



Tin Cup Creek, ID  
2022 Water to Watch



NATIONAL  
**FISH  
HABITAT**  
PARTNERSHIP

# Board Meeting Book



November 29, 2022  
ZOOM Meeting



## National Fish Habitat Board Meeting

Tuesday, November 29, 2022

### Agenda

1:00 – 5:00 PM ET

Zoom Link: <https://fishwildlife->

[org.zoom.us/j/82793951366?pwd=TY2WTRXUmc4UkhCMGM4Q2MrTGlaZz09](https://org.zoom.us/j/82793951366?pwd=TY2WTRXUmc4UkhCMGM4Q2MrTGlaZz09)

Time (PM ET)	Agenda Item	Board Book Tab	Lead
1:00	<p><b>Attendance &amp; Welcome</b></p> <p><i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board staff</b> to take attendance.</li> <li>• <b>Board action</b> to approve the November 29 agenda.</li> <li>• <b>Board action</b> to approve the September 22-23, 2022 draft meeting summary.</li> </ul>	Tab 1	<b>Ed Schriever</b> ( <i>Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Board Chairman</i> ) & <b>Board Staff</b>
1:20	<p><b>Shifting Tides &amp; Update on NFHP Board Member Appointments</b></p> <p><i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board staff to update</b> Board members on shifts in the Board member, FHP coordinator, and staff positions.</li> <li>• <b>Board staff to update</b> the current Board on the ongoing appointment process to solicit applicants for vacant Board seats.</li> </ul>	Tab 2	<b>Alex Atkinson</b> ( <i>Board Staff, NOAA Fisheries</i> )
1:30	<p><b>2023 NFHP Board Meeting Schedule</b></p> <p><i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board staff to</b> present the draft 2023 NFHP Board Meeting schedule and solicit input from Board members.</li> </ul>	Tab 3	<b>Alex Atkinson</b> ( <i>Board Staff, NOAA Fisheries</i> )
1:50	<p><b>USFWS Update</b></p> <p><i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board awareness of</b> the plan for FY23 FHP project administration and any other updates from the USFWS.</li> </ul>		<b>Steve Guertin</b> ( <i>USFWS, Board Member</i> )

2:00	<p><b>USFWS/FHP Relationships</b> <i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Board awareness</b> of the results of individual phone calls with FHPs.</li> </ul>	Tab 4	<p><b>Stan Allen</b> (NFHP Partnerships Committee Co-Chair, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission), &amp; <b>Bryan Moore</b> (NFHP Partnerships Committee Co-Chair, Trout Unlimited)</p>
2:15	<p><b>Congressional Designation FHP Application</b> <i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Board awareness</b> of the status of the FHP application and FHP feedback into the process.</li> <li>● <b>Board awareness</b> of the next steps for the FHP application.</li> </ul>	Tab 5	<p><b>Carter Kruse</b> (Board member, Turner Enterprises), <b>Steve Perry</b> (Board member, EBTJV), &amp; <b>Stan Allen</b> (NFHP Partnerships Committee Co-Chair, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission)</p>
2:45	<p><b>NFHP Board Committee Updates</b></p> <p><b>Science &amp; Data Committee</b> <i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● NCPs (20 minutes) – Board awareness &amp; feedback on initial set of metrics.</li> <li>● Assessment design (15 minutes) – Awareness of survey &amp; feedback on design.</li> <li>● Project Tracking database (10 minutes) – Board awareness of improvements &amp; feedback.</li> </ul>	Tab 6	<p><b>Gary Whelan</b> (Board Staff, Science and Data Committee Co-Chair, MI Department of Natural Resources) &amp; <b>Daniel Wieferrich</b> (Board Staff, Science and Data Committee Co-Chair, USGS)</p>
3:30	<p><b>Communications Committee</b> <i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Board awareness</b> of Communications Committee Strategy.</li> <li>● <b>Board vote</b> to approve the Communications Strategy elements and future work of the Committee.</li> </ul>	Tab 7	<p><b>Johnny LeCoq</b> (NFHP Communications Committee Chair, Fishpond)</p>
3:45	<p><b>Partnerships Committee</b> <i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Board awareness</b> of the draft FHP application for Congressional designation.</li> <li>● <b>Board awareness</b> of progress on revising the Action Plan.</li> </ul>	Tab 8	<p><b>Stan Allen</b> (NFHP Partnerships Committee Co-Chair, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission), &amp; <b>Bryan Moore</b> (NFHP Partnerships Committee Co-Chair, Trout Unlimited), &amp;</p>

- **Board awareness** of plans for the 2022 Report to Congress.
- **Board awareness and discussion** of plans and updates for the FY24 FHP project and reporting submissions.

**Alex Atkinson** (*Board Staff, NOAA Fisheries*)

4:00

**Governance Committee**

Tab 9

**Shannon Boyle** (*NFHP Governance Committee Board Staff, USFWS*)

*Desired outcomes:*

- **Board awareness** of Attorney Team and tasks.
- Board Member solicitation (process, timeline).
- **Board discussion** of Vice Chair.

4:30

**Policy Committee**

Tab 10

**Tim Schaeffer** (*NFHP Policy Committee Chair, PA Fish & Boat Commission*) and **Kate Sherman** (*Board Staff, PSMFC*)

*Desired outcomes:*

- **Board awareness** of Policy Committee activities.
- **Board discussion** of annual report feedback and ACE Act amendments.

5:00

**Adjourn**



## National Fish Habitat Partnership Board Meeting Summary

**WHEN:** Thursday, September 22, 2022 from 9:00 - 5:00 PM CT  
Friday, September 23, 2022 from 9:00 – 1:00 PM CT

**WHERE:** Fort Worth City Club 301 Commerce St, Fort Worth, TX 76102  
Oak Room

**VIRTUAL MEETING INFO:** [JOIN HERE \(link also in Google calendar invite\)](#)

**Phone Conference ID:** 847 684 995#

### Attendance

#### Board Members:

1	Allen	Stan	X
2	Austen	Doug	X
3	Bowden	Allison	-
4	Boyd	Douglass	-
5	Boyles	Robert	X
6	Cantrell	Chris	X
7	Eischeid	Ted	-
8	Gilliland	Gene	X
9	Guertin	Steve	X
10	Conley	Kim	X
11	Kinsinger/Beard	Anne/Doug	X
12	Kruse	Carter	X
13	LeCoq	John	-
14	Leonard/Chester	Mike/Anne	X
15	Linnell	Karen	X
16	Moore	Chris	X
17	Moore	Bryan	X
18	Rivers	Patrick	X
19	Perry	Steve	X
20	Plumer	Christy	X
21	Rauch	Sam	X
22	Ringia	Adam	X
23	Schaeffer/Caccese	Timothy D./Bob	X
24	Schriever	Ed	X
25	Slaughter	Joe	-
26	Trushenski	Jesse	-

#### Board Staff:

- Alex Atkinson
- Mike Bailey
- Shannon Boyle
- Ryan Roberts
- Gary Whelan
- Kate Sherman

#### Other Attendees:

- Rob Harper
- Christopher Estes
- Eric MacMillan
- Kevin Keith
- Jess Newton
- Breanna Rose
- John Young
- Jeff Boxrucker
- Heidi Keuler
- Todd Ewing
- Lisa Havel
- Lori Maloney
- Sara Strassman
- Alicia Marrs
- Gordon Smith

#### Approved By Motion:

- September Board Meeting agenda
- June 28, 2022 Board Meeting summary
- National Conservation Priorities (pending minor revisions)

Thursday, September 22, 2022

9:00 – 5:00 PM CT

Time CT)	Agenda Item	Board Book Tab	Lead
9:00	<p><b>Attendance &amp; Welcome</b></p> <p><i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Board staff</b> to take attendance (sign-in sheet).</li> <li>● <b>Board action</b> to approve the September 22-23 agenda.</li> <li>● <b>Board action</b> to approve the June 28, 2022 meeting summary.</li> </ul>	Tab 1	<b>Ed Schriever</b> ( <i>Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Board Chairman</i> ) & <b>Board Staff</b>

Chairman Schriever thanked everyone for coming to this hybrid format NFHP Board meeting. The Board staff took attendance and the Board approved the meeting June meeting summary and the September Board meeting agenda (with 1 brief addition of Waters to Watch item before lunch). Several proxies for Board members were attending including Kara Meckley for Sam Rauch (NOAA), Kimberly Conley for Rob Harper (USFS), and Annie Chester for Mike Leonard (ASA). Chairman Schriever thanked Debbie Hart, SEAKFHP coordinator, for organizing the virtual meet and greet opportunities for Board members and FHP coordinators to connect informally. Chairman Schriever also took a moment to recognize and thank Jeff Boxrucker, the long-serving coordinator for the Reservoir Fish Habitat Partnerships, who will be retiring in October. Former NFHP Board member, Doug Nygren, will be taking over for Jeff after his retirement.

9:15	<b>Welcome Remarks from Texas Parks &amp; Wildlife Division</b>		<b>Tim Birdsong</b> ( <i>Deputy Division Director, Fisheries Management &amp; Conservation</i> )
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Chairman Schriever thanked Tim Birdsong for hosting the NFHP Board again in Texas. Tim Birdsong, Deputy Division Director of Fisheries Management and Conservation for Texas Parks and Wildlife, shared some remarks with the NFHP Board about his involvement in NFHP over the years and the projects and focus areas in Texas. The shift from when the group last met in Texas during historic floods in 2018 contrasts sharply with the conditions now with historic drought and many competing demands for water. Tim highlighted fish habitat conservation in Texas and the challenges facing their systems like urbanization pressures, erosion, drought, and land ownership. Tim also shared that the state deals primarily with impoundments and tailrace fisheries which makes their management and conservation efforts unique. Finally, Tim highlighted how TX PWD is utilizing funding through Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA), foundations, and other sources to restore fish habitats in the current climate.

9:30	<p><b>Annual Review of Board Member Terms</b></p> <p><i>Desired outcomes:</i></p>	Tab 2	<b>Ed Schriever</b> ( <i>Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Board</i> )
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- **Board staff to present** the current Board member terms and their expirations.
- **Board review** of the Board member appointment procedure.

