

NATIONAL FISH HABITAT PARTNERSHIP



Sun Creek, ID
A 2015 "Water to Watch"



Hosted by: Board Teleconference

Meeting Book for The
National Fish Habitat Board

June 24, 2015

National Fish Habitat Board Meeting
(via Conference Call and WebEx)
June 24, 2015 Draft Agenda and Board Book Tabs

Conference line: 866-560-0760, **Passcode:** 2832957

Web link: <https://mmancusa.webex.com/mmancusa/j.php?MTID=m5714f27534c34477b6a8a3853b4c4276>

1:00-1:10	<u>Welcome, Introductions, and Housekeeping</u> <i>Desired outcome:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board action to approve draft agenda and draft March meeting summary 	Tab 1	Kelly Hepler (<i>Board Chair – SD Dept. of Game, Fish and Parks</i>)
1:10-1:20	<u>ELT Update</u> <i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of members whose terms are slated for review in Summer 2015 • Board suggestions for potential NFWF seat replacements, for consideration by the ELT 	Tab 2	Sam Rauch (<i>Board Member- NOAA Fisheries</i>)
1:20-1:30	<u>USFWS-NFHP FY15 Funding</u> <i>Desired outcome:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of FWS-NFHP FY15 Allocations 	Tab 3	David Hoskins (<i>Board Member - USFWS</i>)
1:30-2:10	<u>Corporate Engagement Strategy Update</u> <i>Desired outcome:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board action to approve use of new Fish Habitat Partnership terminology and associated logos 	Tab 4	Eli Gerson (<i>Design and Image</i>)
2:10-2:40	<u>Demonstration of Project Tracking Database</u> <i>Desired outcome:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board understanding of functionality of project tracking database 	Tab 5	Robin Carlson (<i>PSMFC</i>)
2:40-3:10	<u>Demonstration of 2015 Assessment Online Report</u> <i>Desired outcomes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board understanding of the likely format of the 2015 National Assessment Report • Board input on the demonstrated report format 	Tab 6	Daniel Wieferich (<i>USGS</i>)
3:10-3:20	<u>Fish Habitat Partnership Performance Evaluation Progress</u> <i>Desired outcome:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of Fish Habitat Partnership Performance Evaluation Progress 	Tab 7	Gary Whelan (<i>Board Science and Data Committee Co-Chair - MI DNR</i>)

3:20-3:30	<u>Legislative Update</u> <i>Desired outcome:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act status 	Tab 8	Mike Leonard (<i>Board Member- American Sportfishing Assoc.</i>)
3:30-3:40	<u>501(c)(3) Update</u> <i>Desired outcome:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of National Fish Habitat Fund recent activities and progress to date 	Tab 9	Kelly Hepler (<i>Board Chair – SD Dept. of Game, Fish and Parks</i>)
3:40-3:50	<u>Multistate Conservation Grant Program Update</u> <i>Desired outcome:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of the status of the NFHP Multistate Grant Letter of Intent (LOI) and approach to the full grant application for 2016 funding 	Tab 10	Ryan Roberts (<i>Board Staff -AFWA</i>)
3:50-4:00	<u>Meeting wrap up</u> <i>Desired outcome:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of dates for Fall meeting and FHP Excellence Workshop 		Kelly Hepler (<i>Board Chair – SD Dept. of Game, Fish, and Parks</i>)

Additional Informational updates included in the Board Book:

<u>Communications Committee Update</u> <i>Desired outcome:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of the Communications Committee’s 2015 work plan progress 	Tab 11
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<u>Science and Data Committee Update</u> <i>Desired outcome:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of the Science and Data Committee’s 2015 work plan progress 	Tab 12
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<u>LCC Council Update</u> <i>Desired outcome:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of NFHP participation on the LCC Council and topics discussed at March LCC Council meeting. 	Tab 13
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Draft National Fish Habitat Board Meeting Summary: March 3-4, 2015	
Members present:	
Stan Allen (PSMFC)	Kelley Myers (MAFWA)
Doug Austen (AFS)	Kevin O'Donovan (CCA) - 1 st Day
Tom Champeau (SEAFWA)	Sam Rauch (NMFS)
Whit Fosburg (TRCP)	Ron Regan (AFWA) – 1 st Day
Ellen Gilinsky (EPA) - 1 st Day	Ron Skates (NAWS)
David Hoskins (USFWS)	Mike Stone (WAFWA)
Mike Leonard (ASA)	Anita Thompkins <i>for</i> Rob Harper (USFS)
Bryan Moore <i>for</i> Chris Wood (TU)	Leroy Young (NEAFWA)
Chris Moore (MAFMC) – 1 st Day	By Phone: Kelly Hepler (SD GFP) - 2 nd Day
Members absent:	
Doug Boyd (SFBPC) and Mike Andrews (TNC)	
Approved by consensus:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>March Meeting Agenda</u> • <u>January Board Teleconference Summary</u> – with addition of Kelley Myers to 'Members present' 	
Approved by motion:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Multi-state Conservation Grant Program</u> – Joint staff/Partnership Committee recommendations for developing the 2016 (and beyond) MSCGP applications for funding consideration • <u>Standard Effectiveness Measures</u> – Develop an MOU with the American Fisheries Society for moving the standard effectiveness measures effort forward • <u>Fish Habitat Partnership Workshop</u> – Fund an FHP workshop in Sacramento using the available 30k 	
Updates and discussions:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Welcome, Introductions, and Housekeeping</u> – Tom noted the 2016 meeting schedule and that the October meeting would be held in the Florida Panhandle. He also provided an update on the FHP Evaluation Process. • <u>Executive Leadership Team Update</u> – Ron noted the current Board membership and the members up for review. He explained that the ELT will meet prior to the expiration of member terms. • <u>Board Priorities and Budget</u> – Board discussed how and if to use carry-over funds for the noted unfunded needs, in particular for a 2-day FHP workshop. • <u>Multi-state Conservation Grant Program</u> – The Board heard the results from a survey conducted of the FHPs regarding future MSCGP application submissions and joint staff/Partnership Committee recommendations for developing future MSCGP applications for funding consideration. There was discussion surrounding how much funding to request, in light of the fact that there will likely be less MSCGP funds available this year. • <u>Science and Data Committee Update</u> – The Board viewed a presentation on progress of Science and Data priorities. With regard to Standard Effectiveness measures, there was discussion of scale, what data to include in the assimilation, and time frame. The Board was provided a presentation on progress of project tracking database development. There was discussion regarding funding the project past June. NOAA offers to fund this work through the end of the year. Development of the National Assessment report was discussed, including a future USGS demonstration of what an online report could look like and a request for writing support. NOAA offers to provide limited in-kind graphic assistance and \$25k in 	

funding for contracted support; it cannot provide a dedicated FTE.

