



NATIONAL  
**FISH  
HABITAT**  
PARTNERSHIP

**BOARD MEETING BOOK**  
**JUNE 10, 2025**  
**(VIRTUAL BOARD MEETING)**

**Photo: Somerset Lake, Pennsylvania**

## June 10, 2025 NFHP Board Meeting Attendance

	Last Name	First Name	June 10
1	Allen	Stan	
2	Austen	Doug	
3	Branham	Sharif	
4	Carter	Julie	
5	Gilliland	Gene	
6	Golden	David	
7	Horton	Chris	
8	USGS	Representative	
9	Kruse	Carter	
10	Leonard	Mike	
11	Lohr	Steve	
12	Micciche	Peter	
13	Miko	David	
14	Moore	Chris	
15	Moore	Bryan	
16	Nakayama	Ian	
17	O Keefe	John	
18	Perry	Steve	
19	Rauch	Sam	
20	Ringia	Adam	
21	Rivers	Pat	
22	Schaeffer	Tim	
23	Shimoda	Risa	
24	Slager	Jake	
25	Trushenski	Jesse	
26	Will	Ted	
27	Wright	Charles	
28	OPEN		

## National Fish Habitat Board Meeting

Tuesday, June 10, 2025

1:00 PM EDT – 4:30 PM EDT

[Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 235 776 080 881 Passcode: kH2pT3ue

Time (EDT)	Agenda Item	Tab	Lead(s)
1:00 PM	<b>Welcome</b> <i>Desired Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome to new Board members</li> <li>Shifting tides – acknowledgement of departing Board members and FHP &amp; FWS coordinators</li> <li><b>Board vote</b> to approve January Board meeting summary</li> <li><b>Board vote</b> to approve June 10 Board meeting agenda</li> </ul>	1	<b>Tim Schaeffer</b> (NFHP Board Chair)
1:10 PM	<b>USFWS Update</b> <i>Desired Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Board awareness</b> of status of FY2025 and FY2026 budget.</li> </ul>		<b>David Miko</b> (Acting Deputy Director, USFWS)
1:30 PM	<b>Vote on New Board Member Representing Commercial Fishing Industry</b> <i>Desired Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Board vote</b> on new Board member.</li> </ul>		<b>Tim Schaeffer</b> (NFHP Board Chair)
1:45 PM	<b>Presentation of Proposed FY26 Fish Habitat Conservation Project List</b> <i>Desired Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Board awareness</b> of changes resulting from ACE Reauthorization Act.</li> <li><b>Board awareness</b> of new timeline for FY27 project solicitation process.</li> </ul>	2	<b>Stan Allen</b> (NFHP Board Vice-Chair)
2:10 PM	<b>Beyond the Pond Update &amp; Board Vote on BtP Members</b> <i>Desired Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Board awareness</b> of progress re-convening Beyond the Pond.</li> </ul>	3	<b>Therese Thompson</b> (Nonprofit Management Solutions, LLC)



2:30 PM	<b>Executive Session (if needed)</b>		<b>Tim Schaeffer</b> (NFHP Board Chair)
3:00 PM	<b>NFHP Board votes on:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FY26 Fish Habitat Conservation Project List; and</li> <li>Beyond the Pond Board members.</li> </ul>		
3:10 PM	<b>NFHP Action Plan 3.0 Update</b> <i>Desired Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Board awareness</b> of Action Plan Team progress</li> <li><b>Board discussion</b> of leadership endorsement strategy</li> </ul>	4	<b>Alex McOwen and Jason Olive</b> (NFHP Board Staff)
3:20 PM	<b>Communications Committee Update</b> <i>Desired Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Board discussion</b> of draft 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Communications Plan</li> <li><b>Screening</b> of new NFHP Video</li> </ul>	5	<b>Pat Rivers</b> (NFHP Board) and <b>Ryan Roberts</b> (NFHP Board Staff)
3:35 PM	<b>Policy Committee Update</b> <i>Desired Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Board awareness</b> of FY26 Appropriations Request Letters</li> <li><b>Board awareness</b> of FHP Coordinator virtual Hill visits facilitated by ASA</li> <li><b>Board awareness</b> of finalized FHP Policy Advocacy Guidelines</li> </ul>	6	<b>Connor Bevan</b> (NFHP Board Proxy) and <b>Kate Sherman</b> (NFHP Board Staff)
3:45 PM	<b>Federal Interagency Fish Passage Task Force Biannual Update</b> <i>Desired Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Board awareness</b> of Fish Passage Task Force activities</li> </ul>		<b>Jason Olive</b> (NFHP Board Staff)
4:00 PM	<b>NFHP FY25 Budget Overview</b> <i>Desired Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Board awareness</b> of FY25 budget</li> </ul>	7	<b>Jason Olive and Ryan Roberts</b> (NFHP Board Staff)
4:10 PM	<b>Governance Committee Update</b> <i>Desired Outcomes:</i>	8	<b>Doug Austen</b> (NFHP Board)

- **Board vote on** revised NFHP Bylaws which incorporate elements of ACE Act Reauthorization.
- **Board awareness** of new procedures manual chapters.

4:30 PM    **Adjourn**

## January 28-29, 2025

### NFHP Board Meeting Attendance and Meeting Summary

#### NFHP Board Meeting Attendance

	Last Name	First Name	January 28	January 29
1	Allen	Stan	X	X
2	Austen	Doug	X	X
3	Boyles	Robert	X	X
4	Carter/Beard	Julie/Zach	X	X
5	Gilliland	Gene	X	X
6	Guertin	Steve	-	X
7	Horton	Chris	X	X
8	Jepsen	Sharmilla	X	X
9	Kinsinger/Beard	Anne/Doug	X	X
10	Kruse	Carter	X	X
11	Leonard	Mike	-	X
12	Linnell	Karen	X	X
13	Lohr/Conley	Steve/Kimberly	X	X
14	Micciche ( <i>virtual as able</i> )	Peter	-	X
15	Moore	Chris	X	X
16	Moore	Bryan	X	X
17	Nakayama	Ian	X	X
18	O Keefe	John	X	X
19	Perry	Steve	X	X
20	Rauch/Robinson	Sam/Carrie	X	X
21	Ringia	Adam	X	X
22	Rivers	Pat	X	X
23	Schaeffer ( <i>joining day 2 1 hr late</i> )	Timothy D.	X	X
24	Shimoda	Risa	X	X

25	Slager	Jake	X	X
26	Trushenski	Jesse	X	X
27	Will	Ted	X	X

### Day 1 In-Person Attendance Other:

Daniel Wieferich (USGS, NFHP Staff)

Kate Sherman (PSMFC, NFHP Staff)

Alex McOwen (NOAA Fisheries, NFHP Staff)

Ryan Roberts (AFWA, NFHP Staff)

Jason Olive (USFWS, NFHP Staff)

Gary Whelan (NFHP Staff)

### Day 1 Attendance Online:

Debbie Hart (SEAKFHP)

Doug Nygren (RFHP)

Dave Miko (USFWS)

Ted Will (SEAFWA)

Christopher Estes

Brandon Senger (NDOW)

Jon Sjoberg (DFHP)

Scott Miller (BLM)

Sharmilla Jepsen (BLM)

Nate Clifton

Will Duncan (USFWS)

Jessica Speed (Mat Su FHP)

Joe Nohner (GLBFHP)

Heidi Keuler (FFHP)

Lori Maloney (EBTJV)

Trevor Luna (USFWS)

Gordon Smith (HFHP)

Todd Ewing (SARP)

Trent Dodson (KFHP)

Simen Kaalstad (ACFHP)

Therese Thompson (WNTI)

Shannon Boyle (USFWS)

### Day 2 Attendance Online:

Ali Schwaab (AFWA)

Justin Chiotti (GLBFHP)

Nathan Clifton

Sean Conley (USFWS)

Connor Bevan (ASA)

Doug Nygren (RFHP)

Grace Adams (PLCI)

Joe Nohner (MGLP)

Lisa Hollingsworth-Segedy (ORBFHP)

Lori Maloney (EBTJV)

Tim Loux (USFWS)

Trevor Luna (USFWS)

Louise Malden (DARE, USFWS)

Dave Mike (USFWS)

Scott Miller (BLM)

Sara Strassman (DARE)

Simen Kaalsted (ACFHP)

Therese Thompson (WNTI)

Todd Ewing (SARP)

Trent Dodson (KPFHP)

Ted Will (Georgia DWR)

Amy Horstman (USFWS)

Shannon Boyle (USFWS)

Gordon Smith (HFHP)

Debbie Hart (SEAFHP)

Jessica Speed (MatSu)

Jessica Coakley (MAFMC)

### Approved by Motion:

- Meeting summary from November 6, 2024 virtual Board meeting with additions from Christopher Estes.
- Meeting agenda for January 28-29, 2025 with addition of an Instream Flow Council update during the Governance Committee update.

