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**BOARD MEETING BOOK**

**NOVEMBER 6, 2024**

**VIRTUAL MEETING**

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**National Fish Habitat Virtual Board Meeting**  
**Wednesday, November 6, 2024**

**1:00 PM ET – 4:30 PM ET**

[Webinar Link](#)

**Meeting ID: 231 812 843 335 Passcode: j5jH3c**

<b>Time (EDT)</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Tab</b>	<b>Lead(s)</b>
1:00 PM	<b>Welcome</b> <i>Desired Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board action</b> to approve agenda and August meeting summary.</li> </ul>	1	<b>Chair Robert Boyles &amp; All Attendees</b>
1:10 PM	<b>2025 Board Meeting Schedule Preview</b> <i>Desired Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board awareness</b> of 2025 meeting schedule.</li> </ul>	2	<b>Alex McOwen (NFHP Board Staff)</b>
1:15 PM	<b>Beyond the Pond Update &amp; Discussion</b> <i>Desired Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board awareness and discussion</b> of Beyond the Pond staffing, Board plans, and next steps.</li> </ul>		<b>Kelly Hepler (Chairman, Beyond the Pond Board)</b>
2:15 PM	<b>Policy Committee Update</b> <i>Desired Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board awareness</b> of ACE Act Reauthorization and Policy Committee activities.</li> <li>• <b>Update</b> on meetings with OMB regarding science and technical support funding for agencies.</li> <li>• <b>Board awareness of</b> Policy Committee Terms of Reference document.</li> </ul>	3	<b>Ian Nakayama (TRCP, Policy Committee Chair)</b>
2:40 PM	<b>BREAK</b>		
3:00 PM	<b>NFHP Action Plan 3.0 Update</b> <i>Desired Outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board discussion</b> of draft mission and goals.</li> <li>• <b>Board awareness</b> of upcoming survey of Board members.</li> </ul>		<b>Alex McOwen and Jason Olive (NFHP Board Staff)</b>
3:20 PM	<b>USFWS Update</b> <i>Desired Outcomes:</i>		<b>Steve Guertin (USFWS, NFHP Board Member)</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board awareness</b> of USFWS FY 2025 budget outlook and FAC Program strategic plan development.</li> </ul>	
3:30 PM	<p><b>Governance Committee Update</b> <i>Desired Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board vote</b> to adopt NFHP Code of Conduct.</li> </ul>	4 <b>Doug Austen</b> <i>(Governance Committee Chair)</i>
3:45 PM	<p><b>Communications Committee Update</b> <i>Desired Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board awareness</b> of committee plans for 2025.</li> </ul>	5 <b>Pat Rivers</b> <i>(MN DNR, Communications Committee Interim-Chair)</i>
4:00 PM	<p><b>NOAA Update</b> <i>Desired Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board awareness</b> of NOAA NFHP and round 3 of BIL/IRA NOAA funding opportunities.</li> </ul>	<b>Sam Rauch</b> <i>(NOAA Fisheries)</i> and <b>Carrie Robinson</b> <i>(NOAA Fisheries)</i>
4:15 PM	<p><b>IFC/AFS Instream Flow &amp; Water Level Conservation Training Center</b> <i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board awareness</b> of the Center plan and concept.</li> <li>• <b>Board vote</b> on providing a letter of support.</li> </ul>	<b>Christopher Estes</b>
4:30 PM	<b>ADJOURN</b>	

**\*\* See additional tab 6 for Science and Data Committee updates**



## National Fish Habitat Board Meeting

July 31 – August 2, 2024 Anchorage, AK

Hosted by: Alaska Partners of NFHP

Clarion Inn & Suites 1110 W 8th Ave, Anchorage, AK 99501

[Web Meeting Access](#) (Via Microsoft Teams) Meeting ID: 258 656 948 360 Passcode: agYxFc

	Last Name	First Name	July 31	August 1
1	Allen	Stan	X	X
2	Austen	Doug	X	X
3	Booth	Austin	X	X
4	Boyles	Robert	X	X
5	Carter	Julie	X	X
6	Gilliland	Gene	X	X
7	Guertin	Steve	X	-
8	Harper/Wilson/C	Rob/Josh/Kim	X	X
9	Horton	Chris	X	-
10	Kinsinger	Anne	X	X
11	Kruse	Carter	X	X
12	Leonard	Mike	X	X
13	Linnell	Karen	-	-
14	Micchiche	Peter	X	X
15	Moore	Chris	X	X
16	Moore	Bryan	X	X
17	Nakayama	Ian	X	X
18	O Keefe (online)	John	X	X
19	Perry	Steve	X	X
20	Rauch/Trnka	Sam/Maureen	X	X
21	Ringia/Talayumptewa	Adam/Darren	X	X
22	Rivers	Pat	X	X
23	Schaeffer	Timothy D.	X	X

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**National Fish Habitat Board Meeting**

24	Slager	Jake	X	X
25	Trushenski/Allen	Jesse/Stan	X	X

**Approved by the Board:**

- June NFHP Meeting Summary; approved by consent
- July 31-August 1 revised NFHP Board meeting agenda; approved by consent
- FHP Congressional Designation package - motion by: Stan Allen, seconded by: Austin Booth. Approved by consent.
- Letter to DOI re: Native Hawaiian non-Federal match - motion by: Stan Allen; seconded by Jake Slager. Approved by consent.

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**National Fish Habitat Board Meeting**

Time (AKDT)	Agenda Item	Tab	Lead(s)
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9:00 AM	<b>Welcome, Introductions, &amp; Land Acknowledgement</b>	1	<b>Chair Robert Boyles &amp; All Attendees</b>
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*Desired Outcomes:*

- **Board action** to approve agenda and June meeting summary.

