

November NFHP Board Meeting Attendance

	Last Name	First Name	November 6
1	Allen	Stan	X
2	Austen	Doug	X
3	Booth	Austin	
4	Boyles	Robert	X
5	Carter/Clark	Julie/Andy	X
6	Gilliland	Gene	
7	Guertin	Steve	X
8	Horton	Chris	X
9	Kinsinger	Anne	X
10	Kruse/Williams	Carter/Jacob	X
11	Leonard	Mike	X
12	Linnell	Karen	X
13	Lohr/Conley	Steve/Kim	X
14	Micciche	Peter	X
15	Moore	Chris	
16	Moore	Bryan	
17	Nakayama	Ian	X
18	O Keefe	John	
19	Perry	Steve	X
20	Rauch	Sam	X
21	Ringia	Adam	X
22	Rivers	Pat	X
23	Schaeffer	Timothy D.	X
24	Slager	Jake	X
25	Trushenski	Jesse	X

NFHP Staff:

- Daniel Wieferich

- Jason Olive
- Alex McOwen
- Ryan Roberts
- Kate Sherman
- Gary Whelan

- Mark Humpert
- Paul Dey
- Sharmila Jeppsen
- Jacob Williams
- Conor Bevan
- Therese Thompson

USFWS Staff:

- Eric MacMillan
- Trevor Luna
- Will Duncan
- Jessica Hogrefe
- Nathan Clifton
- Tim Loux

Beyond the Pond:

- Kelly Hepler
- Johnny LeCoq

Approved by Consensus:

- November 6, 2024 Board meeting agenda
- July NFHP Board meeting summary

FHP Coordinators:

- Lori Maloney
- Therese Thompson
- Sara Strassman
- Simen Kaalstad
- Todd Ewing
- Trent Dodson
- Doug Nygren
- Lisa Hollingsworth Segedy

Approved by Motion:

- To adopt the NFHP Code of Conduct – motion by Pat Rivers; seconded by: Mike Leonard
- To provide a NFHP Board letter of support for the IFC/AFS In Stream Flow and Water Conservation Training Center – motion by: Jesse Trushenski; seconded by: Stan Allen

Other Participants:

- Christopher Estes

National Fish Habitat Virtual Board Meeting

Wednesday, November 6, 2024

1:00 PM ET – 4:30 PM ET

[Webinar Link](#)

Meeting ID: 231 812 843 335 Passcode: j5jH3c

Time (EDT)	Agenda Item	Tab	Lead(s)
1:00 PM	<p>Welcome</p> <p><i>Desired Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board action to approve agenda and August meeting summary. 	1	Chair Robert Boyles & All Attendees

Robert Boyles welcome the Board and brought the meeting to order. He reminded the Board members that he will be transitioning into retirement in early 2024 after he hands the Chair position over to Tim Schaeffer. Robert emphasized that he will remain Board Chair for the next in-person meeting in January in Las Vegas, NV and will work with staff to transition leadership to Tim Schaeffer following that meeting and pending his SC DNR successor being confirmed. The Chair also noted that the meeting should adjourn by 4:30 PM ET.

1:10 PM **2025 Board Meeting Schedule Preview** 2 **Alex McOwen (NFHP Board Staff)**

Desired Outcomes:

- **Board awareness** of 2025 meeting schedule.

Alex McOwen reminded the Board of the next in-person meeting scheduled for January 28-30, 2025 Las Vegas NV. Hotel block information from the staff will be coming soon. Spring and summer 2025 virtual Board meeting dates have not yet been set and staff will be working with Tim to identify dates to send calendar invites. The second in-person meeting of 2025 will be held during the week of September 15-19 in Minneapolis, MN. This meeting will be held in conjunction with an FHP workshop and Pat Rivers offered to arrange a canoeing trip to the Boundary Waters for anyone who is interested.

1:15 PM **Beyond the Pond Update & Discussion** **Kelly Hepler (Chairman, Beyond the Pond Board)**

Desired Outcomes:

- **Board awareness and discussion** of Beyond the Pond staffing, Board plans, and next steps.

