



BOARD MEETING BOOK

APRIL 26, 2021 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM EDT

(Zoom Meeting)

National Fish Habitat Partnership Board Meeting Agenda

**Monday, April 26, 2021
3:00 – 5:00 PM ET**

Zoom Meeting Information:

<https://fishwildlife-org.zoom.us/j/97294725179?pwd=Wnhtdjd4RUFTYVNVc2ZWZWM3FhalVzQT09>

Meeting ID: 972 9472 5179

Passcode: 240854

Time (PM ET)	Agenda Item	Board Book Tab	Lead(s)
3:00	Welcome		Ed Schriever (<i>Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Board Chairman</i>)
3:05	Thank You to ACE Act Champions <i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members to thank the Congressional champions of America’s Conservation Enhancement Act. 		Mike Leonard (<i>American Sportfishing Association, Board Member</i>)
3:20	Attendance and Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board action to approve the agenda for this meeting. • Board action to approve the meeting summary from the March meeting. 	Tab 1	Ed Schriever (<i>Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Board Chairman</i>)
3:30	2021 NFHP Board Meeting Schedule <i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The facilitated Board Visioning session will be held Monday, May 17 from 2 – 3:30 PM ET. • Next NFHP Board meeting will be Monday, May 24 from 3 – 5 PM ET. 	Tab 2	Alex Atkinson (<i>NOAA Fisheries, Board Staff</i>)
3:35	NFHP Conservation Priorities & FY22 FHP Project Submittal & Review Process <i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of the legacy NFHP conservation priorities. 	Tab 3	Gary Whelan (<i>Co-Chair of the Science and Data Committee, Board Staff</i>)

- **Board vote** on adoption of legacy NFHP conservation priorities in the interim year of FY22.
- **Board awareness and discussion** of the planned FY22 process and timeline to submit and review FHP projects.
- **Request for Board member volunteers** to participate on the subcommittee to review FHP project submissions.

Tab 4

Stan Allen (*Partnerships Committee Tri-Chair*)

4:15

Partnerships Committee Update

Desired outcomes:

- **Board awareness** of the Fish Habitat Conservation project definition accepted by the Board via virtual vote.
- **Board awareness** of the retrospective FHP match analysis.

Tab 4

Bryan Moore (*Partnerships Committee Tri-Chair*)

4:30

NOAA Fisheries Announcement of FY21 Funded NFHP Projects

Desired outcomes:

- **Board awareness** of FY21 NOAA-funded NFHP projects.

Sam Rauch (*NOAA Fisheries, Board Member*)

4:40

USFWS Update

Desired outcomes:

- **Board awareness** of any update from the March Board meeting discussion and clarification on match funding.
- **Board awareness** of the status of list of Tribal member nominees.
- **Board awareness** of the status of Interagency Operational Plan discussions.

Steve Guertin (*US Fish and Wildlife Service, Board Member*)

4:50

History of the Waters to Watch Campaign

Desired outcomes:

- **Board awareness** of the history, mission and previous successes of this campaign.

Tab 5

Ryan Roberts (*Association of Fish and Wildlife, Board Staff*)

5:00

Adjourn

National Fish Habitat Partnership Board Meeting Agenda

**Monday, March 22, 2021
3:00 – 5:00 PM ET**

Zoom Meeting Information:

<https://fishwildlife-org.zoom.us/j/96259811664?pwd=NjVGNDRTcW90eThzK3lLK3pEdHRYZz09>

Meeting ID: 962 5981 1664

Passcode: 939793

Dial by your location: 1 301 715 8592

Attendees (56):

Board Members Present:

1	Allen	Stan	X
2	Austen	Doug	X
3	Bowden	Allison	X
4	Boyd	Douglass	X
5	Cantrell	Chris	X
6	Eischeid	Ted	X
7	Gilliland	Gene	X
8	Guertin	Steve	X
9	Gyant	Barnie	X
10	Kinsinger	Anne	X
11	Kruse	Carter	X
12	LeCoq	John	X
13	Leonard	Mike	X
14	Moore	Chris	X
15	Moore	Bryan	X
16	Nygren	Doug	X
17	Perry	Steve	X
18	Plumer	Christy	X
19	Rauch	Sam	X
20	Schaeffer	Timothy D.	X
21	Schriever	Ed	X
22	Slaughter	Joe	X
23	Trushenski	Jesse	X
24	Wilson	Bobby	X

Jesse Trushenski introduced herself to the full Board - Agricultural representative and is the Chief Science Officer at Riverence, formerly worked for ID Fish and Game, and was a professor

at Southern IL University. Jesse is also a past president of AFS.

FHP & FWS Present:

- Kevin Haupt
- Jessica Speed
- Karin Eldridge
- Branden Bornemann
- Louise Maldin
- Gordon Smith
- Alicia Marrs
- Joe Nohner
- Jennifer Graves
- Richard Mitchell
- Deb Hart
- Therese Thompson
- Tripp Boltin
- Mike Daigneault
- Lisa Havel
- Steven Krentz
- Callie McMunigal
- Bill Rice
- John Netto

Board Staff Present:

- Alex Atkinson
- Ryan Roberts
- Mike Bailey
- Gary Whelan
- Daniel Wierferich

Other Meeting Attendees:

- Rob Harper (USFS)
- Eric MacMillan (USFWS)
- Susan Pultz (NOAA Fisheries)
- Kimberly Conley (USFS)
- John Young
- Christopher Estes

Board Business:

Approved by Motion:

- February NFHP Board Meeting summary: motion by Chris Moore, seconded by Steve Perry.
- March NFHP Board Meeting agenda: motion by Chris Moore, seconded by Alison Bowden.
- The Board shall seek a virtual vote (via email or poll) of the full Board on the revised project definition put forward by the Partnerships Committee:
“Fish Habitat Conservation Projects include all activities that the NFHP Board, Fish Habitat Partnerships, and our partners perform, fund, or support in whole or in part, that coordinate, promote, and implement conservation (protect, restore and enhance) actions for fish and aquatic habitat.”

Future Board Meetings

- Following the March meeting, Board meetings via Zoom will tentatively be scheduled on **the fourth Monday of the month – April 26, May 24, June 28, and July 26.**
- The Board expressed via Zoom poll an interest in a both virtual and in-person visioning/assimilation session. The Board has availability from 2-3:30 PM ET on Monday, May 17 for the first virtual visioning session to occur.

