



Charleston, SC



Board Meeting Book

December 5-7, 2023

Charleston, SC

Sponsored by:



National Fish Habitat Board Meeting

Tuesday, December 5, 2023 (1:00 PM – 5:00 PM) EST
 Wednesday, December 6, 2023 (9:00 AM – 5:00 PM) EST

Charleston, SC

Zoom link (registration for remote participants)

(12/6 only):

<https://fishwildlife-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEudemtpj4pG9EpWFfug9qMOQAm8iZq3Eg>

Meeting ID: 853 2058 5315

Passcode: 214109

12/5 Time (ET)	Agenda Item	Board Tab	Lead(s)
12:00 PM	Lunch provided at Bi-partisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Workshop Hibernian Hall - 105 Meeting St, Charleston, SC 29401		
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM	NFHP FHP Coordinators, NFHP Board Members attend Bi-partisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Workshop		
5:30 PM – 7:00 PM	NFHP Social Hour @ The Brick 24 Ann St. Charleston, SC 29403		

12/6 Time (ET)	Agenda Item	Board Tab	Lead(s)
	Meeting off-site @ Shimano 9550 Palmetto Commerce Pkwy Ladson, SC		

SC DNR Shuttles Will Depart hotel @ 8:00 AM

9:00 AM	<u>Welcome, Introductions & Attendance</u> <i>Desired outcomes:</i> Welcome to South Carolina. Welcome new Board members. Welcome from Shimano. Board action approve December agenda. Board action approve September summary.	Tab 1	Robert Boyles (AFWA, Board Chair) & Board Staff
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12/6 Time (ET)	Agenda Item	Board Tab	Lead(s)
9:20 AM	Board Reminders & Board Member Terms <i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board planning for 2024 NFHP calendar. • Board awareness of upcoming expiring Board terms and calendar for future Board member recruitment. 	Tab 2	Robert Boyles <i>(AFWA, Board Chair)</i> & Board Staff
9:40 AM	Beyond the Pond Report Findings <i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness Beyond the Pond Report Findings • Board discussion on recommendation of future plans for Beyond the Pond 	Tab 3	Stacy Beaugh <i>(Strategic by Nature)</i> Kelly Hepler <i>(Beyond the Pond)</i>
10:20 AM	Science and Data Committee Update <i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of options for National Fish Habitat Assessment • Board awareness of project tracking database progress 	Tab 4	Gary Whelan <i>(MI DNR, Retired)</i> Daniel Wieferich <i>(USGS)</i> Kate Sherman <i>(PSMFC)</i>
10:50 AM	Break		
11:05 AM	Report out from FHP Coordinator Workshop <i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of FHP Workshop accomplishments and recommendations 	Tab 5	Joan Drinkwin <i>(Pacific Marine and Estuarine Partnership)</i>
11:20 AM	Back to the Future: Remembering the NFHP Vision <i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of the history of NFHP, the original vision, its evolution and recommendations from a "founder" 		Christopher Estes <i>(Chalk Board Enterprises, LLC)</i>

12/6 Time (ET)	Agenda Item	Board Tab	Lead(s)
12:00 PM	Preview Facilitated Session on NFHP Vision		Stacy Beagh (Strategic by Nature)
12:00 PM	Shuttles Depart to take FHP Coordinators to BIL Workshop		
12:05 PM	LUNCH- CATERED		
1:00 PM	Facilitated Session on Achieving the NFHP Purpose and Vision		Stacy Beagh (Strategic by Nature)
2:00 PM	Policy Committee Update <i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of Policy Committee activities. • Board awareness of Federal Agency contributions to NFHP in accordance with meeting obligation in the ACE Act (Section 212). • Board awareness of budget discussions for ACE Act re-authorization. 		Tim Schaeffer (NEAFWA)
2:20 PM	NOAA Recreational Fishing Grant Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of NOAA Rec Fish granting program and current opportunity. 		Sam Rauch (NOAA)
2:35 PM	BREAK		
2:50 PM	Partnerships Committee Update <i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of next steps for implementation of Board Buddies program. • Board vote on increasing the cap on FHP operational funding. 	Tab 6	Stan Allen (PSMFC) Joe Nohner (MI DNR)
3:00 PM	Fish Habitat Partnership Congressional Designation Update <i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of submission and review process for FHP Congressional Designation 	Tab 7	Stan Allen (PSMFC) Bryan Moore (Trout Unlimited)

12/6 Time (ET)	Agenda Item	Board Tab	Lead(s)
3:10 PM	Communications Committee Update <i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of 2024 Communications Deliverables 	Tab 8	Johnny LeCoq (Fishpond)
3:20 PM	Governance Committee Update <i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of development of committee procedures 		Doug Austen (American Fisheries Society)
3:25 PM	National Fish Habitat Board Bylaws <i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness and discussion of key elements of the proposed Bylaws. • Board vote on adoption of proposed Bylaws. 		Doug Austen (American Fisheries Society)
3:50 PM	Interagency Operational Plan Progress Report <i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of progress being made on development of the IOP by federal agencies as required by the ACE Act. 		Jason Olive (USFWS)
4:05 PM	USFWS Update		Steve Guertin (USFWS)
4:20 PM	Board Vote on Reappointment of Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Session for discussion • Votes held in open session 		Robert Boyles (AFWA, Board Chair)
4:55 PM	Wrap-Up and Thursday Field Trip Plans		Robert Boyles (AFWA, Board Chair)
5:00 PM	ADJOURN		
5:20 PM	Shuttles return to Embassy Suites		

**12/7
Time (ET)**

Agenda Item

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|----------|---|
| 8:00 AM | Shuttles Depart Embassy Suites |
| 8:30 AM | NFHP Board and Partnership Field Trip (Charleston Harbor)
217 Fort Johnson Rd, Charleston, SC 29412 |
| 11:30 AM | Field Trip Concludes |
| 12:00 PM | Shuttles Return to Embassy Suites |

National Fish Habitat Virtual Board Meeting Summary

Tuesday, September 12, 2023 (1:00 PM – 4:30 PM) EST

Zoom link: <https://fishwildlife-org.zoom.us/j/82854734635?pwd=N21aQWlWMDZNVVhNa3AzSDRsbmFSUT09>

	Last Name	First Name	Present?
1	Allen	Stan	X
2	Austen	Doug	X
3	Booth	Austin	X
4	Boyles	Robert	X
5	Cantrell	Chris	X
6	Eischeid	Ted	-
7	Gilliland	Gene	X
8	Guertin	Steve	X
9	Conley/Harper	Kimberly/Rob	X
10	Kinsinger/Beard	Anne/Doug	X
11	Kruse	Carter	X
12	LeCoq	John	X
13	Leonard/Chester	Mike/Annie	X
14	Linnell	Karen	-
15	Moore	Chris	X
16	Moore	Bryan	X
17	Perry	Steve	X
18	Plumer	Christy	X
19	Rauch/Meckley	Sam/Kara	X
20	Ringia	Adam	X
21	Rivers	Pat	X
22	Schaeffer	Timothy D.	X
23	Singler	Amy	X
24	Slager	Jake	X
25	Trushenski	Jesse	-

Other Attendees:

- Jason Olive (NFHP Staff)
- Alex Atkinson (NFHP Staff)
- Jonathan Watson (NFHP Staff – on detail)
- Kate Sherman (NFHP Staff)
- Gary Whelan (NFHP Staff)
- Daniel Wieferich (NFHP Staff)
- Christopher Estes
- Trevor Luna (USFWS)
- Lori Maloney (EBTJV)
- Therese Thompson (WNTI)
- Andrew Wilkins
- Michelle Bachman (NEFMC)
- Chris Haak
- Laurel Smith
- Doug Nygren (RFHP)
- Will Duncan
- Joe Nohner (MGLP)
- Jessica Coakley (MAFMC)
- Tori Kentner (MAFMC)
- Melissa Smith (KPFHP)
- Todd Ewing (SARP)
- Holly Steindorf (CFPF)

- Theresa Weber
- Jennifer Graves (DFHP)
- Sara Strassman (DARE)
- Simen Kaalstad (ACFHP)
- Rick Westerhof (GLFHP)
- Gordon Smith (HFHP)
- Debbie Hart (SEAKFHP)

Approved by Motion:

- September 2023 Meeting Agenda – approved as amended, by consensus.
- June Meeting Summary – approved as amended, by consensus.
- Endorse the 2023 Waters to Watch list – motion: Doug Austen, second: Steve Perry.
- Endorse the FHP /Board member buddy system – motion: Steve Perry, second: Johnny LeCoq
- Endorse the Partnership Committee's Guidance Document – motion: Pat Rivers, second: Chris Moore

Meeting Summary:

Time (PM ET)	Agenda Item	Board Tab	Lead(s)
1:00	Welcome & Attendance <i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome new Board members. • Board action to approve the September meeting agenda. • Board action to approve the June meeting summary. 	Tab 1	Robert Boyles (<i>Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Board Chair</i>) & Board Staff

The meeting began by the Chairman calling the meeting to order and the staff taking attendance. The Board welcomed its newest member Jake Slager, who is serving in the corporate industry board seat and is a senior sales executive at the Coca-Cola Company. Jake highlighted his personal connection to outdoor recreation as well as his professional work focusing on sustainable water use in his introduction. Stan Allen requested a modification to the agenda – Board endorsement of Partnerships Committee “Guidance Document”. The agenda was approved as amended. The June meeting summary was approved as amended (Pat Rivers name appeared twice in attendance table). Other updates include introducing Jonathan Watson (NOAA Fisheries), who will be serving in Alex (Atkinson) McOwen’s role as the NOAA Fisheries Board staff member while she is on detail for the next four months. The Chairman also highlighted Callie McMunigal’s contribution to NFHP as she departs for a new role within USFWS. Callie served at USFWS regional FHP coordinator in Region 5 (New England/ mid-Atlantic) for the past several years and the Chairman thanked her for many years of service in support of NFHP.