NFHP Chair, Robert Boyles, welcomed the NFHP Board to Anchorage, thanked our meeting hosts, and read a land acknowledgement. The Board went around the room and online to provide brief introductions. The Board adopted the June meeting summary and the slightly revised July 31 - August 1 meeting agenda (moving NOAA update to 10:30 AM since Sam Rauch is joining virtually).

9:20 AM	<b>Welcome Remarks from Alaska Department of Fish &amp; Game</b>		<b>Doug Vincent Lang</b> <i>(Alaska Department of Fish &amp; Game, Commissioner)</i>
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Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang welcomed the NFHP Board to Alaska and provided an overview of the Department and their connections with NFHP. He highlighted the sheer size of Alaska and the role of fisheries (commercial, recreational, subsistence) in creating thousands of local jobs and supporting tourism in the region. Much of Alaska’s land is under conservation and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has permitting authority over activity that impacts all aquatic habitats. In Alaska, where there are four Fish Habitat Partnerships, the focus is on conserving and protecting rather than restoring. Commissioner Vincent-Lang highlighted the importance of partnership and the roles of states and other partners to be successful in our mission to protect, restore and enhance aquatic habitats.

9:30 AM	<b>Congressional Designation of FHPs</b>	2	<b>Stan Allen</b> <i>(NFHP Board Vice-Chair)</i>
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- **Board vote** on designation packet to be transmitted to Congressional Committees of Jurisdiction.

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Stan Allen presented the members of the Congressional designation sub-group (8 members) and thanked the Board members for their role in reviewing and providing feedback on Fish Habitat Partnership (FHP). Stan summarized the common areas for improvement across FHPs identified by the review team. This included maintaining updated strategic plans, websites, outreach and engagement strategies, and a strong governance structure. He explained to the Board that the sub-group recommends the following materials be sent forward to the Congressional Committees of jurisdiction for their consideration:

- A cover letter from the Board Chair;
- A map of all the Fish Habitat Partnerships;
- A checklist of the ACE Act criteria;
- 20 executive summaries from each of the FHPs; and
- Appendix of full FHP applications.

Finally, Stan introduced the package of 20 Fish Habitat Partnerships that the sub-group recommended for Congressional designation. Board members discussed the compatibility of specific FHP missions and Stan highlighted that the Congressional designation sub-group worked extensively with four FHPs to strengthen their applications and document areas to improve moving forward. The Board buddy system is one way Board members can support the FHPs in their implementation of these improvements. The Board voted to nominate all 20 FHPs for Congressional designation and Chairman Boyles recognized Stan Allen and Bryan Moore for their leadership through this process.

10:00 AM **Non-federal Match Waiver for Native Hawaiians**

**Jason Olive** (NFHP Board Staff)

- **Board vote** on sending a letter to the Secretary of the Interior requesting a waiver of the 1:1 non-federal match for projects conducted by Native Hawaiians.

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Jason Olive reminded the Board that the ACE Act allows the Secretary of the Interior to issue a waiver for the non-federal match requirement for states and Federally recognized Tribes. At their June meeting, the NFHP Board EXCOM discussed and supported the idea of requesting the Secretary issue a non-Federal match waiver for Native Hawaiian organizations since the Hawaiian FHP has challenges meeting the non-Federal match. Jason highlighted that waiving this match funding requirement would provide more NFHP funding opportunities for the Hawaii Fish Habitat Partnership that are currently unavailable due to a lack of match funding. There has also been an effort to add Native Hawaiians during the reauthorization of the ACE Act. Jason Olive consulted with Lane Kisonak, AFWA attorney, on this. There was Board discussion on the whether or not this request could cause issues with obtaining passage of the ACE Reauthorization Act, and members of the Policy Committee indicated that they did not think it would have any impact. The Board approved a motion to send a letter to the Secretary of Interior requesting a waiver of the 1:1 non-federal match for the two state agencies that directly serve the interests of Native Hawaiians.

10:30 PM NOAA Fisheries Update

Sam Rauch (NFHP Board Member)

Desired Outcomes:

- Board awareness of the FY24 NOAA-funded NFHP projects.

Sam Rauch, NOAA Board member, updated the Board on the FY24 NOAA-funded NFHP projects in SARP, PMEP, and Hawaii FHP. NOAA will also join the September FHP Coordinator call to share about BIL/IRA funding and opportunities to build in capacity building.

10:35 AM BREAK

10:45 AM Policy Committee Update

3 Ian Nakayama (Policy Committee Chair)

Desired Outcomes:

- Board awareness of ACE Act Reauthorization and Policy Committee activities.
- Board discussion on next steps with scientific and technical support.

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Ian Nakayama, NFHP Policy Committee Chair, provided an update to the Board on ACE Act reauthorization – in the House, HR 8811 was introduced on June 21, 2024 and there was a hearing that included HR 8811 on July 9 that mostly focused on ESA issues. The bill introduced in the House did not include a budget increase because all budget shifts require a “pay for”. Ian indicated that the reauthorization may be included in a large, end of year package and that the House is now in August recess. If it were to pass the House there would then be a negotiation between the House and Senate bill versions. Ian indicated the Board should expect little movement on the bill until November and then there could be lots of rapid movement after November.

