Title: Recommendations to the Board about next steps in marketing NFHP with private sector help.

Desired outcome: Board approval of Collaborative Action Plan involving NFHP, Patagonia, Fishpond, Costa Sunglasses and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS or Service).

Background: Given the challenges we are facing, there is an emerging recognition amongst conservationists that the community has to change the way it conducts its business; however, the specifics of this change are unclear. At the October 2011 meeting, the NFHP Board became exposed to this thinking about change via a presentation from Joe Starinchak of the FWS. The Service has convened an informal collaborative group, which includes sustainable businesses, social, financial and environmental entrepreneurs and is focused on connecting the economy to the environment at a landscape scale. Then, at its February 2013 meeting, the Board agreed to pursue a corporate engagement strategy, led by Chris Horton with Joe Starinchak's assistance. As a follow-up, Joe gave another presentation to the Board at its Salt Lake meeting in June. *The key point of this presentation was that the "outreach" that is currently being relied upon is insufficient for engaging the private sector. Developing such a strategy requires… 1) a paradigm shift, 2) the creation of a viable NFHP brand, and 3) the need to effectively market this brand with the involvement of the private sector*.

Later, a meeting took place with NFHP staff; David Hoskins, the new FWS Fisheries AD and Johnny Le Coq, the head of Fishpond, a fishing and outdoor gear company. Johnny made a passionate appeal to become part of the NHFP Board and become involved in the branding of NFHP. Also, he persuaded Patagonia and Costa Sunglasses to join as advisors for the NFHP branding and marketing processes.

Recommendations/Proposal: Since a Corporate Engagement Strategy depends upon a viable brand and the marketing of this brand, it is recommended that NFHP undergo additional work to establish a firm foundation to help with the change. Below are some specific recommendations for the Board to consider…

PARADIGM SHIFT

The concepts of marketing and branding are closely related to selling, and this is something the conservation community has not traditionally engaged in. Instead, activities like information, education and outreach have been used to "raise awareness" and promote conservation behaviors. But, given the growing complexity of the issues we're facing and the demographic and technological changes, more effective methods are needed to communicate and engage people to help conserve our aquatic habitat resources.

1) Governance – Involving private sector partners and building upon NFHP's foundation to create a viable brand requires the creation of a shared governance mechanism to facilitate and streamline these processes. By developing a single point-of-contact to work with the companies and a smaller proxy group to represent the Board and serve as liaisons between the companies will fully leverage the company interests in guiding a holistic NFHP marketing strategy and will foster the creativity involved with branding and marketing.

   Proposed Action Step: Develop a collaborative governance mechanism to help facilitate this marketing relationship between NFHP, the Service, Patagonia, Fishpond and Costa Sunglasses.

2) Values and Branding – Within the conservation community, many loosely use the terms branding and marketing without having a clear understanding about the true meaning and impact of these concepts. With both being grounded in the social sciences, over the past 80 years, they have combined to profoundly influence America's culture. On the surface, branding is a strategic process that is focused on creating a "name, term, sign, symbol or design" that is used to identify the goods and

services of a seller and differentiate them from those of other sellers. And marketing is more of a tactical process that is focused on communicating the value of a product or service to customers, for the purpose of selling the product or service. However, just below the surface of both concepts are values – the values of the buyer and the values of the seller. When aligned, a meaningful transaction can occur, and this is not limited to the financial realm.

Creating a brand requires you to know who you really are and what you are really good at; this is what serves as the basis of what you promise your customers. It's not enough to offer a quality product or service; it is important to create deep-seated brand associations within the consumer's mind. Branding is not about getting your target market to choose you over the competition, but it is about getting your prospects to see you as the only one that provides a solution to their problem. So, how might this apply to NFHP? I believe NFHP is about improving the quality of American's lives through the collaborative, science-based conservation of fish habitat for publicly accessible waters. How can this create the necessary associations in the target audience's mind so this value is clear?

Proposed Action Step: Work with the Service, Patagonia, Fishpond and Costa Sunglasses to define the core mission and values of NFHP, which will be the basis for the NFHP brand. And expand upon this to define NFHP's unique value so that it can be effectively leveraged to create partnerships with companies and anglers to enhance the future conservation of aquatic habitat.

