Proposed Context Schema and Timeline for Setting National Fish Habitat Board Priorities

The National Fish Habitat Board has a unique role to play in implementing the objectives of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (Action Plan or NFHAP). The Board should establish its own priorities to inform the efficient use of limited Board resources. The Board should develop those priorities in the context of a shared understanding of the contributions of the various entities in implementing NFHAP objectives and the current process for revising the Action Plan.

Background:
At the April 2011 Board meeting, the Board discussed setting "national priorities". The Board declined to adopt the "Interim Strategies" as national priorities, after representatives from Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs) stated that they did not use the interim strategies or find them helpful. Board members asked that staff address the following questions for further Board discussion at the July 2011 Board meeting. These questions include 1) for whom is the Board setting priorities and 2) what are the resources (staff, financial, etc.) for which the Board is setting priorities?

Concurrent with the effort to clarify the scope of Board priorities, other efforts are underway that contribute to setting strategic direction for Action Plan activities. These include 1) development of a "NFHAP Funding Allocation Framework," to guide how funds will be allocated to the Board and the FHPs and 2) initiation of revisions to the objectives contained in the Action Plan.

Proposal for Board Consideration and Discussion:
The following proposal

- Offers a context schema that depicts the relationship between the various priority-setting activities and participating entities involved in Action Plan revision and implementation.
- Recommends a near-term focus for Board priority setting within this schema.
- Suggests a timeline for setting Board priorities.

Proposed schema for overall NFHAP strategic planning context:

This proposed schema (see below) depicts a tiered approach for establishing priorities for the different NFHAP entities implementing the Action Plan. Objectives set the overall strategic direction for all NFHAP partners. Priorities are needed to establish the relative importance of actions to take or action areas to focus on above any others to achieve the objectives. Priorities will help the Board decide what to do with existing resources, what to continue doing and what to drop if resources become scarcer, and what new actions to take when additional resources become available.

This proposed schema depicts the multiple entities involved in the strategic planning and implementation of the Action Plan. Each entity plays a unique role in accomplishing the objectives of the Action Plan. The primary entities include the Board, the Fish Habitat Partnerships, and individual organizations and agencies. The Board is positioned to influence strategic direction of NFHAP implementation in several ways: 1) leading and approving the revision of the Action Plan including its new objectives, 2) setting priorities for the Board's own activities, 3) initial approval and subsequent evaluation of FHPs, and 4) approving a Funding Allocation Framework.

Recommended focus and scope for near term Board priority setting

- The Board should focus on setting priorities for its own actions to achieve the objectives identified in the revised Action Plan.
- The Board priorities should:
  - Be informed by the unique roles of the Board as described in the Board Charter and Action Plan. (For example, establish national partnerships that provide funding and other resources, establish national measures of success and evaluation criteria)
  - Inform how the Board allocates its limited resources.
  - Consider both the resources that have been appropriated for Board use <u>and</u> resources that Board members bring to the table to execute Board functions.

Proposed Timeline for setting Board Priorities:

July 2011:

- Agree to proposed schema (see below) for overall NFHAP strategic planning and focus of near term Board priority-setting.

October 2011:

- New action plan draft objectives submitted for Board approval.
- Funding allocation framework submitted for Board approval.
- Review and discuss draft Board priorities that respond to draft action plan objectives

January 2011 (Board budget conf call):

- Adopt Board priorities for desired time period.

National Fish Habitat Action Plan

- Includes objectives that provide national direction overall for all parties involved in NFHAP.
- Developed by all and approved by Board.
- May lead to development of national priorities to establish hierarchy of Board and FHP actions needed to implement national conservation objectives

NFHAP Board Priorities

- National in scope
- Establishes hierarchy of Board actions to advance Action Plan objectives.
- Constrained by available Board budget (as informed by funding allocation framework).
- Developed and approved by Board.

FHP Priorities

- Focus on geographic range of FHP
- Establishes hierarchy of FHP actions to advance Action Plan objectives.
- Constrained by available partner and FHP budget (as informed by funding allocation framework).
- Developed by and approved by FHP governing bodies, subject to periodic review by the Board.

Agency/Organization priorities for NFHAP

- May be national or geographic.
- Establishes hierarchy of individual agency or organization actions to advance one or more of Action Plan objectives .
- Developed and approved by agency/organization in consultation with partners.