- Legislative Update– The Board was made aware that a vehicle for the fish habitat legislation is moving in the Senate. They are working on a bill with Senator Merkowski’s office, who is strongly supportive.
- Federal Caucus– The Board heard an overview of the make-up, purpose, and recent activity of the Federal Caucus. It was noted that, given changes in staffing, Board encouragement for the agencies to continue their participation would be helpful.
- Joint Session with USFWS Assistant Regional Directors– The group discussed looking for other sources of funding such as other Federal Programs or elsewhere and how FHPs are currently interacting with LCCs.
- Exploring Opportunities for Collaboration– The Board heard an update on collaboration with Restore America’s Estuaries. The Board viewed a presentation on the activities of the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP); follow-up discussion included TRCP lessons learned and benefits to their participation in the NFHP. The Board also heard a presentation on the Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP); follow-up discussion included outreach, whether they are looking for new pilots, and subsistence fishing. A sub-group of interested individuals was identified and future communication with the UWFP was suggested. The Board heard an update on Native American Fish and Wildlife Society activities (NAFWS); follow-up discussion included how to improve interaction between NFHP/FHPs. Attendance at a NAFWS conference was suggested, as was a training at the fall FHP workshop. The Board viewed a presentation on the Coastal Conservation Association’s projects and activities; follow-up discussion included how they were funded, monitoring, and how far upstream they work.
- Fish Habitat Partnership Presentation– The Board viewed a presentation on the activities of the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership; highlights from follow-up discussion included involvement with LCCs, data needs, and passage as a common theme across FHPs.
- Communications Committee Update– The Board viewed a presentation on the Waters to Watch timeline and need for a new website; follow-up discussion included marketing past project outcomes and what the return on investment has been.
- Marketing and Rebranding– The Board viewed a presentation by the Marketing Team on their strategic recommendations for branding the NFHP and the Fund; follow-up discussion included reactions to changing the “National Fish Habitat Partnership” to “Network of Fish Habitat Partnerships”; proposed logo and messaging for the 501(c)(3); and in what aspects of these recommendations the NFHP Board versus the Fund Board have a decision making role.

Action items:

- American Fisheries Society and Science and Data Committee will produce a timeline for developing standard effectiveness measures.
- Science and Data Committee will discuss future Project Tracking Database funding.
- USGS team will provide a demo of what an online version of the National Habitat Assessment Report could look like.
- The Federal Caucus representative will provide presentations summarizing activities that have taken place and highlights from their agencies.
- Send examples of how FHPs are interacting with LCCs to Tom Champagneau.
- The Marketing team will keep the Board in the loop; staff will explore how the ‘Network’ title would play out.
- A summary of 501(c)(3) BOD status will be sent out to the Board.

Future Board meetings:

- June 24 teleconference, August teleconference (for new Board members), October 20 -21 in Sacramento.

Board approved documents:

- March Board Meeting Agenda
- January Board Teleconference Summary Notes

Additional participants:

In-person:

Laura Deighan (USFWS)
Brian Elkington (USFWS)
Nat Gillespie (USFS)
Scott Goudes (ASA)
Emily Greene (Board Staff – NOAA contract)
Steve Gueren (USFWS)
Lisa Havel (ACFHP)
Steve Kline (TRCP)
Cecilia Lewis (Board Staff – USFWS)
Christopher Meaney (NOAA-NMFS)
Rachel Muir (USGS)
Andrea Ostroff (USGS)
Lisa Pelstring (DOI)
Steve Perry (EBTJV)
Ryan Roberts (Board Staff - AFWA)
Pete Ruhl (Board Science and Data Co-chair- USGS)
Joe Starinchak (USFWS)
Melanie Sturm (ASA)
Susan Wells (USFWS)
Gary Whelan (Science and Data Co-Chair Board – MI DNR)

Phone/webex:

Beth Barbee (Darwin, Inc.)
Alan Brown (USFWS)
Robin Carlson (PSMFC)
Greg Gerlich (USFWS)
Karin Eldridge (USFWS)
Ben Gust (Design and Image, Inc.)
Nat Gillespie (USFS)
Jessica Graham (SARP)
Roger Harding (AK F&G)
Debbie Hart (SEAK)
Johnny LeCoq (Fish Pond, LLC)
Jen Mock (AFWA)
Jess Newton (USFWS)
Scott Roth (USFWS)
Therese Thompson (WNTI)

Title: National Fish Habitat Board Executive Leadership Team Update

Desired outcomes:

- Board awareness of members whose terms are slated for review in Summer 2015
- Board suggestions for potential NFWF seat replacements, for consideration by the ELT

Background: The terms of the individuals listed below are up for review in June/July 2015. Staff and Board leadership are in the process of reaching out to these individuals to determine their interest for continuing and to solicit nominations (3 year terms). The ELT will convene later this summer to make decisions.

NFWF has indicated that they do not plan to sit anew on the NFHP Board at any time in the near future. The ELT seeks ideas for potential organizations or types of organizations that would be value-added to the Board. The ELT will convene later this summer to consider these suggestions. Should the ELT decide upon replacing NFWF with a new organization, this may require a change in the Bylaws, which the Board would address during a future meeting.

Board members whose terms are up for review in June or July 2015:

Rob Harper (USDA FS)

Ron Skates (NAFWS)

Doug Austen (AFS)*

NFWF seat*

Kelly Hepler (State)**

Tom Champeau (SEAFWA)**

Kelley Meyers (MAFWA)**

Mike Stone (WAFWA)**

Leroy Young (NEAFWA)**

* The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the American Fisheries Society each shall nominate a representative for approval by the ELT.

** Each of the four regional Associations of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, and Western) shall nominate a representative to the ELT for approval. The fifth state representative will be appointed by the ELT.

Briefing Book Materials:

Tab 2b - Board Member List and Terms

NFHP Board Membership (*January 2015*)

Last Name	First Name	Organization	Representing	Next Review
Allen	Stan	Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission	At large- Commercial fishing	June 2016
Andrews	Michael	The Nature Conservancy	At large - Conservation	June 2016
Austen	Doug	American Fisheries Society	American Fisheries Society	July 2015
Beard	Doug	US Geological Survey	Federal Agency	July 2018 (Term begins July 2015)
Boyd	Douglass	Sportfishing and Boating Partnership Council	At large- Sportfishing	July 2017
Champeau	Tom	FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	State Agency - SEAFWA	July 2015
Fosburgh	Whit	Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership	At large- Sportfishing	July 2017
Gilinsky	Ellen	US Environmental Protection Agency	Federal Agency	June 2016
Harper	Rob	USDA Forest Service	Federal Agency	July 2015
Hepler	Kelly	South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks	State Agency	July 2015
Leonard	Mike	American Sportfishing Association	At large- Sportfishing	June 2016
Moore	Chris	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council	At large- Commercial fishing	October 2016
Myers	Kelley	IA Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Bureau	State Agency - MAFWA	July 2015
O'Donovan	Kevin	Coastal Conservation Association	At large - Sportfishing	July 2017
Skates	Ron	Native American Fish and Wildlife Society	Tribal	July 2015
Stone	Mike	Western AFWA	State Agency - WAFWA	July 2015
Wood	Chris	Trout Unlimited	At large - Conservation	July 2017
Young	Leroy	PA Fish and Boat Commission	State Agency - NEAFWA	July 2015
NA		National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	July 2015
Board members serving by virtue of their offices				
Ashe	Dan	US Fish and Wildlife Service	Federal Agency	
Rauch	Sam	NOAA Fisheries Service	Federal Agency	
Regan	Ron	Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies	AFWA – Executive Director	