*Chairman) & Mike Bailey  
(USFWS, Board Staff)*

Board staff member, Alex Atkinson, reviewed the NFHP gantt chart with the Board and reminded the Board of their final meeting of the year scheduled for November 29, 2022 1:00 – 4:30 PM ET via Zoom. Alex also reviewed the chart of Board members and their terms which will be an annual check in at each fall meeting of the Board. Both Bryan Moore and Mike Leonard’s terms are expired and the Board will use these seats as a trial run to implement the replacement process discussed and voted on at the June Board meeting. As a reminder, Board members whose terms have expired are permitted to serve until replaced as long as the members are in good standing. The Board discussed how best to handle the nominees for Board member seats during Board meetings and agreed that the Board would discuss nominees in Executive Session with an open vote. Board members also agreed that a set of questions should structure the review of each nominee to consistently compare and consider all candidates. Several revisions were noted to the Board member table presented and it was noted that there are many Board member terms all expiring during 2024. The Board’s Governance Committee will discuss this issue further to strategize around a potential for multiple Board member turnover in 2024.

The Board staff will present a 2023 Board Meeting schedule at the November Board meeting and remind the Board of all of the NFHP end-of-year activities.

9:50 **NCTC Fish Passage Workshop Report Out**

Tab 3

**Ed Schriever, Christy Plumer, Gary Whelan, Debbie Hart/Alicia Marrs, & Mike Bailey**

*Desired outcomes:*

- **Board awareness** of the sessions and discussions at the recent NCTC Fish Passage Meeting. Topics to cover include:
  - **NFHP-level (Ed/Christy)**
  - **Workgroups (Gary)**
  - **FHP significance (Debbie/Alicia)**
  - **IOP (Ed/Mike)**

After some brief opening remarks, Chairman Schriever opened the floor for several speakers who reported out on their experiences and observations from the Fish Passage Workshop co-hosted by NFHP and the USFWS in July at the National Conservation Training Center. Several Board members, staff and FHP coordinators attended the workshop. It was noted that NFHP made a statement with a prominent presence at the workshop and educated many about the Partnership. The workshop brought more perspectives into the discussion about fish passage and NFHP was reference many times as a successful Partnership model. It provided a good opportunity to make connections, especially with more atypical partners (e.g. FEMA, Department of Transportation, Department of Energy, and Federal Highways Administration). Board members are engaged in several workgroups

formed at the workshop to continue advancing progress on items such as inclusion and breaking down barriers to funding. FHPs expressed a desire to remain involved in this effort and stay updated with progress from workgroups. Speakers highlighted that many workshop discussions focused on a new way of doing business in the world of habitat conservation and this was exciting to see and hear.

The Board discussion then shifted to the Interagency Operational Plan (IOP). Chairman Schriever noted that although the finalized IOP may be behind schedule, there are new and timely opportunities before us to broaden the scope of the IOP. Other Board members noted that the tone of the IOP could shift from what agencies are capable of doing to what they *will do* in support of NFHP following a clear articulation of needs by the Partnership. Many view this IOP as an opportunity to show that NFHP can be more than a \$5M program and showcase the benefits of participating in the Partnership while fish passage and habitat work is at the forefront of many large budget packages.

10:45    **BREAK**

11:00    **How is NFHP Accessing & Coordinating Funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)?**    Tab 4    **Ed Schriever** (*Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Board Chairman*)

*Desired outcomes:*

- **Board awareness & discussion** of NFHP plans to access and coordinate on various BIL funding opportunities.

Chairman Schriever introduced this agenda item and turned it over to FHP coordinators to share how they are working with partners to access BIL funding. Lori Maloney, coordinator for the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture, shared that they are helping partners on the ground by bundling smaller projects together so they are eligible for grant programs they may not otherwise be eligible for. It was noted that Alaska Fish Habitat Partnerships are leading the way for coordinating with Federal agencies and are making some great progress. There was additional discussion about creative mechanisms (e.g. section 40804), used by NFWF for the America The Beautiful challenge grant program, to partner with Federal agencies to utilize the network of NFHP to distribute this new Federal funding and accomplish on-the-ground work. A Board member also raised that this discussion did not mention the Tribal component and that we should ensure they are incorporated into these opportunities, particularly in the Southwestern US. Tim Schaeffer highlighted that the Policy Committee is also taking these recommendations into account when discussing recommended language changes for the ACE Act so these may be included in potential amendments.

11:45    **USFWS Update**    **Steve Guertin** (*USFWS, Board Member*)

*Desired outcomes:*

- **Board awareness of** the status of FY22 project funds.
- **Board awareness of** the plan for FY23 FHP project administration and any other updates from the USFWS.



Steve Guertin shared the great news that the Secretary of Interior has approved the FHP projects for FY22 – the Board received a positive letter and the Secretary was impressed at the overall match and compliments our ongoing commitment with Tribal partners.

Steve also shared that the USFWS did not receive the \$1M increase that was requested and the best funding outcome for NFHP in FY23 would be \$7.2M which would alleviate some pressure related to coordination funding. Steve noted he remains encouraged that the administration sees the good work of NFHP and it may take a few years for budget increases to come through.

11:55 **2022 Waters to Watch Endorsement**

*Desired outcome:*

- **Board endorses** 2022 W2W project list that has been approved by the Partnerships Committee.

**Ryan Roberts** (*Board Staff, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies*)

Ryan Roberts shared with the Board that we received 10 nominations for the 2022 Waters to Watch campaign that were all approved by the Partnerships Committee. The announcement of projects is planned for the mid-week around September 28<sup>th</sup> via the NFHP website and social media. The Board voted to endorse the list of 10 Waters to Watch for 2022.

12:00 **LUNCH on your own – 1.5 hours**

1:30 **Board Establishes National Conservation Priorities**

*Desired outcomes:*

- **Board member awareness & discussion** of the proposed set of FY23 National Conservation Priorities.
- **Board vote** on the proposed set of FY23 National Conservation Priorities.

Tab 5

**Adam Ringia** (*NFHP Board Member, NCP Workgroup Chairman, Southwest Tribal Fish Commission*)

Adam Ringia, lead of the National Conservation Priorities (NCP) workgroup, presented the NCPs for FY24 which included a list of strategies under each priority to give a sense of what types of activities could fall within each NCP and are not meant to define or limit creativity of efforts. The NCPs presented were mostly the same, slightly reworded, as what the Board saw in the June Board book materials. The Board discussed some minor word changes and agreed to the following:

- Change “maximize” to “optimize” when referring to fisheries in NCP #2 and #4;
- Change “maintain” to “support” in NCP #6; and
- Change “Tribal treaty fishing rights” to “Tribal fishing rights” in the description of NCP #7 since there are no treaty rights in Alaska.

After these word change discussions, the Board voted to approve these NCPs including the word changes with the recognition that metrics to track these NCPs are in development and will be shared with the Board soon.

2:15 **Plan for FHPs to Receive Designation by Congress under the ACE Act**

*Desired outcomes:*

- **Board awareness & discussion** of Partnerships Committee proposed timeline and process for advancing FHPs to Congress for designation.
- **Board vote** on the proposed/draft timeline for advancing FHPs to Congress for designation.

Tab 6 **Stan Allen** (*NFHP Partnerships Committee co-chair, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission*) & **Carter Kruse** (*Board member, Turner Enterprises*)

Stan Allen presented to the Board a draft plan for FHPs to receive Congressional designation. The Partnerships Committee (+ a couple Board members) has developed an FHP application process for Congressional designation by 2025, as described by the ACE Act. The group used the NFHP 1.0 FHP application process as a starting point and is adding in new ACE Act requirements to the previous process. The Committee presented to the Board a suggested timeline (below) and approach for how and when the FHPs will be nominated for Congressional designation. Proposed timing is as follows:

- Feb/Mar 2023 – revised Action Plan approved by Board
- By August 1, 2023 – all FHPs who seek Congressional designation complete application and 1-pager and submit to Board for review.
- Fall 2023 Board meeting – Board reviews FHP applications and discusses at meeting.
- Early 2024 Board meeting – Board votes on advancing the FHP application packages to Congress.
- By summer 2024 – staff assists Board Partnerships Committee with package assembly for submission to Congress.

Based on their discussions, the Partnerships Committee recommended that the Board nominate all 20 FHPs at one time for Congressional recognition during FY24, however the Policy Committee will think on this decision point further. Board member Christy Plumer recommended that to support the work of the Partnerships Committee, the Policy Committee develop an execution calendar to detail out the recommended timing for FHP Congressional designation that could incorporate feedback from the key staff from Committees of jurisdiction. She also recommended that the Board plan to do some briefings in early 2023 after the FY23 budget is released to begin educating Congressional staff and members about NFHP. FHPs raised a question during this discussion about whether support letters or statements of support should be submitted from partners – the Policy Committee will further discuss this idea as well. There was general concurrence from the Board in support of this approach, however, many more of the details remain to develop.

3:15 **BREAK**

3:30 **What's Next for the NFHP Action Plan?**

*Desired outcomes:*

Tab 7 **Stan Allen** (*NFHP Partnerships Committee co-chair, Pacific States*)



- **Board awareness** of the history of the NFHP Action Plan, its purpose, and revision schedule.
- **Board awareness** of the contents of the legacy NFHP Action Plan and the process to create a contemporary NFHP Action Plan before the FHP Congressional designation process begins.
- **Seeking Board volunteers** to create the new edition of the NFHP Action Plan by November meeting.
- Action Plan will be up for vote at the February/March 2023 meeting.

*Marine Fisheries Commission)*

The NFHP Action Plan (AP) was undergoing revision in 2019-2020 and was not yet finalized when the ACE Act was signed into law. The revision of the plan was put on pause. Given that FHPs will be nominated for Congressional delegation soon, their application materials will likely refer to the NFHP Action Plan and how their strategic plans support the Action Plan. Currently, the most recent version of the AP was approved by the Board in 2012. Stan Allen recommended that the Board undertake reviewing the revised AP and revising and approving it before the Congressional designation process begins. This way, Congress is seeing the most updated NFHP guidance documents that have been agreed upon by the current NFHP Board. Chairman Schriever iterated that the old AP is a good start, but this should not limit the changes this new Board makes to the AP. Several Board members including: Steve Perry, Pat Rivers, Adam Ringia, Anne Kinsinger, Chris Moore, and Gary Whelan volunteered to revise the AP. The goal is to complete revising the Action Plan by early 2023 so that an aspirational 1-pager can be developed to educate members about NFHP. This will be a short, quick timeline.

4:00 **Beyond the Pond Update & Bass Pro Funded Projects**

Tab 8 **Ryan Roberts** (*Board Staff, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies*)

*Desired outcomes:*

- **Board awareness of** the status of the non-profit branch of NFHP, Beyond the Pond.
- **Board awareness of** the 9 projects funded by the Bass Pro Shops donation & video production planned.