Summary:

Time (PM ET)	Agenda Item	Board Book Tab	Lead(s)
3:00	Welcome, Attendance, & Introductions <i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board staff action to take attendance. • Board action to approve the agenda for this meeting. • Board action to approve the meeting summary from the February meeting. 		Ed Schriever (<i>Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Board Chairman</i>)

Chairman Schriever welcomed everyone to the Board meeting. Alex Atkinson (Board staff) took the Board roll call and all Board members were present. Chairman Schriever reminded the Board that we are not yet a complete Board, given that we are short 2 Tribal members. Chairman Schriever outlined how the Board is operating on “parallel tracks” since it has not yet had the opportunity to formally approve Committee membership, workplans, Board procedures, etc. but has had to make quick progress on some key decisions that are provisions of the ACE Act. The Board and its Committees have legacy materials from which to draw language and develop new materials in accordance with provisions of the Act. This Board will establish its own set of National Conservation Priorities and must use what they have in the interim to navigate the transition. Chairman Schriever outlined that although the Board has not yet defined what determines a quorum, the perfect attendance of Board members on today’s call represents the diversity of perspectives that are intended to be included. He also reminded the Board that the ACE

Act requires an affirmative vote of 2/3 of all Board members to approve a recommended list of Fish Habitat Conservation Projects for the Secretary of Interior.

3:15 2021 NFHP Board Meeting Schedule

Tab 1

Alex Atkinson (NOAA Fisheries, Board Staff)

Desired outcomes:

- **Board awareness** of future 2021 meeting schedule.
- **Next NFHP Board meeting will be Monday, April 26 from 3-5 PM ET.**
- **Board discussion** of planning for a future facilitated Board visioning session.

Alex Atkinson (Board staff) reminded the Board of the meeting schedule through July. At one of the upcoming meetings, the Board will need to discuss the meeting frequency needed for the remainder of the year beyond July. In addition to discussing the meeting schedule, Alex described the Board visioning session that the staff is developing with an AFWA MAT facilitator to help establish a common foundation from which the Board can operate. This 90-minute session will include both large and small group discussions and the MAT team has successfully facilitated these sessions remotely during the pandemic. Topics to be discussed include values, norms and traditions of the NFHP Board, challenges and desires of the NFHP Board moving forward, and sharing data regarding external influences to the NFHP Board.

The staff requested Board input for whether to have a visioning session virtually, in-person, or pursue one of each. With 62% of the vote in a Zoom poll, the Board indicated a preference to have one of each a virtual and in-person visioning session led by a facilitator. The Board indicated a preference for Monday, May 17 for the virtual visioning session. Chairman Schriever indicated that it would be ideal to have an in-person meeting in late summer or early fall, but time will tell whether or not that is possible. The Board and the federal agencies designated in the ACE Act will also need to be thinking about development of the Interagency Operational Plan which is due by October 30, 2021.

3:30 Screening of NFHP “Our Story” Video and “Getting to Know the FHPs” videos

Ryan Roberts (Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Board Staff)

Desired outcomes:

- **Board awareness** of the NFHP mission & legacy.
- **Q&A** about the FHP presentations.

Ryan Roberts (Board staff) introduced and screened the “Our Story” NFHP video that was produced in celebration of the 10-year anniversary of NFHP in 2016 with funding support from Bass Pro Shops. He also showed two “Getting to Know FHPs” videos – one from the Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership and the other from the Western Native Trout Initiative. A Board member indicated that NFHP should be cognizant of life jacket usage in any outreach materials that show people on boats given recent boat-related fatalities in the state of PA. Chairman Schriever wrapped up the session by emphasizing that it is important for NFHP to make the link between people and fish habitats in order to help people understand the important impacts of our work.

3:55 Updates from USFWS

Steve Guertin (US Fish and Wildlife Service)

Desired outcomes:

- **Board awareness** of FY2021 funding and support from the USFWS.
- **Board awareness** of the status of list of Tribal member nominees.
- **Board awareness** of the status of Interagency Operational Plan discussions.

Steve Guertin thanked the Board and FHPs for their feedback and conversation during the February Board meeting about the recommendation to maintain the status quo for FY2021. That feedback was incorporated into discussions at the USFWS that resulted in the election to maintain the status quo for FY2021 and allow the Partnership more time to transition into the new funding model. Steve summarized what this will mean in terms of funding - \$6.64M in total:

- \$1.7M (base operational funding for FHPs)
- \$2.75M (FHP projects)
- \$2.25 (USFWS staff support)

And that this will mean no change in USFWS personnel support for FY2021. For FY2022, the new administration is formulating its budget. The new administration will likely align their budget with four main pillars – climate, racial justice, and economic and COVID recovery. This could mean potential additional NFHP funding opportunities via a forthcoming infrastructure bill.

Steve also informed the Board that the list of five Tribal seat nominations is currently in the hands of the Assistant Secretary and hopefully will be approved by the Secretary of the Department of Interior by the Board's April meeting to allow the Board to approve these last two members of the Board. In advance of the April meeting, the USFWS will be reaching out the Federal partners to begin work on the Interagency Operational Plan. They plan to loop in agencies beyond those described by the Act (NOAA, EPA, USFS, and USGS) to also include BLM, FEMA, Army Corps of Engineers, and Federal Highway Administration who could all be critical partners in this work.

4:10 Recap of Board Priority Actions

Desired outcomes:

- **Board awareness** of the upcoming decision points of the Board.

Ed Schriever (*Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Board Chairman*)

Chairman Schriever recapped the funding scenario described in Steve's update and re-emphasized the need for the Board to continue operating in "parallel tracks". He summarized that it will be important for the Partnership to rethink our vernacular with respect to the term "project funding". Previously, that meant a traditional on-the-ground project that moved dirt. The new NFHP model identifies \$7.2M for "projects" (this term is not defined by the Act and the Board has an opportunity to define), but also requires new 1:1 non-federal match. We no longer have a scenario by where the USFWS can provide the \$1.7M in support of base operations to the Fish Habitat Partnerships.

Since the February Board meeting, the Board has requested that the Board Committees help the Board think about a project definition. Chairman Schriever also clarified that of the \$7.2M identified for projects, 5% is allocated to Tribes and does not require 1:1 non-federal match. That means that the Board will have \$6.84M in project funding to provide for Fish Habitat conservation projects. In addition, the Board will need to discuss the multiple levels at which match can be met.