BtP Board Chair Kelly Hepler joined the meeting as a guest speaker with Johnny LeCoq to share some next steps and planning for Beyond the Pond. Kelly reminded the Board about the *Strategic by Nature* report generated in 2023 that made suggestions for Beyond the Pond operations and synthesized input from many sources via interviews. Kelly noted personal and professional challenges have delayed Beyond the Pond progress. He highlighted and commended Ryan Roberts for maintaining a valuable relationship with Bob Ziemer of Bass Pro Shops which has resulted in another \$500K donation to fund Fish Habitat Partnership projects. Emphasizing a “one team, one mission”, Kelly identified a need to reboot Beyond the Pond and clarify the roles and functions and the connection to NFHP. He expressed that he’d like to restore the connection between the two Boards by having 3 members from the NFHP Board as members on the Beyond the Pond Board.

Kelly shared that Therese Thompson is on a part-time, 2-year contract starting in December 2024 to support administrative, coordination, and facilitation needs for Beyond the Pond. Therese then shared the specific work projects they have identified for her to work on including: higher organizational coordination, strategic planning sessions for business plan, Beyond the Pond brand evaluation, fundraising and communication strategy, assisting with communication, and internal organizational plan (grants, budget, etc.).

Kelly noted that Beyond the Pond plans to seek external consultants for development of a fundraising plan and will be discussing overhead with Bob Ziemer and Doug Nygren and Ryan Roberts (currently charging 5% overhead on Bass Pro Shops funding).

- Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation has offered to share strategies with BtP in January 2025.
- **Seeking 3 volunteers to serve on the BtP Board by early 2025**
 - Jake Slager is unable to join in an official capacity
 - Jesse Trushenski would like to join BtP Board – will trade off her role on the NFHP SDC
 - **Let Robert and Ryan know if you are interested in joining the BtP Board**
 - Robert suggested Board leadership circle with Kelly and Johnny to provide feedback
- **Questions:**
 - Jake Slager would like to help further connect with Bass Pro
 - Do we have budget in place to cover this support? Where do these funds come from? Will come from 5% overhead from Bass Pro funds
 - Would like to have 1-2 FHP coordinators support BtP – important voice to include in these conversations

2:00 PM

Policy Committee Update

3

Ian Nakayama (TRCP,
Policy Committee
Chair)

Desired Outcomes:

- **Board awareness** of ACE Act Reauthorization and Policy Committee activities.
- **Update** on meetings with OMB regarding science and technical support funding for agencies.
- **Board awareness of** Policy Committee Terms of Reference document.

Ian Nakayama shared that we have seen an ACE Act reauthorization bill markup in House to modify the language on Congressional designation. He indicated that we are hoping the bill will pass during the lame duck and Ian and the Policy Committee will flag engagement opportunities for the Board. Ian also reported out on an October meeting the Policy Committee had with two budget examiners from Office of Management and Budget (USFS and USGS). Those meetings were scheduled to discuss getting the authorized scientific and technical assistance funds requested by all federal agencies outlined in the ACE Act (USFWS, NOAA, USGS, EPA, and USFS). Robert Boyles provided a high-level overview of NFHP and several FHP coordinators shared examples of how USFS and USGS support specific Fish Habitat Partnerships. The meeting went well and some follow up information was requested. Ian noted that we should expect to see the President's Budget request around May 2025 and there may be another opportunity to engage in January 2025 with the new, incoming administration.

Finally, the Policy Committee has completed their Terms of Reference document.

2:30 PM

BREAK

2:45 PM **NFHP Action Plan 3.0 Update**

**Alex McOwen and
Jason Olive (NFHP
Board Staff)**

Desired Outcomes:

- **Board discussion** of draft mission and goals.
- **Board awareness** of upcoming survey of Board members.

Jason Olive and Alex McOwen presented an update on the progress made by the Action Plan revision team since it was formed at the July Board meeting. The team is comprised of six Board members and three FHP coordinators who have been focused on revising the mission and goals of the 2012 NFHP Action Plan to start. Following this content, a survey will be sent to Board members and FHP coordinators to be **completed by 12/10**. This survey will gather input to further shape and develop the goals and objectives of the Action Plan.

- Tenets of NFHP are still the same
- **Questions:**
 - Will this have a time horizon? We expect to write SMART objectives, so will be time-bound. ACE Act reauthorization could drive that time horizon.
 - We will send the PPT with the survey – goals are also in the survey
 - Board can also develop a Board Work Plan that tiers from the Action Plan. Good for the Board to identify specific actions

3:00 PM **USFWS Update**

**Steve Guertin (USFWS,
NFHP Board Member)**

Desired Outcomes:

- **Board awareness** of USFWS FY 2025 budget outlook and FAC Program strategic plan development.