### Follow Up Actions:

- Slides from all presentations will be shared on the NFHP website

## National Fish Habitat Board Meeting Summary

Tuesday, January 28 – Wednesday, January 29, 2025

Hyatt Silverton

8380 Dean Martin Drive

Las Vegas, NV 89139

Tuesday, January 28, 2025 1:00 – 4:30 PM PST

[Webinar Link](#)

Meeting ID: 250 392 805 505 Passcode: 2ba6fs

### Meeting Summary:

Time (PST)	Agenda Item	Tab	Lead(s)
1:00 PM	<b>Welcome</b>  <i>Desired Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Around the room introductions.</b></li> <li>• <b>Board action</b> to approve agenda and November 2024 meeting summary.</li> </ul>	1	<b>Chair Robert Boyles &amp; All Attendees</b>
<p>Chair Robert Boyles started the meeting by welcoming everyone to Las Vegas and with a round of introductions. Roll was taken of Board members present in the room and online. Robert noted minor additions to the November meeting summary and a minor addition to the January Board meeting agenda – both were approved by unanimous consent. Robert noted that the staff will need to confirm the final attendance list for the field trip in order to arrange transportation and boxed lunches.</p>			
1:20 PM	<b>2025 Board Meeting Schedule Preview</b>  <i>Desired Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board awareness</b> of 2025 meeting schedule.</li> </ul>	2	<b>Alex McOwen (NFHP Board Staff)</b>
<p>Alex McOwen briefly reviewed the Board meeting schedule for the remainder of 2025. The Board will meet on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• June 10 virtually from 1-5 PM ET</li> <li>• September 15-19 in Minneapolis, MN in conjunction with an FHP workshop</li> <li>• December 2 virtually from 1-5 PM ET</li> </ul>			
1:30 PM	<b>Nevada Department of Wildlife Welcome</b>  <i>Desired Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board</b> welcomed by local Department of Wildlife leadership.</li> </ul>		<b>Brandon Senger (Fisheries Biologist, Nevada Department of Wildlife)</b>

Brandon Senger welcomed the Board to Nevada and gave an overview of the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) and some of their key areas of focus related to fish habitat. Brandon highlighted that Nevada is a large state and NDOW is a small agency (40 employees + seasonal employees) with 7



divisions that monitors lots of Federal and public lands. The Fisheries Division focuses on trout hatcheries, aquatic invasive species, and fisheries management across a diverse suite of habitats in Nevada. Nearly half of the 48 native fishes in Nevada are ESA listed. Some of the key challenges related to fish habitat are drought conditions, diversions and old infrastructure, and non-native species (e.g. aquarium dumping). Brandon then provided project examples of work ongoing to improve fish habitat including work at the Warm Springs Natural Area, Crowley Creek, Cave Lake, and Lake Mohave.

1:45 PM      **Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council  
Overview and Introduction of New NFHP Board  
Member**      **Chris Horton (NFHP  
Board and SFBPC Chair)**

*Desired Outcomes:*

- **Board awareness** of the purpose and mission of the SFBPC and its representative to the Board.

Chris Horton provided a welcome to Risa Shimoda, the newest NFHP Board member who is representing the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council. Risa then introduced herself and shared a bit about her background.

2:00 PM      **Interagency Operational Plan Update**      3      **Chair Robert Boyles,  
Chair-Elect Tim  
Schaeffer & Jason  
Olive (NFHP Board  
Staff)**

*Desired Outcomes:*

- **Board awareness** of the IOP draft status.
- **Board awareness** of Chair meetings with agency leadership and EXCOM discussion.
- **Board discussion** on approval level and timing.

Jason provided an overview of the Interagency Operational Plan (IOP) section that was added about interagency coordination. This section of the IOP spells out how the group may use the Interagency Fish Passage Task Force, a group established to coordinate on BIL fish passage efforts, to coordinate moving forward and expand their scope to beyond fish passage to a more holistic approach to fish habitat. This section also outlined an approach where the Fish Passage Task Force coordinator would provide biannual updates to the NFHP Board, provide copies of annual work plan and accomplishment reports to the Board, and may request assistance from FHPs on Task Force matters. Jason highlighted that this approach could provide a business model moving forward for interagency coordination.

There was some Board discussion on this matter. Some Board members expressed concerns about broadening the scope of the Interagency Fish Passage Task Force since its Charter does not reference NFHP and its scope may not be able to be expanded. It was also noted that since NFHP is not spelled out in the Charter, this would be a more informal relationship to NFHP and NFHP would benefit more from a more formal commitment which would also elevate the visibility of the Partnership.

Chair Robert Boyles briefly reported out on his meetings in the fall with several Federal agencies regarding the Interagency Operational Plan. Robert met with Martha Williams, Steve Guertin, and Dave Miko at the USFWS and had a great discussion about the IOP. During their discussion, the group

agreed that the IOP should not aim for Secretarial level sign off. Chair Robert also met with Steve Lohr (Director for Natural Resources) at the USFS and was encouraged by the USFS recommitting to support and engage in NFHP in the IOP. The Fish and Aquatic Conservation Office noted that they are committed to leading an effort of interagency coordination, whether that occur through the task force or another forum. In general, the sense was that NFHP should aim for career level staff sign off of the IOP once it's final and ready.

Finally, Jason reminded the Board that we will aim for sign off on a final version of the IOP by the end of 2025. In the short term, it will be sent to the Board for their input and then to Federal partners. The Board was reminded that this document calls for an update every 5 years. There was a general sense of wariness about timing the signature of this document at the agencies and the Board agreed that the NFHP Executive Committee should convene to discuss this further following this meeting.

2:25 PM	<b>NFHP Action Plan 3.0 Update</b>	4	<b>Alex McOwen and Jason Olive (NFHP Board Staff)</b>
	<i>Desired Outcomes:</i>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board awareness</b> of internal survey results and Action Plan Team progress.</li> <li>• <b>Board discussion</b> of leadership endorsement strategy.</li> </ul>		

Jason Olive reviewed the survey response themes from the internal survey of Board members, FHP coordinators, and staff to gather input for the Action Plan revision process. Survey questions asked about what role NFHP should play in fish habitat conservation, what NFHP has done well, potential specific Board actions, indicators of success, and areas for NFHP improvement. He noted that the response rate was 53%. Response themes highlighted potential Board actions like communications and marketing, completing a habitat assessment, acquiring funding, and advocacy with state fish and wildlife agencies.

An external partner survey was sent around to ~140 partners and will be closed in early February. These responses along with the internal survey results, will be used by the Action Plan team to incorporate concepts into the revision of the NFHP Action Plan. The Action Plan team will be working closely with the Science and Data Committee who is actively working on the habitat assessment to identify metrics or other elements for the Action Plan.

2:50 PM      **BREAK**

3:10 PM	<b>Planning Session for the 20<sup>th</sup> NFHP Anniversary Campaign</b>	5	<b>All</b>
	<i>Desired Outcomes:</i>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board develops</b> ideas and desired outcomes for the communications campaign for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NFHP in 2026 via small group discussions.</li> </ul>		

Jason shared that the USFWS would like to contribute \$5K in funding to support the NFHP Action Plan and 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary rollout.

Following this announcement, the NFHP Board used rotating small group discussions to brainstorm ideas to contribute to the planning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of NFHP in 2026. The virtual Board meeting attendees were also included in this activity – Ryan and Gary facilitated small group discussions with the virtual attendees. The key questions each group focused on are listed below:

1. What opportunities, trends, or needs should we explore to increase relevancy and/or impact?
2. How can NFHP better engage non-traditional (e.g., foundations, corporations) partners?
3. What message or theme should we communicate to our community or stakeholders as part of this celebration?
4. What are the outlets (online, in-person, events, etc.) that should be targeted during the 20th anniversary?

The results from this activity will be summarized as part of the Communications Committee update.

4:15 PM	<b>Science and Data Committee Update</b>	6	<b>Gary Whelan and Daniel Wieferich</b> <i>(NFHP Science &amp; Data Committee Co-Chairs)</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board awareness</b> of assessment progress and other committee activities.</li> </ul>		

Gary Whelan shared an update from the Science and Data Committee about the National Fish Habitat Assessment. Gary shared that the Michigan State University team is working diligently and an assessment product will be completed this fall 2025. The assessment product will be much improved from 2015 and features additional data on protected lands, forest fires, western water bodies, Great Lakes, and cropland datasets. The assessment will be peer-reviewed and published.

4:30 PM      **ADJOURN**

5:00 PM      **Social Gathering**

**Wednesday, January 29, 2025 9:00 – 4:00 PM PST**

[Webinar Link](#)

**Meeting ID:** 268 221 717 948 **Passcode:** J2NH3X

## Meeting Summary:

Time (PST)	Agenda Item	Tab	Lead(s)
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9:00 AM	<b>Welcome Back</b>		<b>Chair Robert Boyles &amp; All Attendees</b>
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Robert welcomed the Board members back and shared a passage by Wendell Barry called “The Piece of Wild Things”:

When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children’s lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

9:10 AM	<b>Policy Committee Update</b>		<b>Ian Nakayama (TRCP, Policy Committee Chair)</b>
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*Desired Outcomes:*

- **Board awareness** of ACE Act Reauthorization and Policy Committee activities.
- **Board awareness of** FHP Advocacy Guidelines.

Chair of the NFHP Policy Committee, Ian Nakayama, shared an update with the Board about the reauthorization of the ACE Act which passed in December 2024. His full presentation can be found [here](#). He walked through the changes in the reauthorization and the short- and long-term Board actions that are needed to implement the changes.

The Board had an opportunity to ask questions, which are documented below:

- ***Will the reauthorization be impacted by recent Executive Orders?***
  - No

- **What messages resonated with Congressional staff?**
  - NFHP project tracking database was a super useful tool! NFHP punches above its weight-class. Leveraged funds is a powerful message. Not everyone has heard of NFHP, relied on Champions (e.g. Crapo, Wittman)
- In chat (From FHP): We've heard that partners are unable to submit for reimbursement through ACE (FY24) due to the Executive Order and grant freeze.
- **Government affairs call this Friday with Kurt Theide** – Tim Schaeffer will share updates about funding situation

Ian also highlighted that the Policy Committee has developed Policy Advocacy Guidelines for FHPs. This document includes a checklist to determine whether or not to advocate for a particular policy or piece of legislation. The Policy Advocacy Guidelines document will be circulated once finalized following the Board meeting.