4:20 Board Priority Actions (by Committee)

Desired outcomes:

Partnerships Committee (PC):

- **Board awareness** of PC membership.
- **Board awareness and discussion of:**
 - PC strawman “project” definition;
 - Retrospective on NFHP non-federal match

Tab 2

Stan Allen (*Partnerships Committee Tri-Chair*) & **Therese Thompson** (*Partnerships Committee Tri-Chair, Western Native Trout Initiative Coordinator*)

Stan Allen reviewed the updated membership of the Partnerships Committee since the February Board meeting (5 Board members and 11 FHP coordinators). Stan highlighted several of the Committee’s main tasks including developing a draft definition of “Fish Habitat Conservation Project”, examining non-federal match funding in previous years, and developing a recommended plan for FY2022 funding. Stan presented the draft project definition and outlined that the Committee started with the USFWS project definition making revisions so the definition would encompass a broader suite of activities including FHP operational support.

Therese Thompson introduced three different potential interpretations of the 1:1 non-federal match requirement (project level, FHP level, and NFHP level). Therese also shared with the Board that the Committee is gathering funding data to retrospectively examine match brought in by FHPs in FY2020 to see what level of match the Partnerships bring in, without that requirement.

The Board then discussed the proposed definition of Fish Habitat Conservation Project and the match funding requirement. Questions were raised about the Congressional intent of the match requirement to better understand at what level Congress expects to see this match. Christy Plumer shared that the language in the ACE Act was modeled after the **North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA)** and that the match requirement was a very important element of the bill for the Republicans of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. She also emphasized that NAWCA includes in-kind contributions which creates additional flexibility in how the match requirement can be met. Christy did not think it would acceptable to Congress for NFHP to meet the \$6.84M in match as NAWCA funding is matched on a project-level basis. On the topic of FHP attrition, Chairman Schriever reminded the Board that all 20 FHPs have 5 years to meet the threshold of requirements outlined in the ACE Act and that the Board hopes to examine ways to help some of the less sophisticated FHPs gain the capacity needed to be fully approved by Congress.

Some Board members expressed concern about the defensibility of this very high level project definition and an interest in seeing the retrospective match data. **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)** was mentioned as another potential model to examine that requires match funding. Steve Guertin mentioned the importance of building good grace with appropriators and that showing previous funding cycles’ project-level match can help to document our progress as the Partnership navigates this transition. He also offered that the USFWS could look more into the match funding requirement interpretation with the help of an examiner and potentially an appropriations clerk point of contact. Chairman Schriever reminded the Board that the ACE Act outlines a deadline for FHP projects to be submitted to the Board by March 31 and a list of projects recommended for funding to the Secretary of DOI by July 1.

Science and Data Committee (SDC):

- **Board awareness** of SDC membership.
- **Board awareness and discussion of:**

Tab 3

Gary Whelan (*Science and Data Committee Co-Chair*)

- Process to develop FY2022 project and evaluation criteria;
- Process to develop national NFHP priorities

Gary Whelan presented briefly on behalf of the Science and Data Committee, re-established at the last Board meeting. He outlined the key priorities of the Committee including developing National Conservation Priorities, project review and evaluation criteria, reviewing FHP assessments, supporting NFHP Project tracking database needs, and supporting a new NFHP Data System.

Legislative/Budget Committee:
Board discussion of former Legislative Team of NFHP

Christy Plumer (*Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership*)

Christy Plumer recommended the Board rethink the former NFHP Leg Team in order to meet the Board's need to implement the ACE Act while coordinating with OMB and other partners on the Hill. This new team could be called the NFHP Policy Committee. This Committee would advance legislative and administrative policies and funding opportunities for the benefit of NFHP and its associated fish habitat partnerships. There is a recognition by members of the former Leg Team that NFHP has opportunities for new funding streams. Tim Schaeffer, NFHP Board Member and head of AFWA's Legislative and Federal Budget Committee, has agreed to serve in the Chair role of this new Policy Committee. There was no action during the meeting to form this new Committee, but was raised for the Board's future consideration.

The Board then revisited the Partnerships Committee's recommended definition of Fish Habitat Conservation project to see if it would be able to be put to a vote (that would require at least 16 "Yes" votes to adopt the definition). There was much additional discussion about the purpose of the definition and its intention to provide flexibility within the ACE Act to fund projects to include FHP base operational support. Chairman Schreiber emphasized that the Board is looking for a simple solution to this issue that will not cause NFHP to lose many of its existing Fish Habitat Partnerships and that the Board will, ultimately, be reviewing all FHP projects proposed for funding to approve and recommend to the Secretary of Interior annually.

The Board voted on a motion to accept the definition:

"Fish Habitat Conservation Projects include all activities that the NFHP Board, Fish Habitat Partnerships, and our partners perform, fund, or support in whole or in part, that coordinate, promote, and implement conservation (protect, restore and enhance) actions for fish and aquatic habitat."

which did not pass (16 votes required to approve, vote count was 13 yes – 3 no). The Board then discussed and approved via vote an approach to ask for a virtual vote of the full Board on the definition since the previous vote was made following some Board members leaving the call. There was some additional discussion about some of the concerns with the definition and the possibility of including overhead in project costs in order to cover FHP base operational support. The Board call adjourned around 5:45 PM ET.

5:00 **Adjourn**

2021 National Fish Habitat Board Meeting Schedule

Background: The National Fish Habitat Board has many important actions to implement in short order following the passage of the ACE Act. Given this, the Board will be meeting monthly for the first portion of 2021. The meeting schedule for the latter portion of the year will be discussed at a future Board meeting.

Meeting Schedule (through July 2021):

- **April 26, 2021 from 3-5 PM ET**
- **May 17, 2021 from 2 – 3:30 PM ET *facilitated session**
- **May 24, 2021 from 1-5 PM ET (extended Board meeting)**
- **June 28, 2021 from 3-5 PM ET**
- **July 26, 2021 from 3-5 PM ET**

Title: FY2022 National Fish Habitat Conservation Priorities**Desired Outcome:**

- **Board approval** of FY2022 National Fish Habitat Conservation Priorities

Decision Type: Consensus**Time Allotted:** 30 minutes**Background:**

The America's Conservation Enhancement Act (ACE Act) Title II Section 201 (2) requires the National Fish Habitat Partnership Board (Board) to establish consensus on a set of National Conservation Priorities to guide the actions and investment of Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs). The FHPs are the primary work units of the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) and are formed around key aquatic habitat types or habitat processes, focal keystone species, or distinct geographic areas. With this diverse set of FHPs a set of national conservation priorities are needed from the Board to guide FHPs to effectively address fish habitat conservation needs at the appropriate scale, mobilize partners and the public, and leverage resources to conserve, restore and improve habitat.

The Board first developed National Conservation Priorities to assist FHPs in project development in 2007. The first set of National Fish Habitat Conservation Priorities assumed that NFHP would be soon funded at a level between \$75-100 million annually through proposed legislation, leading to the approved comprehensive quantitative set of target conservation measures at the November 2007 Board Meeting (Appendix 1).