1:10	Board Reminders & Board Member Terms <i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of NFHP calendar. • Board awareness of upcoming expiring Board terms and calendar for future Board member recruitment. 	Tab 2	Alex Atkinson (<i>NOAA Fisheries, Board Staff</i>) & Ryan Roberts (<i>AFWA, Board Staff</i>)
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Alex (Atkinson) McOwen, Board staff (NOAA Fisheries), reviewed the upcoming expiring Board terms and the plan and timing for new Board member recruitment. The Chairman will send a letter to the 9 members whose terms are up for renewal following this meeting. For those who intend to continue to serve, they should notify the Chair at least 30 days prior to the fall Board meeting, sooner if possible. For the upcoming appointments in the regional AFWA associations, Julie Carter will be representing WAFWA beginning in December, taking over for Chris Cantrell. The Chairman thanked Chris for his years of service on the NFHP Board. Also, NEAFWA reappointed Tim Schaeffer to the Board. In the case of a vacancy, the Chair will make an open solicitation at least 60 days prior to term expiration, which occurs at the end of the month/year specified on the [NFHP webpage](#). Letters of interest and CV's should be received at least 30 days prior to the Spring Board Meeting and staff will distribute to the Board at least 21 days prior. The Executive Committee will present candidates at the Spring Board Meeting prior to voting. As a reminder, all terms have been standardized to begin in February to facilitate this process.

There was discussion of the appointment voting process, which requires 2/3 vote of members of the NFHP Board (26 members). Because the ACE act stipulates that "Board members continue to serve until replaced," the Board discussed the potential for individuals to recuse themselves during votes on their own reappointment. Those reappointments could be handled first, followed by new appointments to ensure compliance with the ACE Act requirements throughout the voting process. Adam Ringia reminded the Board that the process for the Tribal representative seats should allow adequate time, potentially up to one year in advance of vacancy. There was additional Board discussion of the re-nomination process and Board members shared concepts for consideration. This could include allowing Board Members to serve for two terms, after which they would have to re-apply for their seat. Tribal, state, and federal seats will be addressed separately, in accordance with the ACE Act. The Governance Committee will consider this discussion during development of draft by-laws (see Governance Committee summary below) and further discussion is planned for the next Board Meeting.

Finally, the schedule for the rest of this calendar year includes the following items:

- Waters to Watch announced – September 22
- FHP Calls – Oct 4 and Nov 8
- FHP Coordinator Workshop – Dec 4-5
- NFHP Board Meeting – Dec 5-7

1:25

USFWS Update*Desired outcomes:*

- **Board awareness** of USFWS feedback from Board FY24 proposed project list.

Steve Guertin (*USFWS, Board member*)

Steve Guertin announced that the FY24 NFHP project list was approved by the Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary of Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Shannon Estenoz. The letter to the Board from Assistant Secretary Estenoz was sent to Chairman Boyles yesterday. She commended the Board for continuing to engage partners to address fish habitat needs, and commended FHPs for doing their best to meet ACE Act requirements and partner with Tribes.

Steve announced that the Federal Interagency Fish Passage Task Force will be hosting a partner

workshop, co-hosted with NFHP, in Charleston, SC the same week as the December NFHP Board meeting. This workshop is a follow-up to the BIL fish-passage partner workshop that was held at NCTC in July 2022. Shannon Boyles (USFWS) is coordinating the Task Force’s activities, including the workshop. It is being held during the same week as the NFHP Board meeting to increase opportunities for engagement with NFHP.

Steve announced that the next NOFO for USFWS BIL Fish Passage funds will be released this fall. He noted that BIL provided \$200M to the USFWS for barrier removal for fish passage program, and the Service has awarded \$73M already. Steve reminded the group that it is not too early to start coordinating with USFWS Regional Fish Passage Program Coordinators on project ideas.

Steve gave a brief update on the FY24 budget for NFHP. A \$500k increase was requested in the President’s budget but was not included in the House or Senate markups, so we expect to be at \$7.1M. It appears likely that there will be a Continuing Resolution until a larger deal is agreed upon by Congress. The Fiscal Responsibility Act, signed in June 2023, prescribes that if regular appropriation bills are not passed by January 1, 2024, an across-the-board cut of 1% will be enacted for all agency budgets.

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|------|--|-------|---|
| 1:40 | Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment Update
<i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Board awareness of the recent completion of the assessment and its results and impacts. | Tab 3 | Jessica Coakley (<i>Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council</i>)
and Tori Kentner (<i>Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council</i>) |
|------|--|-------|---|

Jessica Coakley (MAFMC) and Tori Kentner (MAFMC) presented an update on the development of the Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment, the latest marine assessment product that was supported by resources from NOAA and undertaken by a large and diverse team. The project team pursued four actions to meet habitat science needs: (1) Inshore fish habitat assessment (fish distribution and habitat), (2) Habitat vulnerability in response to climate change, (3) Spatial descriptions in offshore area, (4) Decision support tools. The results of this work are available through the RShiny app. For more information, see: nrha.shinyapps.io/dataexplorer

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|------|---|--|
| 2:10 | Preview of December (In-Person) Board Meeting
<i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Board awareness and update on December National Fish Habitat Board Meeting. ● Board awareness of FHP Workshop planning. | Robert Boyles (<i>Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Board Chair</i>) |
|------|---|--|

Chairman Boyles previewed the next Board meeting scheduled for December 5-7 at Shimano in Ladson, SC. That will be hosted immediately following the FHP Coordinator Workshop from December 4-5 to be hosted at the Embassy Suites in Charleston, SC. The overall schedule for the week includes:

- Monday (12/4) – FHP workshop all day
- Tuesday (12/5) – Half-day Board meeting. There will also be a half-day BIL workshop in downtown Charleston, and half-day FHP workshop. Travel accommodations will be available for FHP coordinators to attend portions of each meeting.
- Wednesday (12/6) – Board meeting all day at Shimano in Ladson. A full day BIL workshop is also planned in downtown Charleston. Travel accommodations will be available for FHP coordinators to attend portions of each meeting.
- Thursday (12/7) – a site visit to a SARP oyster restoration site. The Chairman extended thanks to SC DNR for allowing us to use their boats to access the site. There will also be a BIL on that date with details forthcoming.

A block of rooms is reserved (details to follow with meeting summary) and Board members are responsible reserve their own accommodations.

2:20	<p>World Fisheries Congress Update <i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Board awareness and discussion of NFHP presence at upcoming 2024 World Fisheries Congress. 	<p>Doug Austen (<i>AFS, NFHP Board Member</i>)</p>
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Doug Austen (AFS) highlighted the [next World Fisheries Congress](#), which will be hosted in Seattle, WA from March 3-9, 2024. There will be a plenary from Federal agencies and fisheries leaders across North America. Several universities will also have a large presence to showcase educational opportunities. Overall attendance is expected to be 2,000 with approximately 1,300 abstracts anticipated. AFS will work in close coordination with WFC in development of this meeting. This will be an excellent opportunity to get the NFHP message out to a worldwide audience.

2:25-2:35 **BREAK**

2:35 – 2:45	<p>FY25 FHP Scoring Rubric <i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Board awareness of the updated FHP rubric for FY25 scoring. 	<p>Stan Allen (<i>PSMFC, Board Review Team Lead</i>) & Bryan Moore (<i>TU, Board Review Team Lead</i>)</p>
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Stan Allen (PSMFC) and Bryan Moore (TU) reviewed the updates made to the FHP Fish Habitat Conservation Project scoring rubric in collaboration with the Board Review Team. These were presented during the most-recent FHP coordination call held August 31 and are still being finalized by the Board Review Team. The Board Chair noted that we are well on target to have next round proceed smoothly and thanked everyone for their efforts work to ensure consistency across project awards.

Board Committee Updates

2:45

Communications Committee*Desired outcomes:*

- **Board awareness and vote** on 2023 of Waters to Watch nominations.
- **Board awareness** of Communications Committee updates.

Tab 4

John LeCoq (*Fishpond, Communications Committee Chair*)

John LeCoq provided an update the Board about the 2023 Waters to Watch campaign project list and requested a motion, which The Board approved, to endorse the list. The Waters to Watch will be announced during National Hunting and Fishing Day on September 23, 2023. John noted that the annual report is slated to be completed at the end of the September. The Communications Committee will also send out a request soliciting FHPs to join the Communications Committee. John also noted that the committee is currently focused on planning FHP workshop through coordination with FHP coordinators and Board staff. Stan Allen commented that the timeline for Waters to Watch was short and suggested that we allot additional time in the future to allow FHPs to go through their review channels. Ryan Roberts noted that we were on a similar timeline as previous years, but will provide more time next year on the front end to think about the projects and the nomination period.

2:55

Policy Committee*Desired outcomes:*

- **Board awareness** of Policy Committee activities and discussions.
- **Board awareness** of benefits to estimating of Federal agency activities contributing to NFHP in support of Sections 206 & 212 of the ACE Act.
- **Board awareness** of ACE Act reauthorization budget.

Tim Schaeffer (*PA Fish & Boat Commission, NFHP Policy Committee Chair*)

Tim Schaeffer, chair of NFHP Policy Committee, provided an update on the committees' discussions and upcoming activities. Tim welcomed Austin Booth to the committee, as well as Ali Schwaab of AFWA, who will attend meetings. The committee is still seeking an FHP representative for the committee. The Policy Committee is planning on making visits to Capitol Hill in the fall of 2023 and the spring of 2024 to raise awareness of NFHP with current authorizing committee staff and begin ACE Act reauthorization discussions. The Committee is drafting talking points for these visits, which will be shared with the NFHP Board and can be used by NFHP partners if/when they make Hill visits. The Committee is also working with the Partnerships Committee to survey FHPs about ACE Act challenges.

