christy Plumer were nominated to represent NFHP on the Beyond the Pond moving forward. There are challenges associated with Beyond the Pond defining fundraising goals or targets due to lack of engagement and knowledge in this area. The Board also discussed a need to better define the interactions between Beyond the Pond, the NFHP Board, and the FHPs. The Beyond the Pond Treasurer position is currently unfilled.

Science & Data Committee Update

Gary Whelan presented on the Science & Data Committee's (SDC) 2018 actions and 2019 priorities. Information from the National Assessment was presented at multiple meetings including AFS and the North American and is also under review for publication. Since the Inland Assessment does not currently have a source of funding, the products will likely be delayed until 2022. The Coastal Assessment is making progress, with support from NOAA and MAFMC, and products should be completed in the near future. The NFHP Project Tracking Database is another success and will allow FHPs and the Board to run reports and view projects on a map. In FY19, the Science & Data Committee will be continuing outreach efforts, planning future assessment work, working with USGS to support data systems, and developing project evaluation standards. Daniel Wieferich (USGS) presented on USGS data systems that support NFHP including the Biogeographic Characterization and Map.

Presentation from Western Native Trout Initiative (Therese Thompson)

Therese Thompson presented high level information about the Western Native Trout Initiative (WNTI). The WNTI Steering Committee is made up on 15 members ranging from state to tribal and federal representatives. From 2006-2017, WNTI has leveraged \$5.5M in federal funding to \$20M of matching funds for 141 projects reconnecting 1100 river miles. WNTI began a small grant program in 2015 which funds small projects along with matching dollars and has resulted in products like the "Know Your Native" posters. WNTI

utilizes several outreach tools to share about their message and grow support including a website, films, Instagram, and Twitter accounts. WNTI has also sponsored unique fundraising events including a “Flyathon” and a Rare Fish/Rare Beer project.

2019 Visioning

The Board Chair and Vice Chair led a discussion session with the Board drawing from the March 2016 Executive Session which raised, but did not resolve, many questions. The discussion focused on what types of plans would need to be in place if the NFHP legislation were to pass. The Board discussed USFWS support and staffing, alternate governance plans for other place-based conservation work, and Board committee engagement. The Board moved to create a working group to review more closely the implications of the legislation.

Day 2 – October 18, 2018 Notes and Discussion

Communication Update

Ryan Roberts updated the Board on NFHP communications. More FHP resources have been added to the NFHP website and there is a plan to add a new infographic and FHP coordinator bios. The Board recognized and discussed potential areas for improvement including better connecting Beyond the Pond with NFHP, promoting the Waters to Watch list and gathering high resolution photos. NFHP social media accounts, including Facebook and Twitter, are consistently active and relatively stable in followership. There was some discussion about adding a NFHP Instagram account to continue to reach new audiences and engage on social media. The Board agreed that the branding and logo guidelines should be re-shared with FHPs due to turnover in coordinator positions as well as a need to refresh on NFHP branding. The Board also agreed that due to limitations in staff and capacity, we need to focus our efforts and be strategic with our communications.

Overview of Lake Wichita Project

Tom Lang shared a presentation with the Board about a local project in Texas called Lake Wichita. The lake faces challenges with sedimentation, drought, and overall degradation. There have been opportunities to rebuild the shoreline, install new fishing piers, trails, boat launch, and a boardwalk. There is growing support for this project among the community through the *Our Lake Our Life* campaign including outreach and fundraising events, social media (dedicated icons and logos specific to public interests), and media coverage. Significant public and private funds have been raised to support this work through a variety of approaches and partnerships with local businesses.

Coastal Conservation Association

John Blaha, Assistant Director and Director of Habitat for CCA, presented to the Board about past, current, and future Coastal Conservation Association activities and priorities. John also directs a key habitat initiative, *Habitat Today for Fish Tomorrow*. He highlighted the Building Conservation Trust which was created under CCA to provide funding to grassroots-driven project which achieve one or more of five core objectives; restore habitats, create new habitats, advance science, foster habitat stewardship, and educate coastal communities. Key restoration areas for the Building Conservation Trust include marsh restoration, nearshore

reef restoration and creation, natural pass and inlet restoration, and science to support those efforts and John shared example projects under several of these areas.

Partnerships Committee Update

Stan Allen, co-chair of the Partnerships Committee, shared an update with the Board on 2018 accomplishments and 2019 priorities. The Partnerships Committee is working with the FHPs to develop an application approach for the Multistate Conservation Grants for 2019. The Partnerships Committee was responsible for planning the 2018 FHP Workshop. Another major committee accomplishment during 2018 was the FHP Evaluation process. The review team (Gary, Stan, Susan, Bryan, Doug, Tom, and Alex) is in the process of wrapping up the 2018 FHP Evaluation. This process is intended, not as a grading or punitive process, but to identify strengths and weaknesses across the FHPs so new FHPs can benefit and learn from more experienced FHPs. FHPs received their scores in early September and most participated in feedback calls with members of the review team. Once FHP scores are finalized, a FHP Evaluation report will be presented to the Board and finalized at the January Board call.

AFS/NFHP Award Proposal

Tom Lang shared with the Board a brief update about the AFS/NFHP award proposal that was introduced to the Board at the March 2018 meeting. A team (Tom Bigford, NOAA staff, Tom Lang, Ryan, and others) reviewed all fish habitat conservation awards (summarized in Tab 12 of Board Book) and supported NFHP and AFS co-sponsoring the Stan Moberly Award for Outstanding Contribution to Habitat Conservation to be awarded as a life time achievement award at the AFS plenary session. There was also support for a young professional award to be awarded within the AFS Habitat Section. NFHP Board staff time was a concern and the Board encouraged cooperation with AFS staff to get these awards developed and advertised.

Native Fish Conservation Areas of the Southwestern USA

Tim Birdsong presented to the group about several local Texas initiatives, partnerships, and outreach efforts. He highlighted work in the Llano, Blanco, and Pedernales Rivers, work supporting Guadalupe Bass, and several outreach conservation initiatives including the Native Bass Project, Stewards of the Wild, and the Landowner Incentive Program.