By 2012, it was apparent that federal legislation to codify NFHP and its expected budget were not likely to occur. The NFHP budget continued to be included in the USFWS budget as demonstrated using the FY2018 budget example that detailed an approximately \$6.664 million total NFHP budget with \$2.466 million available for FHP project funding. This amount was matched by 3:1 by FHPs but overall was a fraction of the original envisioned amount for this program. In response to this level of funding, the Board at the February 2013 meeting approved a new set of National Fish Habitat Conservation Priorities (Appendix 2) that were qualitative measures as follows:

1. Protect intact healthy waters
2. Restore hydrologic conditions for fish
3. Reconnect fragmented fish habitats
4. Restore water quality

At the February 2013 Board meeting, it was noted that quantitative measures would be needed for these broad categories, but these were not subsequently developed or approved by the Board. It was also noted in this and subsequent meetings that the Board would need to work to ensure the FHPs had sufficient resources to implement these national fish habitat conservation priorities. The Board approved 2013 priorities continued to be used through to the passage of the ACE Act. With the passage of the ACE Act and its specific requirements for the Board submission of a recommended set of fish habitat projects to the Secretary of the Department of Interior by July 1 of each year, it is critical the Board provide national conservation priority guidance for the FY2022 projects. Given the short timeframe, it appears to be prudent to continue using the current National Fish Habitat Conservation Priorities with the addition of a priority to ensure resources to allow FHPs to implement these priorities.

The Board should next work to fully develop consensus on a set of national fish habitat conservation priorities to adopt for FY2023. For discussions on FY2023 priorities the Board will need to consider whether they wish to have qualitative or quantitative priorities. The Science and Data Committee will develop options for Board consideration by the October 2021 Board meeting. Options will leverage data in the project tracking database and data from the 2016 National Fish Habitat Assessment to bound any quantitative priorities, where past projects will be used to estimate NFHP capacity of fish habitat conservation work given past to current funding ratios.

Decision Requested on Staff Recommendation:

1. **Yes**, the Board approves the staff recommended interim National Fish Habitat Conservation Priorities for use with the FY2022 FHP project selection process and will review future options for the Board's National Fish Habitat Conservation Priorities in October 2021. The five National Fish Habitat Conservation Priorities for use with the FY2022 FHP project selection process will be:
 - a. Protect intact healthy waters
 - b. Restore hydrologic conditions for fish
 - c. Reconnect fragmented fish habitats
 - d. Restore water quality
 - e. Ensure resources are available to allow FHPs to implement the Board conservation priorities.
2. **No**, the Board does not approve the staff recommendation for interim National Fish Habitat Conservation Priorities for the FY2022 FHP project selection process. The Board will develop a set of interim National Fish Habitat Conservation Priorities for use with the FY2022 project selections and will review future options for the Board's National Fish Habitat Conservation Priorities in October.

Report written by: Gary Whelan (MI DNR Fisheries Division)
Daniel Wieferich (USGS)
Board Science and Data Committee Co-Chairs
April 15, 2021

Appendix 1 - Interim Strategies and Targets for National Fish Habitat Action Plan

Approved November 2, 2007

Introduction – The following are revised draft interim strategies and targets for the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) that could be implemented prior to completion of the first national fish habitat assessment in 2010. The draft interim strategies and targets were initially presented to the Board at its March 2007 meeting. Subsequent to the March Board meeting, the Committee leadership worked closely with NFHAP Board Liaisons (Mike Andrews and Kelly Hepler) to further develop the initial draft of interim strategies. The draft interim strategies and targets have been reviewed by the Science and Data Committee (Committee), the NFHAP Board Staff, the Pilot and Candidate Fish Habitat Partnerships, and were broadly presented to the NFHAP Federal Caucus on June 26, 2007, for input. The revised interim targets shown below are based on the strategies approved by the National Fish Habitat Board (Board) at its June 2007 meeting.

Although our charge suggested we should not set numeric targets, we have provided possible numeric targets for each goal for each partnership to achieve as an option for the Board’s consideration. The numeric targets are based on “best” professional judgment and should be multiplied by the number of approved partnerships to achieve the national numeric target for each strategy. We have also provided a set of measures for each goal to allow success tracking to be done by the Board.

The described numeric targets are proposed for the interim time period before the national fish habitat assessment is completed in 2010. Partnerships should strive to meet the targets that are most relevant for meeting their strategic priorities, during this interim time period. Partnerships are not expected to meet the numeric goal under every target.

The terms “protection,” “restore,” and “enhance” are defined in Attachment A.

Preamble

To conserve (protect, restore, and enhance) the habitats of the nation's marine and freshwater fish populations, **to support a broad natural diversity of fish and other aquatic species, to promote self-sustaining fish populations, and to provide successful fishing opportunities;** we adopt the following strategies:

1. Strategy 1 – Identify and protect intact and healthy waters

- a. Protection targets for each Partnership, as applicable
 - i. Identify all intact and healthy waters along with key target fish and aquatic species for each
 - ii. Protect 1000 miles of intact and healthy river and stream habitat including natural stream flows
 - iii. Protect 10,000 acres of intact lake habitat including natural lake levels
 - iv. Protect 10,000 acres of intact coastal (freshwater, estuarine, or marine) habitat
- b. Success measures for each Partnership, as applicable
 - i. Miles of intact and healthy river and stream habitat protected
 - ii. Acreage of intact lake habitat protected
 - iii. Acreage of intact coastal (freshwater, estuarine, or marine) habitat protected
 - iv. Optional long-term measure - For each of the above, document whether the key target fish or invertebrate populations remained constant or increased in distribution, relative abundance or measured abundance.

2. Strategy 2- Restore natural variability in river and stream flows and water surface elevations in natural lakes and reservoirs.

- a. River and stream flow and natural lake water surface elevation rehabilitation targets for each Partnership
 - i. Identify key degraded rivers, streams, and lakes whose flows and elevations have been modified from the natural seasonal pattern along with the key target fish or invertebrate species for each.
 - ii. Work to restore degraded systems with the following targets
 1. Restore river and streams flows to within 10% of the natural flow variation (daily or seasonal) on 200 miles of degraded rivers and streams
 2. Restore lake elevations to within 10% of the natural water level variation (daily or seasonal) on 1000 acres of lake and reservoir habitat.
 3. Enhance degraded reservoir fisheries habitat through water level manipulations to improve fish production on 10,000 acres of reservoir habitat.
- b. Success measures for each Partnership, as applicable
 - i. Miles of river and stream habitat with flows rehabilitated to within 10% of the natural flow pattern (daily or seasonal).
 - ii. Acreage of lakes with water levels rehabilitated to within 10% of the natural pattern (daily or seasonal).
 - iii. Acreage of reservoirs with enhanced habitat.