Finally, Ian updated the Board on the Federal appropriations process. He reminded the Board that we are currently on a Continuing Resolution which ends on March 14, 2025. Ian reminded the Board that we have a bit of room (\$400K) to fully expand into the NFHP authorization for funding. Agencies are in progress with budget planning discussions for FY27. Ian reminded agencies that the Policy Committee is able to support with requests for the authorized amounts for Scientific and Technical Assistance funds.

Finally, Ian noted that NFHP Policy Committee is tentatively planning virtual hill meetings in March and will be working with FHP coordinators to link up with targeted members of Congress.

10:00 AM **USFWS Update**

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

*Desired Outcomes:*

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

Steve Guertin shared that the USFWS had been preparing for this administration transition since last spring and is currently working with the landing team. He shared that the Doug Burgum is the nominee for the Secretary of Interior and Kate MacGregor is the Deputy Secretary of Interior. The USFWS has been following the Executive Orders as they were issued. There was a court ordered halt on 1/28/25 on issuing of existing grants until 2/3/25. Steve requested everyone's patience as things are processed and grants come back online. He shared that the USFWS will continue to message about the good work funded through their office.

Finally, Steve reminded the Board that the Fisheries and Aquatic Conservation (FAC) Division is undergoing their Strategic Plan development. They had a webinar in November to gather input for the plan and hope to wrap up the plan in summer 2025 and finalize around fall 2025.



10:15 AM **Fishery Management Councils and Marine Fisheries Commissions**

**Stan Allen and Chris Moore** (NFHP Board Members)

*Desired Outcomes:*

- **Board awareness** of the difference between Councils and Commissions and how each engage in habitat conservation.

Stan Allen and Chris Moore provided a [presentation](#) overview on the roles and responsibilities of the 8 Fishery Management Councils and 3 Marine Fisheries Commissions.

**Councils:**

- Manage 3-200 miles, develop FMPs, set annual catch limits, research priorities, and conducting public hearings and gathering public input
- Habitat - Magnuson provisions call for EFH, Deep-sea coral habitat conservation authority, and EBFM
- Northeast regional habitat assessment (NRHA) - work products have been released (NHRA data explorer)
- State of the Ecosystem report
- Fishing gear effects on marine habitats – national database
- Council coordination committee – have a habitat subcommittee

**Commissions:**

- Great Lakes Commission, Pacific Salmon Commission, Halibut Commission (all do different things)
- 3 MFCs formed in 1940s as compacts, quasi-governmental, state/local government
- PSMFC added Hawaii to their list of states in 2024
- **Mission:** Promote and implement conservation, development, and management of fishery resources of mutual concern to member states
- Commission manages within 3 miles of shore
- No regulatory management authority for Pacific and Gulf, but Atlantic has management authority for 27 species
  - PSMFC houses a lot of data – databases and works closely with FHPs, fiscal sponsor for 3 FHPs, ASMFC is sponsor for ACFHP, also serve on FHP committees
  - Rock reef spatial data work, Klamath dam removal, protection scenarios
- Opportunities for bridging gaps – attend a meeting, can lobby and talk with Congress, legislative committees, steering committee meetings (Board buddies), connect habitat work to management actions

**Questions:**

- How do folks get appointed to Councils? Why are lobbyists on Council? – [state Governor works with Sec of Commerce, specific exemptions related to conflict of interest](#)

- Councils funded through Federal govt (NOAA Fisheries)
- Commission – 87 funding sources for PSMFC – BoR, ACE, NOAA, states, Tribes,
- How did ASMFC get management authority – *an act of Congress*
- How well versed are Commissions on NFHP? How well do they carry our water? *PSMFC and ASMFC are very well versed, Gulf is a bit different*
- Great Lakes Commission is very different

10:40 AM **BREAK**

11:00 AM **Governance Committee Update**

7

**Doug Austen**  
(Governance  
Committee Chair)

*Desired Outcomes:*

- **Board awareness** of committee progress towards a full NFHP Procedures manual.
- **Board approval** of shifting Board seats post reauthorization (Councils/Commissions/Commercial Fishing).

Doug Austen, Chair of the Governance Committee, updated the Board on the NFHP Procedures Manual (presentation found [here](#)). The Board's Committees have all developed their Terms of Reference documents for the manual and the Governance Committee will be working next to document other, more detailed processes around funding allocation with the USFWS for input into the manual.

Doug also shared a Governance update related to two current Board members – Chris Moore and Stan Allen. Currently Chris Moore represents commercial fisheries interests and Stan Allen represents Councils and Commissions. Give the ACE Act reauthorization carves out separate seats for Councils and Commissions, Chris would like to move back into the seat representing Councils and Stan, Commissions. Doug presented a suggested motion for the Board: Vote to approve shifting Chris Moore to represent Fishery Management Council Stan Allen to represent the Marine Fisheries Commissions and advertise a vacancy to be filled representing commercial fisheries interests. It was clarified that Stan and Chris's terms would remain the same (both expiring in February 2027) and the new representative of commercial fisheries interests would be a three year term. That motion carried unanimously among the Board.

Doug also presented question of whether or not to undertake a NFHP Board Evaluation that came up in some Governance Committee discussions. He called on Board members (Stan Allen, Gary Whelan, and Steve Perry) to provide the history on previous NFHP Board Evaluations that were done in 2010 and 2013. There was robust discussion among Board members about whether to undertake another Board evaluation. Common discussion themes and concerns included:

- *Whether or not to hire an outside facilitator (how can we keep costs low?).*

- *We need to be clear about why we are undertaking a Board evaluation.*
- *What were the outcomes of previous evaluations, what was done in response?*
- *Who are we asking for feedback?*
- *It could be beneficial to review Committee membership to ensure representation comes from different sectors/background/perspectives.*
- *How could we use an evaluation to be reflective about how to better represent our respective constituencies on the Board (e.g. agricultural interests)?*

Steve Guertin offered that the USFWS used an outside consultant for the Fish Passage Program review and that may be a resource NFHP could consider using. There was agreement that the Board Executive Committee would further this discussion at an upcoming meeting and that Board staff would circulate materials and a synthesis from the previous Board evaluations.

Finally, Doug shared an update about the Instream Flow Council. Following the last Board meeting, the NFHP Chair provided a letter in support of this effort among others (e.g. AFWA, AFS, etc.). The group is now discussing who/where could be the national host for the Center. The call for proposals is currently open and accepting applications. The Board can learn more about the effort at the IFC [website](#).

1:30 PM

#### Communications Committee Update

**Pat Rivers**

*(Communications  
Committee Member)*

- **Board awareness** of committee activities and plans for 2025.
- **Board views** the new NFHP video.

Pat Rivers, acting Chair of the Communications Committee, shared a brief update and some common themes from the small group discussions on meeting Day 1. Overall, NFHP can do a better job telling our story and broadening our messages to reach audiences we're missing. He highlighted that we want to be sure the communications themes should be grounded in the Action Plan. He shared that there is a need for a Communications Plan with specific deliverables. Some Day 1 small group discussion themes are below:

- Q1 – there are many other anniversaries ongoing in 2026 (MSA, EFH), 250<sup>th</sup> of USA
- Q2 – highlighting clean water (universal message), booths at non-traditional organization meetings (Tribal)
- Q3 – Multiple themes for multiple audiences, cost efficiencies, more time on recreational fishing
- Q4 – social media, NPS (Instagram), BassPro, Orvis, other Yamaha

Ryan Roberts provided an overview of some statistics from the NFHP website and newsletter (1700 subscribers with 30-37% open rate). In total we have 5.4K active users of the website and are active on Facebook and LinkedIn with posts that were provided by Monster Media.

Board discussion on the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary discussions continued and focused on cautionary tales about hiring outside help for communications and how to rely on existing Board member organizations (e.g.

Coca-Cola) to advise on an approach for the anniversary campaign. Board members also expressed caution against spending too much funding on the campaign and trying to be too all-encompassing with our messaging (best to identify a specific audience). It was also recommended that this is carefully planned in coordination with the Beyond the Pond team.

1:50 PM **Partnerships Committee Update**

**Stan Allen, Bryan Moore, & Joe Nohner**  
(Partnerships Committee Tri-Chairs)

*Desired Outcomes:*

- **Board awareness** of committee progress to implementing the *reauthorized* ACE Act and key short- and long-term Board decision points.

Bryan Moore provided an update from the [Partnerships Committee](#). The Committee has been working on some of key provisions from the reauthorization of the ACE Act including the funding timelines. Bryan highlighted that the non-Federal match funding requirement is now at the FHP level (summation of all project dollars) and excludes coordination/operational funding. This can easily be implemented in the evaluation of projects in the proposal process for FY26. The Committee has discussed options for implementing an abbreviated funding timeline for FY27 which will take the process from ~18 months to ~12 months, depending on the Federal budget timing which is always uncertain.

Bryan noted that he is seeking volunteers to join the NFHP Project Review team. This is a great way for Board members to become more familiar with the individual activities of each FHP.

2:10 PM **Reappointment of Existing Board Member**

**Chair Robert Boyles**

*Desired Outcomes:*

- **Board vote** on reappointment of Board member whose term is expiring.

During this agenda item, the Board elected to renew a three-year term for existing Board member representing the Tribes of the lower CONUS, Adam Ringia, who has expressed interest in remaining on the Board. The motion was put forward by Doug Austen, and seconded by Stan Allen and approved unanimously by the Board.

2:13 PM **Executive Session: Selection of New Board Member Representing Tribes in Alaska**

8 **Chair Robert Boyles**

*Desired Outcomes:*

- **Board vote** on one of four candidates provided by the Secretary of the Interior.