United States Department of the Interior

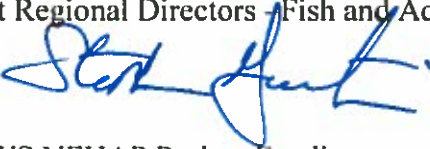
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240



FWS/AFAC/FAC DCN 060323

Memorandum

To: Regional Directors
Assistant Regional Directors – Fish and Aquatic Conservation

From: Director 

Subject: FY15 FWS NFHAP Project Funding

Working with others to protect, conserve, and enhance fish and their habitats is an essential component of the Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) mission. To help achieve this, the FWS is committed to supporting the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP or Action Plan) and the Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs) that implement it. The Action Plan is a science-based, voluntary effort to address fish and aquatic habitat issues. In fiscal year (FY) 2015, the FWS is providing \$3,176,149 to support cost-shared, strategic fish and aquatic habitat projects that address the goals of the Action Plan.

Eighteen FHPs will receive \$75,000 each in stable operational support totaling \$1,350,000. The remaining \$1,826,149 of the project funds will be distributed based on each FHP's performance level (PL) score for FY15. Each FHP's PL score was determined by applying the FWS's NFHAP Allocation Methodology, adopted in December 2013. The resulting PL scores and respective funding amounts for each FHP can be found in the attachment.

FWS funds will be used to support FHP operations, conduct aquatic habitat assessments, and implement on-the-ground conservation projects that address the goals of the Action Plan and align with the mission of the FWS. Specifically, the FHP's will use the funds to implement proposed projects identified in their Work Plan and Accomplishment Reports. In case of delays, funds may be carried over to FY16 and used as soon as possible. Additionally, all projects will be tracked and project accomplishments will be reported in the FWS's Fisheries Information System –Accomplishments Module.

The FWS looks forward to continuing its support of the Action Plan and partnering with the FHPs. If you have questions regarding FY15 Action Plan allocations, please contact Mr. David Hoskins, Assistant Director for Fish and Aquatic Conservation, at 703-358-2250 or David_Hoskins@fws.gov.

Attachments

Table 1. Number of Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs) at each performance level (Level) and respective project funding amount for FY15

Performance Levels	Number of FHPs at each Level	Project Funding at each Level
Level 1	7 FHPs	\$53,710
Level 2	9 FHPs	\$161,131
Level 3	N/A	N/A

Table 2. FY15 performance levels and the corresponding funding amount for each FHP

Lead FWS Region	Fish Habitat Partnership Name	Performance Level ¹	Funding Amount ²
1	Hawaii Fish Habitat Partnership	1	\$128,710
	Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership	2	\$236,131
2	Desert Fish Habitat Partnership	1	\$128,710
3	Driftless Area Restoration Effort	2	\$236,131
	Fishers and Farmers Partnership for the Upper Mississippi River Basin	2	\$236,131
	Great Lakes Basin Fish Habitat Partnership	N/A	\$75,000
	Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership	N/A	\$75,000
	Ohio River Basin Fish Habitat Partnership	2	\$236,131
4	Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership	2	\$236,131

¹ FHP performance levels are applicable to the 2015 federal fiscal year, only

² FHP funding amounts include \$75,000 of operational support for each Fish Habitat Partnership

Attachment 1 –FY15 National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) Project Funding

Lead FWS Region	Fish Habitat Partnership Name	Performance Level ¹	Funding Amount ²
5	Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership	2	\$236,131
	Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture	2	\$236,131
6	Great Plains Fish Habitat Partnership	1	\$128,710
7	Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership	1	\$128,710
	Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership	2	\$236,131
	Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership	2	\$236,131
8	California Fish Passage Forum	1	\$128,710
	Western Native Trout Initiative	1	\$128,710
HQ	Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership	1	\$128,710

Total FY15 NFHAP Project Funding \$3,176,149

Title: Corporate Engagement Strategy Update

Desired outcome: Board action to approve use of new Fish Habitat Partnership terminology and associated logos

Background: At the Board's March meeting, the Marketing Team presented a brand approach to help the National Fish Habitat Fund bring additional resources to the Fish Habitat Partnerships benefitting on-the-ground conservation. This brand will be the foundation from which to market The Fund and enhance the capacity of the Fish Habitat Partnerships as it works towards IRS approval of the 501(c)(3) organization. It will also serve as a way to translate the National Fish Habitat Partnership, its conservation outcomes, and its subsequent connection to the 19 individual Fish Habitat Partnerships and their on-the-ground work, as a vehicle for corporate and citizen involvement.

One of the strategic recommendations made in March was as follows:

- Evolve to **Network of Fish Habitat Partnerships**.
 - "Network" communicates the relationship and association between the 19 individual partnerships more clearly than "National"
 - Sounds less governmental
 - Removes ambiguity between the umbrella organization (which is actually a board of directors) and what it does relative to individual partnerships
 - The Network of Fish Habitat Partnerships is overseen by a board of directors
 - Still enables use of the NFHP acronym, if needed

Proposal:

The Marketing Team seeks approval from the National Fish Habitat Board on the following two items:

1. Establish foundation for branding and marketing the 19 Individual Fish Habitat Partnerships as the "Network of Fish Habitat Partnerships".
2. If first item is approved, the Marketing Team seeks approval of the attached Network of Fish Habitat Partnerships logos (Primary Identity) and NFHP Member logos (Secondary Affiliate Lockups).

Reference Materials:

The Marketing Team Presentation from the March Board meeting can be found online at the following link: http://static.fishhabitat.org/sites/default/files/www/Marketing_Presentation.pdf



National Fish Habitat Board Meeting
June 24, 2015
Tab 4

Primary Identity



Secondary Affiliate Lockups



Title: Demonstration of Project Tracking Database

Desired outcome: Board understanding of the functionality of the NFHP Project Tracking database

Background:

In 2010, a grant of \$100,000 was provided to PSMFC from USGS via National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to develop a NFHP project tracking database. This database will:

- Allow the Board, FHPs, and all partners to exchange project information.
- Visualize locations of implemented projects in a map interface.
- Allow online submission of project information; management, search, and retrieval of information; geographic information system (GIS) outputs; and project progress reporting.
- Allow expansion and modification as the national program and the regional partnerships evolve.

At the March 2015 National Fish Habitat Board meeting, PSMFC provided a presentation on the development of the project tracking database, and its expected status by June 30, 2015.

Update:

Since March, PSMFC has begun working with partnerships to review and update their data in the system. On the Board's June conference call, PSMFC will provide a demonstration of the beta NFHP Project Tracking database in its current form.