- iv. Optional long-term measure - For each of the above, document whether the key target fish or invertebrate populations remained constant or increased in distribution, relative abundance or measured abundance.

3. Strategy 3 – Reconnect fragmented river, stream, reservoir, coastal, and lake habitats to allow access to historic spawning, nursery and rearing grounds.

- a. Connectivity targets for each Partnership, as applicable
 - i. Identify key systems where fish movement barriers are a key impediment to improved fish populations along with the key target fish species for those systems.
 - ii. Restore full fish access to 500 miles of rivers and streams.
 - iii. Restore full fish access to 10,000 acres of lake, reservoir, or coastal (freshwater, estuarine, or marine) habitat.
- b. Success measures for each Partnership, as applicable
 - i. Miles of reconnected river and stream habitat with full fish movement restored.
 - ii. Acreage of lakes, reservoirs, or coastal (freshwater, estuarine or marine) habitat with restored full fish movement.
 - iii. Optional long-term measure - For each of the above, document whether the key target fish or invertebrate populations remained constant or increased in distribution, relative abundance or measured abundance.

4. Strategy 4 – Reduce and maintain sedimentation, phosphorus and nitrogen runoff to river, stream, reservoir, coastal, and lake habitats to a level within 25% of the expected natural variance in these factors or above applicable numeric state water quality criteria

- a. Sedimentation, phosphorus and nitrogen targets for each Partnership
 - i. Identify key degraded systems whose sediment, phosphorus or nitrogen inputs have been modified by more than 25% above numeric State Water Quality criteria or from the natural and expected inputs.
 - ii. Reduce sediment, phosphorus or nitrogen inputs into 100 miles of degraded river and stream habitat degraded waters to a level within 25% of the natural rates or above applicable numeric state water quality criteria.
 - iii. Reduce sediment, phosphorus or nitrogen inputs into 1000 acres of degraded lake, reservoir, estuary, or bay habitat to a level within 25% of the natural rates or above applicable numeric state water quality criteria.
- b. Success measures for each Partnership, as applicable
 - i. Miles of river and stream habitat with sediment, phosphorus or nitrogen inputs rehabilitated to within 25% of natural or other desired levels such as applicable numeric state water quality criteria.
 - ii. Acreage of lakes, estuaries, or bays with sediment, phosphorus or nitrogen inputs rehabilitated to within 25% of the natural or other desired levels such as applicable numeric state water quality criteria.
 - iii. Optional long-term measure - For each of the above, document whether the key target fish or invertebrate populations remained constant or increased in distribution, relative abundance or measured abundance.

Attachment A

National Fish Habitat Action Plan

Science & Data Committee

Protect, Restore, Enhance Terminology

The definitions below are derived, in part, from the Federal Geographic Data Committee, Wetlands Subcommittee, composed of 15 federal agencies involved in wetland related activities. This Subcommittee developed definitions for restoration and related work to aid agencies in accurately reporting their program activities. These definitions also include a component of the “restoration” definition used by the Partners for Fish and Wildlife (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and comments made by National Fish Habitat Board members at the June 2007 Board meeting.

Protection: The removal of a threat to, or preventing the decline of, aquatic habitat by an action in or near a waterbody. Protection may include, but is not limited to:

- the purchase of land or easement;
- repairing or changing the operation of water control structures;
- assisting local units of government in zoning riparian corridors or saltwater marshes for non-development;
- establishing best management practices for agriculture and forestry;
- allocating water to protect ecological stream flows and lake/reservoir surface water elevations;
- acquisition and transfer of water rights;
- riparian zone fencing; and
- oversight, monitoring and maintenance of protective measures.

Restoration: The manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a site with the goal of returning natural/historic attributes or functions to degraded aquatic habitat and moving these systems back to the expected natural variation of these attributes or functions. Habitat restoration includes, but is not limited to:

- practices conducted with the goal of returning a site, to the extent practicable, to the ecological condition that likely existed prior to loss or degradation, such as restoration of riparian area’s aquatic vegetation or woody debris, restoration of channel sinuosity, re-creation of reefs and spawning shoals or re-creation of freshwater inflows ;
- practices conducted when restoration of a site to its original ecological condition is not practicable, but which will partially repair original habitat functions or processes, such as restoring some of the expected hydrologic variability, dredging to reduce sedimentation effects or developing new spawning shoals; and
- removal of the disturbing/degrading element to enable the native habitat to re-establish or become fully functional, such as removal of barriers to flow (such as dams or culverts), control of point and non-point source inputs or removal of breakwaters and bank armoring.

Enhancement: The manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a waterbody or watershed that increases or improves the specific function(s) for a purpose such as water quality improvement, flood water retention or increased fish production.

Appendix 2 NFHP Board National Conservation Strategies Approved February 2013

Introduction

National conservation strategies are intended as a framework to guide future actions and investment by the FHPs while allowing the FHPs to develop meaningful goals and approaches to conserve fish habitat. By establishing and communicating a national framework to partners, these strategies emphasize the need to focus on the process-level issues, not just the symptoms, to reverse the decline in fisheries and aquatic resources by directly addressing the contributing factors. This enhances progress toward the National Fish Habitat Partnership mission to protect, restore, and enhance the nation's fish and aquatic communities through partnerships that foster fish habitat conservation and improve the quality of life for the American people.

FHPs are encouraged to incorporate the concepts of these conservation strategies into their strategic planning and development of site-specific goals and approaches to achieve results at a system level. Melding of the FHPs approaches with the national conservation strategies will assist partners to focus on the common factors responsible for most of the fisheries and habitat problems occurring today, namely: loss of connectivity, hydrologic alteration, water quality alteration, and alteration of aquatic communities (from NFHAP 2nd ed. 2012, Appendix 5: Science and Data Strategy).

Variability among FHPs and local conditions is recognized in the development of conservation strategies. FHPs will determine the extent to which each conservation strategy fits their scope and resources. Each FHP should find identity with one or more of the conservation strategies. Goals and approaches for one FHP may not fit conditions for another. Example actions listed under each conservation strategy are not meant to be exhaustive or prescriptive, but to demonstrate types of actions that may be undertaken. Example actions are listed in broad terms to stimulate development of specific actions meaningful for individual FHPs.