During the June Board meeting, the Committee raised the question of whether or not the 5 Federal agencies authorized to receive scientific and technical assistance funds have requested the \$400K. Thus far, the USFWS is the only agency that has requested and received the \$400K in scientific and technical assistance funds, however, other agencies provide support to NFHP through other avenues without requesting the technical assistance. The Committee would like to share information with the authorizing committees on

the current staff and programmatic resources provided by the federal agencies engaged with NFHP. This will help to support not only a reauthorization request of funding for scientific and technical assistance for the 5 key federal agencies named in the ACE Act (NFHCTPA) but also bolster our pitch that this program is a growing success and additional federal resources are needed to leverage the non-federal commitments of time and funding provided to this program. In order to provide this information, the policy committee and Robert are interested in a back-of-the-envelope estimation of federal agencies existing support of NFHP. There was discussion among the Board about the request. NOAA expressed that they would provide examples of how the agency supports NFHP and express support themselves, but they will not provide a full accounting of estimated dollars that support NFHP. USFS agreed with NOAA's approach. Robert will follow up this discussion with a formal request for information via email.

Tim requested that the Board discuss potential levels for an ACE Act reauthorization budget request. He highlighted the current funding level written into the Act (\$7.2 million in project and operations funding and a separate budget for \$2 million in Federal agency scientific and technical support). He also highlighted that in FY 23, 48 projects proposed by FHPs went unfunded, which equated to approximately \$3 million in additional funds needed. ACE Act re-authorization provides an opportunity to request a larger budget. There was discussion among the Board and general support for an increased budget request. A request of \$3 million in addition to what is already outlined is just a start, there is also a need to increase operational support funding, and there are additional projects available by FHPs that are not submitted to the Board. There is a clear return on investment with additional support of FHPs. The Board noted that there needs to be a balance between budget request and what can realistically be implemented on the ground by FHPs. This topic will be re-visited at the next Board meeting in December.

3:35

Partnerships Committee*Desired outcomes:*

- **Board awareness** of the FHP Buddy system.
- **Board awareness** of Partnerships Committee Guidance Document.

Tab 5

Stan Allen (*PSMFC, Partnerships Committee Co-Chair*) & **Joe Nohner** (*MGLP Coordinator, NFHP Partnerships Committee Co-Chair*)

Joe Nohner presented the concept of the Board/FHP "buddy system." Stan Allen noted that he has a similar connection with an FHP, described the benefits of such relationships, and provided some examples of what this involvement could look like (e.g., attending an FHP annual meeting). The Board approved the motion to endorse this "buddy system" as presented. The Partnerships Committee will work to develop this system in the coming weeks and request Board Members provide updates at the December Board Meeting.

Stan Allen informed the Board about the Committee's newly updated guidance document that outlines Committee operations and decision-making processes. This document could serve as a template for other Board committees. The Board approved the motion to endorse this guidance document.

There was discussion among the Board concerning FHP operational funding. This has not been updated since 2018 and, if adjusted for core inflation, would be approximately \$97k in today's dollars. There was discussion of employing language setting a cap for operational funding (i.e., "not to exceed") to provide FHPs with flexibility to set their budgets based on available matching funds. Further discussions is needed at Partnership Committee level along with support from USFWS for any change. Board Members should anticipate a motion at the next Board meeting in December. This would represent good timing for FHPs

3:45 **Governance Committee**

Desired outcomes:

- **Board awareness** of progress on NFHP Board by-laws and Board member guidance.

Doug Austen (*AFS, NFHP Governance Committee Chair*)

Doug Austen presented and overview of the draft NFHP Bylaws on which the Governance Committee (GC) has been working. A preliminary version was sent to all Board members the morning of the meeting, but a new draft that includes line numbers will be sent in the next 24 hours. Doug asked for each board member to provide edits and other feedback within 30 days. Sections that were highlighted where feedback is especially encouraged include addressing Board member vacancies, election of a Vice-Chair, what Board actions require a 2/3 majority for approval, and Board member responsibilities. The GC will address all comments and edits in a Comment Resolution Table to be provided to the Board, and the revised document will be sent to NFHP’s consulting attorneys for review. The plan is to present a final draft for approval at the December Board meeting. Much of the content in the bylaws comes directly from the ACE Act, so if there are any suggestions related to that language, it will be shared with the Policy Committee for their consideration during the reauthorization effort.

Doug also announced that Simen Kaalstad (ACFHP Coordinator) has joined the Governance Committee as an FHP representative.

4:15 **Science & Data Committee**

- **Board awareness and discussion** of the 3 RFPs for the National Assessment.
- **Board awareness** of Board virtual decision on the NCPs.

Tab 6 **Gary Whelan** (*Board Staff, Science and Data Committee Co- Chair*), **Daniel Wieferrich** (*USGS, Board Staff, Science and Data Committee Co-Chair*), & **Kate Sherman** (*Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, Board Staff*)

Gary Whelan started the presentation on behalf of the Science and Data Committee (SDC) with a discussion on the National Assessment that is due in 2025, as required by the ACE Act. The prospectuses on each of the three opinions (updated 2015 Assessment, updated 2015 Assessment plus key macrohabitats, and updated 2015 Assessment plus a climate change module) have been drafted and are in review by the SDC. Once review is completed the prospectuses will be sent to all Board members and FHP coordinators for review, comment, and input on best option from their perspective after a 1-month review period. Information will be collected and presented for a final Board decision at the December Board meeting. Daniel Wieferrich followed up with the results of the virtual Board vote on the National Conservation Priorities (NCPs) Decision Document and over a 2/3 majority agreed with keeping the current NCPs through FY2025. Only 1 Board member voted in opposition expressing concerns with broadness of the current NCPs. Kate Sherman completed the update with a discussion about coordination efforts between the Board’s Project Tracking Database and the USFWS FIS system staffs to reduce redundancies and improve efficiency in information flowing into the two systems.

4:30 **Adjourn**

Board Reminders for 2024:

2024 Calendar: Preliminary Dates

Table 1: Proposed NFHP Board meeting dates and format for calendar year 2024.

Meeting	Proposed Date(s)	Proposed Format/Location
Winter	Tuesday, February 6, 2024 (1-5 PM ET)	Virtual
Spring	April 30 - May 1, 2024	Hybrid - In-person location TBD.
Summer	July 31 - August 1, 2024	Hybrid - In-person location TBD.
Fall	TBD	

Upcoming Term Expirations and Timeline for Board Recruitment

Background

Several Board member terms are expiring in February 2024 (see table below). The following timeline outlines the proposed process for reappointment of existing Board members and advertising/filling vacant Board seats:

- December Board meeting
 - Board Vote on Board members that are seeking reappointment.
- Mid-December
 - Solicitation for vacant Board seats
 - Post on website
 - Partners post solicitation
 - Post in newsletter
- Early January
 - Deadline for Board member nominations.
- Mid-January
 - Nominations distributed to Board for consideration.
- February Board meeting
 - Board vote to fill Board vacancies.

Table 2: Current Board members, designated seat, and term expiration for the NFHP Board. Those Board members whose terms are expiring in February 2024 and have indicated they will not seek to serve another term (i.e., pending vacancy) are designated with a “Y”.

Board Member	Board Seat	Term Expiration	Pending Vacancy
Stan Allen	Marine Fisheries Commissions/Councils	February 2024	
Doug Austen	Science-based fisheries organization	February 2024	
Austin Booth	SEAFWA	February 2026	
Robert Boyles	AFWA - Board Chair	June 2025	
Julie Carter	WAFWA	November 2026	
Kimberly Conley	Department of Agriculture (USFS)	NA	
Ted Eischeid	Local Government	February 2024	Y
Gene Gilliland	Freshwater Recreational Anglers	February 2026	
Steve Guertin	Department of Interior (USFWS)	NA	
Anne Kinsinger	U.S. Geological Survey	NA	
Carter Kruse	National Private Landowner Association	February 2024	
Johnny LeCoq	Corporate Industry- Fishing	February 2024	Y
Mike Leonard	Recreational Sportfishing Industry	February 2026	
Karen Linnell	Tribal - Alaska	February 2025	
Chris Moore	Commercial Fishing Industry	February 2024	
Bryan Moore	Habitat Conservation Organization	February 2026	
Steve Perry	Landowner Representative of an FHP	February 2024	
Christy Plumer	Marine Recreational Anglers	February 2024	Y
Sam Rauch	Department of Commerce (NOAA)	NA	
Adam Ringia	Tribal - Lower 48	February 2025	
Pat Rivers	MAFWA	February 2025	
Tim Schaeffer	NEAFWA	November 2026	
Jake Slager	Corporate Industry- Natural Resource User	June 2026	
Jesse Trushenski	Agricultural Production Organization	February 2024	
VACANT*	Any Category Under ACE Act 203 (a)(2)(J)		
VACANT	Sportfishing and Boating Partnership Council		

* Amy Singler recently resigned from the Board

Beyond The Pond Stakeholder Assessment

Compiled by Strategic By Nature, Inc.
October 2023
DRAFT

Background and Purpose

Strategic By Nature, Inc. (SBN) was enlisted to work with and Beyond the Pond (BtP) and the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) to gather information and facilitate discussions for the purpose of aligning and motivating the NFHP and BtP team around a renewed and strategic direction for BtP.

The first step of this process was an assessment of Beyond The Pond (BTP) partners conducted August through October 2023. Partners identified to participate were members of the BtP Board of Directors, NFHP Board of Directors, NFHP Staff, and Fish Habitat Partnership (FHP) Coordinators. In total, 38 people participate in interviews or focus groups (see Appendix A for a list of participants and affiliations). The following provides an overview of feedback from assessment participants and recommendations related to nonprofit best practices.