After break Steve Lohr, Peter Micciche, Carrie Robinson, and Sam Rauch joined the Board meeting.

Steve Guertin shared an update that the USFWS is preparing for the administration change. Review teams will share publicly available information on programs, etc and the new leadership team will be here after January 20th. As a reminder about the status of the Federal budget, we are on a continuing resolution (CR) through December 20, 2024. We are hearing that the CR may be extended through March. Latest House and Senate versions of USFWS budget may result in a 6-8% reduction and the FY25 NFHP project funding won't be available until we know the full budget in February or March 2025.

Steve also reminded the Board that the Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program is revising their Strategic Plan via facilitated input session for FHP coordinators and 2 designees from the Board on

11/8. The draft plan will be released in Spring 2025 and will be finalized in summer 2025. They will be preparing their FY26 budget request soon after new administration is in place. FY26 is the final year for BIL fish passage funding.

3:15 PM	Governance Committee Update	4	Doug Austen <i>(Governance Committee Chair)</i>
	<i>Desired Outcomes:</i>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board vote to adopt NFHP Code of Conduct. 		

Doug Austen shared an update on the NFHP Procedures Manual development. The Committee has received several of the other NFHP committee Terms of Reference and continues to document other annual processes in writing. Finally, the Governance Committee completed the NFHP Code of Conduct and the Board voted to adopt the Code of Conduct as drafted in Tab 4.

3:30 PM	Communications Committee Update	5	Pat Rivers <i>(MN DNR, Communications Committee Interim- Chair)</i>
	<i>Desired Outcomes:</i>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of committee plans for 2025. 		

Pat Rivers shared a few Communications updates with the Board. Peter Micciche joined the NFHP Communications Committee. Pat also shared a few website metrics and that NFHP gained 51 new NFHP followers on LinkedIn and that the Waters to Watch 2024 were released today (4). The Committee also completed their Terms of Reference document which was included in Tab 5.

3:45 PM	NOAA Update		Sam Rauch <i>(NOAA Fisheries)</i> and Carrie Robinson <i>(NOAA Fisheries)</i>
	<i>Desired Outcomes:</i>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of NOAA NFHP and round 3 of BIL/IRA NOAA funding opportunities. 		

Carrie Robinson, Director of NOAA's Office of Habitat Conservation, presented to the Board on the latest funding opportunities that are available to NFHP. These opportunities include:

- [NOAA NFHP Engaging Recreational Fishing Communities](#) (closes April 18, 2025)
- [Fish Passage NOFO](#) (closes February 10, 2025)
- [Tribal Fish Passage NOFO](#) (closes February 27, 2025)

Carrie addressed a few questions about the NOAA grants and emphasized that all unsuccessful applicants received a letter encouraging them to seek the opportunity to receive feedback from NOAA staff on their application. Chairman Boyles asked about the capacity of NOAA to get these agreements in place. Carrie clarified that NOAA underwent a transition to a new financial management system and grants management system last year which caused some delays.

4:00 PM	IFC/AFS Instream Flow & Water Level Conservation Training Center		Christopher Estes
	<i>Desired outcomes:</i>		

- **Board awareness** of the Center plan and concept.
- **Board vote** on providing a letter of support.

Christopher Estes presented to the Board an ongoing effort that he is working on with the American Fisheries Society, funded by a Multi-State Conservation Grant, to develop an In-Stream Flow Water & Water Level Conservation Training Center. This new center would train people in water research and management to achieve positive water outcomes for humans and wildlife. The final phase of its development is a business plan and an RFIQ for potential host institutions. Christopher requested that the Board consider writing a letter of support for the development of this center to add strength to future funding requests and diversify the list of parties who support this effort.

There was some Board member discussion on the need for this type of center, particularly for policymakers. The Board also discussed the role of advocacy versus education on these types of technical topics. Christopher clarified for the Board that no funding has been secured yet to fully fund the center. However, this letter would be in general support of the center, not a particular funding request.

4:15 PM **NFHP Board Executive Session**

Not needed.

4:30 PM **ADJOURN**