The Policy Committee thanked the Federal agencies for their responses to the request in December about scientific and technical assistance funds. The Committee feels that there is still funding being left on the table with respect to the Scientific and Technical Assistance. Currently, the USFWS is the only Federal agency (of the four listed in the ACE Act) that are requesting the \$400,000 of Scientific and Technical Assistance funds in their budget. The Committee would like to support Federal agencies authorized to receive the \$400,000 in Scientific and Technical Assistance funds navigate adding this request to their budget if they require support. A one-pager has been developed to summarize the issue in the Board book (Tab 3).

There was Board discussion about whether or not the Federal agencies can send funding to the states and potential uses for the scientific and technical assistance funds. Board members also acknowledged that budget development among the Federal agencies can be close hold and Chair Boyles recognized the recurring theme and the many filters that feed into Federal budget development.

Overall, there was Board support for the Policy Committee supporting the Federal agencies to navigate these additions to their Federal budget requests. The NFHP Policy Committee will be working with OMB to advocate that the scientific and technical assistance funds be included in the President’s Budget.

11:00 AM **NFHP Action Plan 3.0 Update and Options**

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

*Desired Outcomes:*

- **Board discussion** of approach and timing for next Action Plan.

Alex McOwen reviewed the history of the NFHP Action Plans (2006 and 2012) and an unapproved version that was in draft in 2020. Jason presented justification for why the Board might want to update the Action Plan. Upon agreement from the Board that they would like to update the Action Plan, Jason presented an approach for updating the Action Plan in order to complete a revised plan for 2026. Staff propose that a team (~10 members) be developed consisting of the following:

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- Jason Olive
- Alex McOwen
- 1 AFWA Board rep
- 1 Federal Board rep
- 1 Tribal Board rep
- 1 Fishing group/organization Board rep
- 1 Other Board rep
- 3 FHP coordinators

Jason also presented a draft timeline to complete the Action Plan revision and Board approval by 2026. This timeline includes surveying Board members, State Fish Chiefs, external stakeholders, and Tribes about potential NFHP opportunities and the Action Plan objectives given NFHP’s role in the aquatic habitat conservation space. Christopher Estes clarified that the 2012 Action Plan was an add on, not replacement, to the 2006 NFHP Action Plan. The Board discussed referring to the 2006 Action Plan as a “NFHP Constitution” and there was general Board agreement to update the Action Plan to:

- Integrate the ACE Act elements;
- Build in “SMART” objectives;
- Retain the foundation laid by the 2006 and 2012 plans;
- Connect with and re-energize a new generation around aquatic habitat conservation; and
- Celebrate NFHP leading up to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**11:30 AM USFWS Update**

*Desired Outcomes:*

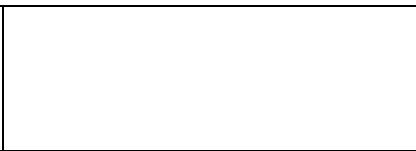
- **Board awareness** of USFWS FY 2025 budget outlook and upcoming FAC program strategic plan development.

**Steve Guertin** (NFHP Board Member) and **David Miko** (USFWS FAC Assistant Director)

Steve Guertin presented an update on the FY25 USFWS budget outlook and thanked the Board for sending in the FY25 Fish Habitat Conservation Project list. The signature on this project list has been delegated to Shannon Estenoz, the new Deputy Secretary of the Interior. Steve indicated that the Federal agencies are likely facing budget cuts in future fiscal years (e.g. BIL/IRA funding drop off is coming soon). He confirmed that the USFWS requested the \$7.7M funding for NFHP in their FY25 budget.

Next, David Miko shared about upcoming plans to update the USFWS Fish and Aquatic Conservation 5 – year Strategic Plan. The USFWS will be reaching out to partners to get input and suggestions on the plan including the 20 FHPs, and two Board members indicated their interest in representing the Board

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(Julie Carter & Doug Austen). Board members asked whether or not hatcheries will be included in the new strategic plan, and Dave confirmed that it would.

12:00 PM LUNCH (On Your Own)

1:30 PM The Alaska NFHP Story

4 AK FHP Coordinators and Key Partners

Mike Daigneault, USFWS, presented an overview of the commonalities among Fish Habitat Partnerships based in or covering Alaska. Mike highlighted the size of Alaska, the tiny portion of the state that is privately owned, and the cultural and economic importance of salmon in Alaska. He reminded the Board that Alaska is a data-poor state and Alaska faces unique challenges (e.g. oil, lack of roads, mining, invasive species, drought, climate change, wildfire, rain/flooding).

Following his introductory remarks, Mike led a panel of presentations from each of the FHPs based in or covering Alaskan geography (e.g. SEAFHP, SWAK, KPFHP, Mat Su, PLCI, and WNTI). The Alaska FHPs meet once or twice per year to build partnerships, coordinate, and share information. Following each of the FHP presentations, Mike led a discussion among Board members and FHP coordinators focused on developing new partnerships, needs for addressing priorities, and Board support for the FHPs. Coordinators identified industry (e.g. mining, logging, etc.), Bureau of Land management, Departments of Natural Resources, and local governments as areas where partnerships could be strengthened. Coordinators identified engagement (particularly with Tribes) and buy-in, filling Steering Committee vacancies, and capacity/coverage during turnover as things they need to be successful addressing their FHP priorities. Coordinators identified increasing awareness of species requiring passage (e.g. lamprey), potential ways to elevate NFHP projects in existing funding opportunities, and leverage as ways the Board can offer support for the FHPs.