While not identified as a specific conservation strategy, it is incumbent upon the FHPs to assess the effectiveness of actions taken to protect, restore, and enhance habitats that support fish and aquatic communities. Through evaluation of specific actions taken to address those factors identified as responsible in the loss of fisheries habitats, FHPs can focus and foster implementation of efforts of proven effectiveness.

The NFHP Board in cooperation with the FHPs and their work plans will develop a set of meaningful and measurable targets for each of the listed conservation strategies. Effectiveness reporting measured against these targets in the annual Board progress reports will, over time, provide a meaningful description of progress for the public. Future revisions of the conservation strategies and habitat targets will recognize that habitat conservation is a long term endeavor.

Partnerships, working relationships, communication, planning, and funding are prerequisites to implementation of any conservation measure and are therefore not included as conservation strategies.

Conservation Strategies

1. Protect intact and healthy waters.

Example actions:

- Develop inventories and data support systems for priority waters.
- Participate in land and water use planning and decisions at all geographic and governmental levels to protect aquatic values.
- Incorporate climate change into development of land and water use plans.
- Acquire land, water rights/reservations, or easements.
- Implement management actions to maintain habitat values.
- Prevent direct habitat alteration.
- Avoid aquatic community alteration.
- Implement best management practices to minimize habitat alteration.
- Implement state and regional aquatic invasive species plans.
- Utilize applicable administrative and statutory opportunities at all governmental levels to protect habitat (hydrologic conditions, connectivity and water quality).

2. Restore hydrologic conditions for fish.

Example actions:

- Restore natural variability in river and stream flows.
- Restore natural variability in estuary and natural lake surface water elevations.
- Secure favorable conditions for reservoirs.
- Secure favorable operating agreements on regulated systems.
- Acquire water rights for streams, lakes and reservoirs.
- Work with water users to incorporate fish habitat values into water management.
- Reconnect rivers to floodplains.
- Restore ground and surface water hydrologic connections.
- Manage vegetation to restore stream flow.

3. Reconnect fragmented fish habitats.

Example actions:

- Identify access impairments to spawning, nursery, rearing and refugia areas.
- Facilitate fish passage through removal of physical barriers.
- Restore concrete stream channels to natural form and structure.
- Incorporate fish friendly designs in construction and rehabilitation of water diversion structures.
- Eliminate chemical/water quality barriers.
- Restore habitat conditions (physical, temperature, lack of water, etc.) in degraded reaches that fragment systems.
- Daylight currently buried stream segments.

4. Restore water quality.

Example Actions:

- Identify sources of watershed degradation.
- Control excessive rates of sedimentation, phosphorus, nitrogen and toxic inputs to aquatic systems.

- Control thermal impairments.
- Control sources of pollutants.
- Control surface runoff through land use practices.
- Develop or maintain functioning wetlands and vegetation buffers.

Title: Partnerships Committee Update April 2021

Desired outcomes:

- **Board awareness and discussion** of the planned FY22 timeline to submit and review Fish Habitat Partnership conservation projects.

Priority A: Fish Habitat Conservation Project Definition

Update: In March, the Board voted virtually to approve the following definition of project:

“Fish Habitat Conservation Projects include all activities that the NFHP Board, Fish Habitat Partnerships, and our partners perform, fund, or support in whole or in part, that coordinate, promote, and implement conservation (protect, restore and enhance) actions for fish and aquatic habitat.”

Priority C: Proposed FY22 FHP Project Submittal Process & Timeline:

Update: The Partnerships Committee, in partnership with Fish Habitat Partnership coordinators and Board staff, developed a recommended approach for the FY22 project submittal process and timeline in order for the Board to meet the July 1 Fish Habitat Partnership project list submission deadline to the Secretary of Interior required by the ACE Act.

Proposed FHP Project Submittal Process

The Partnerships Committee, under advisement by the FHP coordinators group and Board leadership and staff, developed the FY22 process for FHP project submission by revising the USFWS funding allocation methodology work plan and accomplishments template document that has been in use since 2014. The timeline below was developed to make it possible for the Board to put forward a list of FHP projects to the Secretary of Interior by July 1, 2021. In parallel with the revised USFWS funding methodology work plan and accomplishments template, the Partnerships Committee developed an Excel spreadsheet to gather all project submission data in one place for Board review. The Committee added data collection on each project submission about non-federal match (cash and in-kind), whether the project addresses elements of Title II of the ACE Act, and whether the project is being implemented by a Tribe or NOAA.

The Partnerships Committee approved via email vote the FY22 project timeline, template, and spreadsheet. The request for projects was sent to all FHPs with the included template and spreadsheet on Monday April 12, 2021 requesting submissions by May 17, 2021.

Proposed Timeline for FY22 NFHP Projects Submittal and Review*

April 1, 2021	FY22 Reporting/Project preparation begins. All FHP's are eligible for project funding.
April 26, 2021	NFHP Board meeting.
May 17, 2021	FHPs submit completed spreadsheet with list of projects using template format provided to the NFHP Board.
May 24, 2021	NFHP Board meeting (4 hour meeting): present suite of project proposals to the NFHP Board, introduction of projects and review of project criteria and how they contribute to meeting NFHP goals.
June 1-20, 2021	NFHP Board review of proposals (led by subcommittee).
June 21, 2021	Include draft submittal of project list to the Secretary of Interior in Board book for the June 28 Board meeting.
Mid-June	Board conference call just about suite of proposals to address any lingering questions or concerns.
June 28, 2021	NFHP Board meeting: approval of projects for submittal to Secretary of Interior.
July 1, 2021	FHP project list submitted by July 1, 2021 from the Board to the Secretary of Interior.

**Note: This will be an interim transitional process and will be further refined for FY23.*

Priority B: Retrospective FHP Match Analysis:

Update: During the March NFHP Board Meeting, the Partnerships Committee presented several interpretations of the 1:1 non-federal match requirement described in the ACE Act. Therese Thompson shared with the Board that the Committee was gathering project proposal data to retrospectively examine federal and non-federal partner contributions listed in the project proposals submitted to the Fish Habitat Partnerships through their FY21 RFPs to provide some context for this new requirement. The Board expressed an interest in seeing that more detailed data which will be ready for the May Board meeting.

Priority D: Develop recommended approach for "long term" (FY23 and thereafter) NFHP funding allocation process:

Update: The Committee has not yet developed this approach.

Partnerships Committee Background:

The Partnerships Committee serves as a forum for preliminary discussions, fact-finding, and formulating recommendations for Board actions that affect Fish Habitat Partnerships.