The Board will have the ability to explore the system in read-only format, beginning in July (the data themselves will not be ready for actual use until all partnerships have edited and approved their data). PSMFC will house the database and NOAA will cover basic operation and maintenance costs from July through the end of the calendar year. The Board will consider long term options for the project tracking database at its October meeting.

Reference Materials:

PSMFC Project Tracking Database slides from the March National Fish Habitat Board meeting are available

at: http://static.fishhabitat.org/sites/default/files/www/Project_tracking_database_presentation.pdf

Title: Demonstration of 2015 Assessment Online Report

Desired outcomes:

- Board understanding of the likely format of the 2015 National Assessment Report
- Board input on the demonstrated report format

Background: At the January 2015 meeting, the Board approved the 2015 National Assessment Report development plan which included a web designer. The U.S. Geological Survey Aquatic GAP Program has prepared a proof-of-concept demonstration of an interactive website product for the 2015 National Assessment.

The functionality of the website is modeled after the 2014 National Climate Assessment (<http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/>). The demonstration uses some existing content from the 2010 National Assessment report and the NFHP Data System to illustrate how the web site could serve multiple audiences with varying degrees of detail.

To date, the response from SDC members has been positive for using an online interactive reporting method. The SDC will consider any feedback from the Board on a July 2015 conference call and provide guidance to the USGS development team with regard to the build-out of the product.

Title: Fish Habitat Partnership Performance Evaluation Progress

Desired outcome: Board awareness of Fish Habitat Partnership Performance Evaluation Progress

Background: On its January 2015 call the Board approved revisions to the Fish Habitat Partnership Performance Measures. It additionally approved a 2015 FHP Performance Evaluation Timeline and Review Team. This timeline articulated a stepped process beginning on January 16, 2015 with the distribution of FHP Performance Evaluation materials, and concluding with finalized scores presented to the Board via teleconference/webinar on June 24, 2015.

Update: Performance Evaluation materials were distributed to the Fish Habitat Partnerships on January 23, 2015. Fish Habitat Partnership Performance Evaluation submissions were received from 16 of the 19 Fish Habitat Partnerships, which are currently under review. It is expected that evaluation outcomes will be communicated to Fish Habitat Partnerships beginning in July, with an opportunity for FHPs to review and provide responses. We are currently behind schedule due to the underestimation of time required to review submissions. Broad initial themes in the results are expected to be used to help inform the content of the October Fish Habitat Partnership workshop and communicated during the American Fisheries Society meeting in August. Finalized scores and other results will be presented at the October Board meeting.

Title: Legislative Update

Desired outcome: Board awareness of the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act status

Background:

Versions of the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act (NFHCA), which will codify and strengthen the National Fish Habitat Partnership, have been introduced in the previous three sessions of Congress. The most recent version, S. 2080, was introduced in the Senate in the 113th Congress on March 5, 2014, but failed to gain traction before the end of the year. NFHCA was introduced by co-sponsors Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Mike Crapo (R-ID). Previous versions of NFHCA have enjoyed broad bipartisan support in Congress, including bipartisan approval by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in two different Congresses. S. 2080 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.

2015 Legislative Approach:

The NFHCA coalition includes representatives from The Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the American Sportfishing Association, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, the Coastal Conservation Association and the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation. The primary focus of the coalition has been to introduce a similar bill as last year's version and advocate for its inclusion in the Sportsmen's Act, which is a package of various legislative provisions supported by the recreational fishing and hunting community. The coalition has been working actively with Congressional staff who has been working on the Sportsmen's Act in the Senate to introduce a streamlined bill that achieves the core goals of the legislative effort. While the Sportsmen's Act was introduced in the Senate on Feb. 5 without inclusion of NFHCA, the primary sponsors, Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Martin Heinrich (D-NM) have made commitments to work with the coalition and Senators Cardin and Crapo to address the lingering concerns with the bill and have it included in the Sportsmen's Act during the forthcoming legislative process. The coalition is hopeful that when the Sportsmen's Act is marked up in the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, possibly in June, NFHCA will be amended into the bill. The coalition has begun discussions in the House of Representatives as well.

Title: 501(c)(3) Update

Desired Outcome: Board awareness of National Fish Habitat Fund recent activities and progress to date

Background:

In November 2014, the NFHP Board approved National Fish Habitat Fund, Inc. Board of Directors (Federal members abstained). Board Officers were selected during the January call of the National Fish Habitat Fund Board. The officers that were selected are as follows: Kelly Hepler (South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks) – Chair; Rich Rosengren (The Nature Conservancy, retired) – Secretary; Matt Menashes (Society of American Foresters) – Treasurer; Jon Johnson (Sustainability Consortium, University of Arkansas) – Vice-Chair. The rest of the Board is comprised of Steve Moyer (TU), Dick Ludington (The Conservation Fund, retired; La Foresta Plantacion; and Carbon Ceramics Company, LLC), Mike Andrews (The Nature Conservancy), and Johnny LeCoq (Fish Pond, LLC).

Update:

The National Fish Habitat Fund has submitted paperwork to the IRS for 501(c)(3) status on an expedited track. The Fund's BOD will meet in-person in July to discuss the following anticipated items:

- Fundraising Approach
- Coordination with Fish Habitat Partnerships and fundraising
- Fundraising materials and messaging
- Coordination between Beyond the Pond and Fish Habitat Partnerships

Title: Multistate Conservation Grant Program Update

Desired outcome: Board awareness of the status of the NFHP Multistate Grant Letter of Intent (LOI) and approach to the full grant application for 2016 funding.

Background:

In January, the NFHP Staff worked with the Partnership Committee to survey the FHPs on approach to the Multistate Conservation Grant Program. Based on the results of this survey, the Committee and Staff jointly recommended a regional geographic approach for a grant application and a 3-year grant proposal, similar to the approach in 2013-2015. These and other recommendations were approved by the Board at its March meeting.

Update:

Board staff worked with the FHPs to develop deliverables for a LOI and submitted the LOI (below) to the National Grants Committee coordinator at AFWA to be submitted under the AFWA National Conservation Need (NCN) 2: Strengthening the National Fish Habitat Partnership. 11 FHPs have indicated their interest in having projects funded under this grant, including (Hawaii, ORBFHP, SARP, EBTJV, ACFHP, PMP, CFPP, DFHP, WNTI and Mat-Su/Kenai FHP (however all 4 AK FHPs are in support). The grant is seeking \$300,000 for the partnership projects for 2016 and will re-apply for years 2017 and 2018.