Brief overviews of each presentation are below:

- **Mat Susitna Salmon Habitat Partnership - Jessica Speed**
  - 5 species of pacific salmon, key to culture
  - Fastest growing part of the state
  - Greatest threats are many small actions compounding over time (invasive, development, climate change)
  - One of the founding partnerships (original 4)
  - Strategic Action Plan – with priority issues revisited each year
  - Anadromous Waters Catalog

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- Fish passage focus
- Project inventory online
- **Southeast Alaska FHP - Debbie Hart & Andy Stevens (USFWS)**
  - Geographically isolated
  - Action Plan was critical in forming SEKAFHP
  - >250 members, 40 organizational partners
  - Host conferences
  - Information sharing with Tribal partners
  - Fish passage is a big focus
  - Metlakatla project – invest \$80,000 and leveraged to get 2.7M USFWS BIL FHWA funding
- **Southwest Alaska - Tim Troll**
  - Protection oriented (can't use NFHP funds for this)
  - NFHP funds have supported assessments
  - Focus on working with Native corporations
  - Protected ~80,000 acres
  - State of AK is biggest landowner
  - Added 1,350 stream miles to AWC
  - Bristol Bay Fly Fishing & Guide Academy started in 2008 (184 participants since)
- **Pacific Marine and Estuarine Partnership & Pacific Lamprey Conservation Initiative - Joan Drinkwin**
  - Looking to build energy around pacific lamprey conservation in AK
  - Supporting traditional Tribal use – is main part of mission
  - First food for Native Alaskans
  - PL is anadromous, USFWS trust species
  - PL are >360M years old! What can we do to help the species continue to persist
  - Wilamette Falls is one of the only places you can harvest
  - Conservation agreement (58 signatories), status assessment, regional implementation plans
  - BPA supports PL in Columbia River Basin
  - Looking to expand to doing projects in AK
  - Want to take advantage of the AWC – need to fill in the distribution map of where lamprey are in AK
  - FY22 funding on lamprey ID in AK (workshops to be held in 2025) - can we add lamprey to the salmon field work??
- **Kenai Peninsula FHP - Trent Dodson**
  - Freshwater and saltwater (needs updating) conservation action plans
  - Focal funding areas (biological capacity)
  - 2022 Accomplishments - Stream Watch and Adopt A Stream (targets students), impervious surface modeling
- **Western Native Trout Initiative - JD Davis**
  - Coastal cutthroat trout, char
  - Will see a NFHP WNTI project on field trip
  - Project mapped

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- Native trout challenge – 245 have completed challenge
- Bear River Project funded by Open Rivers Fund
- Snake River System largescale trout

2:55 PM **BREAK**

**Announce Stan’s receipt of Stan Moberly Award**

3:10 PM **North Pacific Research Board Presentation**

*Desired Outcomes:*

- **Board awareness** of the North Pacific Research Board mission and opportunities to engage with NFHP.

**Lynn Palensky, MPA**  
*(NPRB Executive Director) or Matt Baker, PhD (NPRB Science Director)*

Lynn Palensky presented an overview of the [North Pacific Research Board](#) (NPRB). While NPRB was created by Congress in 1997, they are not a Federal agency. NPRB was created to fund and support marine research in and around Alaska and has small staff of six people based in Anchorage. Following Lynn’s portion, Matt Baker reviewed the science programs of the NPRB with the Board. NPRB funds research that informs fisheries management through partners like the Fishery Management Councils. They also fund graduate level research, an outreach program, long-term monitoring, and cooperative research. Each year, the NPRB leads the Alaska Marine Science Symposium that has ~700-800 attendees.

3:25 PM **NFHP Interagency Operational Plan Update**

**Jason Olive (NFHP Board Staff)**

*Desired Outcomes:*

- **Board awareness** of progress on IOP development.

Jason Olive provided an overview of the Interagency Operational Plan (IOP) draft which was sent to the Board on 7/16/24. He asked for Board member feedback on the draft IOP (*focusing on Chapter 3 if time is limited*) and indicated it will be sent for Federal agencies review later this year. The Board will likely be signing off on a final version in early 2025. Jason acknowledged that, with its many, large tables of information, the IOP would greatly benefit from an online searchable database-like format for this information. The Board discussed how mature the draft IOP needs to be before it is sent to

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the Federal agencies for their review and signoff. Chair Boyles indicated his interest in getting a renewed NFHP commitment by having Secretarial level sign off on the IOP.

Board member discussion focused on the appropriate level of agency signoff on the document (e.g. Directorate or Secretarial) and adding in more narrative in Chapter 3 to highlight how agencies are committing to work together and forming a coordination body. There was a desire to better express the value of NFHP to Federal agencies somewhere in the IOP. In the end, the Board agreed to slightly delay this process and revisit it in October.

**3:50 PM Science & Data Committee Update**

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**Gary Whelan & Daniel Wieferrich** (NFHP Board Staff, Science & Data Committee Co-Chairs)

*Desired Outcomes:*

- **Board awareness** of science and data committee assessment progress.
- **Board awareness** of rollout plan for public-facing NFHP Project Tracking Dashboard.

Gary Whelan presented an overview of the progress and plans for the National Fish Habitat Assessment. He explained to the Board the three-stage process to analyze the data layers, add in new hydrology, grazing intensity and socioeconomic info, and large macrohabitats. The Assessment report will begin drafting in October 2025 and will be completed by the end of 2025. There was some Board discussion on considering the value added by stream miles opened by NFHP projects in the assessment and utilizing a lot of the existing information about natural capital accounting to better quantify and describe the impacts of NFHP work.

