EPA Involvement in the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP)

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been involved in NFHP as a Board member agency, caucus participant, science and data participant and FHP participant since NFHP began. The Office of Water has been EPA's lead organization for NFHP participation, with assistance from the Office of Research and Development (ORD) and EPA Regional Offices. EPA's support of NFHP has generally been through in-kind services, although the Agency's Clean Water Act expenditures toward restoring and maintaining the waters of the US represent a major contribution to the NFHP goals of fish habitat protection and restoration. EPA activities specifically tied to NFHP have included:

- Participation in the NFHP Federal Caucus since its formation, including:
    - Co-leading early efforts to develop NFHP performance measures;
    - Guest presentations on Healthy Watersheds, Recovery Potential Screening, Federal lands impaired waters assessments;
    - Regular support of April Casting Call event;
    - Regular participation in Caucus meetings;
    - Contributions to the NFHP website;
    - Hosting a Board meeting in 2008 and attendance at several Board meetings;
- Participation in the NFHP Science Committee since its formation, including:
    - Contribution to the development of the NFHP Science Plan;
    - Attendance at science committee working meetings;
    - Participation in American Fisheries Society special session;
    - Participation in NFHP "one year out" workshop;
- Participation in the NFHP Data Committee, including:
    - Providing guidance on using EPA datasets in the NFHP assessment;
    - Providing small funding contributions to the data system development effort;
- Development of special projects and activities, including:
    - EPA-funded joint project with FWS and OSM in Pennsylvania to demonstrate site selection for restoration of minelands-impaired waters with former Brook Trout populations;
    - Recognition of Steve Jordan (EPA ORD) by NFHP for award-winning scientific paper;
    - Participation by EPA in some Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs);
    - Involvement of NFHP Science committee members in EPA Healthy Watersheds design workshop in 2010;
    - (ongoing) Joint project with USGS to get updated and national impaired waters geospatial data into continued work on NFHP national assessment;
    - (ongoing) Development of datasets (geospatial data and spreadsheets) for each of the 17 FHPs that contain all the impaired waters and completed TMDLs occurring within the partnership's boundaries.

Future Outlook: Although still in negotiation as to the magnitude of cuts, there are strong signals that EPA water program budgets will be significantly reduced. Large surface water quality and restoration-related programs likely to be significantly affected include the CWA Section 319 nonpoint pollution control grant funds, and CWA State Revolving Funds. In-kind activity support will likely continue.

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