January 31, 2022

The Honorable Tom Carper
Chairman
Environment and Public Works Committee
United States Senate
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member
Environment and Public Works Committee
United States Senate
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Chairman
Natural Resources Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Ranking Member
Natural Resources Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Subject: 2021 National Fish Habitat Partnership Report to Congress on Future Fish Habitat Partnership and Modifications

Dear Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Westerman:

As Chairman of the National Fish Habitat Board, I am writing to report on the progress of the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) in Fiscal Year 2021 since the enactment of Title II, the National Fish Habitat Conservation Through Partnerships Act, of the America's Conservation Enhancement Act (ACE Act; P.L. 116-188) on October 30, 2020.

NFHP's mission is to protect, restore, and enhance the nation's fish and aquatic communities through partnerships that foster fish habitat conservation and improve the quality of life for the American people. Since its establishment as a federal program in 2006, NFHP and the existing network of twenty Fish Habitat Partnerships (*see Attachment 1*) have completed 1,209 projects spanning all 50 states (Figure 1); 70 of which occurred in Fiscal Year 2021 (*see Attachment 2*). While NFHP has directly contributed $45.2 million in project funding since 2006, each of those federal dollars has been leveraged over 4:1; showcasing the significant influence and value of the Partnership to maximize the impact of our investments on-the-ground. The Program has also worked across a broad range of federal, state, university, and non-governmental organization partners to develop two national fish habitat assessments identifying intact systems

that need conservation or protection and assessing the root causes of aquatic habitat degradation in altered systems to guide future fish habitat conservation efforts.

