

National Fish Habitat Board Webinar Summary: January 18, 2017

Members present:

Peter Aarestad (NEAFWA)	David Hoskins <i>for</i> Dan Ashe (USFWS)
Stan Allen (PSMFC)	Mike Leonard (ASA)
Doug Beard (USGS)	Ross Melinchuk (SEAFWA)
Benita Best-Wong (EPA)	Bryan Moore <i>for</i> Chris Wood (TU)
Tom Bigford (AFS)	Chris Moore (MAFMC)
Doug Boyd (SBPC)	Christy Plumer (TRCP)
Tom Champeau (At-Large State Seat)	Sam Rauch (NOAA Fisheries)

Members absent:

Mike Andrews (TNC), Jim Leach (MAFWA), Ron Regan (AFWA), Ed Schriever (WAFWA), Rob Harper (USFS), and Sean Stone (CCA).

Approved by consensus:

- January Webinar meeting agenda with the following changes: 1) moved up ELT and Legislative updates in the agenda; and 2) added USFWS FY17 Project Funding Method agenda item.
- October Board meeting summary with the following changes: 1) deleted the task “Federal Caucus should develop a charter or Terms of Reference for Board approval (including membership).”; and 2) added “One suggestion was made that the Federal Caucus should develop a charter or Terms of Reference for Board approval (including membership), but consensus was not reached on next steps.” to Federal Caucus section.

Approved by motion:

- Motion to accept Budget and Priorities by Chris Moore, seconded by Doug Boyd.

Updates and discussions:

- Housekeeping – The Board was made aware of the dates (March 21-22) and location (Trout Unlimited) of the next meeting. It was noted that lodging information for this meeting would be sent out soon.
- Executive Leadership Team Update – Recent decisions of the ELT were made known to the Board, including: Benita Best-Wong as the new EPA representative; Christy Plumer as the new Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership representative; and Jim Leach as the new Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies representative. The Tribal representative resigned from the Board and a replacement was in the process of being identified. The Board was notified that by March, the NMFS will take the lead in bringing together USFWS and Forest Service staff to review and redraft the MOU recognizing that it will not be signed by March. NMFS will also reach out to EPA to determine if it would like to be added to the MOU.
- Legislation Update – The Board was notified that though the legislation was close to being passed, the National Fish Habitat legislation did not pass in the last Congress. They are now considering the best course of action to get it across the finish line and introspectively thinking about what was done well and what should be done differently. The Legislative Team was thanked for their efforts.
- Budget and Priorities – The Board reviewed the funding sources within the 2017 budget and major 2017 priorities, including unfunded items (ie. expenses outside the budget). It was noted that the USFWS was operating under a continuing resolution, and could only provide the amount shown as income in the USFWS column (\$64K). It was noted that the dollar amount showing for future assessment work (Priority P) in the unfunded items section, was not a commitment from NOAA. It was clarified that the funds showing as income in the USGS column (\$25k) have been provided.
- National Fish Habitat Assessment – A survey on the National Assessment was provided to and completed by the Science and Data Committee (SDC) and that a similar survey will be provided to FHPs and the

Board. It was noted that a draft vision, purpose, and scope document had been created based upon results from the SDC survey and staff review, as a discussion document. Two webinars to rollout the National Assessment to FHPs and other interested parties had been held with the first on January 6th focused on the inland component of the assessment and the second on January 13th, addressed the inland and coastal components of the assessment. At its height, the first webinar had an audience of over 70, and the second had over 50 in attendance at its height. These webinars opened the door to new opportunities for using the assessment that perhaps weren't being communicated to the FHPs and a number of FHPs have come forward to ask for further elaboration and guidance on use. Another webinar event focused on case histories is in planning and a ½ day session at the Annual American Fisheries Society (AFS) meeting where users can bring habitat assessment analysis questions and the Assessment Team will try to provide insights on how to solve these questions using the information in the National Assessment. Additionally, they are working on getting a tool for unique queries up and running within the web report. It was noted that the committee is well on its way for meeting the Board request for an Assessment vision and purpose by March.

- Next Administration Checklist – An overview of the next administration document was provided to the Board. The document includes: language on Partnership efforts; recreational fishing as the fabric of the Nation; and an action item to pass legislation that would put NFHP on the map. Staff has spoken with the Legislative Team leader about getting the document to the right people in the new administration. Several Federal Board members present on the call asked that the document indicate that it was not prepared by any Federal members of the Board and to let the notes reflect that this was a vote of non-federal Board members. A second request was made that the last bullet should reflect previous work with legislators to introduce legislation. And a third request was made that language regarding commercial statistics be included. It was noted that it is unknown how this administration will perceive commerce versus budget. Board members may provide additional comments on the next administration transition document for the next week and half following the Board call.
- NFHP 10-Year Anniversary Update – It was noted that a 10-year NFHP Anniversary Communication Plan had been developed and that a lot of these items had been completed with very limited funding. They are currently working towards a potential funding request with a donor to create a video and podcast for the work of the FHPs as well as some radio slots. They have also discussed promoting the work of FHPs, such as banners in stores or a round-up to the next dollar campaign. They are also working with U.S. Forest Service to have an event that lines up with National Fishing Week. A Beyond the Pond update will be provided at the March Board meeting.
- USFWS FY17 Project Funding Method – There was discussion with regard to what input Board members should be providing and whether input should be provided by individual Board members or a single set of comments from the Board as a whole. It was determined that individual Board members and the Partnerships Committee could provide comments. To facilitate this effort, NFHP staff would send the Dropbox link containing FHP submissions, in addition to the USFWS evaluation criteria, to Board members and the Partnerships Committee. [Please note that it was later determined that to ensure a fair evaluation process, review should be provided by Board members only, and as such the link to FHP submissions would not be provided to the Partnerships Committee].

Action items:

- Staff and legislative team will revise next administration transition document to include: information on previous legislative work; a commercial fishing statistic; and a note that it was not prepared by Federal members of the Board.
- Staff will send a Dropbox link to FHP submissions and evaluation criteria to Board members after the call. Board members seeking to provide input on the FHP submissions for the USFWS FY17 Project Funding Process should do so by February 6th. Input should be sent to Julie Henning (julie_henning@fws.org) copying Cecilia Lewis (cecilia_lewis@fws.org) and Emily Greene (emily.greene@noaa.gov).
- If any Board member has thoughts on a Tribal representative for the Board, please send to staff

(rroberts@fishwildlife.org).

Future Board meetings (2017):

- March 21-22 (Rosslyn, VA)
- Summer Introductory Call for new members (Date TBD)
- June 28 WebEx
- October 18-19 (South Dakota)

Board approved documents:

- October Board meeting summary with changes detailed in the “Approved by Consensus” section above.

Additional attendees:

Karin Eldridge (USFWS)
Jessica Graham (SARP)
Emily Greene (Board Staff – NOAA contract)
Lisa Havel (ACFHP)
Julie Henning (USFWS)
Heidi Keuler (Fishers and Farmers FHP)
Mallory Martin (South Atlantic LCC)
Doug Norton (EPA)
Steve Perry (EBTJV)
Bill Rice (USFWS)
Ryan Roberts (Board Staff - AFWA)
Peter Ruhl (SDC Co-Chair USGS)
Therese Thompson (WNTI)
Gary Whelan (SDC Co-Chair MI DNR)
Daniel Wieferich (USGS)