Title: Legislative Update

Desired outcome(s): Board awareness of the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act status and 2015 legislative approach

Background:

The National Fish Habitat Conservation Act was introduced in the Senate in the 113th Congress on March 5, 2014. There has been an updated legislative fact sheet created for the bill and a press release distributed for the announcement.

The National Fish Habitat Conservation Act was introduced with bi-partisan support from Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Mike Crapo (R-ID) (lead sponsors). Senator Mark Begich (D-AK) was added as a sponsor on April 30.

The U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works passed the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act (S. 2080) en bloc, in a package with six other water resource and conservation bills on April 3, 2014. The bill then proceeded to the U.S. Senate floor, where it failed to win approval.

Both Senators Cardin and Crapo sit on the Environment and Public Works Committee. Senator Cardin is the Chair of the Water and Wildlife Subcommittee, and Senator Crapo is a long-time supporter of NFHCA. Previous versions of NFHCA have enjoyed broad bipartisan support in Congress, including bipartisan approval by the Environment and Public Works Committee in two different Congresses. The bill included modifications to language in earlier versions of NFHCA that were made in consultation with several Senators and their staffs from both sides of the aisle.

Link to Bill on Thomas.gov:
http://beta.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/2080?q={%22search%22%3A[%22S.+2080%22]}

2015 Legislative Approach:

The coalition (TNC/TU/AFWA/ASA) will be building off of the great momentum we have had in 2014. If any tweaks are needed to the legislation this will be done before reintroduction early next year. We look forward to again obtaining bipartisan support. Next year we hope to introduce in both the House and Senate. We will reassess this approach after the Elections.