Ryan Roberts provided an update about the 9 Bass Pro Shops funded NFHP projects. Of those 9 projects, 5 are fully contracted and 4 are under review or awaiting signature. All projects will be completed by the end of next year and we plan to get some video and photos of the projects. Several recent Bass Pro catalogs highlighted NFHP.

Ryan also provided a brief update about Beyond the Pond noting the group’s major expenses including administrative funding (5% of the Bass Pro award for grant administration) and fixed



expenses (~\$5K). He also highlighted how capacity at Beyond the Pond has been a challenge – there has not yet been a dedicated person for fundraising. There was some discussion among Board members about the need to more clearly define Beyond the Pond’s role, engagement with the NFHP Board, and review the governance of these groups carefully. The NFHP Governance Committee agreed to take on the task to review the articles of incorporation and bylaws to kick off this review.

5:00     **Adjourn**



Friday, September 23, 2022

9:00 – 1:00 PM CT

VIRTUAL MEETING INFO: [JOIN HERE \(link also in Google calendar invite\)](#)

Phone Conference ID: 847 684 995#

Time (CT)	Agenda Item	Board Book Tab	Lead
9:00	<p><b>Welcome &amp; Debrief from Yesterday</b></p> <p><i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Board staff</b> to take attendance (sign-in sheet).</li> </ul>		<b>Ed Schriever</b> ( <i>Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Board Chairman</i> ) & <b>Board Staff</b>

During the Chairman’s opening remarks for meeting day 2, he noted how he appreciates all Board members stepping up and playing important roles in the work that we are doing. He remarked that it is nice to be recognized by the Secretary of Interior for our efforts. Finally, Chairman Schriever shared that the EXCOM has not had a chance to meet yet, but will meet before the next Board meeting.

9:30	<p><b>NFHP Habitat Assessment</b></p> <p><i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Board awareness</b> of decision points (e.g. audience, scale) for the 2025 NFHP Habitat Assessment.</li> <li>● <b>Board awareness</b> of assessment survey results.</li> <li>● <b>Board discussion</b> of the desired attributes for the 2025 NFHP Habitat Assessment.</li> </ul>	Tab 9	<b>Gary Whelan</b> ( <i>Board Staff, Science and Data Committee Co-Chair, MI Department of Natural Resources</i> )
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Gary Whelan presented a suite of decisions that the Board will need to make before undertaking the next habitat assessment (e.g. audience, scale, scope, messages, data products, datasets, socioeconomic data, FHP data, etc.). Gary shared the pre-Board meeting survey results, however, more responses are needed to complete the picture of what Board members envision for the assessment (17 responses at the time of the Board meeting). Ultimately, in order to scope the assessment, the Board needs to be clear about what they want as end products. The Board discussed the many potential purposes of the assessment (e.g. science-based approach to aquatic stewardship, communicate more socioeconomic data to policy makers, etc.) and recognizes that they must identify one or two primary purposes so the assessment structure may be built in support of those outcomes. The Board also discussed how and by whom the 2015 Assessment has been used to inform the next assessment. Board members referenced other reports (e.g. Chesapeake Bay report card and State of the Birds report) as potential models for a national assessment with a national audience. The Board also discussed how capacity and available resources may drive the group’s decision about the desired audience for the assessment. Generally, Board members agreed that the assessment cannot be everything to everyone and we should not let perfect get in the way of good. The Board discussed

data compatibility in the context of rolling up messaging from regional to national levels and how challenging it is to show change at a larger scale. Finally, Gary requested that those who have not yet completed the assessment survey, please submit their responses.

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|-------|---|--------|--|
| 10:00 | <b>FHP Item – PMEP Nearshore Habitat Database</b><br><i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Board awareness of</b> the recently debuted PMEP Nearshore Habitat Database and its functionality.</li> </ul> | Tab 10 | <b>Kate Sherman</b> ( <i>Board Staff, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission</i> ) |
|-------|---|--------|--|

Kate Sherman presented the newly completed Nearshore Project, funded by NOAA, NFHP, and AFWA, highlighting nearshore fish habitats. There were three main objectives of this effort: (1) define and map boundaries for delineating nearshore zones along the U.S. West Coast, (2) compile and standardize spatial data on nearshore habitats within defined nearshore zones, and (3) produce a state-of-the-knowledge report on U.S. West Coast nearshore fish and invertebrate habitats. PMEP has compiled standardized spatial data on nearshore habitats within defined nearshore zones to reflect what we know about nearshore habitat classification and extent along the entire U.S. West Coast. Nearshore areas are delineated by PMEP ecoregions, which include the Salish Sea, Pacific Northwest, Central California, and Southern California Bight. Each ecoregion section describes the habitats by nearshore zones, fish assemblages, and invertebrate use. Nearshore habitat data from multiple sources was standardized using the Coastal Marine Ecological Classification System (CMECS). The report and data products provide a baseline for investigating changes, shifts, and adaptations of habitats for nearshore marine species of the U.S. West Coast. The geodatabase includes feature classes of nearshore zones and biotic and substrate habitat layers, and the data products are designed for use by resource managers, restoration practitioners, and researchers. The [report](#) and [data](#) are available on PMEP’s website at [www.pacificfishhabitat.org](http://www.pacificfishhabitat.org).

10:45 **BREAK**

- |       |  |        |                                  |
|-------|--|--------|----------------------------------|
| 11:00 | <b>NFHP Board Committee Report Outs</b><br><i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Board members updated on newly elected Committee leadership to join the Executive Committee.</li> <li>● Board members updated on existing Committee activities and work plans.</li> </ul> | Tab 11 | <b>Committee Chairs</b><br>(a-f) |
|-------|--|--------|----------------------------------|
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Science &amp; Data Committee</b> (20 minutes)           <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Database update</li> <li>b. Board understanding of the status of the Project Tracking Database System:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Develop updated database schema (completed)</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Gary Whelan &amp; Daniel Wieferrich</b></li> </ol> |
|--|---|



- ii. Develop draft data entry form using ESRI Survey123 Connect (completed)
  - iii. Present NFHP Project Tracking efforts at AFS annual meeting (completed)
  - iv. Solicit review of data entry form from NFHP partners (in progress)
  - v. Incorporate FY22 projects into upgraded data system (next step)
- c. Next SDC items

Gary Whelan and Kate Sherman shared the ongoing and upcoming SDC items. The SDC will continue to shape the scope of the next National Assessment and will be working on metrics to expand the variety expected in the ones approved in the NCPs. These will be shared with Board members prior to the November Board meeting. The SDC is also working on database updates and a dashboard that permit for easy visualization and report generation of NFHP project data. Finally, the SDC presented at the July AFS meeting in Spokane, WA.

**Partnerships Committee (20 minutes)**

- a. ACE Act crosswalk
- b. FHPs to Congress
- c. Online form

**Stan Allen & Bryan Moore**

Stan Allen and Bryan Moore reported on behalf of the Partnerships Committee which has been focused on the ACE Act crosswalk with FHP application package. This work will lay the foundation for a process by which FHPs can apply for Congressional designation by clearly and succinctly indicating how they meet all the FHP criteria in the ACE Act. The Partnerships Committee has also been developing an online form for annual FHP project submission and direct entry into the NFHP project tracking database. This form will be a huge time saver for FHPs and Board staff and will standardize and streamline our project tracking while also allowing us to track proposed, but unfunded projects. During this discussion, Chairman Schriever remarked how it is important for FHPs and NFHP to voice what support is needed from the USFWS for us to be the most successful. He hoped to have an open conversation including FHPs about what is needed.

**Governance Committee (10 minutes)**

**Doug Austen**

Doug Austen reported out for the Governance Committee which hosted one meeting before this Board meeting. The committee revised the charge of the committee and will meet monthly until finalizing the foundational guidance documents (e.g. bylaws and/or SOPs) needed by the NFHP Board to ensure compliance with the ACE Act. The committee will utilize legal staff support to guide the development of these documents. The committee also would like to craft an orientation for new Board members, review standing committee charters, and clarify the role of and engagement with Beyond the Pond.

**Policy Committee (10 minutes)**

**Kate Sherman for Tim Schaeffer**

Kate Sherman (staff support for the Policy Committee) reported out on Tim's behalf. The Policy Committee held their first meeting in August and review their charge and primary function. The Committee wants to coordinate Board reporting requirements for Congress and facilitate the full funding of the ACE Act including the scientific and technical assistance funds. The committee would also like to identify recommended amendments to the ACE Act and supplemental funding opportunities in addition to the ACE Act. There was additional discussion about engaging with the



right members in Congress to begin educating members in advance of FHPs being nominated for Congressional designation.

**Communications Committee** (10 minutes)

**Johnny LeCoq**

Johnny LeCoq reported on behalf of the Communications Committee which held their first meeting and discussed how they will function. The committee focused on the intersection of Beyond the Pond and NFHP and wanted to strategically examine the limited capacity of both groups. Johnny raised the importance of communicating stories and streamlining branding that will help NFHP secure more funding from the private sector.

**Executive Committee** (10 minutes)

**Ed Schriever**

The EXCOM has not yet met, but will be made up of the Chairs of all other Committees, the Board Chairman, a Tribal representative (Karen Linnell) and a non-voting Federal member (Steve Guertin). One of the first issues for the EXCOM to tackle will be these questions that have arisen in the previous discussion about Beyond the Pond and to re-establish those relationships.

12:30 **Meeting Wrap Up**

**Board Staff**

- Thank you all for coming!
- Revisit any parking lot items – assign to work groups or Committees.

**Reminders:**

- Board travel reimbursements forms (Ryan)
- Board meets virtually on **Tuesday, November 29, 2022 from 1:00 – 4:30 PM ET**

12:45 **Adjourn**

**Shifting Tides** Given that there have been some recent changes in FHP coordinator positions, we are recirculating the list of FHP coordinators with their emails. Please update your contact lists accordingly. **Highlighted** rows are FHPs who have had or will soon have FHP coordinator changes.

