Evaluating Fish Habitat Partnership Performance
Final Draft 1-25-13

Introduction

The National Fish Habitat Partnership is an unprecedented effort to build and support partnerships that are strategically focused on fish habitat conservation. The National Fish Habitat Action Plan (Action Plan) guides this initiative and establishes processes for bringing partners together, challenging them to collaboratively advance strategic priorities, as well as measure and report on the outcomes of their conservation actions. The geographic scope and focus on fish habitat conservation distinguishes the National Fish Habitat Partnership from other more local fish habitat initiatives.

To uphold the high standards set by the Action Plan, the National Fish Habitat Board (Board) adopted a set of ten measures aimed at evaluating Fish Habitat Partnership performance levels for core operational functions (i.e., coordination, scientific assessment, strategic planning, data management, project administration, communications, and outreach). At its July 2012 meeting, the Board voted to begin the first "formal" performance evaluation of Fish Habitat Partnerships in January 2015, covering a 3-year period (2012-2014), and to repeat this process every 3 years thereafter.

Performance Evaluation Process

Each Fish Habitat Partnership will submit a completed performance evaluation form by ~~April~~ March 31, 2015. A Board-appointed team will assess each partnership's responses to the ten measures and rate their level of performance using a scale of 1 (low) to 4 (high). The performance evaluation outcomes will be sent to each Fish Habitat Partnership for their review and response prior to being finalized by the team.

Performance measures 1–5 are focused on fish habitat conservation projects, which are defined as (a) approved actions taken for the conservation or management of aquatic habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms; (b) the provision of technical assistance to states, Indian tribes, or local communities to facilitate the development of strategies and priorities for aquatic habitat conservation; and, (c) the obtaining of real property interest in lands or waters, including water rights, if the obtaining of such interest is subject to terms and conditions that will ensure the real property will be administered for the long-term conservation of such lands and waters and the fish dependent thereon. Real property interest means any ownership interest in lands or a building or an object that is permanently affixed to land.

Performance Evaluation Form Instructions

Please provide a complete description of the information requested for each performance measure as the review team will rely on your responses when assessing your partnership's level of performance. The time period that is being covered by this performance evaluation is Federal Fiscal Years 2011-2013 (October 1, 2010 – September 30, 2013) for measures 1- 4 and calendar years 2012-2014 (January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2014) for measures 5-10.

Fish Habitat Performance Evaluation Form

1. For ~~calendar~~ federal fiscal years ~~2012-2014~~2011-2013, list the title of each of your partnership's fish habitat conservation projects that:

   a. Used National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) funding sources (e.g., US Fish & Wildlife Service); or,
   b. Your partnership developed and were funded by non-NFHAP sources; or,
   c. Were neither funded by NFHAP sources nor developed by your partnership, but were ~~formerly~~ formally endorsed by your partnership.

   For each project listed, identify the project type (a, b, or c) as well as the specific FHP and/or national conservation priority (i.e., geographic focus areas, habitat types, key stressors or impairments) the project addresses.

   The following information should be provided for each Fish Habitat Conservation Project:

   - Federal Fiscal Year ~~that~~ the project was funded or endorsed
   - Project title
   - Project type
   - Project location
   - FHP conservation priority being addressed along with a narrative that details how it is being addressed by the project
   - National conservation ~~priority~~ strategy being addressed along with a narrative that details how it is being addressed by the project
   - Why the project was endorsed by your FHP (if applicable)

The Performance Review Team will use the criteria listed below to guide its assessment of performance for this measure.

a. Less than 70% of the fish habitat conservation projects clearly focused on addressing FHP and/or national conservation ~~priorities~~ strategies (1 point).
b. 70% to 79% of the fish habitat conservation projects clearly focused on addressing FHP and/or national conservation ~~priorities~~ strategies (2 points).
c. 80% to 89% of the fish habitat conservation projects clearly focused on addressing FHP and/or national conservation ~~priorities~~ strategies (3 points).
d. 90% or more of the fish habitat conservation projects clearly focused on addressing FHP and/or national conservation ~~priorities~~ strategies (4 points).

2. Describe the ~~effectiveness measures~~monitoring /evaluation plan ~~that are~~ being used to ~~track short- and long-term progress~~measure success ~~toward~~ in achieving the expected conservation outcomes* for each fish habitat conservation project listed under Performance Measure 1. (*Outcomes represent "a desired future state" while outputs are "immediate project products." Providing fish in a stream unimpeded access to spawning habitat is a conservation outcome, whereas removing a manmade barrier is a project output.)