Tri-Chairs

Bryan Moore (Board Member, Trout Unlimited)
Stan Allen (Board Member, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission)
Therese Thompson (Western Native Trout Initiative)

Heidi Keuler (Fishers and Farmers Fish Habitat Partnership)
Jeff Boxrucker (Reservoir Fish Habitat Partnership)
Jessica Graham (Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership)

Staff

Alex Atkinson (Board Staff, National Marine Fisheries Service)

Jessica Speed (Mat-Su Salmon Habitat Partnership)
Joe Nohner (Midwest Glacial Lakes Fish Habitat Partnership)
Lisa Havel (Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership)

Members:

Alicia Marrs (Pacific Lamprey Conservation Initiative, California Fish Passage Forum)
Branden Bornemann (Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership)
Debbie Hart (Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership)

Lori Maloney (Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture)
Carter Kruse (Board Member, Turner Enterprises)
Doug Boyd (Board Member, Sport Fish Boating Partnership Council)
Steve Perry (Board Member, Private landowner, Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture)



**Work Plan and Accomplishments Report Guidance and Template
FY22 NFHP Project Funding Cycle**

Fish Habitat Partnership:

Contact Person Name:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

General Instructions

1. Complete Section 1 if requesting FHP operational support.
2. Complete Section 3 if requesting NFHP funding for projects.
3. Email one electronic copy of the completed report by 11:59 pm local time, **May 17, 2021** to Alex Atkinson at Alex.Atkinson@NOAA.gov and Ryan Roberts at RRoberts@fishwildlife.org.
4. Incomplete reports will not be considered for funding. Information received after the submission deadline will not be considered.

General Guidance for Completing Section 1. Justification for Stable Operating Support

The intent of Section 1 is to ensure that FHPs receiving operating support are thriving, active organizations making concerted efforts to achieve fish habitat conservation goals and objectives established by both the FHPs and National Fish Habitat Partnership .

Narrative responses should provide an overview of all projects and activities supported by NFHP/FWS funds and all other sources or in-kind contributions for anticipated projects and activities over the previous three federal fiscal years (FY2018, FY2019, and FY2020 or October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2020) and anticipated projects and activities over the next three federal fiscal years (FY2022, FY2023, and FY2024 or October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2024).

Project summaries should not be an itemized list of individual projects. Project summaries should instead focus on the associated outputs and outcomes of the habitat conservation projects implemented by the FHP (e.g., *completed ten fish passage projects resulting in X number of miles reopened, link to strategic plan, objective addressed, outcomes, socioeconomic impacts, etc.*)

Activity summaries should focus on salient operational and programmatic activities (e.g. *update strategic plan, improved capacity of FHP, monitoring and assessments, outreach events, socioeconomic impacts, etc.*). Day-to-day FHP activities (e.g. the number of meetings or teleconferences an FHP representative participated in) are not pertinent to this performance report and should not be included in this summary.

Please make efforts to keep your justification in Section 1 concise. Do not exceed six pages.

Section 1. Justification for Stable Operational Support (maximum 6 pages)

Enter your responses in the space provided below, adding additional pages up to a maximum of 6 pages.

Section 2: Not required for FY22 project submittal

Section 3: Work Plan (1-Year Planning Horizon)

Complete attached excel spreadsheet adding rows for additional projects as needed. This table should include all proposed projects for which you are seeking FY22 NFHP project funds, including FHP operational funds.

You will be asked in the spreadsheet to indicate your FHP has evaluated the extent to which each fish habitat conservation project addresses the following elements as described in the America's Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act:

- Fulfills a local or regional priority that is directly linked to the strategic plan of the Partnership
- Address the national priorities of the Board
- Is supported by the findings of the habitat assessment of the Partnership or the Board and aligns with or is compatible with other conservation plans
- Identifies appropriate monitoring and evaluation measures and criteria
- Provides well defined budget linked to deliverables and outcomes
- Address the causes and process behind the decline of fish populations or fish habitats
- Includes a local or regional outreach or educational component
- Will increase fish populations in a manner that leads to recreational fishing opportunities for the public.
- Increases public access to land or water for fish and wildlife dependent recreation
- Advances the conservation of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) as designated by State agencies
- Advances the conservation of fish and fish habitat under Magnuson Act
- Promotes healthy fish habitats so that desired biological communities are able to persist and adapt
- Requirement for Evaluation – No project may be recommended by the Board unless it includes an evaluation plan designed using applicable Board guidance –

In recognition of the requirement to meet the May 17, 2021 deadline for submission of FY22 projects that meet the requirements of the ACE Act, the Fish Habitat Partnerships have compiled the list below of *new requirements* for projects and the information needed to verify compliance with these new requirements. The requirements and information needs identified below are the Fish Habitat Partnership coordinators' best attempt at identifying these new requirements and information needs, in order to support fish habitat conservation project grant processes, promote consistency, and meet the requirements of the ACE Act. These have not been deliberated upon or approved by the National Fish Habitat Partnership Board, and as such are intended to serve only as informal guidance to support the Fish Habitat Partnerships. The Fish Habitat Partnerships recognize that additional information may be requested of project applicants as the National Fish Habitat Board develops guidance for project solicitation, submission, review, and funding allocation.

- 1) NFHP funds being requested must be matched 1:1 with non-federal funds. Non-federal match can include cash and/or in-kind labor, materials, equipment if there are no federal ties to those funds. State agency funds can be used for the nonfederal match if labor and/or materials are not being charged to another federal grant. State agency funds that are used to match other federal grants would not be eligible as match. Once the grant funds are matched with non-federal funds/in-kind, an unlimited amount of federal contributions to the project are allowed.
- 2) Monitoring and evaluation plans and measures need to be included as part of each project proposal.
- 3) Projects are encouraged to include an outreach or education component that includes the local or regional community.
- 4) Improvements in public access as a component of the project are encouraged and should be tracked.

Enter narrative responses below for each project (max. 1000 characters/project)

8. Conservation Actions and Project Outcomes

Percentage of proposed projects with specific conservation actions that will produce desired conservation outcomes and achieve project goals and objectives?

Choose one and provide narrative responses below.

- 50%
- 75%
- 100%
- Less than 50%

Narrative responses (max. 1000 characters/project)

Supplemental Guidance for Selected Performance Criterion

Brief project summary for each prioritized project (examples included below)

In Section 3, FHPs must present the suite of ranked projects proposed for FWS NFHP project funding in the current fiscal year and describe how these projects demonstrate strategic use of NFHP project funds and will achieve desired conservation outcomes. Example narrative is provided below for criteria 7 and 8.