Elements of Successful Nonprofits

Through years of providing training and consultation to mission-driven organizations, SBN has found the following formula for nonprofit success. These four elements are present in one way or another within successful nonprofit organizations. These elements are:

- **Purpose** – Clear understanding of mission, vision, and direction.
- **Leadership** – Dedicated and enthusiastic champions that are relentless in pursuing and holding the accountable to its mission.
- **Resources** – Financial and other resources (e.g., volunteers) that are adequate to complete the work required to meet the mission and are durable and resilient over time.
- **Organization** – Appropriate infrastructure, organizational systems and supports that offer “organization” to the nonprofit.

Organizations that are struggling or experiencing challenges are often missing one or more of these components. BtP’s assessed performance in the four elements is described below, with the top (#1) being the strongest element.

1. **Purpose** – Assessment participants aligned around the intended mission of BtP to be the fundraising or financial arm of NFHP, to provide financial support to augment individual FHPs and NFHP collective ability to implement their mission. There is a common feeling among study participants that BtP hasn’t been able to act on or implement that mission to date, but the role or niche of BtP is not in question. Participants express lack of knowledge of the added value that BtP provides to NFHP and FHPs. Some participants

note that they are confused by the language used in the BtP charter that names FHPs as “chapters” of BtP; they do not understand that language or how that relationship should work. Currently, most FHPs and NFHP board members do not describe BtP as a partner or supporter of their work. A strong suit is that BtP is non-political which according to many NFHP participants, positions them well for fundraising and communication. Most people think there needs to be a rebrand, the sentiment is that: 1) the name “BtP” is not inclusive of the work of NFHP/FHPs (e.g., marine, coastal, riverine); and 2) the name does not reflect the relationship between BtP and NFHP – that BtP exists as the 501c3 financial arm of NFHP - and in fact causes more confusion about the relationship because of separate branding and websites, especially for external audiences and potential funding partners.

2. **Organization** – BtP has some foundational aspects in place, including its tax-exempt status, bylaws, charter, banking and basic bookkeeping and administration. However, systems like board recruitment, communications, and fundraising (donor recruitment and relations), are lacking or non-existent. Additionally, there is wavering confidence in the systems that do exist. Some FHP Coordinators saw potential value-add from BtP systems (e.g., support with grant administration, acting as fiscal agency for those FHPs that need a fiscal agent) but others said they were not sure that BtP could be effective in that role (e.g., unsure how the donation/button process works across state lines). As a result, many FHPs said they would opt toward working with other nonprofit organizations they were more familiar with and/or more local rather than BtP.
3. **Resources** – Assessment participants acknowledge an under-investment in terms of the launch, growth, and maintenance of BtP. The primary challenge is that the organization has never been positioned to successfully solicit resources. There was acknowledgement of past success stories in terms of donations being shepherded through BtP, namely Bass Pro Shops and McKnight Foundation. There was also an understanding that to secure more contributions of this, or any magnitude, there needs to be an investment in the capacity to strategize, cultivate, and secure those relationships. Additionally, many acknowledge the importance of collaboration between BtP and FHPs to advance the best outcomes in terms of resource development. BtP has not had the organizational capacity to invest in these relationships to fully understand the needs and opportunities for each individualized FHP. One resource BtP has access to are the long-term and credible accomplishments of the FHPs and NFHP as a program – these accomplishments could form the foundation of communications/outreach messaging targeted at specific potential donors. The NFHP networks of people, programs, projects, and stories are an incredible asset should BtP choose to leverage them.
4. **Leadership** – While there is a Board of Directors, and some administrative support from Ryan Roberts, the consensus among study participants is that leadership is lacking at BtP. People are thankful for the work/time Ryan has been able to contribute in the short term to help BtP thus far but recognize that he does not have the bandwidth or focus to provide

the level of leadership the organization needs. The overarching perspective is the Board of Directors needs to evaluate and adjust its capabilities/availability, enroll more board members, and invest in hiring dedicated leadership for the organization. Many assessment participants, including BtP Board members, expressed a need to expand the BtP Board of Directors (and the NFHP organization generally, but see the opportunity to start with BtP) with more gender, racial, and age diversity.

Needs

Across the board, FHPs and NFHP representatives said that the biggest gap/concern/need are non-federal financial resources to match the \$1.7M in allocated coordination funding from the America's Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act, which currently equates to \$85,000 per each of the 20 FHPs. While this NFHP allocation is essential, most FHPs are struggling to fund the full cost of their coordination needs which critical to advancing the NFHP mission. Most FHPs expressed a desire for support in matching and importantly, augmenting the coordination funding they currently receive, which is critical to helping their operations and coordination budget keep pace with increasing projects and workloads.

Second to FHP coordination dollars, both FHP and NFHP acknowledge the funding gap for projects. The ACE Act provides \$7.2M annually, less the coordination funding and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's administrative costs, for on-the-ground projects to be allocated amongst 20 FHPs and the NFHP Board. The project allocation requires a 1:1 non-federal match. The requirement for the non-federal match has proven to be a barrier to some partners to be able to apply for NFHP funding. FHPs would welcome support in fundraising for the non-federal match and have project funding needs that extend far beyond what NFHP can currently cover. As a result, augmenting project funding from non-federal sources help FHPs meet the full spectrum of priority projects they are hoping to support.

Finally, there were many ideas related to BtP leveraging the FHPs potential economy of scale. FHPs are typically staffed by one person, and don't have time or capacity to coordinate with other FHPs on a consistent basis. Having an entity/person that is focused on making connections, leveraging partnerships, and helping FHPs think larger scale could benefit FHPs in terms of fundraising and/or organizational efficiency. From the perspective of new FHP coordinators, they would benefit from centralized systems that all FHPs could utilize whether it be grants administration software or coordination on submitting grant proposals. Few FHPs said they need fiscal sponsorship and those that do prefer to work with local organizations.

Recommendations

Though there has been lack of action in the past, there remains a clear need for an organization like BtP to augment the work of FHPs and NFHP. The following recommendations follow the elements of a successful nonprofit listed above, starting with the most important.

Leadership – FHPs and NFHP board members said they would be hesitant to work with or advocate for BtP in the absence of a plan for moving forward that is led by strong board leadership and an investment in staffing for the organization. Multiple levels of leadership are required to be successful. It starts with the BtP Board advancing a collective strategy or united front, and the hiring of a staff person that can work collaboratively with the board and set and implement annual work plans.

Key Strategies – Leadership:

- Advance a board-championed plan of action for BtP that illustrates key strategies, milestones, timelines, evaluation process, and identifies who is responsible for implementation.
- Develop a diverse and active board with a system – committee and/or process – for:
 - Recruitment, vetting and recommendation of new board members; development of board make-up strategy/approach in alignment with organizational needs and priorities/goals.
 - Onboarding, orientation, and ongoing support for (new) board members.
 - Board member training and other development activities (e.g., board manual, mentoring, team building).
 - Board member retention and recognition.
- Hire a dedicated staff person to coordinate board development, fundraising, and other priorities listed in the board-championed plan.
 - Consider cost-share among NFHP non-governmental and corporate board members to provide start-up resources (e.g., funding, cost-share, staffing) for this position.
 - Engage NFHP and FHPs to make connections to potential funders that could invest in this start-up initiative.

Measures of Success:

- Develop and document progress on strategic action plan.
- Increase in the diversity of board members including age, gender, race, and organizational/business interest.
- 100% of board members contribute financially to the organization.
- Board developed job descriptions, annual work plans and evaluation systems.
- Secured staffing (i.e., two years of funding, contract or other commitment depending on the staffing arrangement).

Purpose – BtP’s mission and niche is solid but could use some clarification and an investment in outreach/communications to ensure that other members of NFHP understand and are invested in the relationship. BtP should focus their mission on fundraising and securing financial resources to augment NFHP/FHPs. Having the ability to serve as a fiscal agent could be useful but should not be the primary purpose of the organization. Clarify that BtP’s fundraising role compliments

or augments the FHPs. It is acknowledged that BtP would never replace the role of FHPs in their own fundraising but could provide a support to their work.

Key Strategies - Purpose

- Enhance internal communication and understanding between the people involved in BtP, NFHP and FHPs.
 - Engage the NFHP partnerships committee to support the creation of a communication system that is intentional and consistent in bringing BtP together with NFHP and FHPs.
- Clarify the partnership structure between BTP, NFHP board and FHPs.
 - Ensure expectations of the relationships – roles and responsibilities – are clear and accurately reflected in organizational documents (e.g., charter, NFHP and BtP websites, etc.).
- Evaluate BtP’s brand to ensure the best positioning internally and externally to best communicate/reflect BtP’s niche/mission and relationship to NFHP/FHPs.
 - Look to example branding schemes from model organizations (Appendix B).

Measures of Success:

- All FHPs, NFHP board members are trained, comfortable, and confident in the BtP mission/purpose, and willing to advocate/advance the organization’s role.

Fundraising – There are many opportunities for BtP in terms of fundraising. Whatever direction BtP decides to pursue, it is critical that the board makes investments into the fundraising initiative. A budget is a numerical reflection of an organization’s values, and a fundraising team (board and staff) needs to have a starting budget, the appropriate skills, and a plan to move forward effectively.

There are many potential fundraising models that present opportunity for BtP. However, it is the opinion of SBN that there should be specific focus on a few of these versus all of them in the near term. While BtP could be in the position to fundraise for myriad fundraising needs (e.g., NFHP project match, projects beyond NFHP allocation), it is important to recognize that FHPs across the board said they could use the most help with matching and funding the coordination function.