   The following information should be provided for each Fish Habitat Conservation Project:

   - Project title
   - Expected conservation outcome
   - ~~Effectiveness measure being used to track short-term progress~~Description of the monitoring/evaluation plan
   - ~~Effectiveness measure being used to track long-term progress~~

The Performance Review Team will use the criteria listed below to guide its assessment of performance for this measure.

a. Less than 70% of the fish habitat conservation projects clearly used effectiveness measures (1 point).
b. 70% to 79% of the fish habitat conservation projects clearly used effectiveness measures (2 points).
c. 80% to 89% of the fish habitat conservation projects clearly used effectiveness measures (3 points).
d. 90% or more of the fish habitat conservation projects clearly used effectiveness measures (4 points).

3. Describe vulnerable fish habitat being protected or the causes of and processes influencing fish habitat decline that are being addressed by each fish habitat conservation project listed under Performance Measure 1.

   The following information should be provided for each Fish Habitat Conservation Project:

   - Project title
   - Vulnerable fish habitat being protected
   - Causes of and processes influencing fish habitat decline being addressed

The Performance Review Team will use the criteria listed below to guide its assessment of performance for this measure.

a. Less than 70% of the fish habitat conservation projects clearly focus on protecting vulnerable fish habitats or addressing the causes/processes behind its decline (1 point).
b. 70% to 79% of the fish habitat conservation projects clearly focus on protecting vulnerable fish habitats or addressing the causes/processes behind its decline (2 points).
c. 80% to 89% of the fish habitat conservation projects clearly focus on protecting vulnerable fish habitats or addressing the causes/processes behind its decline (3 points).
d. 90% or more of the fish habitat conservation projects clearly focus on protecting vulnerable fish habitats or addressing the causes/processes behind its decline (4 points).

4. For the fish habitat conservation projects listed under Performance Measure 1, what is the amount of NFHAP funds (i.e., US Fish and Wildlife Service NFHAP funds) allocated in support of these projects, and what is the total amount of funding from all other sources?

   The following information should be provided for each Fish Habitat Conservation Project:

   - Project title
   - Amount of NFHAP funds supporting the project
   - Amount of other federal funds supporting the project
   - Amount of non-federal funds supporting the project
   - If pertinent, also include a description of how funding the project assisted with generating additional sources of non-NFHAP funding that is being targeted towards your partnership's priorities. For example, using NFHAP funds for a fish habitat conservation project that subsequently lead to a new funding source devoted to addressing one or more of your priorities.

The Performance Review Team will use the criteria listed below to guide its assessment of performance for this measure.

a. In aggregate, non-NFHAP funding (including the value of new sources of funding that were generated by the project) for these fish habitat conservation projects was less than NFHAP funding (1 point).
b. In aggregate, non-NFHAP funding (including the value of new sources of funding that were generated by the project) for these fish habitat conservation projects was equal to or up to 1.5 times higher than NFHAP funding (2 points).
c. In aggregate, non-NFHAP funding (including the value of new sources of funding that were generated by the project) for these fish habitat conservation projects was more than 1.5 and up to 2.0 times higher than NFHAP (3 points).
d. In aggregate, non-NFHAP funding (including the value of new sources of funding that were generated by the project) for these fish habitat conservation projects was more than 2.0 times higher than NFHAP funding (4 points).

5. Please provide a copy of the criteria your partnership currently uses to prioritize fish habitat conservation projects for funding.

The Performance Review Team will use the criteria listed below to guide its assessment of performance for this measure.

a. Less than 70% of the Board's minimum benchmark set of criteria are being used by the partnership to prioritize fish habitat conservation projects for funding (1 point).
b. 70% to 79% of the Board's minimum benchmark set of criteria are being used by the partnership to prioritize fish habitat conservation projects for funding (2 points).
c. 80% to 89% of the Board's minimum benchmark set of criteria are being used by the partnership to prioritize fish habitat conservation projects for funding (3 points).
d. 90% or more of the Board's minimum benchmark set of criteria are being used by the partnership to prioritize fish habitat conservation projects for funding (4 points).

6. Describe the ways your partnership has engaged with neighboring/overlapping Fish Habitat Partnerships and/or other regional natural resource conservation entities during the past three years (2012-2014) and what these engagements produced for outcomes (e.g. reduced redundancy, enhanced message delivery or access to a larger outreach audience, greater geographic coverage).

   The following information should be included in your response:

   - Name of the Fish Habitat Partnership/regional natural resource conservation entity engaged.
   - Type of engagement activity or activities (building awareness, coordination, collaboration) that occurred with each Fish Habitat Partnership/regional natural resource conservation entity.
   - The outcome achieved by each engagement activity.