Kate Sherman presented an overview of the public-facing NFHP dashboard. Kate showcased the various data sources, filters, and functionalities within the draft dashboard. She asked Board members to provide their feedback to the draft dashboard (*login info was shared with FHP coordinators and Board members*). The dashboard also creates Wordclouds by each FHP to highlight partners. This draft dashboard will be presented at the 2024 American Fisheries Society meeting.

**4:10 PM Governance Committee Update**

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**Doug Austen** (Governance Committee Chair)

*Desired Outcomes:*

- **Board to provide feedback** on the draft Code of Conduct developed by the Committee.

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**National Fish Habitat Board Meeting**

Doug Austen, Chair of the NFHP Governance Committee, updated the Board on the progress towards developing a full NFHP Procedures Manual. The Committee’s latest completed draft section was the Code of Conduct. Doug requested review and feedback from NFHP Board members (by August 23) and the group will continue to develop other sections and work with Board Committees to document their procedures.

5:00 – **Happy Hour Hosted by Trout Unlimited @ King**  
 7:00 PM **Street Brewery** (9050 King St, Anchorage, AK 99515)

**Thursday, August 1, 2024**

Clarion Inn & Suites 1110 W 8th Ave, Anchorage, AK 99501

[Web Meeting Access](#) (via Microsoft Teams)

**Meeting ID: 248 490 327 582 Passcode: N2G7tz**

Time (AKDT)	Agenda Item	Tab	Lead(s)
9:00 AM	Welcome Back		Chair Robert Boyles
9:05 AM	Continuation of Alaska FHP Panel <del>Alaska Tribal Interests in Fish Habitat</del> <i>Desired Outcomes:-</i> ● <del>Board awareness</del> of Tribal interests in Alaskan fish habitat and opportunities for engagement.-		Mike Daigneault <del>Charlie Wright (Alaska Native)</del>

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**National Fish Habitat Board Meeting**

Mike Daigneault continued the Alaska FHP panel that was started on meeting day one and the FHPs focused on the effects of and how they are addressing climate change. We heard that in SEAKFHP, climate change is leading to more scour, mudslides, flooding, drought, reduction in fish price, and the FHP is trying to increase monitoring. In the WNTI more hundred-year events continue to happen so projects must be prepared for that (e.g. wildfires). Water quality, water temperature, and communicating the information to non-scientists are also key priorities to address climate change in WNTI. The Kenai Peninsula FHP is observing invasive species proliferation, sometimes caused by float plane operations, and more frequent wildfires. The discussion again focused on what the Board can do to support the FHPs. Much of the discussion on this topic focused on increasing awareness with the state associations of fish and wildlife agencies (e.g. “put the F back in WAFWA”). FHPs emphasized the importance of communications to tell the NFHP story and connect more with the public. Several Board members expressed interest in joining the NFHP Communications Committee to assist with these efforts.

9:40 AM

**Bureau of Land Management Aquatics Program & NFHP Engagement**

**Sharmila Jepsen** (*Lead Fisheries Biologist, BLM*)

*Desired Outcomes:*

- **Board awareness** of BLM’s Aquatics Program and NFHP engagement.

Sharmila Jepsen shared with the NFHP Board about the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) Aquatics Resources Program. The Aquatics Resources Program (composed on 4 HQ staff) handles everything from river restoration to invasive species to groundwater and fisheries. Sharmila shared the four strategic program goals to:

- Conserve, restore, and connect riparian, fisheries, and water resources
- Protect water supplies and uses
- Prevent the establishment and spread of aquatic invasive species
- Foster a watershed approach to improve water quality and habitat function

Sharmila has been actively working to increase BLM’s engagement with NFHP and Western FHPs and has expressed interest in a seat on the NFHP Board.

10:10 AM

**NFHP Webinar Follow-Up**

**Christopher Estes**

*Desired Outcomes:*

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- **Board awareness** of outcomes resulting from Christopher’s NFHP talk in December 2023.

Following Christopher’s talk at the December 2023 Board meeting and a public webinar in May 2024, he presented to the Board on some of follow ups within NFHP partner organizations that have resulted since then. For example, Julie Carter highlighted her work with WAFWA to re-engage the fish chiefs in the region and starting up a WAFWA NFHP Working Group. Jason Olive highlighted Tim Schaeffer’s (NEAFWA) efforts to include a NFHP presentation at the spring NEAFWA Directors’ Business Meeting, and host a NFHP symposium at the conference. Anne Kinsinger shared that the USGS ecosystems mission area set up an informational webinar about NFHP to bring staff and FHP Coordinators together to talk about the Partnership and potential areas ways to support and engage. There was some discussion encouraging Board members to identify ways to increase awareness through their own organizations about NFHP and opportunities to get involved with a local FHP. The Board identified MAFWA as a particular challenge and hope to reconnect with MAFWA states and re-energize their engagement in NFHP.

10:30 AM      **BREAK**

10:45 AM      **Upcoming NFHP Board Meeting Schedule**      7      **Alex McOwen (NFHP Board Staff)**

*Desired Outcomes:*

- **Board awareness** of 2024 Board meeting schedule.
- **Board discussion** of potential 2025 meeting dates.

Alex McOwen shared with the Board a draft meeting schedule for 2025 including:

- **Week of February 10** – virtual meeting;
- **Week of June 8** – in-person meeting in upstate New York;
- **Week of September 22** – virtual meeting; and

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- **Week of December 1** – in-person meeting (and FHP workshop?) in Arizona.

The Board raised concerns about the almost one-year time between in-person meetings. Julie Carter informed the staff that an FHP field trips in Arizona may be difficult given the mountain locations of FHP projects. The staff will work with the Chair and Vice Chair to rework the 2025 meeting schedule based on the Board’s concerns.