Fundraising Opportunities, Challenges and Discussion

Source	Opportunities	Challenges	Discussion
Federal agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ample agency funding available right now from Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). BtP could help to aggregate projects across FHPs to make applications larger, and more competitive for BIL and IRA funding. Innovative and non-traditional funds exist, could be an opportunity for BtP to engage in and be proactive in securing those sources (climate smart solutions, floodplain resilience, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fund administration and application requires administration. Federal funding does not help meet the need of 1:1 non-federal match from the ACE Act. 	While there are numerous opportunities, this is not where SBN believes BtP should focus fundraising energy. BIL and IRA funds are ideal for projects, there is potential for BtP to support FHPs in accessing, navigating these funds, but taking on this role could distract from garnering the discretionary/coordination funds that are critical to FHP success. As BtP grows its programs, achieves success, and develops stronger connection to FHPs, the organization may be in more of a position to be a thought-leader and innovator in securing federal funding partnerships.
State agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified as underutilized for some FHPs. Relatively easy to access/administer compared to federal funds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow applicability for BtP given the national, multi-jurisdictional needs identified by FHPs. 	The opportunity could be for BtP to help FHPs. strategize/navigate/apply for project and/or coordination funds.
Private foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underutilized by FHPs. Potential to support coordination and/or project expenses at scale. BtP could aggregate message across FHPs and seek out/develop these relationships. BtP Board, NFHP, and FHPs all identified potential connections and willingness to help on this front. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to invest time and energy in leveraging networks, researching likely prospects, and building relationships. 	Grants can have a large cost/benefit to an organization. Garnering of private funds could be helpful in showing Congress the value of NFHP in the private sector.
Corporations & NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BtP has numerous connections across the NFHP that could become a donor base. Potential to support coordination and/or project expenses at scale. BtP could aggregate message across FHPs and seek out/develop these relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Messaging and developing an appropriate appeal may be a challenge. Corporations tend to support projects rather than capacity. 	There are numerous NGOs and Corporations on the NFHP Board, among FHPs that could be leveraged for smaller-scale start-up funds. As BtP hones their message (consults with NFHP board members on what will be effective), this could be a strong focus for BtP to match federal funds and help FHP funds go further in advancing projects.

Source	Opportunities	Challenges	Discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BtP Board, NFHP, and FHPs all identified potential connections and willingness to help on this front. 		
Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BtP has numerous connections across the NFHP network that could turn into a donor base that may have interest in engaging with BtP/NFHP on a deeper level. BtP could easily leverage this network for annual giving or other campaigns. Long-term opportunities include building a diverse funding portfolio to include major gifts and bequests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding from individuals is a long-game strategy and requires significant investment and patience in fundraising systems, relationships, etc. 	<p>Fundraising from individuals should be a long-game strategy for BtP. These funds offer the most flexibility and durability for an organization. The sooner BtP engages in private fundraising the sooner it will pay-off. However, given the capacity limitations, it may make sense to be more passive about this work at first to focus on low-hanging fruit opportunities and/or low-energy activities that serve to build reputation versus capital (e.g., email campaign to NFHP network).</p>

Key Strategies - Fundraising:

- Co-create a fundraising plan with FHPs, that identifies priority fundraising sources, specific opportunities and core strategies that support, and compliment FHP needs and strengths. Include:
 - Discussion/plan/system for stewarding and acknowledge existing and recent gifts.
 - SMART fundraising goals that are embedded in annual budget projections.
 - Assisting individual FHPs in assessing their current strengths and weaknesses and summarizing funding needs and potential opportunities specific to each FHP.
- Leverage existing partnerships to meet fundraising goals.
 - Engage corporations that are already engaged in NFHP (e.g., Coca Cola, Yamaha, FishpondUSA).
 - Develop relationships with foundations within the NFHP network (e.g., Turner Foundation, Walton Family Foundation, NFWF).
 - Deepen relationships with existing networks (e.g., American Fly-Fishing Trade Association, American Sport Fishing Association, Outdoor Industry Association, Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Association).
- Co-create a communication strategy that positions BtP to successfully speak on behalf of NFHP/FHP accomplishments and value proposition.
 - Work with FHPs to identify priority audiences (e.g., funders) and communicate accordingly to that audience the story of impact and value of the work of the FHPs in a consistent manner.
 - Document/share information at scale on the funding/matching power of the NFHP via the ACE Act.
 - Create a strong communication framework/message that demonstrates the importance of and link between the coordination function of FHPs and how that advances project outcomes.
 - For the purposes of implanting the communication strategy, create cohesion among FHPs for marketing/communications specific to project accomplishments (clear expectations, brand standards, templates).

Measures of Success:

- Engage current NFHP network in providing financial support.
- Implement a fundraising plan that is co-created with FHPs, that identifies reasonable goals/milestones (e.g., raising enough to cover the ACE Act match by a certain date).
- Have established marketing/communications tools, messages, and strategy.

Organization – A solid set of financial, governance and operational systems is critical to an organization’s success. BtP has the foundations of these systems but could improve. The following strategies are rooted in enhancing board oversight, leadership, and attention to these systems.

Key Strategies – Organization:

- Ensure strong financial systems - investment, endowment, banking, reporting, fiscal agent function.
 - Consider an annual review or audit based on budget size.
- Look to model organizations (Appendix B) to understand strategies, approaches, and tools that could be applicable to BtP.
- Work with FHPs and NFHP to identify additional resources, leadership, partnerships, and other support necessary to support strategic goals in the short-term and long-term. Advance/improve organizational systems accordingly.
- Evaluate opportunities to streamline/centralize tools that all FHPs need – low interest loans for cash flow, fundraising training, grant software, technology, etc.
 - Note this is a lower priority than focus on above resources, leadership, and purpose strategies.
 - Ensure mission alignment.

Measures of Success:

- Annually approve a budget that outlines fundraising goals (both income and expense).
- Create a summary of BtP functions to share/explain the operations and function (e.g., financial systems) to FHPs, NFHP and potential funders.

Conclusion

SBN sees ample opportunity for BtP to be successful, provided there is leadership and investment that gives the organization the tools it needs to be successful. Fundraising, and start-up programs, are a long-game endeavor and require patience but also perseverance. The BtP board needs to be strong and convicted in their plans and ability to hold themselves and any staff accountable toward goals, and willing to be flexible in the pursuit of the goals so that adjustments can be made to address challenges and lean into strengths.

Similarly, all interview and focus group participants expressed gratitude for this strategic direction imitative. Despite past challenges, people remain optimistic. They are excited to see the potential of the BtP Board of Directors enacting a strong plan with teeth and evaluation.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all FHP coordinators, NFHP board members, NFHP staff, and BtP board members for your time participating in this assessment. Your candid contributions were thoughtful and informative and provided important perspectives in building this report.

Appendix A – Stakeholder Assessment Participants

First	Last	NFHP Affiliation
1. Kelly	Hepler	Beyond the Pond Board
2. Jon	Johnson	Beyond the Pond Board
3. Dick	Ludington	Beyond the Pond Board
4. John	LeCoq	Beyond the Pond Board & NFHP Board
5. Christy	Plumer	Beyond the Pond Board & NFHP Board
6. Stan	Allen	NFHP Board
7. Doug	Austen	NFHP Board
8. Robert	Boyles	NFHP Board
9. Kimberly	Conley	NFHP Board
10. Gene	Gilliland	NFHP Board
11. Steve	Guertin	NFHP Board
12. Carter	Kruse	NFHP Board
13. Mike	Leonard	NFHP Board
14. Chris	Moore	NFHP Board
15. Bryan	Moore	NFHP Board
16. Steve	Perry	NFHP Board
17. Pat	Rivers	NFHP Board
18. Timothy D.	Schaeffer	NFHP Board
19. Amy	Singler	NFHP Board
20. Jake	Slager	NFHP Board
21. Jesse	Trushenski	NFHP Board
22. Max	Calloway	NFHP Coordinator
23. Jennifer	Graves	NFHP Coordinator
24. Deborah	Hart	NFHP Coordinator
25. Lisa	Hollingsworth-Segedy	NFHP Coordinator
26. Simen	Kaalstad	NFHP Coordinator
27. Heidi	Keuler	NFHP Coordinator
28. Lori	Maloney	NFHP Coordinator
29. Joseph	Nohner	NFHP Coordinator

First	Last	NFHP Affiliation
30. Gordon	Smith	NFHP Coordinator
31. Jessica	Speed	NFHP Coordinator
32. Holly	Steindorf	NFHP Coordinator
33. Sara	Strassman	NFHP Coordinator
34. Therese	Thompson	NFHP Coordinator
35. Alex	McOwen	NFHP Staff
36. Jason	Olive	NFHP Staff
37. Ryan	Roberts	NFHP Staff
38. Daniel	Wieferich	NFHP Staff
39. Jessica	Coakley	FHP Steering Committee (invited by FHP Coordinator)

Appendix B- Model Programs

When asked about what program BtP could model to be like, many examples came up of organizations BtP *could* be like, but none stood out as the one aspirational example. Large government-affiliated foundations like National Parks Foundation, National Forest Foundation and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation along with large NGOs such as The Nature Conservancy and Trout Unlimited were pointed to as successful fundraising entities. The other examples provided take on more of a structural similarity to BtP where they are nonprofits raising funding for specific government programs, but they are all different in that BtP supports myriad government agencies and local partnerships.

Benchmarking against these organizations could prove useful for BtP in setting realistic goals for progress and help to think through/get ahead of potential challenges.