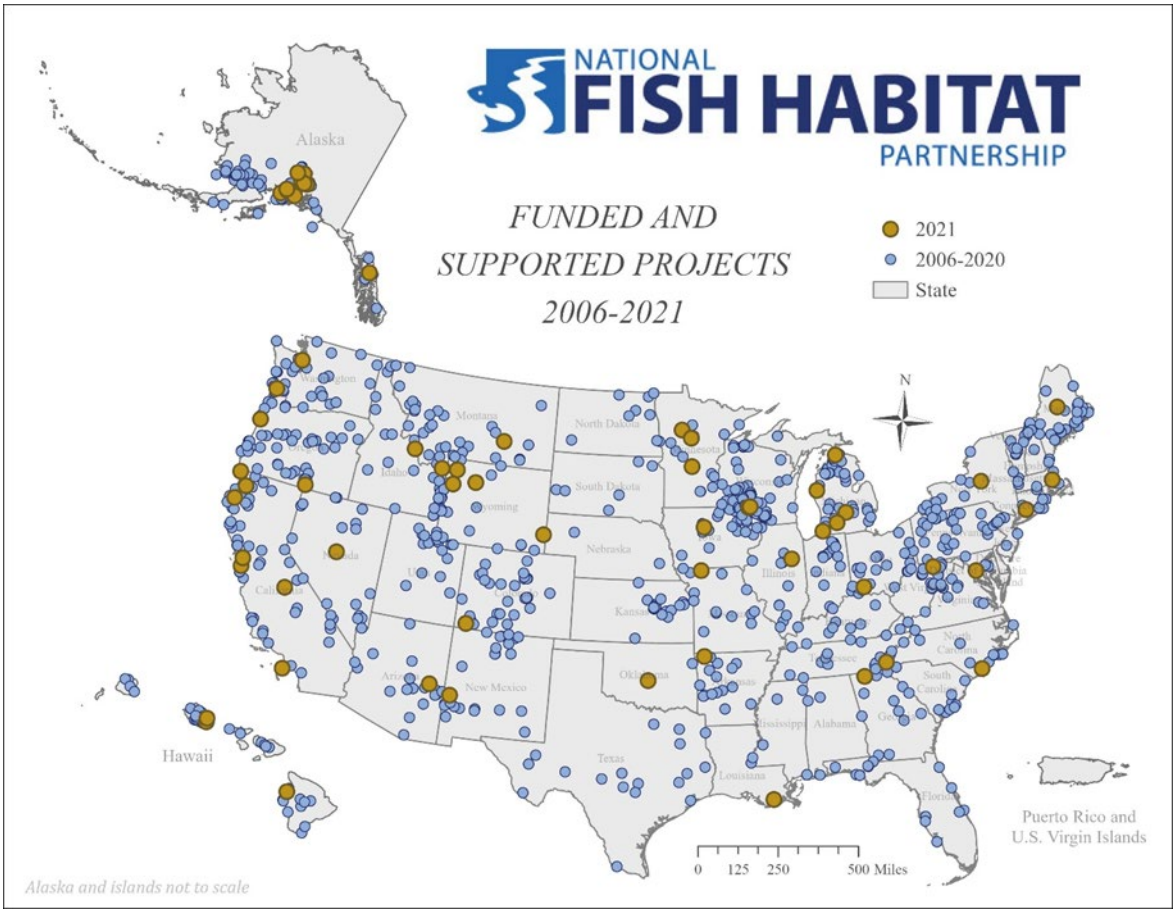

Figure 1 - NFHP funded and supported projects implemented across the United States from 2006 - present.

The Partnership is working to implement the changes to its infrastructure outlined by the ACE Act. By early 2021, the majority of a new 26-member Board was appointed including new members from interest groups not formerly represented on the Board (Figure 2). The two Board member seats that remain vacant are designated for Tribal representatives. The Board awaits the recommendations from the Secretary of Interior to fill these vacant seats. As a result of the pandemic, the Board has been limited to virtual meetings, somewhat hampering our ability to advance all elements of Title II of the ACE Act. However, the Board has been able to implement a timely and responsive program. We look forward to a return to in-person meetings, with Tribal participation, to fully implement the Partnership in 2022. During our regular virtual meetings thus far, the Board discussed changes and key decision points outlined in the ACE Act, shared information, and provided guidance to the existing network of twenty Fish Habitat Partnerships. The newly appointed Board and the Fish Habitat Partnerships developed new project selection

criteria and promptly executed the new project submission process and Board review outlined in the ACE Act. This resulted in the Board's submission of a Fiscal Year 2022 project list for the Secretary of Interior's review by July 1 that was subsequently approved.

The Federal members of the Board, led by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, developed a draft Interagency Operational Plan that describes Federal agency roles and establishes a system for departments and agencies to jointly discuss and pursue collaborative fish habitat conservation work in support of NFHP goals and objectives. The draft Plan is receiving Board review at this stage. The Board also re-established several Committees which support the Board's work on specific tasks like scientific habitat assessments, Fish Habitat Conservation project review, policy analysis, and communications.

As envisioned by the ACE Act, NFHP continues to improve our nation's fisheries resources and aquatic habitats by leveraging funds and collaborating with a diverse network of partners to achieve shared goals. We have been successful transitioning into the model enacted by the ACE Act while continuing to build relationships and achieve on-the-ground results. In Fiscal Year 2022, we look forward to enhancing the operations of the Fish Habitat Partnerships and Board, and beginning needed steps for Congress to approve the Fish Habitat Partnerships. We will also continue planning efforts to complete a new national fish habitat assessment by 2025. We appreciate the support shown to this program by the Committees of jurisdiction through your leadership and other members of Congress and look forward to discussing our work further with you and your staff.

Sincerely,

National Fish Habitat Board Chairman

Attachments:

1. Existing 20 Fish Habitat Partnerships
2. Selection of 2021 NFHP Project Photos & Descriptions

NATIONAL FISH HABITAT PARTNERSHIP

BOBBY WILSON
Director - Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (Board Vice-Chair) (SEAFWA Representative)

ED SCHRIEVER
Director, Idaho Department of Fish & Game (Board Chairman) (Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Representative)

STEVE PERRY
Coordinator, Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (Representatives/Landowners - Fish Habitat Partnerships Representative)

JOE SLAUGHTER
Natural Resource Manager, Georgia Power (Corporate Industry Representative)

JOHN LECOQ
CEO, Fishpond USA (Corportate Industry Representative)

