Proposed NFHP NCN:

Title: Strengthening the National Fish Habitat Partnership (Fisheries and Water Resources Policy Committee & Ocean Resources Policy Committee)

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 through voluntary partnerships throughout the United States. The NFHP includes 18 regional and 1 system based 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 conservation practices of the national Partnership and FHPs are guided by the National Fish Habitat Action Plan and by the National Fish Habitat Board (Board) which includes AFWA and representatives from the four regional associations. FHPs conduct on-the-ground conservation and complement other local, regional, and national priorities.. 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 are depended on by the FHPs, Board and other entities that work with the National Fish Habitat Partnership to:

- improve ecological condition, restore natural processes, or prevent the decline of intact and healthy systems leading to better fish habitat conditions and better recreational fishing opportunities.
- raise public awareness of the importance of healthy fish habitats and communicate conservation outcomes, fill needed gaps in the National Fish Habitat Assessment, and
- coordinate with federal initiatives to maximize impact and results
- ensure projects are consistent with climate adaptation strategies for fish species.

Desired Proposals: Grant recipients would compete for Multi-state Conservation Grants (MSCG) to:

- Build upon a previous MSCG that promotes strategic fish habitat conservation through regionally-coordinated science and conservation efforts
- Build upon a MSCG in assisting FHPs with development, growth and management
- increase FHP capacity to implement habitat-related projects and identify priority watersheds
- compile the socio-economic and recreational benefits associated with FHP projects, and
- coordinate between the Board, FHPs, state fish chiefs, AFWA Fisheries and Water Resources Policy and Ocean Resources Policy Committees on fisheries issues effecting state fish and wildlife agencies.

Desired Outcomes: Desired outcomes of successful proposals would include:

1) effective and efficient conservation activities coordinated by and among FHPs
2) development of FHP coordination and strategic planning
3) data acquisition for the 2020 National Fish Habitat Assessment
4) increased funding for FHP-sponsored conservation projects
5) establishment of new partners for FHPs and the Board
6) increased community of support for fish habitat conservation, angling opportunity and
7) increased coordination on marine-related FHP efforts.
8) Enhanced opportunity for FHP peer-to-peer learning and best practice information sharing