During this agenda item, the Board moved into executive session (*motion by Bryan Moore, seconded by Adam Ringia*) to discuss the Alaska Tribal nominees provided by the Secretary of Interior. Upon

returning from executive session where no actions were taken (*motion by Karen Linnell, seconded by Stan Allen*), the Board voted on appointing the newest Board member. USGS, and USFWS both recused themselves from the vote and BLM did not vote. Charles (Charlie) Wright was selected by the Board to represent Alaska Native Tribes on the NFHP Board.

3:20 PM **NOAA Update**

**Carrie Robinson** (NOAA Fisheries)

*Desired Outcomes:*

- **Board awareness** of latest NOAA funding initiatives in support of habitat restoration and conservation.

Carrie Robinson shared an update from NOAA Fisheries. Three political appointees are getting situated at NOAA and Howard Lutnick, nominee for the Secretary of Commerce, had his confirmation hearing this morning. The NOAA NFHP funding opportunity remains open for projects that improve habitat and engage the rec fish community through April 18. Carrie shared that to date, NOAA has provided 215 BIL awards via cooperative agreements, \$985M all in habitat restoration and fish passage projects. The total demand for these funds was around \$5 billion. NOAA still has four opportunities open and are working with the new administration to issue further guidance.

3:30 PM **USFWS Fish Technology Centers**

**Dr. Jenny Gumm**  
(USFWS FAC Program)

*Desired Outcomes:*

- **Board awareness** of USFWS Fish Technology Centers and how they may collaborate with FHPs.

Invited speaker Dr. Jenny Gumm provided an overview [presentation](#) about the USFWS Fish Technology Centers. The mission of the Fish Technology Centers is leadership in scientifically-based management of fishery resources. The centers employ 1200 employees and feature research programs focused on genetics, aquaculture, fish passage, quantitative ecology, population dynamics, biological banking and cryo, and physiology and nutrition. Dr. Gumm highlighted the focus of work at the various regional centers.

3:15 PM **BREAK**

3:50 PM **Desert Fish Habitat Partnership Field Trip Preview**

9 **Jon Sjoberg** (Desert FHP Coordinator)

*Desired Outcomes:*

- **Board awareness** of the field trip to visit Desert FHP sites for Thursday, January 30th.



Jon Sjoberg provided an overview of the Desert Fish Habitat Partnership field trip for meeting Day 3. The Desert FHP is one of two FHPs focused on non-game fishes and is a very unique FHP. They cover 11 states and focus on the west and southwest. Jon reviewed a few specific DFHP projects including the Wall Canyon Sucker, Hot Creek Habitat Improvement, Condor Canyon restoration, Muddy River, and Ash Meadows.

4:30 PM      **Executive Session (*if needed*) or Additional Board Discussion**

4:00 PM      **ADJOURN**

## **Beyond the Pond Board Summary Review and Recommendation**

### **Articles of Incorporation**

National Fish Habitat Fund Inc was incorporated May 27, 2014, in the District of Columbia, and has been doing business as (dba) Beyond the Pond for almost its entire existence. It is organized exclusively for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes related to the conservation, protection, and restoration of fish and aquatic habitats in the United States through the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) or the chapters organized under this corporation, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

### **Bylaws - Mission**

The Bylaws of Beyond the Pond state that the mission of Beyond the Pond is to conserve, protect, and restore fish and aquatic habitat in the United States by supporting the NFHP and regional Fish Habitat Partnerships. In all activities and respects, Beyond the Pond will advance the NFHP and the regional Fish Habitat Partnerships. In no manner may the funds raised by Beyond the Pond be used to support any organization that is not a member of the NFHP, or a Fish Habitat Partnership approved by the NFHP Board.

### **Summary of Beyond the Pond Bylaws concerning their Board of Directors**

The Bylaws of Beyond the Pond stipulate that they shall have a Board of Directors of between 8 and 12 members, and that no less than three of those members will be selected from the non-federal membership of the NFHP Board. Further, the Bylaws state that individuals will be recommended as a slate or as individuals for positions on the Beyond the Pond Board of Directors by the non-federal members of the NFHP Board or its successor board. Each Beyond the Pond Director shall hold office for a term of three years, and no Director shall serve more than two consecutive terms nor more than four terms total. In the event of a vacancy, the Chair of the NFHP Board shall nominate a candidate to fill any vacancy. A nomination will be viewed by the NFHP Board, whose non-federal members shall elect a new director by majority vote at their next scheduled meeting or via email if the next meeting is more than four weeks away.

### **Current situation**

All currently serving Beyond the Pond Board Directors have termed out according to the Bylaws because they have served more than two consecutive terms. We have consulted with Lane Kisonak, legal counsel for the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, to ensure we carefully handle the transition to a new Board to ensure banking and other responsibilities such as the ability to execute a

grant agreement for a habitat restoration project are not affected during any transition period. Lane confirmed that both Beyond the Pond Bylaws and the District of Columbia allow the current Beyond the Pond Board members to continue to serve until their replacements are selected. Lane recommended rectifying the situation as soon as possible.

**Current Beyond the Pond Board members and their terms:**

Board Member	Begin term	End term	Notes	Notes on term
John LeCoq	2015	Still serving	Serves as non federal NFHP Board member. Left NFHP Board in 2024. Treasurer of BtP Board.	Has served for 11 years consecutively; 3, 3 year terms and is termed out
Doug Boyd	2018	Still serving	Serves as non federal NFHP Board member. No longer on NFHP Board.	Has served for 8 years consecutively; 2, 3 year terms
Christy Plumer	2019	Still serving	Serves as non federal NFHP Board member. Left NFHP Board in 2024	Has served for 7 years consecutively; 2, 3 year terms
Kelly Hepler	2015	Still serving	BtP Board Chair since inception. Was NFHP Board Chair when BtP formed.	Has served for 11 years consecutively; 3, 3 year terms.
Jon Johnson	2015	Still serving	Is Vice Chair of BtP Board	Has served for 11 years consecutively; 3, 3 year terms
Dick Ludington	2015	Still serving		Has served for 11 years consecutively; 3, 3 year terms

**Recommendation**

Four current non-federal members of the NFHP Board of Directors are interested and excited to be nominated to serve on the Beyond the Pond Board of Directors, to take the place of the members listed above who are no longer NFHP Board members.

Additionally, Deborah (Hart) Pederson, coordinator of the Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership, has agreed to be nominated to join the Beyond the Pond Board, representing the FHPs (bio is attached). Daniel Wagner, SVP Regional Sales Leader for First Commonwealth Bank, has

also been recommended, vetted, and has agreed to be nominated to join the Beyond the Pond Board (bio attached).

We recommend a slate of six candidates for staggered Beyond the Pond Board terms, referenced below. As directed by its Bylaws, the new Beyond the Pond Board will vote on its officers once it meets with its new Directors. Kelly Hepler will serve as Chair of the BtP Board until the new Beyond the Pond Board votes in its new Chair.

An additional two Director seats will still need to be filled as soon as possible to get the Beyond the Pond Board to its minimum requirement of 8 Directors. We have a list of recommended potential Board members to be vetted by the new Beyond the Pond Board, which will also be discussed as soon as the new Board convenes.

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>NFHP Board member term expires</b>	<b>Proposed BtP Board term</b>
Julie Carter (WAFWA)	Aquatic Wildlife Branch Chief, Arizona Game and Fish Dept.	12/26	2025-2026
Carter Kruse (National Private Landowner)	Turner Enterprises, Director of Conservation	02/27	2025-2027
Jake Slager (Corporate Industry)	Coca-Cola, Sr. Manager Colleges and Universities	05/26	2025-2026
Jesse Trushenski (Agricultural Production)	Riverence, Chief Science Officer	02/27	2025-2027
Deborah (Hart) Pederson	Southeast Alaska FHP, Coordinator	N/A	2025-2026
Daniel Wagner	First Commonwealth Bank, SVP Regional Sales Leader	N/A	2025-2027



- Daniel Wagner, SVP Regional Sales Leader for First Commonwealth Bank
- Directly oversees 5 area leaders and 62 retail branches in 14 counties across Pennsylvania.
- I have been in retail banking for 8 years with a over 20 years of retail and leadership experience.
- I am directly involved in the development of leadership as well as our retail branch employees that serve our businesses, nonprofits, and personal customers daily.
- I currently serve on the United way of Southwestern Pa Board where I have been an active member for the last 3 years.
- I am also currently on the Pennsylvania Banker's Association Membership Committee and a 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Advanced Banking School director.
- I live in grew up in Somerset, Pa and now reside in Charleroi, PA with my wife of 10 years, Kristen, and our 8 year old dog, Coulson.
- I have a 22 year old daughter that lives in Maryland, Hannah.
- I am an avid fisherman and outdoorsman whether it fishing in a stream, from my kayak, on a charter boat in Erie, or as I travel out of state to Florida or other destinations I am always looking for ways to have a line in the water.





- Deborah (Hart) Pederson, Coordinator for the Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership (SEAKFHP). SEAKFHP works to foster cooperative fish habitat conservation in freshwater and coastal ecosystems across the southern panhandle of Alaska. Our partnership fosters collaborations across this region targeting fish habitat science, education and outreach, and on the ground conservation activities. These activities are guided by [SEAKFHP's Fish Habitat Conservation Action Plan](#), where specific aquatic conservation goals and objectives are indicated separately for both freshwater and coastal areas of Southeast Alaska.
- I have served as the SEAKFHP Coordinator since the partnership began in 2012. Our partnership received formal NFHP FHP recognition in 2014. Before this, I worked for over 20 years for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in various roles including research biologist, fisheries manager, and SE Alaska Marine Fisheries Program Supervisor.
- In 2008, I attended the National Conservation Leadership Institute working on an adaptive challenge: Developing the Next Generation of Natural Resource Leaders for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.
- I currently serve on the City and Borough of Juneau's Docks and Harbors Board of Directors and serve as the Vice Chair on the Operations Subcommittee.
- I grew up and continue to live in Juneau, Alaska with my two dogs, Matty (my little fox) she is 14 and Odin (my big wolf) he is 4. I have two daughters, Skye (26), she lives in Whitehorse Canada and works as a geophysicist; and Kamper (23), she lives in Juneau and will be attending electrical training later this summer.
- I love to spend as much time out on the water as possible whether it is fishing near my cabin, harvesting various kelp and seaweeds learning new ways to use them (eating them, making face creams, and using them in the garden), taking the dogs for long paddleboard rides, or working from my float house – being on the water is my happy place and spurs my passion to help keep our freshwater and coastal environments in healthy shape!

