National Fish Habitat Board Meeting Summary: October 26-27, 2016

Members present:	Tom Lang *for* Tom Bigford (AFS)
Peter Aarrestad (NEAFWA)	Mike Leonard (ASA)
Stan Allen (PSMFC)	Ross Melinchuk (SEAFWA)
Mike Andrews (TNC)	Bryan Moore *for* Chris Wood (TU)
Doug Beard (USGS)	Chris Moore (MAFMC)
Doug Boyd (SBPC)	Sam Rauch (NOAA Fisheries)
Tom Champeau (At-Large State Seat)	Ed Schriever (WAFWA)
Ellen Gilinsky (EPA)	Dan Shively for Rob Harper (USFS)
David Hoskins *for* Dan Ashe (USFWS)	**By Phone:** Tom Bigford (AFS)

Members absent:
Whit Fosburgh (TRCP), Kelley Myers (MAFWA), Ron Regan (AFWA), Ron Skates (NAWS), and Sean Stone (CCA).

Approved by consensus:

- October Board meeting agenda
- June Board meeting summary

Approved by motion:

- Chris Moore moves to task the Science and Data Committee to work with partnerships to clearly identify the purpose and the need for the national assessment for consideration of the Board at its next meeting in March; seconded by Doug Beard. Discussion occurs, but no changes to the motion are made. No opposition noted; motion passes.

Updates and discussions:

- Welcome – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioner Bo Rivard welcomed the group to Florida.

- Housekeeping – It was made known that the dates of the March 2017 Board meeting may need to be changed due to a conflicting AFWA meeting, and that a Doodle poll was forthcoming. It was noted that the preliminary location for the October 2017 meeting is South Dakota and discussion of potential 2018 locations included Texas -- Big Bend or hill country.

- Joint Science and Data Committee and Fish Habitat Partnership Workshop Report – A representative of the Board's Science and Data Committee and a Fish Habitat Partnership representative each provided reports of the workshop.

  The Science and Data Committee representative spoke about the National Fish Habitat Assessment, highlighting that there isn't anything else like it. He noted the strengths and weaknesses of the National Fish Habitat Assessment and the uses and results of the assessment. He noted the National Assessment should continue and on a time frame no more than 5 years, noting that there are no alternatives or substitutes. He noted that the key audiences are Congress, the National Fish Habitat Board, and donors. He noted process improvements and communications and outreach steps and noted that the Committee developed a 2015 punch list.

  The FHP representative offered ideas for different potential primary audiences of the National Fish Habitat Assessment, how it might be used, and if FHPs were to use it, what steps would need to be taken or additional information provided, and asked that the Board consider who the target audience is for the National Assessment. The FHP representative noted that the Beyond the Pond Fund was working through process and that the FHPs need to modify expectations about the role Beyond the Pond will play as a fundraiser and bank and suggested that the diversity and time constraints of individual BOD members be reconsidered. She asked the NFHP Board to act in a leadership role, and for guidance. She laid out three specific requests: formalize a communication plan between the Science and Data Committee and the Fish

Habitat Partnerships; a list of contact information for individuals with specific skill sets including technical and legal; and Beyond the Pond purpose, strategy, timeline, and implementation.

- National Fish Habitat Assessment – The Board was provided with an overview of the history of the assessments that have been completed by NFHP including who was involved, why it was developed, when major steps occurred and the funding involved. Why it was developed included: to assist in developing national conservation goals, to establish a spatial framework and data criteria for FHPs, to measure and communicate progress, to advocate policy, to help guide Board member and staff resources, and to help guide resources. Pros and cons of different potential paths forward were also presented to the Board..

  Board discussion centered around the National Assessment audience, purpose and need, funding, and next steps. Different audiences were considered including FHPs, the Board, Congress, and others, in addition to the different ways in which the assessment is used or not being used. It was noted that the 2015 assessment needs to be rolled out before decisions are made about the future. A motion to task the Science and Data Committee to work with partnerships to clearly identify the purpose and the need for the national assessment for consideration of the Board at its next meeting in March was approved.

- Document of Interdependence – The Board was informed of the purpose of the document and provided a review of some sections of the document. It was noted that the document is meant to capture the current relationships -- it is not meant to capture the ideal situation, and it is not meant to change the Bylaws -- but once it is formalized it will set the stage for more conversation. It was clarified that some of the language was pulled from existing documents, such as that referring to the Federal roles, while some language was new, such as that referring to the NGO roles. Several revisions were requested including explicitly including the role of the Action Plan and Tribes in the pyramid figure, fully capturing Federal funding to the Board and FHPs, and including input from the states and Beyond the Pond. The group also discussed the Board member onboarding process and manual, and the need for a similar process and/or package for new Fish Habitat Partnership coordinators, using this document as a spring board.

- Multistate Conservation Grant Program (MSCG) Update - The Board was provided with an overview of the 2017 process and results, as well as a summary of MSCG funding that has gone to FHPs over the last 9 years (please see presentation for details). The Board discussed the different steps that should be taken in 2018 for NFHP to remain a successful competitor for these highly competitive funds.

- Beyond the Pond Fundraising and Marketing- Several ideas that Beyond the Pond might want to consider taking up were noted, including the following: providing a banking service for FHPs who have a donor that wants to give money consistent with the FHP and NFHP, and get a tax deduction; some members of the Beyond the Pond Board of Directors (BOD)might be able to provide training for FHPs if there was a critical mass of interest; diversifying the BOD; increasing the BOD's executive capabilities; and improving BOD communication with the FHPs. It was suggested that each FHP identify one potential donor, and then bring a Beyond the Pond BOD member with them to make the pitch. Securing a couple successes to promote with other potential donors was also suggested.