Criterion 7 - Measurable Goals & Objectives (Max. 1000 characters): This project replaces one barrier to fish passage and opens 2.8 miles of upstream habitat to juvenile Coho and Chinook salmon. The crossing has been identified as a partial barrier to juvenile salmon by the State. An estimated 8-10-foot embedded culvert will replace the existing culvert. The FHP ranked this culvert in the top 16 culverts to be replaced for fish barrier issues. The project partner and FHP members, the City of Caribou Creek and local Soil District, have expressed the need to construct this project and has funding to support the project. This project addresses Objective 4 in the FHP strategic plan. It targets interjurisdictional fish, an FWS Trust Species, and a species priority for the FHP. It is being implemented in the Anchor River watershed - a priority watershed for the FHP.

Criterion 8 - Conservation Actions & Project Outcomes (Max. 1000 characters): Barrier removal will make 2.8 miles of upstream habitat accessible for chinook and coho salmon. The project will be designed using stream simulation standards/techniques, proven techniques to accommodate fish and other aquatic species. The project partner has an established fish passage program and has considerable capacity to implement the project and achieve project goals. The state fish and game agency will evaluate juvenile use of the reopened habitat pursuant to the state's fish passage monitoring plan.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Project Title	USFWS legacy region (indicate region 1-8)	State where project is located	Project latitude in decimal degrees	Project longitude in decimal degrees	FHP submitting the project	Rank of the project by the FHP's Steering Committee	NFHP PROJECT FUNDS (Requested)	TOTAL PROJECT COST	TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS (cash and in-kind) ALL SOURCES	Federal Contributions (cash)	Federal Contributions (in-kind)	Non federal Match (Cash)	Non federal Match (in-kind)	FEDERAL ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING CONTRIBUTIONS (cash and in kind)	NON-FEDERAL ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING MATCH (cash and in kind)	How much of the project funding is secured by the project proponent as of May 17, 2021 (Please put secured cash and in kind commitments in this column as a dollar amount)

R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	AA	AB	AC
NFHP National Conservation Strategy (indicate each strategy that applies to this project with an X)				Project type: (indicate the type of project with an X; please choose the primary focus of the project and place only one X)					Has this project been evaluated by your FHP to address elements newly outlined by the America's Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act? (indicate YES or NO)	Is this project being implemented by a Tribe or implemented with tribal funds (indicate YES or NO)	Is this project being implemented by NOAA or with NOAA funds (indicate YES or NO)
1. Protect Intact and Healthy Waters	2. Restore Hydrologic Conditions for Fish	3. Reconnect Fragmented Fish Habitats	4. Restore Water Quality	1. "On the ground" (engineering assessment, design, construction, implementation, monitoring, evaluation)	2. Scientific Assessment	3. Outreach, communication project	4. Acquisition	5. FHP operational support			

Title: Waters to Watch Campaign History and Background**Desired Outcome: Board awareness of the history, mission and previous successes of the Waters to Watch campaign.****Time Allotted:** 10 minutes

Background: The National Fish Habitat Partnership established a campaign in 2007 called Waters to Watch. This campaign was designed to promote locally-driven projects representing some of the top conservation activities completed or in progress by 20 regionally-based Fish Habitat Partnerships throughout the country. Annually, ten conservation projects are selected that exemplify conservation of freshwater, estuarine, and marine habitats essential to many fish and wildlife species. These projects are implemented through the goals and objectives of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. These featured conservation projects are fundamental to the overall success of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan established in 2006.

Since 2007, over 120 Fish Habitat Partnership Waters to Watch have been featured that demonstrate science-based, on-the-ground conservation efforts protecting or improving fish habitat across the United States. These projects have come in all shapes and sizes. They have included partners that range from large NGOs to federal, state, and local governments, to local partners and conservation districts.

The Waters to Watch campaign has been a steadfast part of the NFHP program since its beginning and has traditionally been one of the best ways we can promote our NFHP projects collectively on an annual basis.

Purpose: The Waters to Watch campaign highlights ten projects on an annual basis to:

- Focus attention on local efforts carried out by FHPs to implement the National Fish Habitat Partnership;
- Garner local and national support for, and raise awareness of, the benefits to aquatic habitat, local communities, anglers, and economies from actions implemented through the National Fish Habitat Partnership; and
- Strengthen existing and develop new, partnerships with collaborators who share NFHP's mission to protect, restore, and enhance fish and aquatic communities.

Board Involvement in Waters to Watch:

On an annual basis, the Board is presented with ten or more projects for endorsement of the projects that will be announced for that year. This presentation of projects typically happens at a meeting of

the Board. The projects that are presented to the Board have been reviewed and endorsed as quality projects by the Communications Committee, Partnerships Committee, and Waters Watch working group.

Outreach Efforts:

Annually, a press release and outreach strategy are developed for Waters to Watch. Announcement dates for the annual Waters to Watch have varied over the years, but is sometimes paired with the timing of other relevant fish habitat events like World Fish Migration Day in 2020. Our announcement reaches State Fish Chiefs, federal, state, local, and NGO and local partners. The Communications Committee recently started using Meltwater (press release outreach service) to do more targeted outreach to media outlets near the Waters to Watch projects. The Communications Committee developed a guidance document in 2012 that has been updated regularly to share with the FHPs to help them in developing nominations for the program.

How Nominations for Waters to Watch Work:

All NFHP FHPs can nominate projects for selection for the Waters to Watch campaign. Due to the number of Board-recognized FHPs, increased competition is expected for the submission process compared with previous years. FHPs may nominate more than one project and rank their order of preference. However, only one project per FHP (submissions dependent) may be selected in fairness to other FHPs. Not all FHPs will have a project chosen for the Waters to Watch campaign each year. FHPs can also nominate a retrospective project to be featured – a project that was highlighted in a previous Waters to Watch campaign to provide an update on the restored or conserved habitat.

Website:

A listing of recent Waters to Watch projects, including 2020 projects, can be found at:

<http://www.fishhabitat.org/waters-to-watch/>

2021:

Currently, we are targeting a July presentation of Waters to Watch projects to be made to the Board, with a Waters to Watch announcement in August.

Press Clippings Examples:

Tincup Creek, ID: <https://buckrail.com/tincup-creek-stream-restoration-project-moves-along/>

Minsi Lake, PA: <https://www.lehighvalleylive.com/news/2020/06/minsi-lake-reopens-in-the-slate-belt-following-near-5m-dam-repair-project.html>

Aaron Run, MD Video: <https://youtu.be/hFzXdE2xKCQ>