## **2026 National Fish Habitat Action Plan Goals and Objectives**

(NOTE- once these are final, strategies will be added to provide additional detail on how each will be accomplished)

### **1) Provide national leadership and coordination.**

- a. Establish a meaningful set of National Conservation Priorities for a period of time coinciding with the term of each Board Chair (Note: this could be up to six years).
- b. The Board, in concert with the Federal Interagency Task Force, will review, revise, and implement an Interagency Operational Plan every five years, providing a process for coordination among federal agencies in support of this Action Plan.
- c. By 2030, leverage resources and enhance coordination with **eight** new national and regional partnerships that align with NFHP's mission and goals.
- d. The Board will pursue securing the full authorized appropriation from Congress, and commitments from federal and state agencies each year during Fiscal Years 2026-2031 to fund and support the operations of designated FHPs.

### **2) Mobilize and focus national, regional, and local support for fish habitat conservation.**

- a. Increase cooperation and coordination among federal, state, tribal, local agencies, conservation organizations, landowners and other stakeholders each year through 2031.
- b. Each Board member will intentionally engage with the constituencies they represent at least annually to increase awareness of and support for NFHP.
- c. Raise \$10 million in private funding via the NFHP Board's 501c3 by 2031.
- d. The Board's Policy Committee will engage with potential Congressional sponsors to secure passage of legislation that reauthorizes NFHP funding no later than September 30, 2030.
- e. The Board's Communications Committee will develop a Communications Plan and step-down guidance/toolkit for use by FHPs by December 31, 2027.
- f. Engage the recreational fishing community in fish habitat conservation by ensuring that 75% of FHP steering committees have a recreational fishing organization representative on their steering committee by 2030.

### **3) Achieve measurable, science-based fish habitat conservation outcomes.**

- a. Each FHP will facilitate increased collaboration among stakeholders by convening state, territorial, tribal, and federal agencies, conservation groups, landowners and other interested parties by organizing events annually that focus existing and new resources towards increasing effectiveness in achieving long-term, sustainable results.
- b. Fish Habitat Partnerships will create and update prioritization plans or decision support tools every five years to identify priority conservation outcomes and develop strategies that influence fish habitat conservation work conducted by partners across the landscape.
- c. Fish Habitat Partnerships will annually support (via direct funding, leveraging additional funding, and partnerships) fish habitat conservation projects that address the root causes of degradation to habitats identified in prioritization plans.
- d. By 2031, provide an online portfolio of regionally or nationally accepted science-based methods and tools that help partnerships plan, measure and demonstrate progress.

### **4) Evaluate and communicate the status of fish habitats and address gaps in scientific knowledge.**

- a. Develop a national fish habitat assessment by 2030 that is informed by regional FHP assessments and FHP prioritization plans.
- b. Develop a socioeconomic evaluation toolkit for FHPs by 2028 to use for project-specific and regional analyses to quantify economic benefits to local communities and raise public awareness of the role healthy fish habitat plays in improving quality of life for the American people.
- c. Develop a communications plan for the National Fish Habitat Assessment that outlines the utility of the Assessment results for different audiences prior to its release in 2030.

### Introduction:

The Communications Committee was tasked in January with developing a 20th Anniversary Communications Strategy. The following is the Anniversary Communications Strategy, created by the Communications Committee, which will guide our efforts moving forward. Several elements of the Communications Strategy will have projects developed. With that said, we are working to identify budgetary needs and gaps necessary to implement certain elements of the Strategy.

# Communications Strategy for the 20th Anniversary of the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP)

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## 1. Introduction

The National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) is celebrating its 20th Anniversary, marking two decades of collaborative efforts to conserve and restore fish habitats and improve recreational fishing across the United States. This milestone presents a unique opportunity to amplify NFHP's mission, engage stakeholders, and highlight successes. The communications strategy aims to celebrate NFHP's accomplishments, increase awareness of its impact, and build momentum for the next 20 years of work.

## 2. Objectives

- **Celebrate NFHP's Achievements:** Highlight key milestones, success stories, and the transformative work done by NFHP partnerships to improve fish habitats for the betterment of the American people. A focus on water quality improvements, creating conditions for sustainable fish populations, increasing fishing access, and improving recreational fishing are key items to highlight.
- **Increase Awareness:** Educate a broader audience on the importance of fish habitats and the vitality of healthy fish populations, as well as the ongoing voluntary, non-regulatory work of the NFHP and how these efforts relate to improving the quality of life for the American people.
- **Strengthen Stakeholder Engagement:** Engage partners, stakeholders, and the public, fostering a sense of pride in the Partnership's achievements and future efforts. Echoing the message of the strength in leveraged resources that the partnership brings will be essential to strengthening ties with partners.
- **Attract New Partnerships & Resources:** Showcase the success of and communicate the added value of collaborative conservation efforts to attract additional funding, partnerships, and resources for future work.

- **Promote Long-Term Sustainability:** Encourage continued investment in fish habitat restoration and conservation, emphasizing the long-term benefits to ecosystems, sustainable fish populations, communities, anglers, and economies.

### 3. Key Audiences

- **Current Partners & Stakeholders:** Including governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, professional fisheries societies, and private sector partners.
- **Conservation Community:** Environmental groups, researchers, and conservationists interested in habitat protection, with a particular focus on organizations focused on physical habitat along with water quantity and quality issues.
- **Outdoor Enthusiasts:** Anglers, hunters, birders, hikers, outdoor recreationalists, and nature lovers who directly benefit from healthy ecosystems.
- **Policymakers:** Elected officials and governmental representatives who influence conservation funding and legislation, emphasizing the non-regulatory approach taken by NFHP and the quality-of-life benefits that result from fish habitat conservation efforts.
- **Media:** Regional, national, and specialized media outlets covering environmental, conservation, and quality-of-life issues.
- **Potential Funders & Partners:** Corporations, foundations, and philanthropic organizations interested in environmental sustainability.

### 4. Key Messages

- **NFHP's Legacy:** "For 20 years, the National Fish Habitat Partnership has led collaborative non-regulatory efforts to conserve, restore, and enhance fish habitats nationwide. Together, we've made a significant difference in the health of our aquatic ecosystems across the U.S. since 2006.
- **Impact of the Partnership:** "Through a shared commitment to conservation, NFHP has brought together hundreds of partner organizations to leverage each other's resources to more effectively and efficiently conserve fish habitat, benefiting thousands of aquatic species, improving fishing, and supporting vibrant communities."
- **Collaboration is Key:** "The success of the NFHP is a direct result of the power of partnerships—uniting federal, state, tribal, and local agencies, conservation groups, and private stakeholders."
- **Future of Fish Habitats:** "As we look toward the next 20 years, engaging additional partner organizations to work collaboratively will be critical to: conserving fish habitats; increasing the number of sustainable fish populations; improving recreational fishing; increasing public access to higher quality experiences; and ultimately improving the quality-of-life for the American people."

### 5. Strategies & Tactics

#### A. Awareness Campaign



- **Social Media Campaign:** Create a series of posts on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn using specific hashtags to highlight milestones, success stories, and the importance of healthy fish habitats.
  - **Storytelling Posts:** Share individual stories of restored habitats, featuring before-and-after photos, and specifically videos of fieldwork, and testimonials from local communities.
  - **Historical Timeline:** Develop a visual timeline (e.g., infographic) that showcases key milestones over the past 20 years, including successful restoration projects and notable collaborations.
- **Press Release & Media Outreach:** Distribute a press release announcing the anniversary, highlighting the successes of NFHP and its future objectives. Target environmental and national media outlets, as well as regional and local newspapers and digital media.
- **Infographics & Visual Content:** Develop infographics that demonstrate the scale of NFHP's work, the number of habitats restored, species protected, benefits to recreational angling (economic and improved angling opportunities), and the benefits of healthy fish habitats to American families.

## B. Stakeholder Engagement & Events

- **20th Anniversary Gala:** Host an event to celebrate the anniversary, featuring keynote speakers, awards for outstanding contributions, and recognition of key partners.
  - Promote this event through invitations to stakeholders and social media channels.
- **Partnership Spotlight:** Create a digital "Partnership Wall" showcasing the organizations and individuals who have been critical to NFHP's success. Highlight partner contributions through a dedicated section on the website and in social media content.

## C. Educational Initiatives

- **Webinars and Panel Discussions:** Host a series of webinars for partners focusing on key topics such as fish habitat restoration, the role of collaboration in conservation, and the future of aquatic ecosystems. Feature partnership subject matter experts.
- **Educational Toolkit:** Develop a digital toolkit for use by FHPs and state agencies. Include educational resources, fact sheets, and suggestions for local actions to protect fish habitats.
- **Interactive Website Features:** Update the NFHP website to include a dedicated anniversary page with interactive features, such as an online timeline, a map of restoration projects, and a short documentary video. Utilize the NFHP data dashboard as a starting point to highlight success.