Name	Mission	Year Founded	Annual Expense Budget	Staff Size
Arkansas Game and Fish Association	The foundation is organized to acquire and provide financial support for properties and facilities for conservation education programs, wildlife habitat, and land for game and fish management programs.	1983	\$1.4 M (2021)	3
Friends of Reservoirs	Improve public understanding of fish habitat.	2010	\$308,251 (2022)	0
Puget Sound Restoration Fund	To restore habitat, water quality and native species in Puget Sound.	1997	\$1,652,000 (2021)	16

Tab 3

Oyster Recover Partnership	Lead the conservation of the native oyster in the Chesapeake Bay and beyond, through oyster restoration, shell recycling conservation, and sustainable fishery practices.	1972	\$6,951,540 (2022)	23
Restore America's Estuaries	Dedicated to the protection and restoration of bays and estuaries as essential resources for our nation.	2000	\$3,798,577 (2021) \$2,537,135 in grants	10
Fish and Wildlife Foundation of Florida	Seeks to protect Florida's iconic animals and plants and the lands and waters they need to survive. Works most closely with and support the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.	1995	\$9,614,467 (2022) \$6,360,441 in grants	10
National Marine Sanctuary Foundation	Leading voice for U.S. Protected Waters, working with communities to conserve and expand those special places for a healthy ocean, coasts, and great lakes. Working together, we safeguard species and the places they call home, and preserve America's maritime resources.	2001	\$16,683,505 (2022)	83

Title: Science and Data Committee Report

Desired Outcomes:

- **Board awareness of and direction on** the 3 prospectuses for the 2025 National Fish Habitat Assessment (Assessment).
- **Board awareness** of the Project Tracking Database – Presented at meeting

2025 National Fish Habitat Assessment Planning

The Science and Data Committee (SDC) has scoped the three proposed Assessment options noted below and a prospectus for each option has been provided to the Board prior to the December Board Meeting. A brief presentation on each option will be presented during the December meeting. Comments and indications on which approach is most desired by the Board is requested at the December Board Meeting where a final decision will be requested.

Assessment options being scoped:

- ***Attachment 1 – Base Case** - 2015 approach with updated datasets to include data to fill known data gaps (hydrology, grazing intensity, timber harvest, and socioeconomics). This approach will also add in completed regional coastal assessments, where available.*
- ***Attachment 2 – Base Case Plus Large Macrohabitats** - 2015 approach with updated datasets to include data to fill known data gaps (hydrology, grazing intensity, timber harvest, and socioeconomics) and incorporate additional large-scale habitats including lakes, impoundments, reservoirs, and coastal areas. This approach will also add in completed regional coastal assessments, where available.*
- ***Attachment 3 – Base Case Plus Climate Change Component** - 2015 approach with updated datasets to include data to fill known data gaps (hydrology, grazing intensity, timber harvest, and socioeconomics) with a climate/resiliency component. This approach will also add in completed regional coastal assessments, where available.*

Assessment planning proposed schedule:

- Finalize scoping and share materials with Board – October and November 2023
- Request board feedback and indications on the most desired option – November-December 2023
- Final Board direction on 2025 Assessment – December 2023
- Finalize 2025 Assessment Planning and develop final budget and funding options – February 2024

Attachment 1 – Assessment Base Case

Title: Updating the NFHP Board National Fish Habitat Assessment – Base Case Prospectus

Project Leader(s): TBD

Project Overview: A 2025 National Fish Habitat Assessment using a similar approach as the 2015 assessment but with updated available data and filled data gaps. Estimated \$620,000 in funds required with a project period spanning January 2024 to December 2026.

Objectives: 1) To develop an updated National Fish Habitat Assessment by the end of 2025 that provides a composite picture of the fisheries habitat condition across the United States with a focus on watershed, streams, rivers, estuarine, and inshore habitats where data are available; 2) Update the existing data layers to reflect more recent conditions and reanalyze habitat condition indices; 3) Incorporate best available data on hydrology, timber harvest, grazing intensity, and socioeconomics into the 2025 Assessment and data products; and 4) Migrate geospatial framework to NHDPlusV2.1.

Rationale: The America’s Conservation Enhancement Act (ACE Act – Public Law 116-188) requires in Section 201 that a National Fish Habitat Assessment (Assessment) and associated database be produced by presumably 2025 when the ACE Act is up for reauthorization. The ACE Act directs gaps be filled in the existing Assessment resulting in a product that empowers strategic conservation actions and integrates socioeconomic data into the Assessment.

While the 2015 Assessment made large advancements in developing a national-scale assessment, particularly in the analytical methodology, there are gaps that require additional attention. Spatially, the 2015 Assessment did not directly address lakes, reservoirs, impoundments, and many components of inshore and marine habitat. There were also spatial gaps and inconsistencies with the contiguous 48 states data in the Alaska and Hawaii datasets. The key component gaps were the lack of hydrology, timber harvest, grazing intensity, and socioeconomics data. Additionally, several of the existing data layers have been updated, such as the National Land Cover Database updated in 2019 and the connectivity database being developed nationally by the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP), and more fish community data has been collected since the 2015 Assessment that requires integration and analysis. Thus, these gaps will need to be addressed at some level to meet the Assessment requirements of the ACE Act.

Methods: Similar to the 2015 Assessment approach, the 2025 assessment of stream habitat condition will analyze the contiguous United States, Alaska, and Hawaii using different methodologies to account for differences in the spatial framework and data availability across these regions. All of the existing 2015 Assessment data layers will be examined and will be updated if updated versions or more appropriate data layers are available. Requests for new fish community data will be made to resource agencies and other sources. All data layers will be attributed to NHDPlusV2.1 following similar methods as used in the 2015 Assessment.

The 2015 Assessment analytical approach to develop dose-response curves between stream fish metrics and human landscape factors, and predicted conditions of fish habitat will be used in the 2025 Assessment of the contiguous United States. Analytical approaches for completed inshore and marine assessments will be reviewed and data incorporated wherever consistent and compatible with inland analyses.

A review of publicly assessable and nationally consistently measured datasets will be made for hydrology, timber harvest, grazing intensity, and socioeconomics. Inquiries will be made to NFHP partners, including Fish Habitat Partnerships, to help identify appropriate and available datasets to address these data gaps. For example, it is known that the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has a national data layer for hydrology that will be examined for use in the 2025 Assessment. Additionally, a request for data layers for forest harvest and grazing intensity will be made to U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management along with other agencies and NFHP partners to scope the ability to build the needed data layers to address these gaps. Existing data on socioeconomics will be requested for a range of entities and products such as the current USGS creel dataset and the ASA economic impacts information will be examined for incorporation. Due to the trait-based methodology of the Assessment and the incapability of known socio-economic data with this approach, we will explore using a separate index of socio-economic information will be attributed for use and displayed alongside the assessment data.

Existing inshore and marine fish habitat assessments will be reviewed and evaluated for incorporation into the 2025 Assessment. Other fish habitat assessments and data products completed by the Fish Habitat Partnerships will be evaluated for inclusion when available, readily assimilated, and appropriate into the 2025 Assessment by the Assessment Team with assistance from the Science and Data Committee.

Deliverables/Products: By the end of 2025, a map-based National Fish Habitat Assessment similar in look to the 2015 Assessment will be produced but will not include lakes, reservoirs, impoundments, and some inshore and marine habitats unless available through partnerships and can be readily attributed to the Assessment. All data and generated results will be attributed to the lowest possible spatial scale and will be available in a database for other users. The reliability/confidence level of each of the assessment data layers will be scored to assist in user evaluation of the results. Assessment results will be presented to fisheries professionals at venues such as American Fisheries Society meetings and Fish Habitat Partnership meetings to allow for peer input into Assessment products and results published in appropriate peer-reviewed journals with publication submittals by the end of 2026. Data gaps will be identified in the final product for incorporation into future assessments.

Cost Details: *1st year:* \$250,000 (1 post-doc or equivalent, 1 fisheries biologist with GIS expertise, and 1 GIS technician to generate assessment); *2nd year:* \$250,000 (1 post-doc or equivalent, 1 fisheries biologist with GIS expertise, and 1 GIS technician to generate assessment); *3rd year:* \$120,000 (1 post-doc or equivalent and 1 part-time GIS technician to complete publications).

Attachment 2 – Base Case Plus Large Scale Macrohabitat

Title: Updating the NFHP Board National Fish Habitat Assessment – Base Case Plus Large Scale Macrohabitat Prospectus

Project Leader(s): TBD

Project Overview: A 2025 National Fish Habitat Assessment using a similar approach as the 2015 assessment but with updated available data and filled data gaps to include additional previously unassessed macrohabitats. Estimated \$920,000 in funds required with a project period spanning January 2024 to December 2026.

Objectives: 1) To develop an updated National Fish Habitat Assessment by the end of 2025 that provides a composite picture of the fisheries habitat condition across the United States to include information on watersheds, streams, rivers, lakes, reservoirs, impoundments, estuarine, and inshore habitats; 2) Update the existing data layers to reflect more recent conditions and reanalyze habitat condition indices; 3) Incorporate best available data on hydrology, timber harvest, grazing intensity, and socioeconomics into the 2025 Assessment and data products; 4) Develop new data layers and dose-response relationships for previously unassessed large-scale macrohabitats (i.e. lakes, reservoirs, impoundments, and large components of inshore and marine habitat); and 5) Migrate geospatial framework to NHDPlusV2.1.

Rationale: The America’s Conservation Enhancement Act (ACE Act – Public Law 116-188) requires in Section 201 that a National Fish Habitat Assessment (Assessment) and associated database be produced by presumably 2025 when the ACE Act is up for reauthorization. The ACE Act directs gaps be filled in the existing Assessment resulting in a product that empowers strategic conservation actions and integrates socioeconomic data into the Assessment.

While the 2015 Assessment made large advancements in developing a national-scale assessment, particularly in the analytical methodology, there are gaps that require additional attention. Spatially, the 2015 Assessment did not directly address certain large-scale macrohabitats lakes, reservoirs, impoundments, and many components of inshore and marine habitat. There were also spatial gaps and inconsistencies with the contiguous 48 states data in the Alaska and Hawaii datasets. The key component gaps were the lack of hydrology, timber harvest, grazing intensity, and socioeconomics data. Additionally, several of the existing data layers have been updated, such as the National Land Cover Database updated in 2019 and the connectivity database being developed nationally by the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP), and more fish community data has been collected since the 2015 Assessment that requires integration and analysis. Thus, these gaps will need to be addressed at some level to meet the Assessment requirements of the ACE Act.