Fish Habitat Partnership	First Name	Last Name	Email Address	Additional contact
Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership	Doug	Nygren	doug.nygren@gmail.com	
California Fish Passage Forum	Alicia	Marrs	aliciamarrs@cafishpassageforum.org	
Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership	Joan	Drinkwin	jdrinkwin@nrccorp.com	
Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership	Todd	Ewing	todd@southeastaquatics.net	scott.robinson@dnr.ga.gov;
Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership	Deborah	Hart	coordinator@sealaskafishhabitat.org	Neil.Stichert@usda.gov
Driftless Area Restoration Effort	Sara	Strassman	Sara.strassman@tu.org	louise_mauldin@fws.gov
Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership				kent.smith@myfwc.com; jcoakley@mafmc.org; pcampfield@asmfc.org
Ohio River Basin Fish Habitat Partnership	Kevin	Haupt	kevin_haupt@fws.gov	LHollingsworth- Segedy@americanrivers.org
Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership	Joseph	Nohner	NohnerJ@michigan.gov	
Fishers and Farmers Partnership for the Upper Mississippi River Basin	Heidi	Keuler	Heidi_Keuler@fws.gov	amy@habitatlacrosse.org (Amy Smith)
Great Plains Fish Habitat Partnership	Steven	Krentz	Steven_Krentz@fws.gov	
Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture	Lori	Maloney	lori.maloney@canaanvi.org	
Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership	Benjamin	Meyer	coordinator@kenaiwatershed.org	
Great Lakes Basin Fish Habitat Partnership	Rick	Westerhof	rick_westerhof@fws.gov	susan_wells@fws.gov
Hawaii Fish Habitat Partnership	Gordon	Smith	gordon_smith@fws.gov	
Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership	Jessica	Speed	jessica.speed@tu.org	
Desert Fish Habitat Partnership	Jennifer	Graves	jennifer_m_graves@fws.gov	kirk_young@fws.gov; ccrookshanks@ndow.org; yvette.paroz@usda.gov
Western Native Trout Initiative	Therese	Thompson	tthompson@westernnativetrout.org	
Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership	Tim	Troll	nmwlandtrust@hotmail.com	
All Alaska Partnerships	Kevin	Keith	kevin.keith@alaska.gov	
All Alaska Partnerships	Jessica	Johnson	jessica.johnson@alaska.gov	christopher@chalkboardllc.com
Pacific Lamprey Fish Habitat Partnership	Alicia	Marrs	alicia@pacifclamprey.org	christina_wang@fws.gov



## DRAFT NFHP Board Member Appointment Process (11/2022 Updated)

### NFHP Governance Committee Proposed Board Member Appointment Annual Timeline

**Note:** Dates each year will be based on the annual Board Meeting schedule. The most important dates to note are:

- January 1
- Fall Board Meeting
- December 31

Est. Date	Milestone/Timeline	Task
January 1	Board Term Start Date	
Dec – Feb	Orientation prior to first new member's first Board Meeting	Conduct orientation for new Board members
Mid-February	Winter Board Meeting	New Board Member's first Board Meeting
Mid-September	A minimum of 60 days prior to the Fall Board Meeting	Board staff updates the Board on the status of all Board seats. The Board chair distributes the open solicitation for all vacant or expiring seats.
End of October	A minimum of 30 days prior to the Fall Board Meeting	Application materials for new Board seats are due to <a href="mailto:info@fishhabitat.org">info@fishhabitat.org</a> .
First week of November		<b><i>The GC (or ad hoc nomination committee) screens applications and organizes package to distribute to the Board.</i></b>
Early November	A minimum of 21 days prior to the Fall Board Meeting	Board staff distributes application materials to the Board for Board member review and consideration.
Late November	Fall Board Meeting (in person)	Board discusses applications for Board seats in Executive Session and votes on Board seats in public session.
December 31	Board Term Expiration Date	

### Additional Explanation on Proposed Appointment Timeline

1. At each Summer Board Meeting:
  - a. Board staff shall provide an update on the status of all Board seats and point out which seats need renewal or replacement at the beginning of the next year.

- b. The Board chair shall distribute an open solicitation for the expiring seat to Board members and post the solicitation, at a minimum, on the NFHP, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) websites. Board staff may also post the solicitation on the American Fisheries Society website, the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society website, and other recommended websites.
    - c. The Board chair shall also conduct targeted outreach to various organizations representative of and relevant to the open or expiring Board seat.
2. At the same time that the Board member seat solicitation occurs, the Board staff will contact the Board member whose term is expiring to ask if they are interested in continuing to fill the Board seat. If they are interested in continuing to serve, they will be considered for the seat.
3. Any new individuals interested in filling the vacant Board seat shall submit a letter of interest and a CV to the Board (via [info@fishhabitat.org](mailto:info@fishhabitat.org)) a minimum of 30 days prior to the Fall Board Meeting. Board members whose terms are expiring and wish to be considered for the open Board seat are not required to submit a letter of interest or a new CV.
4. ***Following the due date application, the Governance Committee, or an ad hoc Nomination Committee, shall review and screen applications using the screening questionnaire.***
5. A minimum of 21 days in advance of the Fall Board meeting, the Board staff will distribute any application packages for the vacant Board seat for Board member review and consideration.
6. At each Fall Board Meeting:
  - a. The Board shall discuss applicants for the expiring Board member seat in Executive Session.
  - b. The Board shall vote in public session to fill the vacant Board seat.
7. Prior to the first Board Meeting attended by new Board members (typically the Winter Board meeting held in January or February), new Board members will be required to attend an orientation session to be held by Board staff and other Board members.



**National Fish Habitat Partnership**  
1100 First Street, NE, Suite 825  
Washington, DC 20002  
Tel: 202/838 3466 ♦  
Web [www.fishhabitat.org](http://www.fishhabitat.org)

The [National Fish Habitat Board \(Board\)](#) is welcoming nominations from organizations or individuals to fill vacant or expired seats on the Board. The Board values the diversity of its members and their respective organizations as it advances our mission to protect, restore, and improve our country’s fish and aquatic communities through [twenty partnerships](#) that foster fish habitat conservation and improve the quality of life for the American people. We are seeking representatives from a variety of sectors, as outlined in the 2020 [America’s Conservation Enhancement Act \(ACE Act\) Section 203\(b\)\(5\)](#), to help the Board implement the vision and requirements of the ACE Act and the [National Fish Habitat Partnership \(NFHP\)](#).

The Board is responsible for carrying out a cooperative nationwide program to conserve (protect, restore, and improve) the habitats of the nation’s marine and freshwater fish populations. The Board is a voluntary association of public and private sector entities that serves as the body overseeing the implementation of Title II of the ACE Act and NFHP’s Action Plan. As outlined in the Action Plan, the Board facilitates coordination of fish habitat conservation efforts through twenty Fish Habitat Partnerships that focus on specific regions, species or habitat types and use an evidence-based, scientific approach to conserve fish habitat within their respective partnership boundaries.

The Board is soliciting nominations for one vacant Board seat, two expired Board terms, and two expiring Board terms representing different sectors as listed in the table below. Please note the different term limits and term expiration dates for each Board seat.

<b>Representative Seat</b>	<b>Term Limit (Years)</b>	<b>Term Expiration Date</b>
Corporate Industry <i>(vacant)</i>	1	December 31, 2023
Recreational Sportfishing Industry <i>(expired)</i>	2	December 31, 2024
Habitat Conservation Organization <i>(expired)</i>	2	December 31, 2024
Habitat Conservation Organization <i>(exp. Feb. 2023)</i>	3	December 31, 2025
Freshwater Recreational Anglers <i>(exp. Feb. 2023)</i>	3	December 31, 2025

Following the expiration of a Board member term, the Board will solicit nominations for a new representative. Existing Board members in the expiring seats are eligible for nomination and re-



election to additional terms and serve until replaced. Members are expected to participate in annual meetings which include, at minimum, two in-person and two virtual meetings along with additional work on Board committees and workgroups that facilitate the success of NFHP. Board members often fund their own travel to meetings, but compensation by NFHP is available.

Individuals interested in filling any of the Board seats listed above should submit a letter of interest and a CV to [info@fishhabitat.org](mailto:info@fishhabitat.org) by close of business **January 13, 2023**. The letter of interest should include a description of interests, experience, and skills relevant to the representative Board seat and necessary to support active participation in and engagement on the Board. Please ensure that you get a confirmation of receipt from the [info@fishhabitat.org](mailto:info@fishhabitat.org) email address. The current Board will review and decide on new Board members in February 2023.

## Draft 2023 NFHP Board Meeting Schedule

= in-person Board meeting  
 = virtual Board meeting

**February 28 – March 2 – in person**

**June 13 - virtual**

**October 12 - virtual**

**December 5-7 – in person**

Timing	Potential Date for NFHP Meeting	Draft Topics to be Covered	Known Conflicts
<b>February/March 2023</b> <b>In-person</b> <b>2.5 day</b>	<b>Tuesday, February 28 –</b> <b>Thursday, March 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee updates               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EXCOM</li> <li>• SDC</li> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Policy</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Communications</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Budget</li> <li>• Board FY24 project selection process</li> <li>• Next NFHP Assessment</li> <li>• Follow up on BIL &amp; priorities (work groups)</li> <li>• NFHP Action Plan</li> <li>• FHP session</li> </ul>	WAFWA Winter Meeting January 4-10  AFS Southern Division Meeting February 1-5  AFS North Central Division Meeting February 12-15  Federal Fisheries Summit February 21-24  RBFF Marketing Workshop February 27- March 1  Oregon AFS Meeting February 27 - March 3  North American Wildlife and Natural Resource Conference and AFWA Meeting March 20-24  NEAFWA April 30-May 2, 2023
<b>June 2023</b> <b>Virtual</b> <b>Half day</b>	<b>Tuesday, June 13</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee updates               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EXCOM</li> <li>• SDC</li> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Policy</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Communications</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Approve FHP FY24 project list for submission to Secretary of Interior</li> <li>• FHP session</li> </ul>	AFS Western Division May 7-11  MAFWA Meeting late June 2023 in WI  WAFWA Summer Meeting July 9-14, 2023

<p><b>September Virtual Half day</b></p>	<p><b>Tuesday, September 12</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee updates             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EXCOM</li> <li>• SDC</li> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Policy</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Communications</li> </ul> </li> <li>• NCPs – any revisions?</li> <li>• Scoring criteria of project submission – finalize project submission for FHP RFPs</li> <li>• FHPs to Congress – Board to discuss submitted FHP applications</li> <li>• IOP</li> <li>• FHP session</li> </ul>	<p>AFS Annual Meeting August 20-24 (Grand Rapids, MI)</p> <p>AFWA Annual Meeting September 23-27 (Calgary)</p> <p>SEAFWA Meeting October 15-18, 2023</p>
<p><b>December In-person 2.5 day</b></p>	<p><b>Tuesday, December 5 – Thursday, December 7</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee work plans for following year:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EXCOM</li> <li>• SDC</li> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Policy</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Communications</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Approve 2023 Annual report</li> <li>• IOP</li> <li>• FHP session</li> <li>• Field trip to FHP project</li> </ul>	



## FHP/USFWS Survey Results

FHPs were surveyed live over a two-week period in early November 2022. The survey included all 19 coordinators of the 20 FHPs and were polled on the five questions below. Questions including time for discussion ran for approximately 20 – 30 minutes. Answers were compiled for final results and no individual FHPs were identified by the answers they provided.