## D. Fundraising & Partnerships

- **Corporate Sponsorship:** Engage with corporate partners for anniversary sponsorship opportunities. Offer them recognition in anniversary events, publications, and digital media.

- **Matching Fund Campaign:** Promote a matching fund campaign where donations made during the anniversary year will be matched by a major donor, increasing funds for future conservation projects.
- **Partner with Organizations:** Partner with relevant conservation organizations who are also celebrating anniversary milestones in 2026.
- **Some gimmick to go viral...**

#### E. Digital & Traditional Media

- **Video Series:** Produce a short video series that showcases the impact of NFHP's work over the past 20 years. Include interviews with key stakeholders, beneficiaries, and team members involved in the restoration efforts.
- **Anniversary Newsletter:** Send a special 20th-anniversary newsletter to current and potential stakeholders, featuring achievements, upcoming events, and how to get involved.
- **Local Radio & Podcast Interviews:** Secure radio and podcast spots with NFHP leadership or partners to discuss the anniversary and the importance of fish habitat restoration.
  - **Realistic options-** MeatEater, The Itinerant Angler, Bass Edge, Fish Nerds, Addicted Fishing, .....

#### 6. Timeline

- **May-September, 2025:**
  - Add specific actions and specific due dates for all actions/ideas above.
- **3-4 Months Prior to April Anniversary:**
  - Finalize anniversary event logistics and invite key stakeholders.
  - Develop social media calendar and content for #NFHP20 campaign.
  - Begin media outreach and prepare press materials.
- **1-2 Months Prior:**
  - Launch teaser campaign on social media to build excitement.
  - Confirm partnerships, sponsors, and media coverage.
  - Host the first webinar or educational event.
- **Month of Anniversary:**
  - Roll out full press release and media outreach.
  - Release anniversary video series and infographics.

- **Post-Anniversary:**
  - Continue promoting success stories and effect through ongoing social media posts.
  - Share the outcomes of the anniversary campaigns (fundraising, partnerships, new projects).
  - Follow up with stakeholders and partners with thank-you notes, and provide reports on campaign results.

## 7. Metrics of Success

- **Media Coverage:** Track the number of press mentions, articles, and interviews.
- **Social Media Engagement:** Measure likes, shares, comments, and hashtag usage related to the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.
- **Event Attendance:** Monitor the number of attendees at the anniversary events, both virtual and in-person.
- **Partnership Growth:** Track the increase in new partnerships, corporate sponsors, and funding commitments.
- **Public Awareness:** Use surveys and social media engagement metrics to assess public awareness and knowledge of NFHP's mission and work.

## 8. Conclusion

The 20th Anniversary of the National Fish Habitat Partnership offers a unique moment to reflect on its past achievements and to inspire future generations of conservationists. By celebrating the success of the partnership, highlighting the importance of collaborative conservation, and engaging new stakeholders, this communications strategy will help ensure that the next 20 years are even more successful than the first.

## National Fish Habitat Partnership Releases New Video For 2025

The [National Fish Habitat Partnership](#) recently released a [new video](#) for 2025 highlighting program accomplishments and testimonials from our Board Members and Fish Habitat Partnership Coordinators.

National Fish Habitat Board members and Fish Habitat Partnership Coordinators provided program testimonials at our Fish Habitat Partnership Coordinator Workshop and National Fish Habitat Board meetings in South Carolina in December 2023.

The video features testimonial interviews from Joe Nohner (Midwest Glacial Lakes Coordinator), Sara Strassman (Driftless Area Restoration Effort Coordinator), Debbie (Hart) Pederson (SE Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership Coordinator), Kate Sherman (National Fish Habitat Partnership Staff), Jessica Speed (Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership Coordinator), and Doug Austen (National Fish Habitat Board Member). The video is narrated by Alex Atkinson (National Fish Habitat Partnership Staff).

To view the video, please visit our **YouTube Channel**:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCn8\\_cDrXJSJQukyILPLZRTw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCn8_cDrXJSJQukyILPLZRTw)

## FHP Advocacy Guidelines June 2025

### Introduction

FHPs are self-directed coalitions of diverse partners that organize around geographic areas, keystone species, or ecosystem types, and work toward common goals to protect, restore, and enhance fish habitat. The National Fish Habitat Action Plans make several things clear regarding Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs) and advocacy:

- FHPs are the primary work units of the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) and take the lead in identifying on-the-ground projects;
- FHPs raise public awareness of the role healthy fish habitats play in the quality of life and economic well-being of local communities, and educate Americans about how everyday activities affect fish and their habitat;
- FHPs build strong grassroots support that places fish habitat conservation higher on the public agenda by engaging key audiences and the general public to build support for fish habitat conservation; and

Sound science and data are the cornerstones of the NFHP's ability to bring scarce resources to bear where they can gain the highest returns. Science and data drive our decision-making.

Advocacy is not one of the main responsibilities of the FHPs. Given the diversity of partner organizations comprising each FHP, advocating on behalf of the FHP would require approval/support of all partner organizations and may be challenging to obtain. However, partner organizations always have the opportunity to advocate certain positions or policies, provided that they clearly communicate that they are speaking on behalf of themselves or their organization and not the FHP.

### Considerations

- 1) FHPs' voluntary partnership approach complements Federal and state regulations that protect aquatic habitat. The NFHP mission supplements, but does not replace the existing foundation of statutory authority and associated regulatory programs implemented by the Departments that presently serve to protect aquatic habitats from degradation.
- 2) In some instances, a proposed law or rule may prevent an FHP from carrying out their work, the FHP steering committee can consider advocating against, or expressing concern for the proposal. See "Policy Review Checklist" section on the next page for questions to consider about proposed law or rule.
- 3) In rare cases, if a proposed law or rule would directly prevent an FHP from carrying out a relevant provision of the ACE Act (or subsequent legislative acts), direct advocacy on policy may be considered by the FHP's steering committee. See "Policy Review Checklist" section on the next page for questions to consider about proposed law or rule.
- 4) In all other cases, FHPs should limit any formal comments related to proposed or existing laws or regulations to statements of scientific fact. It is not appropriate for FHPs to express positions on policy decisions outside of those referenced in #2 or 3 above.
- 5) In situations where there is no imminent policy discussion occurring, FHPs may educate the public and policymakers on common habitat conservation topics that could result in

future policy outcomes. Some examples include riparian setbacks, streamside management zones, and appropriately sized culverts. This is education and not advocacy.

- 6) For all non-federal FHP coordinators, it is appropriate for FHPs to educate Congressional offices about the National Fish Habitat Partnership. However, since FHPs receive federal funding for NFHP work, they cannot advocate for NFHP funding.
- 7) In some States advocating for legislation requires registration as a lobbyist, we encourage coordinators to research the rules around lobbying for their state

**Policy Review Checklist (Must check boxes for all of these questions)**

If an FHP wants to advocate or oppose certain legislation or regulations they should go through the checklist, if all of the boxes are checked they should reach out to the Chair of the NFHP Policy Committee and supporting NFHP staff member for final approval.

1. Does the law or rule directly impact the work you do as part of your Fish Habitat Partnership?  
☐ Yes
2. Is every member of your steering committee in full support or full opposition of the law or rule?  
☐ Yes
3. Is there any controversy surrounding the law or rule?  
☐ No

If an FHP has a question about a particular topic, they may direct those questions to the Chair of the NFHP Policy Committee and supporting NFHP staff member.

## FY25 NFHP Budget Overview

Category		Percent	
<b>Projects</b>	\$3,036,654		
<b>FHP Coordination</b>	\$2,387,310		
<b>Total to FHPs</b>		\$5,423,964	80
<b>USFWS Support</b>		\$850,000	13
<b>NFHP Board Operations</b>		\$272,036	4
<b>National Assessment</b>		\$131,000	2
<b>NFHP Database Support</b>		\$87,000	1
<b>Total Appropriation</b>		<b>\$6,764,000</b>	<b>100</b>



**Bylaws of the  
National Fish Habitat Board**  
*As established under the  
“America’s Conservation Enhancement Act” Public Law 116-188 Title 2*

**BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**

The National Fish Habitat Partnership is a cooperative, non-regulatory nationwide program to conserve (protect, restore, and enhance) the habitats of the Nation’s marine and freshwater fish populations, and to increase public fishing opportunities. The National Fish Habitat Board serves as the body overseeing the implementation of Title II of the America’s Conservation Enhancement Act ([ACE Act, Public Law 116-188](#)). Board members serve voluntarily and represent a broad suite of interests who seek to protect, restore, and enhance fish habitat through partnerships that foster conservation and improve the quality of life for the American people.

**NATIONAL FISH HABITAT BOARD CHARTER**

There is established a board, to be known as the “National Fish Habitat Board”, whose duties are—

- (1) to promote, oversee, and coordinate the implementation of this title;
- (2) to establish national goals and priorities for fish habitat conservation;
- (3) to recommend to Congress entities for designation as Fish Habitat Partnerships; and
- (4) to review and make recommendations regarding fish habitat conservation projects.

**MISSION and GOALS**

The purpose of the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP), as stated in the ACE Act, is to encourage partnerships among public agencies and other organizations or individuals to promote fish habitat conservation—

- (1) to achieve measurable habitat conservation results through strategic actions of Fish Habitat Partnerships that lead to better fish habitat conditions and increased fishing opportunities by—
  - (A) improving ecological conditions;
  - (B) restoring natural processes; or
  - (C) preventing the decline of intact and healthy ecosystems;
- (2) to establish a consensus set of national conservation strategies as a framework to guide future actions and investment by Fish Habitat Partnerships;
- (3) to broaden the community of support for fish habitat conservation by—
  - (A) increasing fishing opportunities;
  - (B) fostering the participation of local communities, especially young people in local communities, in conservation activities; and
  - (C) raising public awareness of the role healthy fish habitat plays in the quality of life and

economic well-being of local communities;

(4) to fill gaps in the National Fish Habitat Assessment and the associated database of the National Fish Habitat Assessment—

(A) to empower strategic conservation actions supported by broadly available scientific information; and

(B) to integrate socioeconomic data in the analysis to improve the lives of humans in a manner consistent with fish habitat conservation goals; and

(5) to communicate to the public, conservation partners, and other stakeholders—

(A) the conservation outcomes produced collectively by Fish Habitat Partnerships; and

(B) new opportunities and voluntary approaches for conserving fish habitat.