The National Grants Committee will invite the applicants with the most competitive LOIs to submit a Full Grant Proposal. Applicants will be notified in early July (date TBA) whether they are invited to submit a full proposal. Full Grant Proposals will likely be due in early August. More information on the Multistate Conservation Grant Program can be found here:

http://www.fishwildlife.org/files/2016-MSCGP-Funding-Opportunity_LOI-Guidelines.pdf

The (AFWA) National Grants Committee is comprised of the following members:

Vice President of the Association (Chair)

Chair of Executive Committee (Vice Chair)

Chair of Fish and Wildlife Trust Funds Committee

Vice Chair of Executive Committee

Western Regional Association President (or designee)

Northeast Regional Association President (or designee)

Midwest Regional Association President (or designee)

Southeast Regional Association President (or designee)

**2016 Multistate Conservation Grant Program
Letter of Intent**

Executive Summary

Applicant Information

1. **Full Legal Name of Organization:** National Fish Habitat Board. If awarded, the grant will be administered on behalf of the National Fish Habitat Board by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, 444 North Capitol Street NW, Suite 725, Washington DC, 20001
2. **Brief Description of Organization:** The 22-member Board was established to promote, oversee and coordinate the National Fish Habitat Partnership and implementation of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan.

The Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (Association) represents North America's state, provincial and territorial fish and wildlife agencies to advance sound, science-based management and conservation of fish and wildlife and their habitats in the public interest. The Association provides member agencies with coordination services, as well as species-based programs that range from birds, fish habitat and energy development to climate change, wildlife action plans, conservation education, leadership training and international relations.

3. **Organization Website URL:** www.fishhabitat.org
4. **Lead Applicant's Contact Information:**
Mr. Kelly Hepler, Secretary, South Dakota Game Fish & Parks
Chair, National Fish Habitat Board
c/o Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
444 North Capitol Street NW, Suite 725
Washington, DC 20001
Email: Kelly.hepler@state.sd.gov
Phone Number: 605-773-3718
5. **Name and Affiliation of Co-Investigators(s)/Partner(s) (if applicable):**
[Gary Whelan, Michigan Department of Natural Resources](#)
[Ryan Roberts, National Fish Habitat Board Communications Coordinator](#)
6. **Have you applied for MSCGP funding before?** Yes
7. **If yes, was/were your previous proposal(s) funded?** Yes, most.
8. **Date(s) of Previous Applications(s) (if applicable):** 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011, 2010, 2007

Program Eligibility

9. **Organization Information.**

- a. **Applicant Classification:** Nongovernmental Organization
- b. **Nongovernmental Organization Classification:** 501(c)(6)

10. **State Benefit Requirement:** The outcomes of this project will benefit all 50 states

11. **States Benefitted:**

- a. States: 50 States

12. **Primary National Conservation Need (NCN) Addressed:** NCN 2: Strengthening the National Fish Habitat Partnership

13. **Terms and Conditions.** *Use of MSCGP Grants - All applicants must ensure that their proposed project does not fund, in whole or in part, an activity that promotes or encourages opposition to the regulated hunting or trapping of wildlife or taking of sport fish.* "I agree with the above terms and conditions."

Project Information

14. **Project Title:** Advancing the objectives of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan through regional and collaborative science and priority setting.

15. **Project Length:** 3 years. **Will re-apply for year 2&3 funding.**

16. **Funding Source:** 100% Sport Fish Restoration Fund

17. **Funding Requested: \$300,000** (seeking in 2016)

Seeking in 2017 (\$250,000)

Seeking in 2018 (\$250,000)

3 year total: (\$800,000)

18. **Estimate of Partnership Funds/Existing Assets to be Leveraged (if applicable)**

It is estimated that this grant will likely leverage \$100,000 of in-kind services provided by states and federal agencies in collaboration on this grant.

19. **One Paragraph Description of Project (main objectives and anticipated outcomes)**

Through regional collaboration, Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHP) will compile biological and watershed process-level information on fish habitats to meet FHP needs and supplement the National Fish Habitat Assessment; establish new or improved strategic goals, objectives, and priorities for conserving fish species and habitats; expand the scope of partners complementary projects; and develop best management practices for implementing fish habitat conservation actions across the U.S.

Project Narrative and Budget

Objectives/Goals

Priority information needs identified by FHPs vary across regions, several of which this project will help address. In Hawaii this grant will support improving hydrography data, building upon an assessment of island estuaries and developing freshwater flow and sediment yield variability on nearshore coastal habitats. In the Midwest, this grant will help launch a basin-wide mussel initiative in the Ohio River Basin incorporating this key group of aquatic species into existing habitat assessment work. In the East, this grant will help achieve measurable habitat conservation results through strategic actions of the Eastern Fish Habitat Partnerships that improve ecological condition, restore natural processes, or prevent the decline of intact and healthy systems leading to better fish habitat conditions and increased angling opportunities through habitat improvement projects implemented by the regional fish habitat partnerships. Overall, this grant will substantially improve data resources that are required set restoration and protection priorities for aquatic habitats across the U.S. This project would address several of those needs, ensuring the continued progress that the FHPs are making on the ground and enhanced greatly recently by Multistate Conservation Grants.

Through regional collaboration among FHPs, this grant will:

- Collectively advance FHP habitat assessments through identification of mutual data needs, data acquisition and landscape-level analysis for the benefit of fish, mussels, and other aquatic animals;
- Provide region and system-specific fish population, habitat, and human impact data to fill regional data gaps and to assist the Board's Science & Data Committee in the continual improvement of the National Status of Fish Habitats Report;
- Help achieve conservation results through strategic actions that improve the ecological condition of intact systems, rehabilitate natural processes in systems currently degraded, or prevent the decline of intact and healthy systems leading to better fish habitat conditions, increased numbers of self-sustaining fish populations, and increased fishing opportunities; and
- Allow further critical collaboration to occur among FHPs on projects and initiatives, especially in regions with shared habitat and species interests amongst partners.

Outcomes/Benefits

The National Fish Habitat Partnership brings a focused and coordinated approach to conserving, rehabilitating, and enhancing the nation's aquatic habitats under the objectives of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. This proposal strengthens that approach by linking the oversight responsibility of the Board and the operational responsibility of the FHPs to achieve national and regional science and data driven conservation goals.

In general, this project will support activities of the Fish Habitat Partnerships that will help to achieve four of the objectives in the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, 2nd Edition:

1. *Achieve measurable habitat conservation results* through strategic actions of Fish Habitat Partnerships that improve ecological condition, restore natural processes, or prevent the decline of intact and healthy systems leading to better fish habitat conditions and increased fishing opportunities.
2. *Broaden the community of support for fish habitat conservation* by increasing fishing opportunities, fostering the participation of local communities – especially young people – in conservation activities, and raising public awareness of the role healthy fish habitats play in the quality of life and well-being of local communities.
3. *Fill gaps in the National Fish Habitat Assessment* and its associated database to empower strategic conservation action supported by broadly available scientific information, and integrate socio-economic data in the analysis to improve people's lives in a manner consistent with fish habitat conservation goals.
4. *Communicate the conservation outcomes* produced collectively by Fish Habitat Partnerships, as well as new opportunities and voluntary approaches for conserving fish habitat, to the public and conservation partners.