3) Marketing NFHP – The textbook definition of marketing is the process of communicating the value of a product or service to customers, for the purpose of selling the product or service. However, when translated to more common sense terms, marketing is what you say and how you say it when you want to explain how awesome your product is and why people should buy it. The key part of this definition is the sales context. Because of the complexity of the times we are living in, we quite literally have to sell conservation, and this is what marketing can help us to do.

Proposed Action Step: Work with the Service, Patagonia, Fishpond and Costa Sunglasses to develop a national campaign that connects NFHP to the Regional FHPs, activates the sales and consumer networks of these and other forward thinking companies to elevate fish habitat conservation as a critical element of America's 21st century culture.

Analysis: Generally speaking, engaging in marketing and branding is new to the larger conservation community and this applies to NFHP as well. To shorten its learning curve, it is recommended that the NFHP Board leverage the interests of Fishpond, Patagonia and Costa Sunglasses and move ahead in developing a collaborative action plan with tangible milestones.

- *Governance*
  - Develop a governance mechanism to manage the relationship with the companies that includes a single point-of-contact to be the liaison with the businesses and a smaller Ad Hoc Work Group to represent and be a bridge to the Board. This will allow for NFHP to fully leverage the interests and expertise of these companies in guiding the development of a holistic marketing strategy.

    - Potential Implications
      - New Roles for the Board and the Regional FHPs – Engaging in this relationship will change how NFHP operates. The NFHP Board has consciously provided only broad guidance for the Regional FHPs and has encouraged them to organize and operate organically. This arrangement

has made NFHP very successful and is partly responsible for what the platform is today. However, with our complex challenges we are facing, NFHP needs increased exposure, relevance and ways to complement and grow its funding. Branding and marketing can help to meet these needs; yet, their application requires a degree of consistency and connectivity that currently does not exist. Also, applying branding and marketing to NFHP will create more formalized business and community engagement mechanisms, which will create an expansion of external ownership for the habitat projects. While this expansion is good thing, it comes with the tradeoff of lessening the unilateral management of government agencies.

- *Values, Branding & Marketing*
  - Defining NFHP's "Core Values" is the first critical step for branding and marketing aquatic habitat conservation. As Steve Jobs, one of America's most famous marketers said, people want to know who you are and what you stand for. This process is important because it will help to integrate the social sciences into NFHP's approach to conservation, grow support for conservation and enable the platform to reach people it normally would not engage. Additionally, it will allow potential corporate partners to better understand the platform and how it can add value to their respective business. Below is a short table to help clarify what core values are and what core values are not.

Core Values….		
• Govern personal relations	• Guide business processes	• Clarify who we are
• Articulate what we stand for	• Explains why we do business the way we do	• Guide us on how to teach
• Inform us on how to reward	• Guide us in making decisions	• Underpin the whole organization
• Require no external justification	• Essential tenets	
Core Values are not…		
• A regurgitation of operating practices	• A description of business strategies	• Cultural norms
• An identification of competencies	• Changed in response to market or administration changes	• Used individually

    - Potential Implications
      - Traditionally, the conservation community has been very operationally-oriented with a "boots-on-the-ground" mentality. Applying branding and marketing processes won't change that; but it will require the adoption of a new mindset, one that focuses on addressing the human side of conservation. While it's unreasonable to expect those associated with NFHP to become marketers overnight, it recommended that all facets of NFHP become engaged -- with the Board defining platform's core values and the Regional FHPs designating someone to help translate a habitat project's scientific information into values that can be leveraged.

- *Implementation & Budget*
  - Applying branding and marketing to NFHP requires an expanded team effort. While Board and Regional FHPs roles will change, there will also be new roles for NGOs, manufacturers, retailers, reps, guides and outfitters. To facilitate this transition, co-sponsoring Regional FHP branding workshops will reinforce and expand a sense of community around aquatic habitat conservation and will help to define the different roles for the players who need to be involved. And with the private sector partners providing in-kind support with their marketing expertise, it will be important for the government to find some resources to help support these efforts. By meeting with individual agencies and explaining how these efforts can help them with their involvement in NFHP and with their own programs, we can secure some funding support to make this happen.

    - Potential Implications
      - Changing a successful landscape scale conservation platform will meet with resistance; however, by creating a collaborative action plan that involves key companies and focuses on marketing NFHP will allow us to overcome the resistance. And then NFHP and aquatic habitat conservation will become elevated to new levels, and a new collaborative paradigm will emerge that elevates aquatic habitat conservation to new heights.