

2026 NATIONAL FISH HABITAT ACTION PLAN UPDATE



Process Timeline



Action	Deadline
AP Team Formed, Draft Mission and Goals Developed	November 2024 Board Meeting
Survey NFHP Board Members and FHP Coordinators to Inform Objectives	November-December 2024
Survey Key Stakeholders to Inform Objectives	January-February 2025
Draft AP Introductory Materials, Mission and Goals, and Descriptive Sections	January 2025 Board Meeting
Revisions to Draft Intro, Report on Stakeholder Input and Development of SMART Objectives	June 2025 Board Meeting
Development of Actions/Strategies Under Each Objective	Summer 2025
First Complete Draft Submitted to Board	Fall 2025 Board Meeting
Completion of Board and External Reviews	Post-Fall 2025 Board Meeting
Final Draft for Board Approval	December 2025 Board Meeting
Graphic Design and Printing	April 2026- 20 th Anniversary Celebration



External Partner Survey Results

- Conducted January 21-31, 2025
- Five questions related to NFHP's relevance to their work
- Sent to 140 partners including state and federal agency fisheries leadership, NGO leaders, Tribal consortia and organizations, councils and commissions not represented on the Board
- Received 52 responses (37%)



What role is NFHP uniquely positioned to play as a national entity addressing fish habitat conservation (protect, restore, enhance)?

- Federal- collaboration, bring states and feds together, national influence
- States- raise awareness, advocacy, interjurisdictional coordination, funding source
- NGO- collaboration, interjurisdictional coordination, convening (people, resources, protocols), set national priorities
- Other- interjurisdictional coordination



How can one or more of the 20 Fish Habitat Partnerships add value to your organization's aquatic habitat conservation work?

- Federal- scientific assessments
- State- assessments, interagency convening space, funding, information, public awareness, advocacy
- NGO- regional prioritization and planning



How can the NFHP Board add value to your organization's aquatic habitat conservation work?

- Federal- national coordination, IOP
- State- obtain more funding, connect states with other partners and non-NFHP funding sources, facilitate coordination among FHPs, educate stakeholders
- NGO- marketing and communication to stakeholders



Besides additional funding, what resources are lacking at a regional or national level for advancing meaningful aquatic habitat conservation (e.g., personnel or capacity, communication among partners, awareness of problems)?

- Federal- advocacy on the Hill for NFHP and partner agencies, communicate availability of existing resources for resource agencies and NGOs
- State- more personnel/capacity (lots of specific reasons given), communication among partners, national project database beyond NFHP projects, BMPs for habitat work, process streamlining
- NGO- advocacy on the Hill, facilitation of consensus/buy-in across stakeholder groups, clear prioritization of research and conservation needs
- Other- communication, technical information



QUESTIONS?



DRAFT Goals



Provide national leadership and coordination.



Mobilize and focus national, regional, and local support for fish habitat conservation.



Achieve measurable, science-based fish habitat conservation outcomes.



Evaluate and communicate the status of fish habitats and address gaps in scientific knowledge.



Important Notes

- REMINDER- like the first two Action Plans, this is a plan for all facets of NFHP
- Objectives are still DRAFT- edits are ongoing
- FHPs will have an opportunity to review next
- Objectives were crafted to be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**ime-bound (**SMART**)
- Actions/Strategies will be added under each objective to clarify “how” some of these things will be accomplished



Provide national leadership and coordination

- Establish a meaningful set of National Conservation Priorities for a period of time coinciding with the term of each Board Chair (Note: this could be up to six years)
- The Board, in concert with the Federal Interagency Task Force, will review, revise, and implement an Interagency Operational Plan every five years, providing a process for coordination among federal agencies in support of this Action Plan
- By 2030, leverage resources and enhance coordination with **eight** new national and regional partnerships that align with NFHP's mission and goals
- The Board will pursue securing the full authorized appropriation from Congress, and commitments from federal and state agencies each year during Fiscal Years 2026-2031 to fund and support the operations of designated FHPs



Mobilize and focus national, regional, and local support for fish habitat conservation

- Increase cooperation and coordination among federal, state, tribal, local agencies, conservation organizations, landowners and other stakeholders each year through 2031
- Each Board member will intentionally engage with the constituencies they represent at least annually to increase awareness of and support for NFHP
- Raise \$10 million in private funding via the NFHP Board's 501c3 by 2031
- The Board's Policy Committee will engage with potential Congressional sponsors to secure passage of legislation that reauthorizes NFHP funding no later than September 30, 2030
- The Board's Communications Committee will develop a Communications Plan and step-down guidance/toolkit for use by FHPs by December 31, 2027
- Engage the recreational fishing community in fish habitat conservation by ensuring that 75% of FHP steering committees have a recreational fishing organization representative on their steering committee by 2030



Achieve measurable, science-based fish habitat conservation outcomes

- Each FHP will facilitate increased collaboration among stakeholders by convening state, territorial, tribal, and federal agencies, conservation groups, landowners and other interested parties by organizing events annually that focus existing and new resources towards increasing effectiveness in achieving long-term, sustainable results
- Fish Habitat Partnerships will create and update prioritization plans or decision support tools every five years to identify priority conservation outcomes and develop strategies that influence fish habitat conservation work conducted by partners across the landscape
- Fish Habitat Partnerships will annually support (via direct funding, leveraging additional funding, and partnerships) fish habitat conservation projects that address the root causes of degradation to habitats identified in prioritization plans
- By 2031, provide an online portfolio of regionally or nationally accepted science-based methods and tools that help partnerships plan, measure and demonstrate progress



Evaluate and communicate the status of fish habitats and address gaps in scientific knowledge

- Develop a national fish habitat assessment by 2030 that is informed by regional FHP assessments and FHP prioritization plans
- Develop a socioeconomic evaluation toolkit for FHPs by 2028 to use for project-specific and regional analyses to quantify economic benefits to local communities and raise public awareness of the role healthy fish habitat plays in improving quality of life for the American people
- Develop a communications plan for the National Fish Habitat Assessment that outlines the utility of the Assessment results for different audiences prior to its release in 2030



QUESTIONS?