The Performance Review Team will use the criteria listed below to guide its assessment of performance for this measure and the score will be cumulative, with each type of outcome (a-d) listed below being worth 1 point. The maximum number of 4 points will be assigned if a Fish Habitat Partnership has achieved outcomes for all four criteria.

a. The engagement outcomes with neighboring/overlapping FHPs and/or other regional natural resource conservation entities improved the capacity for building awareness (1 point).
b. The engagement outcomes with neighboring/overlapping FHPs and/or other regional natural resource conservation entities improved the coordination of mutually beneficial activities (1 point).
c. The engagement outcomes with neighboring/overlapping FHPs and/or other regional natural resource conservation entities included generating collaboration that improved the delivery of a conservation action (1 point).
d. The engagement outcomes with neighboring/overlapping FHPs and/or other regional natural resource conservation entities increased the geographic scale of a conservation action (1 point).

7. Describe how your partnership uses resource condition assessment and/or analysis results to determine your conservation priorities and to identify the actions they require.

   The following information should be included in your response:

   - Title of the resource condition assessment(s) and/or analysis(es) used by your partnership along with the date(s) it (they) were completed.

   - A listing of the conservation priorities, and the actions they require, determined by the resource condition assessment and/or analysis results.

The Performance Review Team will use the criteria listed below to guide its assessment of performance for this measure.

a. The partnership has not used resource condition assessment and/or analysis results to assist with determining their conservation priorities and identifying the actions they require (1 point).
b. The partnership has used resource condition assessment and/or analysis results to assist with either determining their conservation priorities or identifying the actions they require (2 points).
c. The partnership has used resource condition assessment and/or analysis results to assist with determining both their conservation priorities and identifying the actions they require (3 points).
d. The partnership has further refined their conservation priorities and/or the actions they require through newly acquired resource condition assessment and/or analysis results (4 points).

8. Describe your partnership's outreach activities aimed at: 1) sharing information about your strategic priorities (i.e., geographic focus areas, habitat types, key stressors or impairments); 2) building broader visibility among local and regional partners; 3) tailoring events to garner media coverage; and 4) strengthening relationships with policy-makers.

The Performance Review Team will use the outreach categories listed below to guide its assessment of performance for this measure. Fish Habitat Partnerships whose activities includes only one of these categories will receive 1 point; use of two categories will receive 2 points; use of three categories will receive 3 points; and, use of all four categories will receive 4 points.

a. The partnership's outreach activities were limited to information sharing.
b. The partnership's outreach activities included building broader visibility among local and regional partners.
c. The partnership's outreach activities included events to garner media coverage.
d. The partnership's outreach activities included strengthening relationships with policy-makers.

9. Describe the ways your partnership coordinated its aquatic resource data and regional assessment information with the NFHP Science and Data Committee during the past 3 years (2012-2014).

   The following information/documents should be included in your response:

   - The regional data sets and/or conservation outcomes you provided for integration into the NFHP National Assessment.

   - Documents your partnership produced that provide details about the effectiveness of the conservation outcomes supported by your partnership.

The Performance Review Team will use the criteria listed below to guide its assessment of performance for this measure.

a. The partnership's efforts to facilitate information exchange with the NFHP Science and Data Committee were minimal (1 point).
b. The partnership facilitated information exchange with the NFHP Science and Data Committee by providing either regional data sets or conservation outcomes for integration into the NFHP National Assessment (2 points).
c. The partnership facilitated information exchange with the NFHP Science and Data Committee by providing regional data sets and conservation outcomes for integration into the NFHP National Assessment (3 points).
d. The partnership facilitated information exchange with the NFHP Science and Data Committee by providing regional data sets and conservation outcomes for integration into the NFHP National Assessment, and produced documents that provide details about the effectiveness of the conservation actions supported by the partnership (4 points).

10. List your partnership's conservation priorities (i.e., geographic focus areas, habitat types, key stressors or impairments) and describe the progress that has been made toward achieving these priorities during the past 3 years (2012-2014).

    The following information should be included in your response:

    - Separate listings for short-term and long-term conservation priorities.
    - Target dates for achieving each conservation priority.
    - Current status of achieving each conservation priority by its target date (i.e. ahead of schedule, on schedule, behind schedule).
    - Efforts underway within the partnership that are focused on addressing each conservation priority.

The Performance Review Team will use the criteria listed below to guide its assessment of performance for this measure.

a. Less than 50% of the partnership's conservation priorities are on track for achievement by their target dates (1 point).
b. 50% to 69% of the partnership's conservation priorities are on track for achievement by their target dates (2 points).
c. 70% to 89% of the partnership's conservation priorities are on track for achievement by their target dates (3 points).
d. 90% or more of the partnership's conservation priorities are on track for achievement by their target dates (4 points).