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Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies Supports Measure to Strengthen the National Fish Habitat Partnership

(October 7, 2013) – The 10-year mark of the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) and Action Plan, was commemorated with a resolution passed at the business meeting of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) in September 2013.

With this resolution, state fish and wildlife agencies recognize NFHP as a state-led effort and will work towards increasing support for implementing the Action Plan, distinguishing its value in furthering the conservation of fish, wetland and wildlife habitats and enhancing fishing opportunities for the public.

"This resolution affirms AFWA's commitment through the states in supporting the increasing scope of the National Fish Habitat Partnership. State support of the both the National and individual partnership efforts is essential for the continuing success of the initiative and maintaining the National Fish Habitat Partnership as a state-led effort" said Kelly Hepler, Chair of the National Fish Habitat Board and Assistant Commissioner, Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game.

The NFHP is working through 18 regionally-based partnerships in 47 states. Many of these partnerships work hand-in-hand with state agencies and have been instrumental in the success of the work of the partnerships in conducting on-the-ground conservation activities.

The NFHP is a priority of AFWA's Fisheries and Water Resources Policy Committee, and it has received nearly $3 Million in Sportfish Restoration funding since 2008 through the Multistate Conservation Grant Program. This funding is used for implementation of Partnership priorities and to restore aquatic habitat across the country.

AFWA's NFHP resolution is complementary to a Memorandum of Understanding recently signed by the U.S. Departments of the Interior, Agriculture and Commerce underscoring their commitment to the NFHP and implementing the National Fish Habitat Action Plan and, reporting their activities annually to each Department's Secretary.

To read AFWA's resolution #2013-1: STRENGTHENING STATE INVOLVEMENT IN THE NATIONAL FISH HABITAT NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP (NFHP) & RECOGNITION OF THE 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF AFWA LEADING NFHP, go to http://www.fishwildlife.org/files/2013AnnualMeeting_Resolutions.pdf.

About the National Fish Habitat Partnership:

The National Fish Habitat Partnership works to conserve fish habitat nationwide, leveraging federal, state, and private funding sources to achieve the greatest impact on fish populations through priority conservation projects. The national partnership implements the National Fish Habitat Action Plan and supports 18 regional grassroots partner organizations. For more information visit, http://fishhabitat.org/ , http://www.facebook.com/NFHAP , https://twitter.com/FishHabitat , http://www.scoop.it/t/fish-habitat

Resolution #2013-1

STRENGTHENING STATE INVOLVEMENT IN THE NATIONAL FISH HABITAT NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP (NFHP) & RECOGNITION OF THE 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF AFWA LEADING NFHP

The year 2013 marks the 10-year anniversary of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council bringing forth a vision that spawned the National Fish Habitat Partnership. In celebration of the ten years of progress that has been made towards implementing the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (Action Plan), and in recognition of the tremendous contributions states make to the National Fish Habitat Partnership, the following resolution is being proffered.

WHEREAS, threats to fish habitats across the country still exist and fisheries resources remain at risk; and

WHEREAS, the National Fish Habitat Partnership is a state-led, action oriented, and science based partnership effort that is priority driven; is focused on achieving measurable outcomes; is collaborative in its conservation efforts; targets resources and funding where they will make a measurable difference; facilitates public-private partnerships; and, promotes monitoring and dissemination of conservation results. State-led conservation partnerships are unbiased and therefore create significant goodwill from the public; and

WHEREAS, from the beginning states have been essential to making the National Fish Habitat Partnership an effective force for fish habitat conservation. States had significant input in developing the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (2006) and the 2nd Edition of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (2012) and the 10-year anniversary of implementation of this state-led effort provides an opportunity for the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and its member state agencies to reaffirm their commitment to leading the effort; and

WHEREAS, the unified, coordinated guidance and objectives of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan led to unprecedented cooperation and collaboration among federal, state, tribal, and conservation partners at a landscape-scale level to address threats to fish habitats and fisheries resources; and

WHEREAS, the activities of the National Fish Habitat Board and the eighteen (18) recognized Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs) led to significant conservation actions targeting key fish habitats across the country. All 50 states are covered by the conservation efforts of one or more of the FHPs and state fish and wildlife agencies are key FHP partners; and

WHEREAS, in April 2012, the United States Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, and Commerce signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) underscoring their commitment to the National Fish Habitat Partnership and implementing the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. The MOU focuses these agencies on collaborating to implement the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, committing resources to the National Fish Habitat Partnership and, reporting their activities annually to each department's Secretary.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOVED, that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and its member state agencies recognize the valuable accomplishments of the National Fish Habitat Partnership and continue to be committed to advancing the goals and objectives of the Action Plan, actively leading implementation of the Action Plan, and coordinating with the National Fish Habitat Board on reporting state contributions to the National Fish Habitat Partnership; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that increased support for implementing the Action Plan will further conserve fish, wetland, and wildlife habitats and enhance fishing opportunities for the public and therefore build a stronger community of support for on the ground for fish habitat conservation, and thus state fish and wildlife agencies are encouraged to consider voluntary financial contributions as well as personnel contributions to the National Fish Habitat Partnership; and the Association will continue to provide the leadership role it has to the National Fish Habitat Board and its staff.

Submitted by the Fisheries and Water Resources Policy Committee