The National Fish Habitat Board's (hereafter referred to as "the Board") role in executing the Mission and Goals of NFHP is to:

- Provide national leadership and coordination of agency and stakeholder involvement in the National Fish Habitat Partnership.
- Develop and implement appropriate policies and guidance for recommending Fish Habitat Partnerships for Congressional approval and developing new Fish Habitat Partnerships as needed to continually improve the program's ability to conserve fish habitat.
- Develop and implement processes to prioritize and deliver fish habitat conservation funds to the Fish Habitat Partnerships.
- Establish interim and long-term national fish habitat conservation goals, support regional goals, and determine the effectiveness of each Fish Habitat Partnership in meeting these goals.
- Measure and communicate the status and necessary measures to conserve fish habitat nationally.
- Report to Congress, States and other partners on the status and accomplishments of the National Fish Habitat Partnership.
- Address administrative, organizational, or procedural matters as necessary.

#### BOARD BYLAWS

1. Membership

A. Members-The Board shall consist to ~~286~~ members. The initial Board shall consist of representatives as described in the following subparagraphs (i) through (xv)

(i) ~~24~~ shall be ~~a~~ representatives of the Department of the Interior, including US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Land Management;

(ii) 1 shall be a representative of the United States Geological Survey;

(iii) 1 shall be a representative of the Department of Commerce;

(iv) 1 shall be a representative of the Department of Agriculture;

(v) 1 shall be a representative of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, who will serve as Board Chair;

(vi) 4 shall be representatives of State agencies, 1 of whom shall be nominated by a regional association of fish and wildlife agencies from each of the Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, and Western regions of the United States;

(vii) 2 shall be a representative of either—

(I) Indian tribes in the State of Alaska; or

(II) Indian tribes in States other than the State of Alaska;

(viii) ~~12~~ shall be ~~a~~ representatives ~~of either—~~

(I) the Regional Fishery Management Councils established under section 302 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act ([16 U.S.C. 1852](#)); or

(II) a representative of the Marine Fisheries Commissions, which is composed of—

(aa) the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission;

(bb) the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission; and

(cc) the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission;

(ix) 1 shall be a representative of the Sportfishing and Boating Partnership Council;

(x) 7 shall be representatives selected from (I)-(VI) below, with at least one from each:

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- (I) the recreational sportfishing industry;
- (II) the commercial fishing industry;
- (III) marine recreational anglers;
- (IV) freshwater recreational anglers;
- (V) habitat conservation organizations; and
- (VI) science-based fishery organizations;

- (xi) 1 shall be a representative of a national private landowner organization;
- (xii) 1 shall be a representative of an agricultural production organization;
- (xiii) 1 shall be a representative of local government interests involved in fish habitat restoration;
- (xiv) 2 shall be representatives from different sectors of corporate industries, which may include—
  - (I) natural resource commodity interests, such as petroleum or mineral extraction;
  - (II) natural resource user industries; and
  - (III) industries with an interest in fish and fish habitat conservation; and
- (xv) 1 shall be in a leadership position in the private sector or landowner representative of an active partnership.

#### B. Terms of Service

- (i) Normal Term- Except as provided in this subsection, a member of the Board described in paragraphs v through xv of Subsection A, shall serve a term of 3 years. A member elected to fill an unexpired term shall serve a full 3-year term.
- (ii) Chair- shall serve a term of 3 years and may not serve more than two consecutive terms as Chair.

#### C. Vacancies

##### (i) Board Member Appointment Process

- (I) Vacancies of Board representatives from the Departments of the Interior, Commerce, and Agriculture, as well as the U.S. Geological Survey shall be filled by the leadership of those respective agencies.
- (II) Vacancies of Board representatives from state agencies shall be filled by nomination by regional associations of fish and wildlife agencies.

- (III) Candidates to fill vacancies of Board representatives from Indian Tribes shall be nominated by the Secretary of the Interior. Nominations should be solicited at least one year prior to the expiration of current board member terms. The Secretary shall recommend to the Board a list of not fewer than 3 Tribal representatives, from which the remaining members of the Board shall select a representative to fill the vacancy.
- (IV) All other Board member vacancies shall be filled according to the provisions of the ACE Act under the process and timeline outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Process and timeline for addressing expiring terms for Board members.

Action	Time
Notification of Board of upcoming term expirations	Fall Board meeting and letters from Chair
Board member notifies Chair of desire to serve another term via a letter of interest	No later than 30 days prior to the Winter Board meeting
Board votes on reappointment (if eligible).	During or shortly after the Winter Board meeting
<b>In the event of a vacancy, the following procedure is followed:</b>	
Chair distributes open solicitation for expiring Board seat	At least 60 days prior to term expiration
Letter of interest and CV submitted to the Board by interested individuals	No less than 30 days prior to term expiration
Board staff distribute application packages for vacant Board seats to Executive Committee for review	No less than 21 days prior to the Spring Board meeting
Executive Committee presents candidates to the Board for vote	Spring Board meeting
New Board member orientation	No more than 30 days following the Spring meeting

\*The Fall meeting is typically held in September. The Winter meeting is typically held in December. The Spring meeting is typically held in March. The Summer meeting is typically held in June. Meeting dates may shift into adjacent months in some years to avoid conflicts with major conferences.

(ii) Voting Procedure for Filling Vacant Board Seats

- (I) A separate vote must be taken for each open Board seat.
- (II) If there is a circumstance where a vote on the reappointment of an existing member occurs at the same meeting as an election of a new member, the vote on the new member should be conducted first.
- (III) The Board may enter executive session to discuss the candidates, but all votes must be held in open session.
- (IV) Reappointing an existing Board member or electing a new Board member requires

approval of two-thirds of those present, with the member or candidate in question recusing themselves from the discussion and vote.

- D. Continuation of Service – A Board member may serve a second term unopposed. Following a member's second term, that seat will be considered vacant, but the member may reapply. An individual whose term expires may continue to serve on the Board until a successor is appointed.
- E. Removal – If a member of the Board described in any of subparagraphs (vii) – (xv) of Section A, misses 3 consecutive regularly scheduled Board meetings, the members of the Board may vote to remove that member and appoint another individual in accordance with Section C above (Vacancies). Two-thirds of the members present must approve this action. Acceptable participation in a Board meeting includes in-person, phone, or virtual attendance.

## 2. Procedures

A. Meetings--The Board shall meet at the call of the Chair at least twice each calendar year. The Chair shall propose a meeting schedule identifying potential meeting dates within the twelve-month period following each meeting of the Board. Except as provided below, the Chair must give Board members at least two months' notice of a Board meeting. Notice must be provided in writing but may be delivered by email to each Board member. The Chair with due cause may call the Board for emergency meetings, provided, however, that business of an emergency meeting must be restricted to the reasons for which the meeting is called.

The Board shall meet to perform all duties and functions prescribed in Title II of the ACE Act. All Board meetings must be held in public. The Board may meet in executive sessions closed to the public to discuss personnel, legal matters, or any other matter of a private or necessarily confidential nature. The Board may not take any statutorily required actions or make any final decisions while in executive session. These closed sessions shall be clearly identified in the meeting announcement. Notification of Board meetings shall be made to members of the Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs) and other interested parties.

Reasonable notice of the meeting time and agenda should be provided to the public at least two weeks prior to the meeting unless in the case of emergency. Publication on the NFHP website (fishhabitat.org) shall serve this purpose.

- B. Quorum-- A simple majority of Board members (n = 1~~5~~4) shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
- C. Participation and Attendance--If a Board member is not able to attend a Board meeting, he or she may appoint a designee provided an official proxy is presented to the Board Chair. Notification by email prior to the meeting is sufficient.
- D. Voting--The Board will strive to achieve consensus on all actions proposed. If consensus cannot be achieved within the time frame allotted to the action on the agenda, all recommendations specified

in the ACE Act<sup>1</sup> must be approved by the vote of two-thirds of all members ~~present~~(n-18). Other actions of the Board require a minimum of a simple majority of those present for approval. Each Board member shall have one vote. All voting shall proceed under Robert's Rules of Order. The Board may extend the discussion period for items on the agenda or consider items not on the proposed agenda for a meeting, provided that such changes to the agenda must be approved by a vote at the time they are proposed.

E. Other Procedures--The Board shall establish other procedures as needed to schedule meetings, develop agendas, and otherwise facilitate and conduct business, including those procedures or matters required to comply with any requirements resulting from incorporation of the Board under law.

F. Chair's Responsibilities--In addition to such duties established elsewhere in these bylaws, the Chair shall:

- i. Prepare a written agenda of all matters to be considered by the Board at any meeting;
- ii. Prepare and issue all notices, including notices of meetings, required to be given to the Board and public;
- iii. Preside at all meetings of the Board and, unless otherwise directed by the Board, present items of business for consideration by the Board in the order listed on the agenda for the meeting;
- iv. Conduct all meetings in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order and these bylaws;
- v. Appoint committee members as required; and
- vi. Perform other duties as requested by the Board.