TED EISCHEID
Planner, Matanuska-Susitna Borough, AK (Local Goverment Representative)

JESSE TRUSHENSKI
Chief Science Officer, Riverence (Agriculture Representative)

CARTER KRUSE
Director of Conservation, Turner Enterprises (National Private Landowner Representative)

GENE GILLILAND
Conservation Director, Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (Freshwater Recreational Angling organization Representative)

CHRIS CANTRELL
Engineering and Construction Services Branch Chief, Arizona Game and Fish Department (WAFWA Representative)

STAN ALLEN
Sr Program Manager, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

ALISON BOWDEN
Conservation Director, Rivers, Coasts & Oceans, The Nature Conservancy (Habitat Conservation Representative)

STEVE GUERTIN
Deputy Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

ANNE KINSINGER
Associate Director, Ecosystems, U.S. Geological Survey

DOUG AUSTEN
Executive Director, American Fisheries Society, (Science Based Fisheries Organization Representative)

DOUG BOYD
Sport Fishing & Boating Partnership Council

CHRISTY PLUMER
Chief Conservation Officer, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) (Marine Rec. Fishing Representative)

TIM SCHAEFFER
Executive Director, PA Fish and Boat Commission (NEAFWA Representative)

MIKE LEONARD
Conservation Director, American Sportfishing Association (Recreational Sportfishing Industry Representative)

CHRIS MOORE
Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council (Commercial Fishing Representative)

DOUG NYGREN
Fisheries Division Director, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism (MAFWA Representative)

SAM RAUCH
Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NOAA (National Marine Fisheries Service)

BARNIE GYANT
Associate Deputy Chief, USDA Forest Service

BRYAN MOORE
Chief Intergovernmental Officer, Trout Unlimited (Habitat Conservation Organization)

Figure 2 – National Fish Habitat Board Membership

Attachment 1 – Existing 20 Fish Habitat Partnerships (in alphabetical order)

Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (*Board recognized March, 2009)*

The geographic extent of the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP) stretches from Maine to the Florida Keys, including all or part of 16 States. It covers 476,357 square miles, including land areas inland to the headwaters of coastal rivers, and ocean areas outward to the continental slope. The ACFHP plans to work throughout the region, but will focus on estuarine environments and place less emphasis on coastal headwaters and offshore marine ecosystems.

http://www.atlanticfishhabitat.org/

California Fish Passage Forum (*Board recognized March, 2010)*

The mission of the California Fish Passage Forum is to protect and restore listed anadromous salmonid species, and other aquatic organisms, in California by promoting collaboration among public and private sectors for fish passage improvement projects and programs. Species of concern include (but are not limited to): coho and chinook salmon, steelhead trout, and Pacific lamprey.

http://www.cafishpassageforum.org

Desert Fish Habitat Partnership (*Board recognized March, 2009)*

Desert fish have declined across these arid lands as a result of habitat loss and alteration and the widespread introduction and establishment of nonnative aquatic species. Despite numerous federal and state laws, regulations, and policies to protect and recover native desert fishes and their habitats, most of them remain imperiled.Current habitat conditions and threats require specific management actions and focused consideration of desert fishes if these species and their habitats are to be protected and remain viable into the future.

http://www.desertfhp.org/

Driftless Area Restoration Effort (*Board recognized October, 2007)*

The Driftless Area is a 24,000 square-mile area that encompasses portions of southeast Minnesota, northeast Iowa, southwest Wisconsin and northwest Illinois bypassed by the last continental glacier. The region has a high concentration of spring-fed coldwater streams and is recognized for its high diversity of plants, animals, and habitats. The Driftless Area Restoration Effort (DARE) partnership formed to address habitat degradation, loss, and alteration that are the primary factors contributing to the decline of fish populations in this unique region.Poor land and water management practices including intensive row crops, fertilizer use, channelization, water withdrawals, loss of perennial vegetation, and invasive species have caused excessive streambank erosion, sedimentation, and poor water quality that impact waters all the way to the Gulf of Mexico, where such practices have helped contribute to hypoxic waters. DARE is employing a collaborative approach to plan and implement cost effective projects to improve aquatic habitat for fish and other aquatic species by developing a regional strategy that links upland health and fish habitat with fish populations in targeted watersheds.