Methods: Similar to the 2015 Assessment approach, the 2025 assessment of stream habitat condition will analyze the contiguous United States, Alaska, and Hawaii using different methodologies to account for differences in the spatial framework and data availability across these regions. Similarly, each

macrohabitat assessment may require different approaches. All of the existing 2015 Assessment data layers will be examined and will be updated if updated versions or more appropriate data layers are available. Requests for new fish community data will be made to resource agencies and other sources. All data layers will be attributed to NHDPlusV2.1, or similar spatial framework for lakes, impoundments and reservoirs, following similar methods as used in the 2015 Assessment.

The 2015 Assessment analytical approach to develop dose-response curves between stream fish metrics and human landscape factors, and predicted conditions of fish habitat will be used in the 2025 Assessment of the contiguous United States, Alaska, and Hawaii. A similar approach using dose-response relationship will be evaluated for large-scale macrohabitats that were not accounted for in previous assessments. In addition, methods used by Fish Habitat Partnerships in their individual habitat assessments will be evaluated for use in the Assessment. Analytical approaches for completed inshore and marine assessments by Fish Habitat Partnership and other entities will be reviewed and data incorporated wherever consistent and compatible with inland analyses and linkages between inland systems and receiving estuaries and inshore marine areas will be developed. Gaps in inshore and marine assessments will be filled where standardized data is available using appropriate analytical approaches from completed assessments for these macrohabitats.

A review of publicly assessable and nationally consistently measured datasets will be made for hydrology, timber harvest, grazing intensity, and socioeconomics. Inquiries will be made to NFHP partners, including Fish Habitat Partnerships, to help identify appropriate and available datasets to address these data gaps. For example, it is known that the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has a national data layer for hydrology that will be examined for use in the 2025 Assessment. Additionally, a request for data layers for forest harvest and grazing intensity will be made to U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management along with other agencies and NFHP partners to scope the ability to build the needed data layers to address these gaps. Existing data on socioeconomics will be requested for a range of entities and products such as the current USGS creel dataset and the ASA economic impacts information will be examined for incorporation. Due to the trait-based methodology of the Assessment and the incapability of known socio-economic data with this approach, we will explore using a separate index of socio-economic information will be attributed for use and displayed alongside the assessment data.

Existing inshore and marine fish habitat assessments will be reviewed and evaluated for incorporation into the 2025 Assessment. Other fish habitat assessments and data products completed by the Fish Habitat Partnerships will be evaluated for inclusion into the 2025 Assessment by the Assessment Team with assistance from the Science and Data Committee. These data products will be incorporated into the Assessment when available, consistent, and appropriate with the other data layers.

Deliverables/Products: By the end of 2025, a map-based National Fish Habitat Assessment similar in look to the 2015 Assessment will be produced for all habitats where standardized or close to standardized national data are available. All data and generated results will be attributed to the lowest possible spatial scale and will be available in a database for other users. The reliability/confidence level

of each of the assessment data layers will be scored to assist in user evaluation of the results. Assessment results will be presented to fisheries professionals at venues such as American Fisheries Society meetings and Fish Habitat Partnership meetings to allow for peer input into Assessment products and results published in appropriate peer-reviewed journals with publication submittals by the end of 2026. Data gaps will be identified in the final product for incorporation into future assessments.

Cost Details: *1st year:* \$350,000 (2 post-docs or equivalent, 1 fisheries biologist with GIS expertise, and 1 GIS technician to generate assessment layers); *2nd year:* \$350,000 (2 post-docs or equivalent, 1 fisheries biologist with GIS expertise, and 1 GIS technician to generate assessment layers); *3rd year:* \$220,000 (2 post-docs or equivalent and 1 part-time GIS technician to complete publications).

Attachment 3 - Base Case Plus Climate Change Prospectus

Title: Updating the NFHP Board National Fish Habitat Assessment – Base Case Plus Climate Change Prospectus

Project Leader(s): TBD

Project Overview: A 2025 National Fish Habitat Assessment using a similar approach as the 2015 assessment but with updated available data and filled data gaps along with an analysis of the potential effects of climate change. Estimated \$1,145,000 in funds required with a project period spanning January 2024 to December 2026.

Objectives: 1) To develop an updated 2015 National Fish Habitat Assessment by the end of 2025 that provides a composite picture of the fisheries habitat condition across the United States to include information on watersheds, streams, rivers, estuarine and inshore habitats along with lakes, reservoirs, impoundments, estuarine, and inshore habitats where easily accessible and consistent data is available; 2) Update the existing data layers to reflect more recent conditions and reanalyze habitat condition indices; 3) Develop new data layers and dose-response relationships for previously unassessed macrohabitats; 4) Incorporate best available data on hydrology, timber harvest, grazing intensity, and socioeconomics into the 2025 Assessment; 5) Incorporate best available regional or national downscaled climate data or incorporating an existing climate assessment into the Assessment to assist in making future predictions on fish habitat degradation risk to help guide conservation decisions using specific climate change scenarios; and 6) Migrate geospatial framework to NHDPlusV2.1.

Rationale: The America's Conservation Enhancement Act (ACE Act – Public Law 116-188) requires in Section 201 that a National Fish Habitat Assessment (Assessment) and associated database be produced by presumably 2025 when the ACE Act is up for reauthorization. The ACE Act directs gaps be filled in the existing Assessment resulting in a product that empowers strategic conservation actions and integrates socioeconomic data into the Assessment.

While the 2015 Assessment made large advancements in developing a national-scale assessment, particularly in the analytical methodology, there are gaps that require additional attention. Spatially, the 2015 Assessment did not directly address lakes, reservoirs, impoundments, and many components of inshore and marine habitat. There were also spatial gaps and inconsistencies with the contiguous 48 states data in the Alaska and Hawaii datasets. The key component gaps were the lack of hydrology, timber harvest, grazing intensity, and socioeconomics data. Additionally, several of the existing data layers have been updated, such as the National Land Cover Database updated in 2019 and the connectivity database being developed nationally by the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP), and more fish community data has been collected since the 2015 Assessment that requires integration and analysis. Thus, these gaps will need to be addressed at some level to meet the Assessment requirements of the ACE Act.

Board and other NFHP community members have expressed an interest in having a climate change component added to the Assessment for 2025. An initial analysis of climate change building off from the 2010 National Fish Habitat Assessment data framework was completed during the period from 2009-2016 and a project summary and data products can be found at

<https://www.sciencebase.gov/catalog/item/4f833d4fe4b0e84f608680cf>. This analysis used regional downscaled climate data from USGS, fisheries and landscape data from NFHP, and available water temperature and flow data to develop expected future conditions to examine how climate change could affect fish communities in the Northeast, Great Lakes, Northern Prairie, and Lower Colorado River areas.

Methods: Similar to the 2015 Assessment approach, the 2025 assessment of stream habitat condition will analyze the contiguous United States, Alaska, and Hawaii using different methodologies to account for differences in the spatial framework and data availability across these regions. Similarly, each macrohabitat assessment may require different approaches. All of the existing 2015 Assessment data layers will be examined and will be updated if updated versions or more appropriate data layers are available. Requests for new fish community data will be made to resource agencies and other sources. All data layers will be attributed to NHDPlusV2.1, or similar spatial framework for lakes, impoundments, and reservoirs, following similar methods as used in the 2015 Assessment.

The 2015 Assessment analytical approach to develop dose-response curves between stream fish metrics and human landscape factors, and predicted conditions of fish habitat will be used in the 2025 Assessment of the contiguous United States, Alaska, and Hawaii. A similar approach using dose-response relationship will be evaluated for large-scale macrohabitats that were not accounted for in previous assessments. In addition, methods used by inland-based Fish Habitat Partnerships in their individual habitat assessments will be evaluated for use in the Assessment. Analytical approaches for completed inshore and marine assessments by Fish Habitat Partnership and other entities will be reviewed and data incorporated wherever consistent and compatible with inland analyses and linkages between inland systems and receiving estuaries and inshore marine areas will be developed. Gaps in inshore and marine assessments will be filled where standardized data is available using appropriate analytical approaches from completed assessments for these macrohabitats.

A review of publicly assessable and nationally consistently measured datasets will be made for hydrology, timber harvest, grazing intensity, and socioeconomics. Inquiries will be made to NFHP partners, including Fish Habitat Partnerships, to help identify appropriate and available datasets to address these data gaps. For example, it is known that the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has a national data layer for hydrology that will be examined for use in the 2025 Assessment. Additionally, a request for data layers for forest harvest and grazing intensity will be made to U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management along with other agencies and NFHP partners to scope the ability to build the needed data layers to address these gaps. Existing data on socioeconomics will be requested for a range of entities and products such as the current USGS creel dataset and the ASA economic impacts information will be examined for incorporation. Due to the trait-based methodology of the Assessment

and the incapability of known socio-economic data with this approach, we will explore using a separate index of socio-economic information will be attributed for use and displayed alongside the assessment data.

Existing inshore and marine fish habitat assessments will be reviewed and evaluated for incorporation into the 2025 Assessment. Other fish habitat assessments and data products completed by the Fish Habitat Partnerships will be evaluated for inclusion into the 2025 Assessment by the Assessment Team with assistance from the Science and Data Committee. These data products will be incorporated into the Assessment when available, consistent, and appropriate with the other data layers.