The questions and general responses are as follows:

1) Does this FHP have a USFWS employed coordinator?

Six of the FHPs have FWS employed coordinators although they are only serving as part-time coordinators. The remaining FHPs have hired or contracted coordinators.

2) Does USFWS serve your FHP as a fiscal sponsor? Do you have the ability to act as your own fiscal sponsor or a third party who could act?

There are 11 FHPs where the USFWS serves as the fiscal sponsor. Eight FHPs have a separate fiscal sponsor in place ranging across a number of sources including Fish & Wildlife Agencies or nonprofits with one FHP operating as a 501(c)(3) and a self-operating fiscal sponsor.

3) Do you have a close working relationship with your respective USFWS representative?

This question resulted in a unanimous positive response. All of the FHPs had a good working relationship with the USFWS at both the local and regional levels. The independent FHPs were queried more closely on this question to avoid placing USFWS staff coordinators in any kind of discomfort. The resulting conversations were positive and complimentary of the interactions with the Service.

4) Would you like to have more support from USFWS? In what areas or functions do you need more support?

The large majority FHPs would like more support from USFWS— ranging from staff increase (coordinator \$ increase), admin aid, tech support, travel expenses were mentioned by many FHPs as a problem not covered, better capacity building support, additional FWS updates and involvement through project completion.

Most common requests were for more training in areas such as Grant Solutions, permitting, accounting, and planning and prioritization.

5) Should USFWS have additional dedicated staff to NFHP Board and the FHPs?

There was a unanimous response to this question in the affirmative. The FHPs understand that to attain some of their goals and needs will take a higher level of dedicated staff. There was also a stated concern about overloading existing staff with more demands.

A general response when questioned was keep FWS! Previous system worked well. Noticeably lower FWS involvement after ACE act in place.



**National Fish Habitat Board  
INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A  
FISH HABITAT PARTNERSHIP APPLICATION**

The form for submitting a Fish Habitat Partnership application begins on the third page. If you have questions about these instructions or the form, please contact Alex Atkinson at 301-427-8710 or [alex.atkinson@noaa.gov](mailto:alex.atkinson@noaa.gov).

Applications must be submitted by the deadline established by the National Fish Habitat Board. Contact Alex Atkinson for submission deadline(s).

Submit an **electronic copy** of the completed application and all supporting materials via a *(to be determined)* web-based file sharing method.

- Assign a file name that clearly identifies the Partnership the application pertains to. For example, WNTI 2023.pdf. If multiple files are submitted as part of the application, assign file names that clearly identify the Partnership and section(s) and/or subsection(s) of the application (as provided below) the file pertains to. For example, WNTI 2023 Sections 1-3.pdf.
- Provide files in both PDF format and Microsoft Word format.

Do not exceed the specified maximum length for each section of narrative.

## America's Conservation Enhancement Act (2020) - Section 204. Fish Habitat Partnerships

*Note: This section of the ACE Act includes the purposes, criteria, and requirements for a Fish Habitat Partnership and Partnerships should be familiar with this section relative to completing this application.*

(a) Authority to Recommend. The Board may recommend to Congress the designation of Fish Habitat Partnerships in accordance with this section.

(b) Purposes. The purposes of a Partnership shall be (1) to work with other regional habitat conservation programs to promote cooperation and coordination to enhance fish populations and fish habitats; (2) to engage local and regional communities to build support for fish habitat conservation; (3) to involve diverse groups of public and private partners; (4) to develop collaboratively a strategic vision and achievable implementation plan that is scientifically sound; (5) to leverage funding from sources that support local and regional partnerships; (6) to use adaptive management principles, including evaluation of project success and functionality; (7) to develop appropriate local or regional habitat evaluation and assessment measures and criteria that are compatible with national habitat condition measures; and (8) to implement local and regional priority projects that improve conditions for fish and fish habitat.

(c) Criteria for Designation. An entity seeking to be designated by Congress as a Partnership shall— (1) submit to the Board an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Board may reasonably require; and (2) demonstrate to the Board that the entity has— (A) a focus on promoting the health of important fish and fish habitats; (B) an ability to coordinate the implementation of priority projects that support the goals and national priorities set by the Board that are within the Partnership boundary; (C) a self-governance structure that supports the implementation of strategic priorities for fish habitat; (D) the ability to develop local and regional relationships with a broad range of entities to further strategic priorities for fish and fish habitat; (E) a strategic plan that details required investments for fish habitat conservation that addresses the strategic fish habitat priorities of the Partnership and supports and meets the strategic priorities of the Board; (F) the ability to develop and implement fish habitat conservation projects that address strategic priorities of the Partnership and the Board; and (G) the ability to develop fish habitat conservation priorities based on sound science and data, the ability to measure the effectiveness of fish habitat projects of the Partnership, and a clear plan as to how Partnership science and data components will be integrated with the overall Board science and data effort.

(d) Requirements for recommendation to Congress. The Board may recommend to Congress for designation an application for a Partnership submitted under subsection (c) if the Board determines that the applicant— (1) meets the criteria described in subsection (c)(2); (2) identifies representatives to provide support and technical assistance to the Partnership from a diverse group of public and private partners, which may include State or local governments, nonprofit entities, Indian Tribes, and private individuals, that are focused on conservation of fish habitats to achieve results across jurisdictional boundaries on public and private land; (3) is organized to promote the health of important fish species and important fish habitats, including reservoirs, natural lakes, coastal and marine environments, coral reefs, and estuaries; (4) identifies strategic fish and fish habitat priorities for the Partnership area in the form of geographical focus areas or key stressors or impairments to facilitate strategic planning and decision making; (5) is able to address issues and priorities on a nationally significant scale; (6) includes a governance structure that— (A) reflects the range of all partners; and (B) promotes joint strategic planning and decision making by the applicant; (7) demonstrates completion of, or significant progress toward the development of, a strategic plan to address declines in fish populations, rather than simply treating symptoms, in accordance with the goals and national priorities established by the Board; and (8) promotes collaboration in developing a strategic vision and implementation program that is scientifically sound and achievable.



**National Fish Habitat Board  
FISH HABITAT PARTNERSHIP APPLICATION  
AND EVALUATION FORM**

Date:

**PARTNERSHIP INFORMATION**

Partnership Name:

Primary Contact (address, email, and phone):

Partnership web site:

Mission/Vision statement:

**HISTORY** (250 word maximum)

*Note: Provide a brief background on the Partnership.*

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** (500 word maximum)

*Note: Provide a summary of this application by briefly restating the high point(s) of each section.*



**SECTION 1. Demonstrate how your Fish Habitat Partnership promotes the health of important fish and fish habitats.** (up to 1000 words)

*Note: Promote is broadly interpreted here to include on-the-ground restoration, maintenance, construction, conservation, or preservation of fish or fish habitats, as well as outreach, education, and research regarding Partnership projects, fish or fish habitat issues, the National Fish Habitat Partnership, or Board's national priorities.*

*Note: Throughout this application the term project is intended to mean discrete or individual projects solicited by the Partnership, as opposed to a group of projects presented as a package to the Board on an annual basis.*

- a. Describe the focus or purpose around which your Partnership is organized. For example – reservoirs, natural lakes, coastal and marine environments, coral reefs, estuaries, native species, etc.
- b. Describe how the geographic boundaries of your partnership were determined and why these boundaries are the most appropriate to achieve effective regional prioritization of habitat needs and to demonstrate success in strategically addressing those needs.
- c. Provide the goals, objectives, and priorities of your Partnership and describe how these promote fish and fish habitats.
- d. Describe how you solicit and select priority fish or fish habitat projects.
- e. Describe the type and amount of outreach/education your Partnership conducts or proposes to conduct.
- f. Provide summary statistics demonstrating numbers and types of fish or fish habitat projects implemented over the history of your Partnership (use provided spreadsheet for reporting). Discuss how this demonstrates the capacity of your Partnership to conduct fish and fish habitat work moving forward.
- g. Provide a brief description of at least two example projects your Partnership has conducted in the recent past that demonstrates your capacity to successfully implement projects that promote the health of important fish or fish habitats.

**SECTION 2. Demonstrate your Fish Habitat Partnership's ability to coordinate the implementation of priority projects that support the goals and national priorities set by the Board that are within your geographic boundary.** (up to 1000 words)

*Note: Coordinate is interpreted here to include the activities necessary to solicit, review, prioritize, select, contract (with Partnership or partner acting on Partnership behalf), inspect, monitor, and report on fish habitats projects; it does not include those activities required to implement or conduct the project.*

- a. Describe the organizational structure of your Partnership and the duties and responsibilities of each position and organizational layer, individually and/or collectively.

- b. Describe how your Partnership's priorities that guide project solicitation and selection (for funding) are established and support the national priorities set by the Board.
- c. Describe how project implementation is coordinated by your Partnership (i.e., how does the Partnership itself or key partners take care of the steps – e.g., *contracting, oversight, review and inspection, fund disbursement* – necessary for project implementation to occur).
- d. Discuss whether your Partnership's boundaries overlap with other Fish Habitat Partnerships, and if so, how the overlapping Partnerships differentiate and/or coordinate/collaborate on fish and fish habitat projects across Partnerships.