https://wicouncil.tu.org/tu-projects/driftless-area-restoration-effort

Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (*Board recognized October, 2007)*

In 2005, in recognition of the need to address regional and range-wide threats to brook trout, a group of public and private entities formed the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV) to halt the decline of brook trout and restore fishable populations of this iconic species. The EBTJV directs locally-driven efforts that build partnerships to improve fish habitat, working to ensure healthy, fishable brook trout populations throughout their historic eastern United States range.The EBTJV's long-term goals are to develop a comprehensive restoration and education strategy to improve aquatic habitats; build awareness through education; and raise federal, state, and local funds for brook trout conservation that will ultimately help enhance public use of brook trout and generally improve ecosystems and water quality within the watersheds they inhabit.

http://easternbrooktrout.org

Fishers & Farmers Partnership (*Board recognized March, 2010)*

Our vision rests on a belief that the combined experience, knowledge and skills of fishers and farmers can measurably improve the health of land and streams in the altered landscape of the Upper Mississippi River Basin. To advance this purpose, rural landowners voluntarily develop and implement science=based solutions to local water quality issues, with the support of conservationists. As landowners achieve their own goals for conservation and sustainable prosperity, successful practices will be demonstrated and effects measured, lessons will be learned and shared throughout the basin, and ultimately a globally significant landscape will be renewed.

http://fishersandfarmers.org/

Great Lakes Basin Fish Habitat Partnership (*Board recognized October, 2009)*

The international Great Lakes Basin is a unique and biologically diverse region containing the largest surface freshwater system in the world, with sport and commercial fisheries valued at over $7 billion annually. The fishery and aquatic resources of the Great Lakes have suffered detrimental effects of invasive species, loss of biodiversity, poor water quality, contaminants, loss or degradation of coastal wetlands, land use changes, and other factors.

Great Plains Fish Habitat Partnership (*Board recognized October, 2009)*

Streams of the Great Plains are home to a wide diversity of aquatic fauna adapted to harsh changes in temperature and water availability. Low human population density has enabled many Great Plains streams to remain relatively unimpaired, yet aquatic species have experienced a slow but steady decline in abundance and diversity during the 20th Century and continue to face challenges that threaten their viability.

http://www.prairiefish.org

Hawaii Fish Habitat Partnership (*Board recognized March, 2009)*

The Hawaii Fish Habitat Partnership is composed of a diverse group of partners that plan and implement a technically sound statewide aquatic habitat restoration program with a special focus on inland waters including streams, wetlands, and estuaries. Our partners include local watershed coalitions; private landowners who seek to establish sustainable aquatic resource management practices on their lands; federal and State aquatic resource agencies; and Native Hawaiian groups that seek to preserve aquatic resources as a cultural and natural resource legacy. The Hawaii Fish Habitat Partnership was recognized by the Board in March 2009.

http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands/hfhp.html

Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership (*Board recognized January, 2010)*

Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership is a conservation partnership developing on the Kenai Peninsula, Alaska. This partnership is working with the National Fish Habitat Action Plan to protect, restore, and enhance our area's fish and aquatic communities.

http://www.kenaifishpartnership.org/

Matanuska Susitna Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership (*Board recognized October, 2007)*

The Matanuska-Susitna Basin, or Mat-Su, covers 24,500 square miles in southcentral Alaska, roughly the combined size of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. The basin supports populations of chinook, coho, sockeye, pink and chum salmon as well as world-class rainbow trout, char, and grayling, making it one of the country's premier sportfishing and wildlife viewing destinations. Salmon and other fish are at the heart of Alaskan ecosystems, economy, and culture.The basin is also one of the fastest growing regions in the country, presenting unique challenges and opportunities to ensure thriving fish, healthy habitats, and vital communities in one region. The Matanuska-Susitna Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership (Partnership) formed to address increasing impacts on salmon from human use and development pressures in the Mat-Su basin and ensure that opportunities for growth and conservation go hand-in-hand.