11:00 AM	<p><b>Kenai Peninsula and Mat-Su FHP Field Trips Preview</b></p> <p><i>Desired Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board awareness</b> of field trips planned for August 1 afternoon and full day on August 2. Local experts will preview what Board members will see and who they will meet.</li> <li>• <b>Board staff</b> to obtain a final headcount for August 2 field trip.</li> </ul>	8	<p><b>Jessica Speed</b> (<i>Mat Su Salmon Habitat Partnership Coordinator</i>) <b>and Ben Meyer</b> (<i>Kenai Watershed Forum, Water Quality Coordinator</i>) <b>or Trent Dodson</b> (<i>Kenai Watershed Forum, Executive Director</i>)</p>
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The Board heard presentations from Jessica Speed and Trent Dodson on the upcoming field trips into the Mat Su Salmon Habitat Partnership and the Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership geographies. See the Board book field trip itineraries for a full description.

12:00 PM      **Adjourn**

12:30 PM      **Depart Hotel for Mat-Su Basin Field Trip**

**\*\*See Tab 9 for the Communications Committee update and Tab 10 for the Partnerships Committee update**

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## 2025 Board Meeting Schedule

Date(s)	Location	Draft Topics to be Covered
<b>January 28-30, 2025</b>	<b>Las Vegas, NV</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NFHP Action Plan Update</li> <li>• Committee updates (<i>as needed</i>)</li> <li>• IOP Update</li> <li>• Field trip to Devil's Hole and Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge</li> </ul>
<b>March/April 2025</b>	<b>Virtual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board vote</b> on FY26 fish habitat conservation project list</li> <li>• SDC National Habitat Assessment update</li> <li>• Committee updates (<i>as needed</i>)</li> <li>• Fish Passage Task Force Update</li> </ul>
<b>September 2025</b>	<b>Minneapolis, MN</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FHP Workshop</li> <li>• NFHP Action Plan update</li> <li>• Committee updates (<i>as needed</i>)</li> <li>• Field trip TBD</li> </ul>
<b>December 2025</b>	<b>Virtual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board vote</b> on Revised NFHP Action Plan</li> <li>• Review draft Congressional report 2025</li> <li>• Committee updates (<i>as needed</i>)</li> </ul>

## ***Terms of Reference***

### ***Committee:*** Policy Committee

***Membership:*** The Policy Committee is composed of NFHP Board Members from non-federal organizations, and one FHP coordinator. The FHP coordinator serves as a liaison for FHPs, and is a non-voting member. All Committee members will have equal standing in conducting Committee business. All new Committee members will be approved by the existing Policy Committee. The committee is supported by one NFHP staff member.

***Committee Purpose:*** The purpose of the Policy Committee is to coordinate and advance legislative and administrative policies and funding opportunities for the benefit of NFHP and its associated fish habitat partnerships. This includes the following:

- Provide guidance on NFHP Board reporting requirements to Congress.
- Work to fully fund the ACE Act, including 400K for technical support is appropriated to each of the federal agencies identified in the ACE Act
- Identify supplemental funding opportunities in addition to the ACE Act
- Track and suggest clarifications or amendments to the ACE Act
- Coordinate congressional designation or reauthorization of FHPs
- Coordinate annual appropriations requests as part of the federal budget process
- Maintain relationships with members of Congress, including Hill visits and events
- Respond to requests by the NFHP Board about interpretations of the ACE Act

***Meeting Frequency:*** Quarterly, in between Board meetings, or more often as necessary.

***Decision-making authority:*** The Policy Committee does not have formal decision-making authority on behalf of the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP), with the exception of extremely time sensitive legislative situations in which the Committee Chair can act as a designated decision maker for the NFHP Board.

***Decision-making process:*** The Committee shall make recommendation-related decisions through oral discussion in its meetings or written discussion via email. Materials for all Board decisions shall typically be provided at least two weeks prior to a decision on its recommendations. In rare cases, if the need for more rapid action is required by the Board, materials for the decision will be provided with as much time as possible prior to the final recommendation for decision. In extremely time sensitive situations, the policy Committee Chair can act as designated decision maker for the NFHP Board for legislative purposes. The Committee shall prioritize acting by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, a vote may be taken if a quorum of at least two thirds of the Committee Members (i.e., those listed as members in Appendix 1) is present. If a vote is held, a simple majority of those voting will determine the decision. In the case of a vote, those in the minority will have the option to provide a written briefing with their opinion to the Board in addition to the opinion being provided by the majority. Policy Committee will provide its recommendations to the Board through a concise, written Issue Statement that includes background information, a proposal or discussion, and a recommendation with specified options for Board consideration.

***Committee Chair(s)*** One Board Committee member serves as the Chair of the Committee. Chairs will be appointed by the Board Chair and serve a one-year term starting with the first meeting of their appointment and with no limit to the number of terms served. The Chair of the Committee will serve as the Committee representative on the Executive Committee.

***Anticipated time commitment:***

Chairs: 20 hours/year

Staff Lead: 30 hours/year

Member: 10 hours/year

**Appendix 1. Membership and staff support**

***Chair(s):*** Ian Nakayama (August 2024-2025)

**Members**

Ian Nakayama

Mike Leonard

Tim Schaeffer

Julie Carter

Austin Booth

Chris Horton

Doug Nygren

***Staff Lead:*** Kate Sherman

***Staff Support:*** Ryan Roberts and Gary Whelan



## **National Fish Habitat Partnership Code of Conduct**

The National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) and its members are committed to providing all participants with a safe, productive, inclusive, and welcoming environment. While conduct issues have been rare, NFHP established this Code of Conduct to ensure these commitments are met for all meeting participants.