More specifically, the project will:

- Improve strategic prioritization of conservation actions and reporting of outcomes by FHPs across the United States.
- In three eastern Fish Habitat Partnerships, develop and implement connectivity teams in participating FHPs. Collectively define and communicate the scientific basis of river restoration through connectivity improvement throughout the Eastern U.S.. Develop, update and share connectivity assessment tools and resources specific to FHP state needs.
- In Alaska, the Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership (KPFHP) and the Mat Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership will assist the US Geological Survey (USGS) in the development of the National Hydrography Dataset (NHD+) in Southcentral Alaska. This data is imperative for FHPs to fully implement a complete fish habitat assessment and make sound science-based conservation decisions.
- In the Midwest, a basin-wide Mussel Initiative will be implemented in the Ohio River Basin (ORB) that will cover 9 states. This initiative will look to broaden partner involvement in the Ohio River Basin and identify challenges, opportunities, and path forward for the protection and restoration of mussel populations in the ORB that has large implications for water quality and fish populations in this area.
- In the West, continue a successful collaboration between the Western Native Trout Initiative and Desert Fish Habitat Partnership to complete an integrated aquatic assessment in the Rio Grande Basin in FY16.
- In Hawaii, build upon a newly developed spatial framework and habitat assessment for island estuaries and also develop freshwater flow and sediment yield variability model for nearshore coastal habitats across Hawaii that will greatly inform decisions on priority habitat work.
- Enhance regional aquatic habitat condition assessments and landscape-scale conservation design for coastal habitats on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts (including Hawaii), coldwater habitats in the Appalachians and interior west, and the southeastern United States through cooperative efforts of FHPs by developing new process level and fisheries datasets.

- In California, the CA Fish Passage Forum will continue to refine APASS Optimized Fish Passage Barrier Prioritization Tool. This will further describe habitat quality attributes, document unknown barriers and develop improved cost criteria to enhance the utility and reliability of APASS barrier optimization algorithms and support maintenance and operation of California’s Fish Passage Assessment Database. The Forum will also initiate developing a stream temperature network database for California as well as using a temperature-based stream habitat estimation methodology to understand current conditions and model scenarios with variable temperature regimes, an issue that has become increasingly important with long-term drought.
- The Pacific Marine and Estuarine Partnership will convene West Coast scientists and biologists to develop an improved inshore fisheries spatial framework will be the foundation for inshore-offshore fisheries management, oil spills, and a variety of other uses. A West Coast-wide classification and inventory of fish and habitat databases will be improved, including the collection, attribution and assimilation of fish and habitat datasets for the West Coast, and chart the course for next steps in achieving FHP strategic plan goals associated with identifying and prioritizing juvenile fish habitat on the West Coast.

Budget

Salary	
Benefits	
Contract	270,000.00
Total	<u>270,000.00</u>
Indirect on sub-recipients	30,000.00
Indirect on personnel costs	
Grand Total	<u><u>300,000.00</u></u>

Qualifications

Kelly Hepler, Chairman, National Fish Habitat Board

Kelly Hepler was named the Secretary of South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks Department in January 2015. Mr. Hepler worked for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game from 1979 - 2014 as a fisheries biologist and held increasingly complex positions throughout his career. In Alaska, Mr. Hepler served as director of the Division of Sport Fish and was a special assistant to the Commissioner. Mr. Hepler holds a B.S. in Fish and Wildlife Management from Montana State University.

Ryan Roberts, Communications Coordinator, National Fish Habitat Board

Ryan Roberts is the Communications Coordinator for the National Fish Habitat Partnership. Mr. Roberts has 8 years of experience in public relations/communications and has worked on the National Fish Habitat Partnership since 2008. Mr. Roberts created several communications toolkits for use by National Fish Habitat Partnerships and created an overall communications strategy for the partnership. Mr. Roberts’ contributions were key in the development and release of the Status of Fish Habitat Partnership 2010 Assessment and the 2nd Edition of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (2012).

Gary Whelan, NFHP Board Science and Data Committee Co-Chair

Gary Whelan is one of the two co-chairs of the NFHP Board Science and Data Committee and has worked on NFHP since its inception. Mr. Whelan is a Program Manager for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources – Fisheries Division where he manages the Research Section and a Habitat Management Unit. His fisheries career has spanned over 32 years and he has worked in nearly every aspect of fisheries in the State of Michigan. In his role for NFHP, he has been responsible for all of the Board’s Science and Data efforts including the development and release of the Status of Fish Habitat Partnership 2010 and 2015 Assessments. He was also deeply involved in the development of the 1st (2006) and the 2nd Editions of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (2012). Mr. Whelan holds a B.S. in Zoology (Fisheries Management focus) from the University of Wyoming and a M.S. in Fisheries Management from the University of Missouri.

Staff level leadership and management support of the work of the Board group will be provided by AFWA, USFWS, NOAA, state agencies and other partners such as NGO’s.

National Fish Habitat Board Members <http://fishhabitat.org/contacts/board>

Title: Communications Committee Update

Desired outcome: Board awareness of the Communications Committee's 2015 work plan progress.

Background: The Communications Committee with Board approval announced the following projects on May 12 as the 2015 "Waters to Watch":

1. Alexander Creek Watershed, AK
Partnership: Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership
2. Kasilof and Anchor River Watersheds, AK
Partnership: Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership
3. Kilchis Estuary, OR
Partnership: Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership
4. Lake Livingston, TX
Partnership: Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership
5. Lower Heeia Stream Habitat Improvement Project, Oahu (HI)
Partnership: Hawaii Fish Habitat Partnership
6. Mill Creek Restoration, WV
Partnership: Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture
7. Pinole Creek, CA
Partnership: California Fish Passage Forum
8. Shoshone Springs Pupfish Habitat Project, CA
Partnership: Desert Fish Habitat Partnership
9. Sun Creek, OR
Partnership: Western Native Trout Initiative
10. Ulele Springs on the Hillsborough River, FL
Partnership: Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership

The project reports and summaries were coordinated among the members of the Communications Committee, FHPs and Partnership Committee Chairs. The Communications Committee utilized a press release service (through AFWA) called Meltwater and we were able to send the release to over 200 reporters, editors and bloggers. Follow-up on these projects will continue with these media outlets throughout the year. Progress reports on "Waters to Watch" projects are anticipated in August and November 2015. 2015 Waters to Watch Resources can be found at www.fishhabitat.org

2015 Work Plan Update:

Continue building database for newsletter distribution to increase engagement with partner coalition.

Utilize AFWA to reach out to State Fish and Wildlife Agencies to increase engagement.

- We will continue to grow database at events throughout 2015. NFHP continues to be a priority of AFWA Fisheries related committees. Quarterly conference calls have been established in 2015 with State Fish Chiefs and the US FWS on a variety of matters. NFHP has been a topic of conversation on these calls with Fish Chiefs.

Increase usage of video and further campaign to document work of Fish Habitat Partnerships.

- Pinole Creek project will be documented in October of 2015. The Communications Committee is also planning for one additional project documentation in late summer 2015.

NFHP website re-development.