- Fishers and Farmers Presentation – The Fishers and Farmers coordinator shared highlights of the FHPs successes including educating farmers in oxbow restoration and the effects of different agriculture techniques on run-off and stream erosion, and building trust with landowners. The coordinator also shared information with respect to the importance of pre- and post- project monitoring, the development of science products including maps, and the use of different habitat assessments.

- Federal Caucus – It was noted that the Federal Caucus was most engaged during the creation of the MOU (when it had a task before it) and after this, it met routinely for updates. Suggestions for what the Federal agencies could focus on were provided by Board members and it was suggested that updates could potentially be provided via email. It was noted that renewal of the MOU should continue to be postponed until January 2017 and there was discussion regarding whether the MOU should be revised at that point. It was noted that some agencies are not active at the national level, but are involved at the local level. There was discussion of how to facilitate more agency involvement at the national level such as rotating

USDA seats on the NFHP Board and/or adding EPA and USACE to the MOU. One suggestion was made that the Federal Caucus should develop a charter or Terms of Reference for Board approval (including membership), but consensus was not reached on next steps.

- Committee Updates – Communications 2016 highlights included the development of a new website and 10-year infographic, and social media growth. 2017 priorities are generally similar to years previous, with the addition of a 10-year anniversary event similar to the Casting Call event held several years ago. The legislative team reported that the NFHP legislation remains in limbo, noting that the bill is now in conference but it is difficult to forecast with the election in play, and the potential for a change in the Senate majority. It was noted that FHPs weighing in with their senators could be helpful. In addition to the priorities noted in the briefing book the Partnerships Committee may play a role in the Assessment motion articulated by the Board, and the addition of a FHP workshop priority. Major Science and Data Committee 2017 priorities include enhancing the 2015 Assessment, planning and initiation future assessment work, beginning a three-year project to complete the NFHP Project Tracking Database, and maintaining and improving the NFHP Data System.
- Budget and Priorities – The group was provided a summary of budget and priorities. It was clarified that the funding requested for the Project tracking database was part of year one of a three year total. Suggestions were provided to improve understanding of the budget.
- AFS New Administration Checklist – American Fisheries Society representatives walk the Board through the content of their new administration checklist, which includes 12 topic areas. Two of these topic areas -- Conservation Science Funding, and Habitat Protection and Restoration – highlight support for NFHP. Follow-up discussion, from which the Federal members recused themselves, included the need to define a dollar amount that would reflect a fully funded effort and acknowledging the funding amount noted in the current NFHP legislation. The Board also discussed whether it should develop a letter of support highlighting particular topic areas in the AFS checklist or a separate one-two pager that recognizes the importance of NFHP. It was noted that other NGOs such as AFWA are developing similar materials that include NFHP.
- Additional FHP Highlights – The Board viewed a video developed by the Western Native Trout Initiative and Desert FHP entitled “Blueheads and Bonnevilles” which can be viewed on the NFHP website. The SARP coordinator shared information about the coastal dune lakes that the Board would be visiting in the afternoon, including the restoration work completed and planned. SARP does not have a role in the projects, but the work supports SARP objectives.

Action items:

- Staff will send out Doodle Poll to determine a date for the March 2017 Board meeting.
- Science and Data Committee and Communications Committee will roll out the 2015 Assessment
- Science and Data Committee will train Fish Habitat Partnerships in how to use the 2015 Assessment
- Partnerships Committee will consider suggested revisions and finalize the Document of Interdependence for March 2017 Board Meeting.
- Partnerships Committee will develop an onboarding process and/or package for new Fish Habitat Partnerships.
- Staff or overlapping NFHP Board member will reach out to the BOD members for availability to provide training or advice to FHPs.
- Staff or overlapping NFHP Board member will relay feedback from workshop and Board discussions pertaining to the BOD.
- Staff will bring the Federal Caucus list up-to-date.
- ELT will re-address the MOU renewal in January.
- The Legislative Team and Communications Committee will develop legislation talking points for the FHPs.
- For the January call, staff will make clear in the budget where the Board has influence and where it does not, and which funds are fixed and which are not.

- Board leadership and staff will develop a document for the next administration that recognizes the importance of NFHP and send around to non-federal members.
- Tom Bigford will send a list of the groups to whom the AFS is planning to send their new administration checklist.

Future Board meetings (2017):

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

Board approved documents:

- June Board Webex summary

Additional attendees:

Steve Brown (NMFS)
Mike Daigneault (USFWS)
Pam Fuller (USGS)
Jessica Graham (SARP)
Emily Greene (Board Staff – NOAA contract)
Deborah Hart (Southeast Alaska FHP)
Julie Henning (USFWS)
Donovan Henry (Ohio River Basin FHP)
Heidi Keuler (Fishers and Farmers FHP)
Celeste Leroux (NMFS)
Cecilia Lewis (Board Staff – USFWS)
Mallory Martin (South Atlantic LCC)
Pat Montanio (NMFS)
Steve Perry (EBTJV)
Ryan Roberts (Board Staff - AFWA)
Peter Ruhl (SDC Co-Chair USGS)
Howard Schaller (Pacific Lamprey FHP)
Jack Sinclair (Kenai Peninsula FHP)
Joe Sheahan (Great Lakes FHP)
Gordon Smith (Hawaii FHP)
Kent Smith (Atlantic Coastal FHP)
Tracy Smith (ADFG- AK FHP coordination)
Therese Thompson (WNTI)
Stephanie Vail-Muse (Desert FHP)
Christina Wang (Pacific Lamprey FHP)
Gary Whelan (SDC Co-Chair MI DNR)
Daniel Wieferich (USGS)
Katie Woodside (FWCC)
By Phone: Joe Nohner (MGLP)