Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership

Formative Years 2000 – 2008

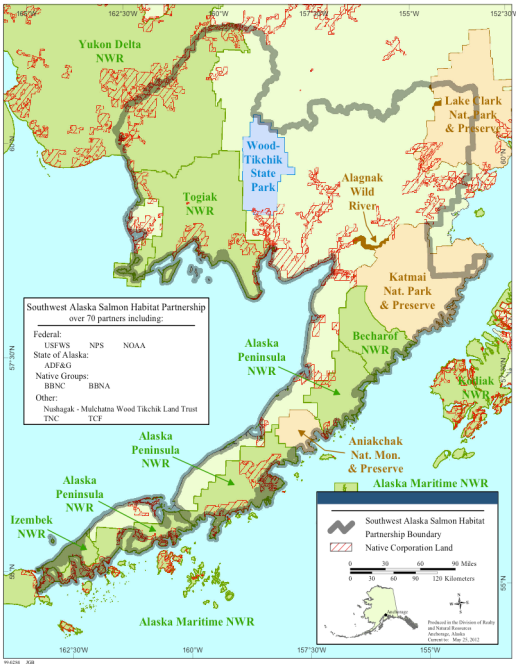
Established in 2000 as the Southwest Alaska Conservation Coalition.

Founding Partners: The Conservation Fund, Bristol Bay Heritage Land Trust (BBHLT), Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC), Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

Mission: Protect integrity of conservation units in Southwest Alaska and prevent habitat fragmentation by purchasing fee or conservation easements on private land inholdings within State and National Parks and Refuges.

Service Area: Lands in Bristol Bay watersheds, Alaska Peninsula down to Izembek NWR and south of the Kuskokwim River up to and including the Aniak River.

Accomplishments 2000-2008: Raised $17,243,000 to purchase fee or conservation easements on 69 tracts comprising 78,109 acres. Most tracts were conveyed to Federal or State conservation units. A few tracts were conveyed to BBHLT.



Recognized Years 2008 – 2013

NFHAP Recognition in 2008: Reorganized as the Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership in 2008 upon recognition by the NFHP Board of Directors. First non-pilot fish habitat partnership to be recognized.

New Partners: USF&WS, BLM, NOAA, Lake Clark NP&P, Alaska Dept. Fish &Game, Trout Unlimited and University of Alaska, Bristol Bay Campus.

Mission Statement: To protect, conserve and, if necessary, restore watersheds that sustain wild salmon populations and the fisheries of Southwest Alaska.

Strategic Conservation Plan: Adopted in 2011. Strategic Actions in priority order and summary of accomplishments to date:

1. **Protect Water Quantity and Flow**: Instream flow reservations initiated under Alaska Law by partners (Bristol Bay Native Assn., Trout Unlimited, TNC) to establish priority flows for fish on five river systems – $100,000 NFHAP Funds used to initiate reservations on Stuyahok River, Mulchatna River, Kaskanak Creek. To date approximately $720,000 has been raised to collect flow data on these three systems,

and another $380,500 to perfect these and other applications and partner with Lake Clark National Park on an instream flow reservation for the Chuilitna River.

Partners have initiated reservations on Upper Talarik Creek and the Koktuli River raising an additional $500,000 + funding from private foundations, Bureau of Indian Affairs grants, and USFWS Tribal Wildlife Grants

2. **Protect Connectivity**: Documenting salmon distribution to provide protection to anadromous waters under Alaska law. Since 2008 TNC and BBHLT have conducted fish distribution studies in Nushagak and Kvichak watersheds adding approximately 296 miles to the Alaska Anadromous Waters Catalog.

   $153,000 NFHP Funding for surveys has been matched and leveraged with approximately $670,000 in Foundation (including $200,000 NFWF) funding and other government funds. Some of these funds (Coastal Impact Assistance Program) will be used to conduct more fish distribution surveys in Nushagak, Kvichak and Alagnak River watersheds (Katmai National Park). Studies will be used to develop geo-spacial fish distribution model for use in Bristol Bay. NFHP grant of $75,000 in 2010 funded a background study in Tikchik Lakes of the effect of large glacial lakes on fish distribution.

   $46,000 NFHP funds used to support ADF&G survey of culverts in larger communities in SW Alaska

3. **Protect Water Quality**: Funded research directed to understanding water quality in mineralized areas and specific study to determine whether State and Federal water quality standards for copper are sufficiently protective of salmon and other aquatic species. $85,000 NFHP funding to BBHLT.

4. **Protect Habitat from Fragmentation**: Since recognition in 2008 raised $15,717,000 to purchase fee or conservation easements on 39 tracts comprising 25,404 acres. Support raised by The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy and Bristol Bay Heritage Land Trust. First acquisitions outside conservation units. Private parcel prioritizations using USFWS Coastal funds.

5. **Prevent Establishment of Invasive Species:** Local monitoring and assessments by some partners. No serious threat of an invasive species has been documented.

6. **Respond to Climate Change:** 2012 NFHP grant of $30,000 to Land Trust to develop stream temperature monitoring plan matched with $15,000 from Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Assn. and $5000 in kind from BBNA. Coordinating with Western Alaska LCC.

7. **Education and Outreach Around Salmon.** Bristol Bay River Academy for local youth started in 2008 to teach salmon conservation and river ecology while imparting skills for fly fishing and guiding. NFHP funds of $15,000 leveraged with approximately $160,000 in cash and in-kind support from Orvis, BLM, Bristol Bay

Native Corporation, Trout Unlimited, Alaska Conservation Foundation, EPA, local lodges and private donors. Academy has been held in Ekwok, and King Salmon and will be held this year at Mission Lodge near Wood-Tikchik State Park.

Since Recognition in 2008 SWASHP has received $622,470 in NFHP funds to carry out its Strategic Conservation Plan. NGO partners have secured approximately $17,620,000. For every $1 invested by NFHP in Southwest Alaska, NGO partners have raised $28.

Direct Protection Accomplishments Since Recognition: 25,404 acres conserved. 300 + miles added to Alaska's Anadromous Waters Catalog. Priority Instream Flow Reservation Applications for Fish on 3 river systems directly covering 111.5 + anadromous stream miles.