**SECTION 3. Demonstrate a self-governance structure that supports the implementation of strategic priorities for fish habitat.** (up to 1000 words)

*Note: Self-governance is broadly interpreted here to include governing activities conducted by the Partnership itself or activities conducted by partners in support of the Partnership (e.g., support from US Fish and Wildlife Service can be part of the governance structure).*

*Note: General organizational structure of the Partnership was addressed in Section 2(a) and does not need to be restated here.*

- a. Describe the governance structure and the decision-making protocol(s) used by your Partnership's management board and subsidiary committees (e.g., consensus, majority vote).
- b. Describe how your Partnership conducts fiscal administration including your ability to accept, manage, track, disburse, and report on federal and state grant income.
- c. How does your Partnership governance structure promote joint strategic planning and decision-making among Partnerships or partners?
- d. Provide copies of your Partnership's governance documents (e.g., charter, memorandum of understanding, other). *Note: Strategic Plan is addressed in Section 5 below.*

**SECTION 4. Demonstrate your Partnership's ability to develop local and regional relationships with a broad range of entities to further strategic priorities for fish and fish habitat.** (up to 1000 words)

*Note: Entities and partners are terms used interchangeably throughout this application and refer to the collection of agencies, organizations, municipalities, individuals, governments, etc. that support and work with a Partnership.*

*Note: We understand you may have many different partners and providing an exhaustive summary of those entities may be outside the scope this Section. Please focus on "key" partners that demonstrate the breadth and depth of your Partnership's local and regional relationships.*

- a. Describe how your Partnership has reached out and engaged with partners on fish

- and fish habitat priorities and projects across the geographical extent of the Partnership, especially touching on key state and federal resource agencies, tribal entities, local communities, landowners, or private organizations.
- b. Describe your Partnership's key partners' associations and their interest/mission/philosophy in conserving fish and fish habitat, as well as their role in your Partnership's governance or operation, if any.
  - c. Provide an estimate of the overall number of partners your Partnership has worked with. If available provide a link to or a list of these entities (*not required*).
  - d. Provide at least two examples of how your Partnership has worked to bring varied partners together that resulted in improved or positive outcomes for fish and fish habitat.
  - e. Discuss how your Partnership's governance structure promotes joint strategic planning, establishment of Partnership priorities, project selection, and decision-making among the partners.
  - f. Describe the procedures in place for communicating with your partners and for recruiting additional partners.
  - g. Provide copies of letters and/or other documentation indicating support and commitment to your Partnership by key partners (e.g., federal or state agencies, Native American governments), regional Associations of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, or similar entities.

**SECTION 5. Development of a strategic plan that details required investments for habitat conservation that addresses the strategic fish habitat priorities of your Partnership and also supports and meets the strategic priorities of the Board.** (up to 1000 words)

- a. Describe the current status of your Partnership's strategic plan and provide either an electronic link or copy of the plan with this application.
- b. Describe the process used to identify your Partnership's strategic priorities.
- c. Summarize the strategic priorities of your partnership (e.g., priority focal areas, key stressors, or impairments).
- d. Describe how your strategic plan/priorities are used to solicit and select fish habitat conservation projects and the process for finalizing the prioritized list of projects for submission to the NFHP Board.
- e. Demonstrate that your Partnership's strategic plan addresses the following (*reference to specific sections of or language in Partnership's strategic plan is adequate*):
  - i. includes specific, measurable, achievable, time-bound goals and objectives;
  - ii. supports the national priorities established by the Board;
  - iii. connects to one or more goals and objectives of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan;

- iv. identifies desired outcomes in terms of habitat conditions and/or fish and aquatic community conditions;
- v. identifies strategic priorities in the form of geographic focus areas or key stressors or impairments, as examples;
- vi. connects priorities of the Partnership to state wildlife action plans, watershed plans, recovery plans, land and water use plans, or other regional-scale plans;
- vii. identifies fish and fish habitat information gaps and priorities for filling gaps; and
- viii. identifies conservation actions needed to address strategic priorities and achieve desired outcomes.

**SECTION 6. Demonstrate your Partnership’s ability to develop and implement fish habitat conservation projects that address strategic priorities of your Partnership and the Board.**

*Note: The Board is satisfied that this criterion as defined in the ACE Act has been fully and sufficiently addressed in Sections 1-5, and 7 of this application. Specifically, Sections 1,2, and 5 have addressed the Partnerships ability to develop and implement fish and fish habitat projects consistent with the strategic priorities of the Partnership and the Board.*


**SECTION 7. Demonstrate your Partnership’s ability to develop fish habitat conservation priorities based on sound science and data, measure the effectiveness of fish habitat projects, and a clear plan as to how the Partnership’s science and data components will be integrated with the Board’s science and data efforts. (up to 1000 words)**

- a. Describe how scientific information and data are used to establish your Partnership’s priorities, including how lessons learned (past project successes and failures) or information gaps are considered when developing or updating the Partnership’s priorities and project solicitations.
- b. Explain how your Partnership has organized itself and its information systems to make use of partners’ data and other data to help set habitat conservation priorities.
- c. Describe your Partnership process for tracking projects and the types of data or metrics that are collected and used by your Partnership to assess project success, measure project effectiveness (e.g., type and amount of fish habitat impacted), and report progress.
- d. With examples, describe resources and capabilities that partner organizations have made available to your Partnership to measure baseline conditions and progress in habitat conservation.
- e. Describe how your Partnership will link its assessment activities to the



*Framework for Assessing the Nation's Fish Habitat.*

- f. Describe the technical and financial resources your Partnership has to support its assessment work.
- g. Provide documentation or examples of how your Partnership manages information that is provided by partners or other sources.
- h. Provide documentation of resource assessments conducted by your Partnership.

					
For Federal Fiscal Year:	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of projects submitted for review in response to Partnership RFP					
Priority projects selected for potential funding by Partnership					
Priority projects that received NFHP funding					
Projects funded by Partnership but not with NFHP funding					
Priority projects that did not receive funding from Partnership					
Projects coordinated (administered in some way) but not funded by Partnership					
Projects endorsed (but not coordinated or solicited) by Partnership					
Overall Partnership budget (staff, contracts, project support, etc.)					
NFHP funds received					
NFHP funds expended on coordination and administration					
NFHP funds expended on project support					
Total match dollars for NFHP funded projects					
Non-NFHP funds directly raised by Partnership					
Non-NFHP funds raised by Partnership dedicated to project implementation					
Non-NFHP funds raised by Partnership dedicated to administration and coordination					







## Title: Science and Data Committee Report

### Desired Outcomes:

- **Board Direction** for the 2025 National Fish Habitat Assessment.
- **Board Understanding** of the status of the Project Tracking Database System.
- **Board Understanding** of SDC work on metrics for the current National Conservation Priorities.

### 2025 National Fish Habitat Assessment Scoping

Overview: The ACE Act requires that the Board report to Congress on the condition of the nation's aquatic habitat by 2025 and to fill the gaps in the National Fish Habitat Assessment (Assessment). One gap specifically noted in the ACE Act is the omission of socioeconomic data. To accomplish this reporting task, the Board's desired Assessment needs to be fully scoped by early 2023. The SDC started this process at the June Board meeting with an overview of existing assessment products and an associated survey. Further background was also provided, and available, in the June Board Meeting Book. Currently a reevaluation of FHP data products is being planned for early 2023 to understand availability and compatibility of regional efforts into future national Assessments. Progress on this effort is dependent on outcomes and direction received from the Board during assessment discussions in this meeting. At this meeting, the SDC requests Board direction on what is desired and expected from the 2025 National Fish Habitat Assessment.

*Key Direction Needed from the Board.* To properly design the 2025 Assessment, the SDC still needs Board direction on the following questions:

- **Who will be the audience for the new 2025 Assessment and how broad does the Board want the audience to be?** This information will inform the SDC on how many output information layers should be included along with the detail of the information.
- **What messages does the Board want to convey from the Assessment?** For example, does the Board want to show the current state of the nation's aquatic habitat using consistently measured fish and habitat data? Does it just want to just show FHP scale assessment information for all 20 FHPs? Information from this question will assist the SDC in scoping the needed product.
- **Does the Board want a similar product to the 2015 Assessment or something else? If something else, what would the Board want as a final product?** This information will help the SDC scale and scope the Assessment product.
- **What datasets does the Board want included in the 2025 assessment?** This information will be used to determine what data may be available to meet the Board direction in this area.

- **What socioeconomic datasets does the Board want included in the 2025 assessment?**  
This information will be used to determine what data may be available to meet the Board direction in this area.
- **Does the Board want the 2025 Assessment to try to include all FHP assessment products?** Information from this question will help scope the SDC determination of the feasibility of this approach. This was not done in previous Assessments due to the incompatibility of the FHP assessments across the nation and their inherit data gaps. This can be examined/scoped again if desired by the Board.

The Board will be provided an update on the assessment survey results prior to the meeting that requested input on the above questions. The current survey results will be briefly reviewed at the Board meeting and additional input on each question will be requested. These data will be vital to the proper scoping of the 2025 Assessment.

## **Project Tracking Data System Update**

### Project Tracking System Priorities and Progress

- A new draft data entry form using ESRI Survey123 Connect has been completed
  - FHP Coordinators and NFHP Staff have reviewed and tested the new form
  - NFHP Project Tracking system team is making updates to the online system based on feedback
  - Online form will be finalized in early December
- Next tasks
  - Database documentation and a user manual development
  - Schedule FHP Coordinator training for new data entry system in February and March
  - Develop key data summary reports

## **National Conservation Priorities Metric Development**

At the September Board Meeting, the SDC agreed to develop a set of potential metrics to measure success under each approved NCP. The SDC developed a draft set of metrics by the end of October that were discussed, reviewed, and edited at the November 9<sup>th</sup> SDC meeting. This menu of NCP measurement options, attached to this report, was sent to the FHPs for their review and comment on November 14. A report on the progress concerning the NCP measurement metric menu will be made at the November Board meeting and Board comments on the draft list is requested.



**Board Action: Seeking Board approval of Communications Strategy elements and future work of committee**

## Communications Strategy and Background

### Communications Committee Charge:

Develops guidelines and oversees consistent, effective communication aligned with the NFHP mission and brand. Maintains the brand standards and defines the voice and tone of the organization. This committee acts as the voice of the organization and the messages it sends influences the organization's most important asset: its reputation. Perceptions of its reputation affect the organization's ability to attract funding and enhance its influence.

### Communications Committee Activities:

- Establish/review a communications/branding plan with key messages, logo/brand guidelines, communication channels.
- Write the annual NFHP report, e-newsletters, press releases.
- Develop other media/stories as possible.
- Develop graphics/dashboards/etc. that encapsulate NFHP successes for strategic audiences.
- Waters to Watch and other national or regional campaigns.
- Develop talking points for Board members.
- Oversee communications program staff to ensure website and other platforms are accurate, updated, and reflect the organization's communications goals and objectives.