G. Appointment of Vice-Chair--The Board may elect a Vice-Chair from among the Board membership. The Vice-Chair shall serve no more than two consecutive terms. Nominations will be solicited by the Chair via email four weeks prior to a Board meeting when the election will be held. The term of the Vice-Chair shall be three years, non-coincident with the term of the Chair.

H. Vice-Chair's Responsibilities-- In the absence of the Chair, or in the event of the Chair's inability to act, or a conflict of interest for the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair. A Vice-Chair may not call a meeting of the Board, but otherwise shall have all the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the Chair. The Vice-Chair shall perform duties assigned by the Chair or requested by the members.

### 3. Board Responsibilities

- A. Coordination - The Board will coordinate agency and stakeholder involvement at the national level to provide funding and other resources to the FHPs and other efforts of the National Fish Habitat Partnership.
- B. National Conservation Priorities and their Goals and Objectives - As required by the ACE Act, the Board shall develop and revise, as appropriate National Conservation Priorities (NCPs) for America's fish habitat along with their implementation goals and objectives with the advice from



the Science and Data Committee established pursuant to Section 5 (A) below. At minimum, NCPs will be fully reviewed and, if necessary, revised every three years. The Board will address any prioritization of NCPs annually at one of the Board meetings.

C. Reports to Congress

- i. National Fish Habitat Assessment - As required by Sections 201 and 209 of the ACE Act, the Board shall develop and implement an assessment of the state of the nation's fish habitat and deliver a report to Congress on its findings. The first such assessment shall be completed in 2025 and subsequent assessments be completed every five years.
- ii. Progress Report - In accordance with Section 209 of the ACE Act, the Board shall submit a report to Congress detailing the progress of NFHP, the status of fish habitats in the United States, and enhancements or reductions in public access resulting from the activities of FHPs. The report shall be completed in 2025 and every 5 years after and will be shared with States and other partners.

D. Fish Habitat Partnerships

- i. Recognition - The Board shall recommend to Congress the designation of FHPs in accordance with the requirements outlined in Section 204 the ACE Act. The Board shall distribute the criteria and establish a process for parties to use in seeking recognition as an FHP and maintain a publicly accessible registry of recognized FHPs. Such criteria shall include provisions to promote transparency and the highest standards of ethical conduct in the decision-making of the Board regarding recognition of FHPs. By February 1 of any fiscal year in which the Board is proposing modifications to, or new designations of, 1 or more Partnerships of each year, the Board shall submit a report to the appropriate Congressional committees during entitled "Report to Congress on Future Fish Habitat Partnerships and Modifications". This report that identifies each FHP that the Board recommends for designation, describes any proposed modifications to existing FHPs, and describes how each FHP fulfills the requirements of Section 204 of the ACE Act.
- ii. Evaluation- The Board will establish national measures of success and evaluation criteria guidelines for FHPs. The Board shall, as part of the annual NFHP project submission process, review the performance of all FHPs to ensure they are complying with the language and intent of the ACE Act.

- E. Funding - The Board will develop and implement strategies to increase public and private funding for fish habitat conservation, provided that the responsibility for implementation of such strategies by any Board member shall be limited by any legal or administrative restrictions that may apply to the activities of any such member.

4. Coordination and Support

- A. Staff—The Board may accept staff support provided by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, other federal agencies, state fish and wildlife agencies, marine fisheries commissions, and tribal agencies. The Chair, in consultation with the contributing entities, shall act on behalf of the Board in directing the activities of the staff. The Chair, in consultation with the Board, may accept additional staff or other support from other entities. The contributing entities shall use their best efforts to provide office space for all Board staff and take such other measures as they deem appropriate to facilitate communication, cohesiveness, and efficient operations for the benefit of the Board.

B. Technical and Scientific Assistance- Per Sections 206 ~~and 212(A)(3)~~ of the ACE Act, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Geological Survey, ~~and the U.S. Forest Service~~, and the Bureau of Land Management are each authorized to provide scientific and technical assistance to Partnerships. Per section 212(A)(3), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Geological Survey, and U.S. Forest Service are authorized to be appropriated \$400,000 per fiscal year to carry out, and provide technical and scientific assistance to FHPs, participants in fish habitat conservation projects, and the Board. This assistance may include –

1. providing technical and scientific assistance to States, Indian Tribes, regions, local communities, and nongovernmental organizations in the development and implementation of FHP objectives;
2. providing technical and scientific assistance to FHPs for habitat assessment, strategic planning, and prioritization;
3. supporting the development and implementation of fish habitat conservation projects that are identified as high priorities by FHPs and the Board;
4. supporting and providing recommendations regarding the development of science-based monitoring and assessment approaches for implementation through FHPs;
5. supporting and providing recommendations for a national fish habitat assessment;
6. ensuring the availability of experts to assist in conducting scientifically based evaluation and reporting of the results of fish habitat conservation projects; and
7. providing resources to secure State agency scientific and technical assistance to support FHPs, participants in fish habitat conservation projects, and the Board.

C. Board and Committee Expenses- A member of the Board may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for an employee of an agency under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from the home or regular place of business of the member in the performance of the duties of the Board. All Board travel authorizations and reimbursements will be administered by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) using their standard processes with the Board staff member that is an AFWA employee being the contact person.

5. Committees

The Board may establish and otherwise manage committees and/or ad-hoc working groups as needed to carry out the responsibilities of the Board. Such committees may include individuals who are not members of the Board. Standing Board Committees include the following:

A. Science and Data Committee --The Board shall establish a Science and Data Committee (SDC) co-chaired by a State representative (either active or retired) and a USGS representative or other entities recommended by the Committee and approved by the Board. The SDC shall consist of a

minimum of two Board members, four FHP representatives, four State agency representatives, four Federal agency representatives, two non-governmental organization representatives and two academic representatives. Additional members can be added by the SDC chairs to fill knowledge gaps. All SDC members will have demonstrated knowledge of NFHP's science foundation. The Board shall solicit information from the SDC and incorporate that information, and other appropriate information, into the National Conservation Priorities and their implementation goals and objectives. The SDC shall be responsible for the development and implementation of the Board's National Fish Habitat Assessment, a required product specified in the ACE Act, following the direction and guidance of the Board. The Board and participating agencies will support the SDC by providing necessary staff, funding, data, and other resources needed to complete the national assessments and reports called for in the ACE Act.

- B. Governance Committee - The Board shall establish a Governance Committee whose principal responsibility is to ensure that the Board abides by statutory requirements and meets its statutory obligations. The Governance Committee will consist of a minimum of three Board members and be supported by a minimum of two Board staff. The Governance Committee chair shall be a Board member and additional committee members can be requested to be added by the chair as required. The Committee chair can also request to have FHP representation as non-voting members. Governance Committee duties shall include writing and updating the Board's Bylaws, development of board operating policies and securing answers to legal questions brought by the Board or FHPs relative to executing the mission of the Board. The Governance Committee shall review standing Committee Terms of Reference as part of annual Board evaluation and oversee the annual evaluation of the Board.
- C. Federal Caucus—The Board shall coordinate with the broadest possible range of Federal agencies through the Federal Caucus, a partnership of Federal agencies organized to coordinate Federal participation in the implementation of the NFHP and make every attempt to expand the Federal Caucus to include all Federal agencies involved with fish habitat. The Board shall coordinate with Federal agencies to develop and implement habitat protection and rehabilitation strategies at national and regional scales, to ensure that Federal agencies' policies are consistent with the Plan, and to otherwise support implementation of the Plan. The Federal Caucus shall be responsible for development of, and implementation of the Interagency Operational Plan described in Section 208 of the ACE Act.
- D. Partnerships Committee- The purpose of the Partnerships Committee is to provide information, analysis, and recommendations for Board action on the full range of issues affecting the FHPs in response to Board requests or as generated by the Partnerships Committee. Between 2-3 co-equal Chairs will lead the committee, with a minimum of one Chair being a Board Member and one Chair being an FHP Coordinator. Chairs will be appointed by the Board Chair and serve a three-year term starting with the first meeting of the calendar year and with no limit to the number of terms served. The committee will also work to evaluate and score annual funding proposals from FHPs.
- E. Policy Committee- The Board shall establish a Policy Committee to oversee and assist with interpretation, implementation, compliance with, and reauthorization of the provisions of the ACE Act and relevant federal, state, and tribal policies. The Policy Committee shall consist of at minimum three Board members and will be supported by a minimum of two Board staff members. The Policy Committee chair shall be a Board member. The Committee chair can also request to have FHP representation as non-voting members.

F. Communications Committee- The Communications Committee develops guidelines and oversees consistent, effective communication aligned with the NFHP mission and brand. The committee maintains the brand standards and defines the voice and tone of the organization. The committee develops and reviews annual communications products such as the Waters to Watch campaign and the NFHP Annual Report. The Communications Committee shall consist of at minimum three Board members and will be supported by a minimum of one Board staff member. The Communications Committee chair shall be a Board member. The Committee chair can also request to have FHP representation as non-voting members.

G. Executive Committee- The Executive Committee will comprise the Board Chair, Board Vice-Chair, a tribal representative, and the Chairs of each Board committee listed above. The Federal Caucus will be represented by the USFWS in a non-voting role. The Executive Committee will meet at least four times per year to discuss and vote on Board level budget items and discuss pending issues to be presented to the full Board.

#### PROCEDURE TO AMEND BYLAWS

The Board may decide to amend these bylaws by consensus, or by a two-thirds vote of all members present and voting, and following the guidance as stated in Robert's Rules of Order. Any proposed change to these bylaws must be noted on the draft agenda that is sent out at the time the meeting is scheduled and include the proposed language changes by section.

#### Footnotes:

Items mentioned in the ACE Act requiring a two-thirds majority vote for approval: designation of FHP's, and approval of annual proposed project lists.