- Communications coordinator has explored several options with website development and maintenance companies, while keeping in mind National Fish Habitat Fund Branding and overall NFHP Branding. Redeveloped site would be launched in late 2014/early 2015.

Establish a regular schedule of meetings for the communications committee and work to include more FHP members on the committee.

- Communications Coordinator has reached out to individuals gauging their interest in being on the committee. Second Call of Committee will be held in August.

Review and make any needed changes to the communications strategy (Board approved 2011 and updated in 2013) to ensure that it remains a guide for committee work and maintained as a living document.

- The Communications Strategy will be revised for Board approval in October of 2015.

Broaden the visibility of the 10 Waters to Watch Campaign as a means to tell the story and increase awareness of FHP efforts to conserve fish habitat and consider prioritizing outreach to younger generations through social media and smart phones

- The National Fish Habitat Partnership has crafted messages and campaigns, in particular the Waters to Watch campaign, to reach young people through social media and in particular the use of hashtags. Also, several of our habitat news stories that are curated through Scoop.it to the fishhabitat.org website are youth conservation initiatives.

Additional related activities:

National Fish Habitat Awards 2015 Update.

- We are seeking an agreement again to work with AFS on sponsoring the awards. We are tentatively scheduled to have the awards presented in the fall.

Continue coordination with legislative affairs team in supporting developments of the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act.

- Communications coordinator has been part of Legislative Affairs meetings as National Fish Habitat Conservation Act is being developed for 2015. Fact sheet has been updated and project sheets have been developed for members of the Legislative Affairs team.

Title: Science and Data Committee Update

Desired outcome: Board awareness of the Science and Data Committee's 2015 work plan progress

1. Demonstration of 2015 Assessment Online Report (Presentation by Daniel Wieferich, USGS)

Priority Task L: Develop coordinated delivery of the 2015 assessment, including adding new online capabilities to help partners and stakeholders understand and best use the new National Assessment data and products.

Background: At the January 2015 meeting, the Board approved the 2015 National Assessment Report development plan which included a web designer. The U.S. Geological Survey Aquatic GAP Program has prepared a proof-of-concept demonstration of an interactive website product for the 2015 National Assessment.

The functionality of the website is modeled after the 2014 National Climate Assessment (<http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/>). The demonstration uses some existing content from the 2010 National Assessment report and the NFHP Data System to illustrate how the web site could serve multiple audiences with varying degrees of detail.

To date, the response from SDC members has been positive for using an online interactive reporting method. The SDC will consider any feedback from the Board on a July 2015 conference call and provide guidance to the USGS development team with regard to the build-out of the product.

On a related note, the SDC has been successful in finding a National Assessment Report Author/Editor, Mr. Steven Crawford (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, very recently retired). Mr. Crawford was the former manager of the Commission's Research Section and has extensive writing and editing experience. We are very pleased to have been able to acquire his services to assist in this major effort.

Desired outcomes: *Board understanding* of the likely format of the 2015 National Assessment Report. *Board input* on the demonstrated report format.

2. Action Plan Objective 1: Achieve Measurable Habitat Conservation Results

Priority Task E: Continue development of standard effectiveness measures for conservation actions used to address nationwide fish habitat focus areas

Background: There is broad consensus that evaluating and reporting on the effectiveness of conservation actions of the National Fish Habitat Partnership is important. The Board has always desired measurements of NFHP project that measure both the habitat and fisheries changes that result along with the accounting of the work being conducted and funds expended (i.e. number of dams removed). While project accounting is straight forward, there is, however, lack of consensus about how many projects should be

examined, the types of outcomes that should be measured and the appropriate scales of evaluation. It is acknowledged that it is not cost effective to measure the resource results of every project but the development of appropriate system and project classifications is needed to allow proper sampling strata to be implemented. Similarly, the spatial and temporal extents of resource effects from project implementation need to be developed. At one end of the spectrum, effectiveness could be defined as the amount of habitat and fish populations directly improved or protected by a local action. At the other end of the spectrum, effectiveness could be defined as the measured effect on basin-wide or even regional fish populations.

At the November Board Meeting, discussions were initiated with the American Fisheries Society and its Habitat Section on collaborating to develop a set of local-scale metrics that could be applied to describe the effectiveness of tangible Partnership projects. The proposed approach would be to: (1) to develop appropriate sampling strata to allow subsampling of all similar projects and systems; (2) identify types, or classes of habitat restoration, enhancement, and protection activities; and (3) to develop “best practices” guidelines for describing the effectiveness of each class of projects to include temporal and spatial bounds for sampling. For example, a project that eliminated fish passage barriers might report on number of stream miles made accessible and appropriate measures of fish population improvement that occurred as a result over an agreed upon timeframe. Similarly, a stream restoration project might report on stream length rehabilitated to a target condition and appropriate measures of fish population improvement that occurred as a result over an agreed upon timeframe.

At the Science and Data Committee (SDC) Meeting in April 2015, the SDC began discussion on how to develop consistent evaluation protocols. Some of the key messages from the discussion were: 1) this effort should be a joint effort between the SDC, FHPs, and AFS; 2) a stratified approach should be used and the amount of evaluation should depend on the project scope and the development of criteria for specific classes of projects is appropriate; 3) audits should be done through the Project Tracking Database; and 4) minimum levels of evaluation should be developed by project class/scope and using existing FHP methods.

Discussions are beginning between the American Fisheries Society and the Board Science and Data Committee to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to move this effort forward as approved by the Board in March. Given the discussions at the SDC meeting, there will be a need to engage the Partnership Committee in this effort and discussions will be initiated between the SDC and Partnership Committee. It is expected to have a draft MOU ready either for the October or January Board Meeting.

Desired outcome: *Information* - Update the Board on the progress on the Project Effectiveness Measures.

3. Action Plan Objective 4: Fill in Gaps in the National Fish Habitat Assessment and its Associated Database

Priority Task K: Examine and review National Assessment products produced by Marine and Inland Assessment Teams along with activities underway by the Fish Habitat Partnerships and Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs).

Status - No issues to report. The National Assessments are in preparation and the writing team expects products by July. Draft products were reviewed by the Science and Data Committee at their April 15-16 meeting in San Marcos, Texas. No significant issues were seen at that time in the products presented. Overall, we are about 1-2 months behind the initial schedule for the Assessment Report but still expect to be able to make the report available next March at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference.

Desired outcome: *Information - Board understanding of 2015 National Assessment status.*

Priority Task N: Refine and update fisheries, aquatic nuisance and invasive species, dam inventory, land conservation status, and water quality status information as data become available.

No issues to report and improved products in the above areas will be incorporated into the new Assessment Report.

Priority Task O: Improve river fragmentation analyses and national calculation of fragmentation metrics and initiate development of lakesheds and lake assessments.

No issues to report.

Priority Task P: Evaluate approaches to improve hydrology and temperature incorporation and to refine the marine-inland linkages between the inland and marine assessments

No issues to report. Additional work on marine-inland linkages will not be completed until the 2020 National Assessment.

