



United States Department of the Interior
Office of the Secretary
Washington DC 20240

Mr. Ed Schriever
Chairman
National Fish Habitat Partnership
1100 Fist Street, NE, Suite 825
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your letter, dated June 30, 2021, on behalf of the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) presenting the priority list of fish habitat conservation projects that the NFHP Board recommends for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 funding. We appreciate the collective efforts of the Board and the Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs) to provide the list of projects recommended for funding, per the provisions of the recently enacted Title II–National Fish Habitat Conservation Through Partnerships of America’s Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act.

I have reviewed the list of projects recommended for funding by the Board. My review considered the information submitted by the Board on the projects, as well as information available on the project evaluation and selection process conducted at the FHP and Board level to ensure that each recommended project meets the provisions of Title II of the ACE Act. My review suggests the slate of projects recommended by the Board for funding in FY 2022 is consistent with the goals and objectives outlined in Title II of the ACE Act. As the Board recognizes, not all of the recommended projects met the ACE Act provision that at least 50 percent of the cost of each project is funded with non-Federal funds, though collectively, NFHP funds for these projects would be matched with non-Federal funds by a ratio of almost 5:1. I also note that, based on estimated project costs, four percent of the funding recommended by the Board is for projects carried out by Indian Tribes. This is below the five percent provision of Title II of the ACE Act. For future years, I encourage the FHPs and Board to keep working with Tribal partners, and to meet, or exceed, this provision.

I understand all of the provisions outlined in the recently enacted ACE Act will take some time to fully implement. However, I am pleased with the level of effort put forward by the project proponents, the FHPs, and the Board, in striving to meet all of these provisions. I believe this inaugural list of recommended projects sets a solid foundation in our collective efforts to fully meet the vision established by Title II of the ACE Act. I encourage the Board to work with appropriate contacts at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to further clarify and streamline the project evaluation and submission process for future years.

I am pleased to approve this inaugural list of fish habitat conservation projects for funding under Title II of the ACE Act! Thank you, the rest of the Board, the all-important FHPs, and the many

other partners involved for your continued efforts to advance fish habitat conservation. Efforts such as NFHP are essential to achieving this Administration's goal to pursue a collaborative and inclusive approach to conservation. To be successful, we must continue to work together to leverage resources to protect, restore, and enhance fish and aquatic habitat across the county.

I, and staff in the Department, look forward to continuing our support of NFHP. If you have questions regarding this letter or the Department efforts in support of the NFHP program, please contact Mr. Stephen Guertin, Deputy Director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, via email at Stephen_Guertin@fws.gov.

Sincerely,

Shannon Estenoz
Assistant Secretary for
and Wildlife and Parks