To integrate potential climate change into the Assessment, we would propose to use a similar approach as outlined in previous climate change analyses ([Tsang et al. 2021](#)). Where possible, we will also summarize existing climate change assessment information into our Assessment framework (e.g., TNC Freshwater Resilience) to highlight related perspectives. Anticipated changes in fish habitat would be modeled using appropriate regional or national downscaled global climate change models to predict alterations of climate sensitive habitat variables (e.g., water temperature, hydrology, and land use) under selected likely climate scenarios to determine a range of risk to change of habitat condition. We will examine at least three spatial scales for this analysis if resources allow and likely include: 1) a coarse-scale nationwide assessment of how fish habitat will change with climate; 2) an examination of the available regional-level U.S. datasets to select specific areas/regions/habitats to refine our predicted changes in fish habitat using specific climate change scenarios and resulting land-use patterns; and 3) an analysis using available data on selected key or high profile fish species to determine how distributions may change with altered climate. The data will provide insights highlighting key geographic areas for future conservation investments to prevent or reduce degradation.

Deliverables/Products: By the end of 2025, a map-based National Fish Habitat Assessment similar in look to the 2015 Assessment will be produced for all habitats where standardized or close to standardized national data are available. Map-based information on the effects of specific climate scenarios on fish distributions and habitat degradation would also be produced. All data and generated results will be attributed to the lowest possible spatial scale and will be available in a database for other users. The reliability/confidence level of each of the assessment data layers will be scored to assist in user evaluation of the results. Assessment results will be presented to fisheries professionals at venues such as American Fisheries Society meetings and Fish Habitat Partnership meetings to allow for peer input into Assessment products and results published in appropriate peer-reviewed journals with publication submittals by the end of 2026. Data gaps will be identified in the final product for incorporation into future assessments.

Costs: *1st year:* \$450,000 (3 post-docs or equivalent, 1 fisheries biologist with GIS expertise, and 2 GIS technicians to generate assessment layers) *2nd year:* \$450,000 (3 post-docs or equivalent, 1 fisheries biologist with GIS expertise, and 2 GIS technicians to generate assessment layers) *3rd year:* \$245,000 (2 post-docs or equivalent and 2 part-time GIS technicians to complete publications) *Project Dates:* January 2024 – December 2026.

FHP Workshop Agenda
Monday December 4, 2023 (8:30 AM – 5:00 PM EDT)
Tuesday, December 5, 2023 (8:30 AM – 11:30 PM EDT)

Colonial Ballroom, Embassy Suites by Hilton Charleston Historic District
337 Meeting Street, Charleston, South Carolina 29403

Intended Outcomes

- Facilitate relationship building and peer-learning among FHP Coordinators.
- Understand FHP Coordinator needs.
- Provide tools to advance solutions (e.g., fundraising tools) for FHPs.
- Identify expectations of the FHPs with regard to contributing data and time for the National Assessment.
- Develop a shared message from FHP Coordinators to convey to the board.
- Engage in a productive, enjoyable, and motivating time that positions FHP Coordinators and partners to maximize the opportunity and impact of NFHP and FHPs.

Monday (12/4)

8:30 AM Gather - Coffee and Activity

9:00 AM Setting the Stage

- Welcome - Robert Boyles and Ryan Roberts
- Tribal Welcome and Land Acknowledgement -
- Agreements and Agenda Overview - Stacy Beough

9:30 AM Introductions & Ice Breaker - Stacy

9:45 AM What does a successful FHP look like under NFHP?

- Table Hosts/Topics
 - Joan - Partnership Engagement/Internal Partnership Management (Governance, Steering Committee Engagement)
 - Heidi Keuler/Joe Nohner - Engaging Project Sponsors/Project Development
 - Doug N - Cultivating Support from External Partners (Reservoir Partnership gets annual grants from companies, initiating and maintaining those relationships)
 - Debbie - Communications/Storytelling/Branding/Reporting

11:15 AM Break

11:30 AM 2025: Five Years of the ACE Act (What's Next)?

- Update from Policy Committee - Conner Bevin, Kurt Thiede (AFWA)
- Discussion
 - What challenges with implementing ACE Act?
 - How can the FHPs assist in the reauthorization?

12:00 PM Lunch

1:00 PM Opportunities for Enhancing FHP Coordination/Operations - Stacy

- Small group activity

1:45 PM Fundraising Skill Building - Tools and Examples - Stacy

- Resource Development Opportunities & Activities Presentation
- Peer-Learning, [Worksheet](#)

2:45 PM Break

3:00 PM Peer-Consulting - Challenges Facing FHP Coordinators - Stacy

- Small group activity

4:00 PM FHP Coordinator & Board Engagement - Ryan

- Two-on-ones between FHP Coordinators & NFHP Board Members; prompts:
 - What do you see as the biggest opportunity for NFHP/FHPs in the next 1-3 years?
 - What do you see as the biggest challenge for NFHP/FHPs in the next 1-3 years?
 - As a board member, what do you want to get out of the board-buddy program?

5:00 PM Meeting Wrap and Prepare for Day 2 - Stacy

5:30 PM -7:00 PM Rodney Scott's Whole Hog BBQ - 1011 King St, Charleston, SC 29403
(Patio seating reserved)

Tuesday (12/5)

8:30 AM Gather - Coffee & Conversation

- Prompt: Share reflections from yesterday's meeting, what did you learn, what are you excited about, what do you have questions on?

9:00 AM FHP Project Tracking System - Kate Sherman

9:30 AM NFHP National Assessment - Gary Whelan and Daniel Wieferich

10:30 AM Benefits, Troubleshooting, Peer-Sharing around Redesignation - Jonathan Watson

11:15 AM Wrap-Up and Preparing Report for NFHP Board - Stacy & Joan Drinkwin Meeting

11:30 PM Concludes

12:00 PM Lunch Provided at BIL Workshop

Partnerships Committee Update

Committee Members:

- Jessica Speed
- Heidi Keuler
- Deborah Hart
- Lori Maloney
- Carter Kruse
- Therese Thompson
- Bryan Moore (co-chair)
- Todd Ewing
- Melissa Smith
- Joe Nohner (co-chair)
- Ted Eischeid
- Karen Linnell
- Stephen Perry
- Stan Allen (co-chair)
- Jonathan Watson (Board staff support)

Committee Updates:

1. FHP/Board Member Buddy System

- a. First step toward implementation is complete. Board members identified the FHPs with which they'd like to buddy via survey.
- b. FHP coordinators will reach out to Board buddies following the December Board meeting. The FHP coordinators should identify potential touchpoints (e.g., annual meetings, site visits, etc.) in the next year that will set the stage for future coordination.

Issue Statement for the National Fish Habitat Partnership Board

Board Member – Fish Habitat Partnership Operational Funding Cap

Background

The National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) Board evaluates and awards funding to the Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs) to support two broad categories of activities – operations and project implementation. The NFHP Board has set a cap on the allocations an FHP may be allowed specifically to support their operations. These operational funds must meet the 1:1 non-federal match requirement, as part of the overall allocation to FHPs.

The primary uses for these funds are to support FHP coordinator salary, coordinator travel, education and outreach, meetings of Steering Committee or FHP leadership, workshops, training, and small conservation projects. The current funding cap (\$85,000) was set in 2018 and many FHP coordinators have identified a need to increase this cap to support their core functions and ensure effective project development and implementation.

Proposal

The Partnerships Committee recommends increasing the operations limit to provide FHPs greater flexibility in using NFHP funding for operations to ultimately maximize their conservation benefits. The Partnerships Committee recommends a new cap of \$125,000, which accounts for inflation and accommodates other identified operational needs while also ensuring that a significant proportion of FHP funding is directed toward projects. Operational funds are not additional to project funds, and thus increased operational funding will come from the FHP's funding allocation that could otherwise be used for projects.

Decision

Decision 1: Does the Board approve increasing the existing operational funding level cap on NFHP funding for FHPs?

- Yes, funding cap increased to \$125,000
- Yes, funding cap increased to other amount: _____(specify)_____
- No, funding cap remains unchanged from \$85,000

Fish Habitat Partnership Congressional Designation Update:

Background

Title II of the [ACE Act](#) requires that FHPs seek formal Congressional designation by 2025 if they'd like to continue receiving funding through the USFWS (see Section 204). The NFHP Board has developed a process by which all FHPs seeking Congressional designation will apply in order to meet that deadline. As a first step, all FHPs will work collaboratively with the Board to develop their application that demonstrates how their FHP meets the ACE Act requirements. The Board will vote in June 2024 on the list of FHPs to put forward for Congressional designation. The Board will submit a letter to the Congressional Committees of jurisdiction to recommend supporting all of the agreed upon FHPs seeking designation.

Proposal

Several Board members are needed to serve on the FHP Congressional Designation review team. Participants will help to develop feedback to the FHPs to ensure complete and effective applications are put forth. To ensure consistency across applications, we are requesting that those board members serving on this team commit to review several (e.g., ten) applications. The purpose of this discussion is to gauge interest in serving on this team.

Timeline

- Draft applications will be submitted to the Board review team by **December 31, 2023**.
- The Board will review all FHP applications and provide FHPs feedback on the application by **March 1, 2024** to ensure that the FHP and its operations meet all of the ACE Act criteria outlined in Section 204 of the ACE Act
- FHPs will then have until **June 1, 2024** to revise and finalize their FHP Congressional designation application that will be included as an appendix with a letter from the NFHP Board to Congress.
- The Board will vote on the final list of FHPs to recommend for Congressional Designation at the June 2024 meeting

Communications Committee Report

Committee members: Steve Guertin, John LeCoq, Chris Cantrell, Pat Rivers, Gene Gilliland

Committee Update:

- Debbie Hart, SE Alaska FHP Coordinator has agreed to join the Communications Committee starting in January.
- The NFHP Canva Calendar, including Meetings and deadline for 2024, will be released in December.
- Website revision and video development for NFHP will begin in February-March of 2024.
- Committee will consider ways to expand and bring in further expertise.

Committee Request: With Chris Cantrell departing the Board, the Committee would like to seek another Board member representative to serve on the Communications Committee.