**Committee Members:** John LeCoq (Chair), Steve Guertin, Pat Rivers, Gene Gilliland, Chris Cantrell

**Goal of the Communications Strategy:** To raise the level of awareness by multiple partners, including Fish Habitat Partnerships and associated partners, members of the Board and their organizations, Congress and interested members of the public to the conservation projects and benefits of the National Fish Habitat Partnership both regionally and nationally.

**The primary purpose of the Communications Committee is as follows:**

- **Serve in an advisory capacity to the National Fish Habitat Board and its staff, particularly in identifying outreach opportunities.** Board members of the committee have different levels of expertise in marketing, conservation communications, and familiarity of working with broad partnerships.
- **Advance the work of Fish Habitat Partnerships.** The committee recognizes the value of promoting conservation success stories of Fish Habitat Partnerships, the work units of the National Fish Habitat Partnership. Communications should focus on the work of the Fish Habitat Partnerships and how local conservation projects directly address National Fish Habitat Action Plan objectives. Input by the Fish Habitat Partnerships is critical to make this function of the committee a reality.

- **Develop communications materials to keep partners informed, foster mutually beneficial relationships, and attract new supporters for NFHP.** The committee will develop communication materials that are cohesive and complementary in message, design, and delivery to have the greatest impact for advancement of the work of the National Fish Habitat Partnership.
- **Maintain and fulfill a list of outputs for the work of the communications committee and Fish Habitat Partnerships.** A list of outputs will be maintained and built-upon to show measurable results, ex: distribution of materials, website and social media analytics for National Fish Habitat Partnership platforms. Growing the National Fish Habitat Partnership subscriber newsletter will be viewed as an important outcome.
- **Foster partnerships with conservation organizations and conservation-minded businesses.** The committee will work to build mutually beneficial relationships with organizations aimed at enhancing the brand and recognition of the National Fish Habitat Partnership.

## Communication Channels

National Fish Habitat Partnership communications will target the following primary networks to build awareness, support, engagement, advocacy, and action in various forms. The committee will focus efforts on these audiences to help amplify and leverage outreach of the networks to reach out to their constituencies and local groups.

### (Internal):

Internal communications is important to NFHP to and is the audience most important for setting the tone and to ensure consistency in messaging across and throughout the partnership.

### **National Fish Habitat Board**

Communications will promote the Board's leadership, coordination, and facilitation role, and support the Board in serving as ambassadors and influential advocates for the National Fish Habitat Partnership in policy arenas.

### **Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and State Agencies**

Communications will support the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in serving as the main conduit for communications with state fish and wildlife agencies. Communications also will support the association's role in assisting states align priorities and resources for Fish Habitat Partnerships. The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies serves as a direct connect to State Fish and Wildlife Agency Directors and other related staff contacts that are critical to inform and seek input from on the work of the Partnership.

### **Fish Habitat Partnerships**

Developing communications that strategically illustrate what the National Fish Habitat Partnership is all about in compelling ways is one of the most important contributions the committee can make. The fish habitat conservation projects are the marketable force for communications, rather than the Action Plan. More visibility and emphasis on Fish Habitat Partnerships through website updates and media outreach will be a key to growing a community



of support for future projects and assist in obtaining future sustainable funding for partnerships and their projects.

#### (External):

Broader visibility through the media will help grow the community of support for the National Fish Habitat Partnership and shine a light on the work of Fish Habitat Partnerships, as well as influence future policy and investments significantly. The “10 Waters to Watch” campaign is the most significant element of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan to date to receive media attention. Building upon this attention and coordinating future site visits when possible, with media outlets and policy makers, will help raise awareness of the Partnership and Action Plan, as well as the Fish Habitat Partnerships.

#### Social Media Audience

The National Fish Habitat Partnership currently has a small social media presence on Facebook and LinkedIn. Working to expand our reach in these mediums could help bring additional partner coalition members into the fold in support of the National Partnership and will at a minimum serve as a forum to relay stories about the good work of the Partnerships under the guidance of the Action Plan. Staying current with these mediums will be important for us to stay on the cutting edge of social media fronts.

#### Trade Shows/Meeting Exhibits

Maintaining a presence among our constituents, by having displays at Trade shows and meetings across the country will help advance the work and reach of the National Fish Habitat Partnership. Whenever possible we should work to get out in front of these audiences to help grow our community of support.

#### NFHP Newsletter Subscribers

The Partner Coalition will serve as tool when applicable as an outlet for information sharing as well as spreading the word of NFHP in a grass roots manner.

#### Communications Tools

##### **WEBSITE**

The [www.fishhabitat.org](http://www.fishhabitat.org) webpage is in the process of its second revision and is the most critical component of National Fish Habitat Partnership communications as the main source of information. The website builds upon and houses all of the communications documents for the Partnership. In the technologically savvy world that is a reality today our website needs to be direct and succinct to get our message and is our main vehicle for communication.

There is a need to clarify the working parts of the National Fish Habitat Partnership in an understandable way. The Partnership is built upon the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, which is at the core. The National Fish Habitat Board oversees the work of the Plan and Fish Habitat Partnerships as well as establishing policies for the Partnership. The National Fish Habitat Partnerships are the working units of the National Partnership, striving to make a significant difference through on-the-ground conservation actions that protect, restore and enhance fish

habitat at a landscape scale.

## E-MAIL NEWSLETTERS

E-mail newsletters are another source of communication and are the chief outreach tool for maintaining contact with our Partner Coalition. Newsletters are the most succinct way to reach out to this audience and inform them about Fish Habitat Partnership news both locally and nationally.

## ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS

With the *National Fish Habitat Action Plan*, codified by [Title II of America's Conservation Enhancement Act \(PL 116-188\)](#) (ACE Act) in 2020, the National Fish Habitat Partnership is required to submit a report to Congress Annually in February. This report includes conservation objectives met in the prior year and the progress the Board is making in meeting national conservation priorities in implementing the requirements of the ACE Act.

### Future Investment for Communications

The National Fish Habitat Partnership has successfully been awarded a grant beginning in 2023. The grant is for \$176,400.00 and will come from through the Multistate Conservation Grant. Funding in the Multistate Conservation Grant Program comes from Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration funding (WSFR) through the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Funding elements of the grant related to communications are listed below. The communications committee will solicit workgroup members to plan how to best implement these funds to meet our needs collectively through contracting deliverables.

Website Development Contract - \$40,000  
Communications templates and fact sheets - \$10,000  
ESRI Storymap - \$8,000  
Map Development - \$5,000  
Video Contract - \$15,000

## NFHP Partnerships Committee

### Members:

- Jessica Speed
- Heidi Keuler
- Deborah Hart
- Lori Maloney
- Carter Kruse
- Jeff Boxrucker
- Alicia Marrs
- Therese Thompson (*co-chair*)
- Bryan Moore (*co-chair*)
- Alicia Marrs
- Lisa Havel
- Joe Nohner
- Ted Eischeid
- Karen Linnell
- Joe Slaughter
- Stephen Perry
- Stan Allen (*co-chair*)
- Alex Atkinson (*Board staff support*)

## FHP Congressional Designation Process

### Background:

The Partnerships Committee, plus several Board members who expressed interest in developing this process, have been meeting to discuss and develop recommendations for how the FHPs will approach applying for Congressional designation. During the initial formation of NFHP, there was an application process for all new FHPs seeking recognition by the Board. The Committee has started a crosswalk between the ACE Act requirements and criteria and the former FHP application documents and guidance. The Committee is in the process of revising the application process and guidance documents to incorporate all the FHP criteria specified by the ACE Act. The Committee has also focused discussions on the timing and strategy by which FHPs will seek Congressional designation. The ACE Act, language below, requires that FHPs seek Congressional designation no later than October 30, 2025 in order to continue to receive Federal funds.

### ACE Act Language re: Congressional Designation:

(1) DESIGNATION REVIEW.—Not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, any partnership receiving Federal funds as of the date of enactment of this Act shall be subject to a designation review by Congress in which Congress shall have the opportunity to designate the partnership under subsection (f).

(2) INELIGIBILITY FOR FEDERAL FUNDS.—A partnership referred to in paragraph (1) that Congress does not designate as described in that paragraph shall be ineligible to receive Federal funds under this title.

**Proposed Process & Timeline for FHP Application for Designation**

<b>Timing</b>	<b>Task</b>
Feb/Mar 2023	Revised NFHP Action Plan approved by Board.
By August 1, 2023	All FHPs complete application & 1-pager and submit to the Board for review (prior to entering the RFP process).
April 2023?	FHP application form is completed, finalized and shared with FHPs.
Fall 2023 Board Meeting	Board reviews the FHP applications and discusses at the Board meeting.
Early 2024 Board Meeting	Board votes on whether or not to advance FHP application packages to Congress.
By Summer 2024	Staff assists Partnerships Committee with package assembly for submission to Congress

**Feedback & Next Steps**

- All FHPs were asked for their feedback on the draft application by November 14.
- We received feedback from 5 FHPs and we are still working to synthesize all of the feedback and incorporate it into the application.
- Small team will meet again in early December to further revise the application.
- Board will vote on final application at February 2023 meeting.

**NFHP Action Plan**

- Action Plan work group held their first meeting on November 9<sup>th</sup> (7 attendees).
- Members: Chris Moore, Steve Perry, Stan Allen, Adam Ringia, Anne Kinsinger, Pat Rivers, Board staff
- Group reviewed the history of the AP, connection to FHP Congressional designation and discussed revisions they'd like to see.
- Themes of group discussion included:
  - Business plan vs. strategic plan
  - Support for FHP vignettes that can rotate over time
  - Support for keeping plan concise and in plain language (possibly developing a shorter and longer version for using with different audiences)
  - A need to identify the AP's key purpose and target audience before continuing with revisions
- Group will meet again in early December.

## **FY24 FHP Accomplishment Reports & Project Submission**

- Board staff is simplifying the annual FHP accomplishment report that is to be submitted to the Board by March 31, 2023.
- The goal of this revision is to ensure all written, narrative material supplied by FHPs adds value for Board member reviewers to their spreadsheet of proposed projects and is focused on Board information needs.
- This will be the first year that FHPs will submit their projects via the online database form that Kate Sherman has been working on and testing out with FHPs. We hope that this will greatly reduce burden on FHPs, staff, and Board member reviewers in this task and future reporting tasks.