### **To whom and when the code applies:**

The Code of Conduct applies to all meeting participants, including meeting chairs, leaders, facilitators, organizers, attendees, speakers, volunteers, staff, and the public. It applies in all settings and locations in which NFHP-related work and activities are conducted, including working group meetings, workshops, and other related work and social functions.

### **Each member of NFHP shall:**

1. All NFHP Board members, coordinators, staff, and partners are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner consistent with scientific independence, integrity, and impartiality;
2. Be punctual and come prepared to meetings;
3. Be respectful, considerate, collaborative, and actively listen;
4. Follow the meeting ground rules and agenda, both verbal and written, set by the meeting chair, leader, or facilitator;
5. Encourage and value diverse viewpoints and opinions by allowing others to speak;
6. Communicate openly and with kindness, critique ideas rather than individuals, and gracefully accept feedback;
7. Any criticism should be followed with recommendations and solutions;
8. Use language that is inclusive and welcoming regardless of background, title, or experience level;
9. Be direct, but professional when sharing disagreements or criticisms;
10. Acknowledge and credit the contributions of others;
11. Be mindful of your surroundings and proactive in your inclusion of fellow participants;
12. Respect any additional rules and policies of the meeting venue, hotels, NFHP-contracted facility, or any other venue;
13. Turn off or silence phones during the meeting;

14. Give appropriate credit for professional work done by others;
15. Balance, to the extent possible, professional viewpoints representative of the breadth of perspectives and backgrounds from which information is both obtained and applied;
16. Recruit employees, consistent with equal opportunity legal requirements and strive towards a workforce that is representative and inclusive of our communities.
17. Treat employees justly and fairly with respect to supervision, job development, recognition, and compensation;
18. Encourage education that identifies unconscious biases, and incorporates training opportunities supporting inclusion, equity, and diversity in the workplace; and
19. Create and uphold a safe, open, and professional environment for learning, conducting, and communicating science with integrity, respect, fairness, trustworthiness, and transparency.

**Unacceptable behavior:**

Harassment, intimidation, or discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated. The following is a summary of examples of unacceptable behavior:

1. Not adhering to the meeting ground rules and agenda as set by the chair, facilitator, or meeting leader;
2. Talking over or heckling speakers and participants including sustained disruption of talks or other events;
3. Physical or verbal abuse, bullying behavior, deliberate intimidation, stalking, or shaming on site, online, and/or on social media;
4. Unwelcome sexual attention or advances, inappropriate physical contact;
5. Harassing use of photography, recording, or social media;
6. Use of an individual's presentation or likeness without permission;
7. Harassment or discrimination in any form including, but not limited to, unwelcome or offensive verbal comments or images related to age, appearance, body size, employment or military status, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, physical or cognitive ability, political affiliation, sexual orientation, race, religion, or any other elements of individual lifestyle or social identity;
8. Retaliation for reporting harassment; and
9. Other conduct which could reasonably be considered inappropriate in a professional setting.

**Conflict of Interest Policy**



Conflicts of interest happen when an individual who is responsible for acting in the best interests of NFHP has another interest that could influence or impair, or may appear to influence or impair, the individual's ability to act in the best interests of NFHP.

Examples of a conflict of interest may exist, but are not limited to, when a NFHP Board Member or proxy:

1. Is employed by the agency funding the National Fish Habitat Partnership;
2. Uses their position on the Board or information obtained as a result of their service on the Board to obtain financial gain or advantage for themselves or members of their family or business associates; or
3. Could benefit from the appointment of specific Board member.

Other conflicts of interest may exist and all members of the Board must exercise good faith and avoid participating in any activity of the Board where there exists an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

It is the duty of NFHP Board members to disclose to the Board Chair or Vice Chair any conflicts of interest. With respect to Board decisions, members of the Board who become aware of circumstances that pose an actual or potential conflict of interest must recuse themselves from the decision-making process and take no part in the discussion or the vote. If the Board member advises the Chair or Vice Chair that he or she wishes to be recused from the decision-making process, the Chair will honor the Board member's decision, and the recusal will be noted in the minutes.

**Consequences of unacceptable behavior:**

Anyone requested to stop unacceptable behavior is expected to comply immediately. Meeting organizers may take action deemed necessary and appropriate, including immediate removal from the meeting. Notification of an infraction may be made to the offender's supervisory chain when appropriate. Limiting and/or prohibiting attendance and/or participation in future meetings may also be considered.

**Reporting of unacceptable behavior:**

If you are the subject of unacceptable behavior or have witnessed any such behavior, please immediately notify the NFHP Board Chair and/or Board staff either on-site or via email.



## Communications Committee Report

**Committee members:** Steve Guertin, Gene Gilliland, Debbie Hart (FHP Representative), Miles Nolte, John O’Keefe, Pat Rivers, Jake Slager, Peter Micciche, Tom McCann (US FWS)

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

### **Committee Update:**

- Peter Micciche joined the Communications Committee in September 2024.
- National Fish Habitat Partnership Website revision launched in September 2024 <https://fishhabitat.org>.
- Announced Public rollout of the NFHP Projects and Accomplishments Dashboard on September 19th: <https://fishhabitat.org/news/dashboard>.
- Testimonial Videos (Filmed in December 2023) are being released on the NFHP facebook and LinkedIn pages. b-roll footage of projects was filmed in October in Iowa in coordination with the Driftless Area Restoration Effort FHP. The NFHP video project will be completed in early 2025.
- The Communications Committee has approved their Terms of Reference for the committee (below tab).
- The Communications Committee will update the NFHP Communications strategy and provide a presentation to the Board at the January 2025 meeting of the Board.