http://www.matsusalmon.org/

Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership (*Board recognized March, 2009)*

Each year, millions of anglers fish on over 40,000 inland lakes across the Upper Midwest, seeking recreation, food, and the opportunity to catch "the big one". These lakes, which were naturally formed by glaciers, are essential in supporting biodiversity, including the many threatened and endangered species that live in them. Fish populations in Midwest glacial lakes are dependent upon the healthy habitats that lakes provide, allowing them to grow, reproduce, and thrive. Stress from human development along lake shorelines, water quality decline driven by development and agriculture in watersheds, changing climate, invasive species, and many other factors threaten these fish populations. The Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership was created in 2009 to coordinate and improve the conservation of fish habitat in the over 40,000 lakes across the Upper Midwest.

The MGLP's partners work together to protect, rehabilitate, and enhance sustainable fish habitats in glacial lakes of the Midwest United States for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations. MGLP partners include the United States Fish and Wildlife Service; the United States Forest Service; the state natural resource agencies in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin; national nonprofit organizations such as The Nature Conservancy; universities; and stakeholder organizations.

http://www.midwestglaciallakes.org/

Ohio River Basin Fish Habitat Partnership (*Board recognized October, 2009)*

The Ohio River Basin Fish Habitat Partnership was formed to protect, restore, and enhance priority habitat for fish and mussels in the watersheds of the Ohio River Basin. We pursue this mission for the benefit of the public, but what brings us to the table is as diverse as the basin itself. Whether it is sport fish, mussels, imperiled fish, water quality, or one of many other drivers, what bonds us is the Basin and our desire to work together to protect, restore, and enhance her aquatic resources.

https://orbfhp.org/

Pacific Lamprey Conservation Initiative (*Board recognized June, 2016)*

The Pacific Lamprey Conservation Initiative (PLCI) is a collaboration of Native American tribes, federal, state, municipal and local agencies working to conserve Pacific Lamprey throughout its range in California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Alaska. The goal of the PLCI is to achieve long-term persistence of Pacific Lamprey and their habitats and support traditional tribal cultural use of Pacific Lamprey throughout their historic range in the United States.The intent of the partnership is to achieve this goal, where ecologically and economically feasible, by maintaining viable populations and their habitats in areas where they exist currently, restoring populations and their habitats where they are extirpated or at risk of extirpation, and doing so in a manner that addresses the importance of lamprey to tribal peoples. The PLCI envisions a future where threats to Pacific Lamprey and their habitats are reduced, and the historic geographic range and ecological role of Pacific Lamprey are restored to the greatest extent possible.

https://www.fws.gov/pacific/fisheries/sphabcon/lamprey/lampreyCI.html

Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership (*Board recognized January, 2012)*

The Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership's (PMEP) mission is to protect, enhance, and restore ecological habitats within estuaries and nearshore marine environments to sustain healthy native fish communities and support sustainable human uses that depend on healthy fish populations.

The PMEP originated in 2009 when representatives from Oregon, Washington and California agencies and non-governmental entities met to discuss the need to protect and restore habitat for fish species that use estuaries and nearshore marine areas.

http://www.pacificfishhabitat.org/

Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership (*Board recognized October, 2009)*

Reservoirs are inextricable parts of our natural landscapes; they cannot be isolated or dismissed in conservation management. Constructed to meet a variety of human needs, they impact almost every major river system in the United States, affecting to various degrees habitat for fish and other aquatic species and, in turn, affected by the health of the watershed in which they reside. Reservoirs, their associated watersheds, and their downstream flows constitute interdependent, functioning systems. Effective management of these reservoir systems – maintaining their ecological function and biological health – is essential to the conservation of our nation's aquatic resources and their habitats. It requires that we minimize the adverse impacts of reservoirs on their watersheds (and watersheds upon reservoirs) and maximize their utility for aquatic habitat.

http://www.friendsofreservoirs.com/

Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership (*Board recognized March, 2014)*

The Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership works to foster cooperative fish habitat conservation in freshwater, estuarine and marine ecosystems across the southern panhandle of Alaska including the dynamic watersheds and waterways that make up the Alexander Archipelago. Covering nearly 17 million acres of this region is the Tongass National Forest, the largest national forest in the United States and a key producer of salmon. The Partnership's mission is to support cooperative fish habitat conservation, restoration, and management across the region with consideration of economic, social, and cultural interests of local communities in its efforts. The partnership's three priority conservation goals are to 1) protect fish habitat in freshwater systems, estuaries and nearshore-marine areas in Southeast, 2) maintain water quality and quantity in those areas, and 3) restore and enhance fragmented and degraded fish habitats in impacted areas. The Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership was recognized by the Board in March 2014.

http://www.seakfhp.org/

Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (*Board recognized October, 2007)*

Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP) was initiated in 2001 to address the myriad issues related to the management of aquatic resources in the southeastern United States, which includes about 26,000 miles of species-rich aquatic shoreline and over 70 major river basins. The area faces significant threats to its aquatic resources, as illustrated by the fact that 34% of North American fish species and 90% of the native mussel species designated as endangered, threatened, or of special concern are found in the Southeast.

http://southeastaquatics.net/

Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership (*Board recognized May, 2008)*

The Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership is a made up of local communities, Native organizations, subsistence users, anglers, hunters, commercial fishing interests, lodge owners, hunting and fishing guides, tourism interests, non-profit organizations, federal, state, and local agencies and corporations and foundations working cooperatively to conserve fish, wildlife and habitat and perpetuate the uses they support through voluntary habitat conservation in Southwest Alaska.

http://southwestsalmon.org/

Western Native Trout Initiative (*Board recognized February, 2008)*

Trout are important as an "indicator species" of a watershed. When a watershed is in trouble, the trout are the first to die. Species like the greenback cutthroat, gila, and westslope cutthroat trout thrived in Western watersheds until their habitats were altered because of roads, dams, agriculture, and logging. Human introduction of non-native trout species, such as rainbow, brown and brook trout put further pressure on native species by out-competing them for food and by eating native fry. Conservation of Western native trout and their habitats is critical in maintaining their cultural, scientific and recreational value.

http://www.westernnativetrout.org

Attachment 2 – Selection of 2021 NFHP Project Photos & Descriptions

Photo Caption: Site of the historic removal of the lower Eklutna dam on the Eklutna River, Alaska in the Matanuska Susitna Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership. **Photo Credit:** Trout Unlimited

Project Description: The lower Eklutna Hydroelectric dam, built in 1929, blocked the migration of spawning salmon and was the first of two severe impacts to the Eklutna River system by hydroelectric projects and was abandoned when the second project was built upstream, diverting the entire flow of water. Over the course of 2017 and 2018, the defunct lower Eklutna dam was successfully removed in the most ambitious river restoration project ever attempted in Alaska. With support from the Matanuska Susitna Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership, the Conservation Fund, the Native Village of Eklutna and Eklutna Inc. completed the 5- year, $7.5 million effort to remove the lower Eklutna River dam. Known to its ancestral inhabitants as Idlughet, this area is among the traditional lands of the Eklutna Dena'ina who would overwinter along the shores of Eklutna Lake (Idlu Bena). The Eklutna River, Idlughentnu, and its wild salmon runs have long supported the Eklutna Dena'ina, however historic hydroelectric development on the river has greatly diminished the formerly flourishing salmon fisheries. The completion of this project will open up access to the necessary habitats for salmon in the region.

