Proposed NCN: Fisheries and Water Resources Policy Committee
Strengthening the National Fish Habitat Partnership

Statement of Need

The *National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) seeks to* arrest and reverse declines to the quality and quantity of our nation's fish habitat in freshwater, estuarine, and marine waters. The National Partnership includes 18 regional Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs) that develop and implement landscape scale approaches to protect, restore, and enhance priority fish habitats (natural and manmade) across the nation. All 50 states are engaged in one or more of the FHPs. The Partnership is guided by the National Fish Habitat Action Plan and coordinated by the National Fish Habitat Board (Board) which includes AFWA and regional association representatives.

FHPs implement the habitat-based conservation strategies and actions established by the Board and themselves and seek to complement other local, regional, and national priorities, particularly those contained in many State Wildlife Action Plans.

The Multi-state Conservation Grant Program helps leverage other federal, state, and private resources to implement the priorities of the Board and the FHPs. Grant resources aid state, federal, tribal, private, academic, and other local partners that coordinate with or are members of FHPs to

- compile scientific information on fish habitats,
- establish strategic goals and objectives for fish species and habitats, and
- develop methods for and implement habitat conservation activities across jurisdictional boundaries and species ranges.

Desired Proposals

Grant recipients would compete for Multi-state Conservation Grants to:

1) coordinate and compile scientific assessment information on fish habitats consistent with the Board's *Science and Data Framework*, including addressing gaps identified by FHPs in the *2010 National Fish Habitat Assessment*,
2) implement data standards and mechanisms established by the Board,
3) develop measurable outcomes from conservation action for fish species and habitats and compile those outcomes for reporting to the Board and stakeholders,
4) develop or improve methods to identify priority places, issues, and projects to focus conservation action
5) monitor the performance and needs of FHPs nationwide in a manner that enables direct and consistent comparisons between FHPs.

Projects that create methods or systems that could by used by multiple FHPs, and/or those that could be adopted by the Board's Science and Data Committee for broad implementation, are preferred. Some examples of desired proposals would be those that include collaboration between Partnerships, and with Joint Ventures and/or Landscape Conservation Cooperatives.

Desired Outcomes

Desired outcomes of successful proposals would include:

1) production of scientific information that fills gaps identified through the national fish habitat assessment reported in *Through a Fish's Eye: Status of Fish Habitats in the United States 2010,*
2) coordinated implementation of *NFHP Conservation Strategies and Targets* adopted by the Board or FHPs for rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and other aquatic habitats,
3) development of new analytical approaches to examine landscape conservation information to improve the Board's and FHP's understanding of fish habitat quality or condition,
4) coordinated implementation of conservation actions by FHPs with other aquatic habitat strategies and actions identified in State Wildlife Action Plans and other complementary plans,
5) engagement of additional organizations and individuals with interest in the conservation of target aquatic habitats with FHPs and the Board,
6) support for and development of FHP capacity to achieve goals and objectives for 2015 that will be outlined in the revised Action Plan that is expected to be completed in early 2012.