### ***Guidance Document (Terms of Reference)***

***Committee:*** Communications Committee

***Membership:*** The Partnership Committee is composed of a mix of Board Members and FHP Coordinators as well as bringing in Communications experts outside of NFHP for purposes of providing

*insight and technical expertise related to communications product development and plans. All Committee Members will have equal standing in conducting committee business.*

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

***Meeting Frequency:*** Quarterly or more often as necessary

***Decision-making authority:***

This committee does not have formal decision-making authority on behalf of the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP).

***Decision-making process:***

The Committee shall make recommendation-related decisions through oral discussion in its meetings or written discussion via email. Materials for all decisions shall typically be provided at least two weeks prior to a decision on its recommendations. In rare cases, if the need for more rapid action is required by the Board, materials for the decision will be provided with as much time as possible prior to the final recommendation for decision. The Committee shall prioritize acting by consensus. The Communications Committee will provide its recommendations to the Board through a concise, written Issue Statement that includes background information, a proposal or discussion, and a recommendation with specified options for Board consideration.

***Committee Chair:***

A Chair will serve voluntarily and will be a representative of the Communications Committee.

***Anticipated time commitment:***

Chairs: 15 hours/year

Staff Lead: 20 hours/year

Member: 10 hours/year

**Revised and approved:** November 6, 2024



## **Appendix 1. Membership and staff support**

***Chair:*** Pat Rivers (Acting)

**Members:**

Steve Guertin

Gene Gilliland

Debbie Hart (FHP Representative)

Tom McCann (US FWS)

Peter Micciche

Miles Nolte

John O'Keefe

Pat Rivers

Jake Slager

***Staff Lead:*** Ryan Roberts

## Title: Science and Data Committee Report

### Desired Outcomes:

- **Board awareness** of progress on the NFHP Projects and Accomplishments Dashboard
- **Board awareness** of progress on the 2025 National Fish Habitat Assessment (Assessment)

### NFHP Project Tracking System – NFHP Projects and Accomplishments Dashboard

- **Public Release of Dashboard:** The NFHP Projects and Accomplishments Dashboard which highlights fish habitat projects funded and supported by NFHP was released to the public on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The dashboard can be accessed directly using <https://arcg.is/1ya5W>, or through the “Project Dashboard” header on NFHP’s homepage (<https://fishhabitat.org>). The release of the dashboard followed the rollout plan shared at the July 2024 board meeting. The release coincided with and was promoted at the American Fisheries Society 154<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii (Sept 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>).
- **Dashboard Usage:** Basic web analytics are being used to track general use of the newly released NFHP Projects and Accomplishments Dashboard. From September 15th to October 30th 1,116 users accessed the dashboard.
- **FHP Committee Meetings:** Science and Data Committee members joined two FHP committee meetings to share details about the NFHP Project Tracking System and the NFHP Projects and Accomplishments Dashboard and discuss opportunities to promote efficiencies between regional and national project tracking efforts (Mat-Su Salmon Science and Data Committee on 10/7 Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Steering Committee on 10/22).
- **Next Steps:** Coordination with USGS to decommission older beta dashboard and update of NFHP projects in the American Conservation and Stewardship Atlas (In Progress).

### 2025 National Fish Habitat Assessment

- **Multistate Conservation Grant Update:** The “National Fish Habitat Assessment for the National Fish Habitat Partnership” proposed project to MSCG was recommended for funding at \$136,000 and will be used to help support components of the assessment.
- **Assessment Status Update from Michigan State University:**
  - Conterminous United States
    - Updates to environmental datasets and stream fish assemblage datasets were processed and are now analysis ready.
    - Developing analytical approach that modified 2015 assessment approach and a project for the Mississippi River (Ross et al. 2023; <https://doi.org/10.3390/w15132400>) (to be reviewed by Science and Data Committee)
    - Investigating four stream flow datasets and an index of hydrologic alteration for possible use in an assessment context. Also initiating a

regional pilot study to investigate relationships between stream flow and fishes that will inform how to implement flow in the 2025 assessment.

- Alaska and Hawaii
  - Starting to investigate updates to environmental data and new data sets that may have been developed since 2015.
- Other Regions and Data
  - Met with The Nature Conservancy staff to discuss their recently developed resilience index for fresh waters. This index will likely provide valuable information to support conservation decision making when used along with NFHP condition assessment scores, and we anticipate investigating patterns in the index and assessment scores when scores are completed.
  - Met with USGS staff that developed CreelCat, a dataset characterizing locations of angling catches across the US, to understand opportunities for use of the data in the assessment (e.g., as a socioeconomic measure). The current focus is on inland lakes, but that may change in the future.
  - Through a project supported by the Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership, environmental data is summarized for lakes > 1 ha across the conterminous US.
  - Starting to investigate environmental data and fish data available for Puerto Rico
  - Starting to review available socioeconomic datasets in regions or across the US that could be helpful in an assessment context.
- American Fisheries Society
  - The AFS Annual meeting was used to share efforts and build connections across the fisheries community (including local Hawaiian partners) to help support the assessment.
  - Multiple presentations were used to share efforts on topics such as development of a national fish dataset, investigating linkages between inland and coastal environmental predictors with reef habitats in Hawaii, and how measures of resilience could be incorporated into large scale assessments.