Photo Caption: Restored habitat for salmon as part of the second phase of this project in Lawrence Creek, California. Similar work will be done in Phase 3 to further enhance connectivity on Lawrence Creek with support from the California Fish Passage Forum. **Photo Credit:** Trout Unlimited

Project Description: Historically, thousands of salmon and Steelhead Trout returned annually to spawn in the rivers and streams of Northern California and Southern Oregon within the boundary of the California Fish Passage Forum. Habitat alterations caused by land management, including historic logging practices, resulted in restricted access to important floodplain habitat and led to declines in these populations. Lawrence Creek, a tributary to Yager Creek and the Van Duzen River in Humboldt County, California. Lawrence Creek is among the most important Coho Salmon and Chinook Salmon streams in the Lower Eel River basin (CA Department of Fish and Wildlife 2017). The Lower Eel/Van Duzen River Coho Salmon population is at high risk of extinction (NOAA 2014), and within the Van Duzen River Basin, the Yager Creek sub-basin most likely maintains the highest salmonid fisheries value. Salmonids found in the Van Duzen River basin include the Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast (SONCC) Coho Salmon (status: threatened); California Coastal (CC) Chinook Salmon (status: threatened); and Northern California Steelhead Trout (status: threatened); as well as native cut-throat trout. Since 2015, partners in the region have been working collaboratively to restore access to floodplain habitat, including off-channel ponds and side channels, that provide important "winter refugia"- shelter from high flows during intense winter storm events, and increased habitat diversity that leads to improved food resources for fish. Monitoring of the first two connectivity projects in Lawrence Creek has shown that these listed fish will immediately occupy the restored habitat. To expand recovery efforts in the region, the California Fish Passage Forum joined partners NOAA Restoration Center, Humboldt Redwood Company, Trout Unlimited, and the Pacific Watershed Associates to construct a third pond with deep and shallow water habitats and wood debris to provide more winter rearing habitat for salmonids.

Photo Caption: Fishers and Farmers Partnership working with Ag Drainage Management Coalition at a Clean River Partners Field Day in Minnesota (left). Native Brook Trout caught by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources from Rice Creek, Minnesota (right). **Photo Credits:** Fishers & Farmers Partnership for the Upper Mississippi River Basin & Clean River Partners

Project Description: Over 12 farmers are working with Clean River Partners and Fishers & Farmers Partnership to improve water quality and protect fish habitat in Rice Creek, a tributary of the Cannon River Watershed in southeast Minnesota. Rice Creek is the only trout stream in Rice County, and a section of the Cannon River has been designated as a Wild and Scenic River by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR). Minnesota's Wild and Scenic Rivers Program protects rivers that have outstanding natural, scenic, geographic, historic, cultural, and recreational value. This fish habitat project creates opportunities and events for non-farm and farming community members to learn from and support each other, adding great potential for sustained and perpetual practice change. It also creates farmer-to-farmer learning opportunities that promote best management practices and addresses farming impacts at the watershed scale. For example, this project demonstrated that by planting cover crops on a portion of tillable acres over time, farmers can significantly reduce the runoff of detrimental nutrients entering Rice Creek each year, protecting the local trout populations. Partners on this project besides Clean River Partners and Fishers & Farmers include: St. Olaf College, MN DNR, Rice Soil and Water Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Service, University of Minnesota Extension, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Trout Unlimited, Compeer Financial, McKnight Foundation, Bridgewater Township, Circle Lake Association, Tri-Lakes Sportsmen's Club, and the National Fish Habitat Partnership.

Photo Caption: Aerial view of the Armstrong Dam and project site in Braintree, MA within the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership. **Photo Credit:** Town of Braintree, MA

Project Description: For many years, the former mill industry along the Monatiquot River in Massachusetts impacted historic herring runs and disconnected species from their spawning grounds. Now the Armstrong Dam is the primary barrier to fish passage on the river. The dam no longer serves its original purpose and is also a public safety hazard. This project, led by the Town of Braintree in the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership, will remove the Armstrong Dam. There is also a concurrent project to remove the downstream Ames Pond Dam and install a pool-and-weir fishway around Rock Falls. When these projects are completed, 36 miles of unimpeded upstream access to 180 acres of river herring spawning habitat will be restored. This project will provide river herring access to spawning grounds, which have been blocked for centuries by dams. The subsequent increase in these forage fish should benefit recreational fish species such as striped bass and bluefish. The removal of the dam will also improve public safety by removing a flooding hazard.