Priority Task Q: Refine and improve the 2010 National Marine Assessment by incorporating updated datasets; complete a full assessment of estuaries in the northern Gulf of Mexico; continue data collection, processing, and initial analysis for West Coast estuaries

No issues to report and report products are expected to the writing team in July.

Priority Task R: Conduct Science and Data Outreach to FHPs, LCCs, Board, and other key audiences.

Gary Whelan met with the SE AK FHP (May 19) to discuss a range of issues including the National Assessment. Additionally, Gary provided a NFHP presentation at the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society on May 21 to build additional bridges in Tribal lands concerning NFHP and gave National Assessment updates at the AFWA Ocean Policy and Fisheries and Water Resources Committee Meetings and the American Fisheries Society – Administration Meeting during the week of March 9. Gary will open the NFHP Symposium at the upcoming Annual AFS Meeting on August 19 and give a separate presentation in a different symposium on the same day highlighting the issues of having inconsistent data in building national habitat assessments. The 1.5 day NFHP symposium will inform AFS members of our National and FHP Assessment products along with how their results are being applied in fisheries conservation planning and implementation.

Desired outcome: *Information - Board awareness* of the status of the NFHP National Assessments and Outreach efforts.

4. Science and Data Committee Meeting Update

The Science and Data Committee (SDC) convened a face to face meeting in San Marcos, TX on April 15 and 16, hosted by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (a big thanks to Tim Birdsong and his staff). Approximately 50% of the committee attended in person with a few others remotely. The meeting focused on reviewing the draft products of the Inland and Marine Assessment Teams lead by Dr. Dana Infante (Michigan State University) and Kristan Blackhart (NOAA Fisheries), respectively. The Committee also began work on examining how to develop project effectiveness measures, data sharing agreements, and examined the Project Tracking Database. A workgroup has been formed to assist Robin Carlson (PSMFC) with refinement and development of a future workplan for the Project Tracking Database based on a request made at the SDC Meeting.

Overall, the SDC was pleased with the products developed to date and only one item remained to be considered, the best way to score river segments given the options presented by Dr. Wes Daniel at the meeting. This will be determined during the SDC June Conference Call.

The SDC recommended that the following items be considered for inclusion in the Assessment Report:

- Executive summary
- Introduction – Similar to the National Wetlands Status and Trends Report
 - Why report is being written and the intended uses of the report
 - 2010 Background – What is new
 - Action Plan language from 2010 report
 - Why fish habitat matters – Ecological, Social and Economic – Healthy Habitat = Healthy Fisheries = Healthy People
 - Conditions of the watershed reflects in the water
 - What does a healthy water look like and what do impaired

- Population – 1/3 people live near red waters
 - Photos of waters with different scores
 - Including some discussion of the costs of impaired waters
 - Cost of eutrophication - \$2.2 billion dollars
 - Economics of fisheries – USFWS and NOAA – Stock building report
- Methods
 - General approach (landscape approach) and methods with compare and contrasts
 - Geographic scale
 - Stressors examples
 - Multiple fish species used
 - Links to detailed publications
 - Discuss differences between inland and coastal assessments
- Results – Key Messages and we need a good title to catch attention
 - National overall trends
 - Regional key disturbances
 - Change metric likely to show move negative
 - Why negative and positive
 - Positive not mapped
 - Keep regional context for all sections – Lower 48, AK, HI
 - Case histories highlighting issues
 - FHP efforts should be included showing habitat work
 - 10 waters to watch highlights
 - Purple waters - successes with projects
 - Red waters – Why red with rehab projects
 - Any changed areas should be noted
 - FHP Assessment summaries – 1 page summaries in similar format with links would be best with the following as possibilities and there are likely other FHP work to be considered.
 - SARP connectivity work leading to dam removals
 - PMEP and ACFHP
 - MGLFHP
 - EBTJV
 - Great Lakes Assessment
 - WNTI
 - Lessons Learned, Future Direction and Challenges
 - Case studies of data needed – We would love to have them and use them
 - Study of SAV vs. fish
 - Temperature and flow data
 - Future for lakes, reservoirs, and other aquatic species (e.g. mussels, crayfish, stoneflies)
 - Bridging inland and marine assessment scores

- Discussing if and how other geographic areas could be included such as the other islands other than HI, arctic AK, Canada and Mexico
 - How to measure change and show change in future – Conservation success measurement
 - Further call for action to address gaps
 - Future changes – Vulnerabilities and climate change
 - Socioeconomics – Link items to existing issues
- Section on what the report can tell and cannot tell us
- Options and Recommendations - Separate document to the Board
 - Further call for action
 - Bring items from above into here
 - Items needed to improve 2020 report
- FAQs – Bullets of key points that can be used in the Executive Summary and Public Outreach efforts
 - Major trends

Committee members expressed a strong need for continued at minimum annual face-to-face meetings for the Committee both to improve working relationships and Committee effectiveness as the work completed at this meeting was clearly many times more efficient than work accomplished in the monthly SDC call. While the monthly SDC calls certainly help move SDC work forward and keep information flowing, all attendees made it clear that this annual face-to-face meeting was many times as effective and was critical to continue.

- **Desired outcome:** *Information - Board awareness* of the NFHP Science and Data Committee activities and the continued need for, at minimum, 1 face-to-face committee meeting annually to maintain energy and initiative in Science and Data Committee work.

Title: LCC Council Update

Desired outcome: Board awareness of NFHP participation on the LCC Council and topics discussed at March LCC Council meeting.

Background: The purpose of the LCC (Landscape Conservation Cooperatives) Council is to support the cooperative conservation and sustainable resource management efforts of the LCC Network, to assist the LCC Network in achieving its goals, to contribute to building a constituency of partners, and to help sustain the LCC initiative. The Council consists of Federal, state, tribal, non-governmental, and other representatives including NFHP. Mike Andrews participated in the Council's inaugural meeting on behalf of the NFHP Board (February 2014) and Ryan Roberts participated on behalf of the NFHP Board at its June 2014 meeting.

Update: Tom Champeau attended the most recent LCC Council meeting (March 2015) on behalf of the NFHP Board. Major agenda items included: an update on a National Academy of Sciences Review; presentation and discussion of the LCC Network Strategic Plan; presentations and brainstorming discussion on LCC partnerships; presentation and discussion on funding, leveraging, and the President's FY16 budget request for LCCs; and presentation and discussion on the National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy. Collaboration between LCCs and FHPs is going on throughout the country decreasing fiscal and manpower costs to develop science and data, design and implement projects, and conduct follow-up monitoring. The key to expanding collaboration is encouraging overlapping LCCs and FHPs to regularly communicate and develop shared goals and objectives. LCC and NFHP share the purpose of developing partnerships to implement strategic conservation projects at the landscape level that benefit terrestrial, aquatic, estuarine, and marine resources. With good communication and cooperation, these programs can effectively complement each other. The next Council meeting will be in October at the SEAFWA Conference in Asheville.

Reference Materials: More on the LCC Council can be found at <http://lccnetwork.org/Council>