January 31, 2022

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

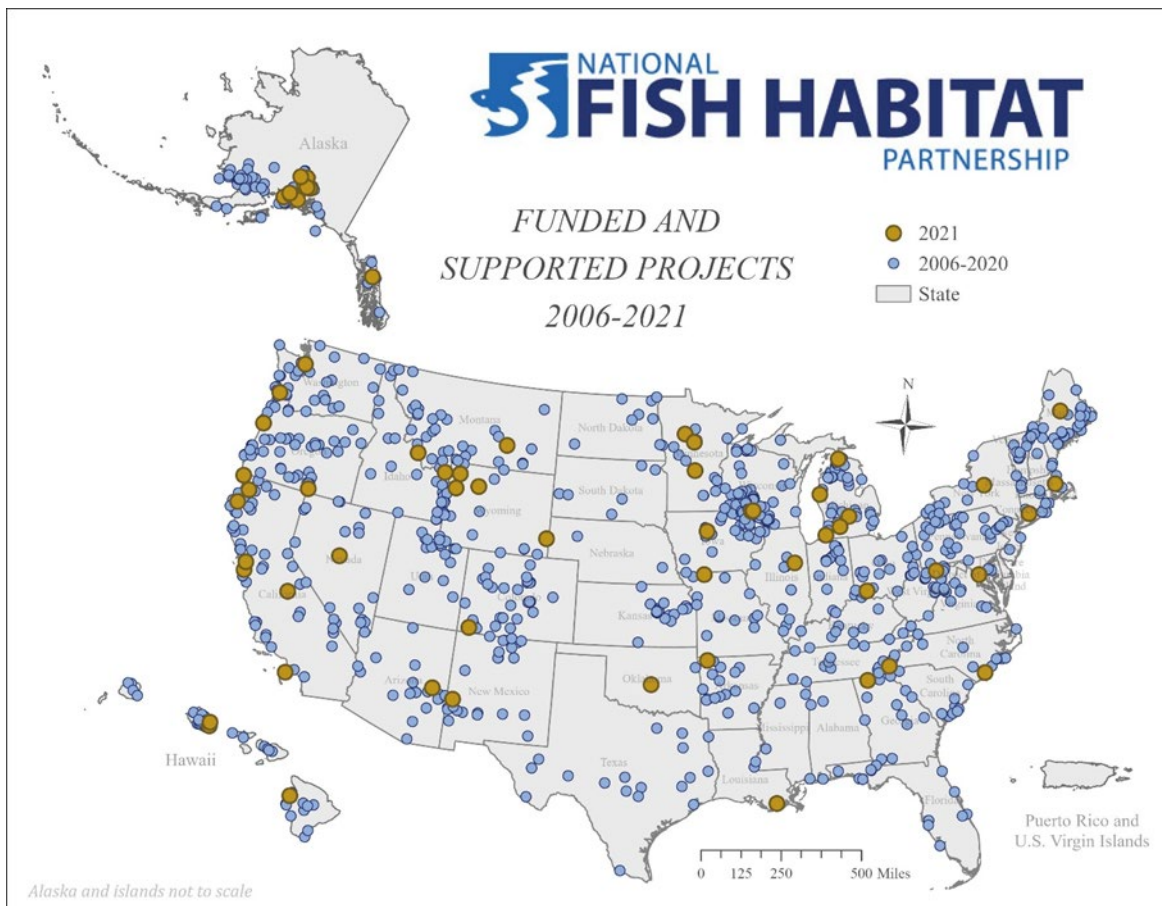


Figure 1 - NFHP funded and supported projects implemented across the United States from 2006 - present.

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



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

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

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

National Fish Habitat Board Chairman

Attachments:

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

**BOBBY WILSON**

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

**JOE SLAUGHTER**

Natural Resource Manager, Georgia Power (Corporate  
Industry Representative)

**JESSE TRUSHENSKI**

Chief Science Officer, Riverence (Agriculture  
Representative)

**CHRIS CANTRELL**

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

**STEVE GUERTIN**

Deputy Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**DOUG BOYD**

Sport Fishing & Boating Partnership Council

**MIKE LEONARD**

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

**SAM RAUCH**

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

**ED SCHRIEVER**

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

**JOHN LECOQ**

CEO, Fishpond USA (Corporate Industry  
Representative)

**CARTER KRUSE**

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

**STAN ALLEN**

Sr Program Manager, Pacific States Marine Fisheries  
Commission

**ANNE KINSINGER**

Associate Director, Ecosystems, U.S. Geological  
Survey

**CHRISTY PLUMER**

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

**CHRIS MOORE**

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

**BARNIE GYANT**

Associate Deputy Chief, USDA Forest Service

**STEVE PERRY**

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

**TED EISCHEID**

Planner, Matanuska-Susitna Borough, AK (Local  
Government Representative)

**GENE GILLILAND**

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

**ALISON BOWDEN**

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

**DOUG AUSTEN**

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

**TIM SCHAEFFER**

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

**DOUG NYGREN**

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

**BRYAN MOORE**

Chief Intergovernmental Officer, Trout Unlimited  
(Habitat Conservation Organization)

Figure 2 – National Fish Habitat Board Membership

**Attachment 1 – Existing 20 Fish Habitat Partnerships (in alphabetical order)****Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership** (*Board recognized March, 2009*)

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

<http://www.atlanticfishhabitat.org/>

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

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

<http://www.cafishpassageforum.org>

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

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

<http://www.desertfhp.org/>

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

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

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





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

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

<http://easternbrooktrout.org>

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

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

<http://fishersandfarmers.org/>

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

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

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

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

<http://www.prairiefish.org>



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

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

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

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

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

<http://www.kenaifishpartnership.org/>

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

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

<http://www.matsusalmon.org/>



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

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

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

<http://www.midwestglaciallakes.org/>

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

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

<https://orbfhp.org/>

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

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

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



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

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

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

<http://www.pacificfishhabitat.org/>

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

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

<http://www.friendsofreservoirs.com/>

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

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

<http://www.seakfhp.org/>



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

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

<http://southeastaquatics.net/>

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

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

<http://southwestsalmon.org/>

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

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

<http://www.westernnativetrout.org>



## Attachment 2 – Selection of 2021 NFHP Project Photos & Descriptions



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

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



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

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





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

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



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

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



## NFHP Governance Committee

### Bylaws

- The Governance Committee (GC) met with attorneys on October 21, 2022. Lane Kisonak (AFWA Attorney), Larry Mellinger (DOI Solicitor), Doug Austen, Sam Rauch, Chris Moore, Alex Atkinson, Ryan Roberts, and Shannon Boyle attended. Keith Hagg (NOAA General Counsel) was added to the team following the October meeting.
- The attorney team will provide support to NFHP and the GC as appropriate.

### Outstanding Tasks

- The GC shall develop and present a list of questions regarding the relationship between NFHP and Beyond the Pond to the attorney team for review and advisement. Outcomes will be presented to the Board.
- The GC shall draft bylaws/SOPs for review by the attorney team. Following the attorney team's input, the GC will propose bylaws/procedures to the Board for review, discussion, input, and eventual adoption.

### Board Solicitation

Please see the attached *DRAFT NFHP Board Member Appointment Process (Updated 11/2022)* for the proposed changes to the process discussed at the June 2022 Board Meeting. Additional notes on the Board solicitation process are included below.

### 2022 Ad hoc Board Seat Solicitation Process

- The GC recommends conducting an ad hoc solicitation process to fill the vacant, expired, or expiring (as of February 2023) seats:
  - Seats that are currently expired or have been retired:
    - Mike Leonard – Sportfishing Industry
    - Joe Slaughter – Corporate Industry
    - Bryan Moore – Habitat Conservation Organization
  - Seats that are expiring in February 2023:
    - Allison Bowden – Habitat Conservation Organization
    - Gene Gilliland – Freshwater Recreational Angling

### Board Solicitation Letter

- The GC developed and finalized a letter (see attached) to solicit for the five vacant, expiring (as of February 2023), or expired Board seats.



- Applications are due to [info@fishhabitat.org](mailto:info@fishhabitat.org) by January 13, 2023.
- This letter can be adjusted in future years to solicit for the appropriate seats.
- New terms will be assigned such that the original staggered terms are maintained – eventually, all seats will be 3 years.

#### Posting the Solicitation Letter

- Following the Board Meeting, the GC will post the solicitation letter to FWS, NMFS, and NFHP websites.
- Following the official posting on FWS, NMFS, and NFHP websites, the GC will conduct targeted outreach to various organizations relevant to the open Board seat.
  - Targeted outreach would likely be a letter to organizations from the Board Chair notifying the organization of the open seat.
  - AFWA has a list of organizations to start with. GC discussed other potential organizations such as the American Petroleum Institute, Electric Power Research Institute, and other companies such as Coca-Cola, Ford, GM, mining companies, oil companies, etc.

#### Applications and Board Voting

- The GC still needs to finalize some precise details of this ad hoc process.
  - Following the January 13, 2023 due date, the GC, or an ad hoc Nomination Committee, will review and screen applications before distributing application package to Board Members for review and consideration.
  - Discussion and voting, as outlined in the attached *DRAFT NFHP Board Member Appointment Process (Updated 11/2022)*, will likely occur at the first Board Meeting of 2023.

#### Annual Board Seat Solicitation Process

- As currently scheduled, multiple expiration dates per year (some expiring in February, some in November) would require the Board to solicit for and select Board members twice a year, likely resulting in an excessive workload. The GC is recommending a standard expiration date for all Board terms to facilitate ease of solicitation and selection once a year.
  - Expires: December 31
  - Starts: January 1
- The annual appointment process, to begin in September 2023, is outlined in the attached *DRAFT NFHP Board Member Appointment Process (Updated 11/2022)*.

## NFHP Board Vice Chair Position

The GC recommends that the NFHP Board nominate and select a NFHP Board Vice Chair to support the duties of the Board Chair.

- The Governance Committee recommends the Vice Chair position be open to all non-Federal members of the Board.
- Procedures for establishing a Vice Chair, once developed, will be included in the in the SOPs as appropriate.



**NFHP Board Policy Committee Update**  
**NFHP Board Meeting; November 29, 2022**

**Desired Outcomes:**

- Board awareness of Policy Committee activities
- Board discussion: annual report feedback and ACE Act amendments

**Update**

- Summary of policy committee suggested updates to report to Congress (report to be submitted to Congress no later than February 1, 2023).
- Bringing FHP's to Congress for reauthorization.
  - *Partnerships committee drafted FHP application.*
- Tracking ongoing clarifications or amendments to the ACE Act for reauthorization.
- Funding updates.