National Fish Habitat Board Meeting Summary: April 17-18, 2012

Members Present:

Kelly Hepler (AK DFG- Chair)
Steve Perry (NH FGD/ NEAFWA– Vice Chair)
Stan Allen (PSMFC)– for Randy Fischer
Mike Andrews (TNC)
Jim Estes (SC DNC/SEAFWA - phone) – for Nick Wiley
Brad Gentner (Gentner Consulting Group/CCA)
Rowan Gould (US FWS)– for Dan Ashe
Chris Horton (Congressional Sportsmens Foundation)
Joe Larscheid (IA DNR/MAFWA– phone)
Stan Moberly (Northwest Marine Technology/AFS)
Steve Moyer (TU) – for Chris Wood
Sam Rauch (NOAA Fisheries)
Gordon Robertson (ASA) – Alyssa Hausman (alternate)
Mike Stone (WY GFD/WAFWA)
Krystyna Wolniakowski (NFWF)
Anne Zimmerman (US FS)

Members Absent:

Ron Regan (AFWA), Fred Matt (Native American FW Society), Bob Mahood (SAFMC), Doug Boyd (SFBPC)

Key Discussion Items:

- Board make-up: Board members expressed support for further exploring corporate partnerships including Walmart and also recommended:
  - Developing a broader strategy for partnering with corporations before committing to Board membership for any single corporation.
  - Consider the full range of options for partnering with corporations (including Board membership and through other relationships).
  - Inviting Walmart's sustainability committee to the October 2012 Board meeting.
  - Reviving an annual review by the Executive Leadership Team of Board membership.

- 10-Waters-to-Watch: Board members discussed the need to strengthen the value of the 10-Waters-to Watch. Specific recommendations included:
  - Following up with past projects, including more footage and photos.
  - Use projects to develop messages for a general awareness campaign about NFHP.

- Board Priorities: The Board agreed to assign approved priorities and action plan objectives to existing Board committees or create new committees where necessary. Confirmed committees and Board membership to include:
  - Krystyna Wolniakowski, Ann Zimmerman, and Steve Moyer to lead new Funding Committee
  - Kelly Hepler and Mike Andrews to lead a new Conservation Committee
  - Tom Busiahn and Steve Perry to lead a Partnership Committee
  - Joe Larsheid and Stan Allen will continue to provide Board leadership support to the Science and Data Committee Co-Chairs.
  - Chris Horton will provide Board leadership support to the Communications Committee which will also include Erica Stock from WNTI.
  - Gordon Robertson and Steve Moyer will continue to provide Board leadership to the Legislative team.

  The focus of each committee and/or team is described in the 2012 Board Priorities Team and Committee Assignments document (see below in "Board approved policy and/or technical documents").

- Action Plan: Board members discussed the timeline for completing the Action Plan and made the following suggestions and recommendations:
  - The action plan should look like a strategy that can be used as a basis for setting agency priorities and making funding allocations.

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- The "Case for Action" should include more economic justification.
- The Board would like two weeks for review and requested time for FHP and partner review.
- The Communications committee should develop concise messaging about the Action Plan that targets groups that are already part of the partnership (vs. the general public).

- Science and Data: The Board received an update on the timeline for completing a strategy for the 2015 National Assessment. The Science and Data Committee plans to send to the FHP, Board, and Board staff by May 5. Comments will be due by June 5. Final revision will be available for Board review in late June and approval and the July 2012 Board meeting. The Board also received the following updates and requests for action:
  - Approval of Science and Data Committee Terms of Reference
  - Update on Project Tracking project. The Board expressed interest in seeing economics data reflected in the Project Tracking System.
  - Effectiveness Measures: the Science and Data committee presented a proposal for tackling effectiveness measures that the Board will take up for action in July.

- Western Native Trout Initiative Presentation on strategies to leverage resources.

- Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture Presentation on measuring success at different scales.

- Restoring Fish Passage While Disaster-Proofing Communities generated interest from Board for FHPs to get involved with large-scale planning efforts to affect habitat outcomes.

- Performance Evaluation: The Board received an update on the test drive for evaluating FHP performance. The final report and recommendations will be available to the Board for approval in July. The Board asked:
  - What options does the Board have when an FHP is a high or low performer?
  - Is there an across the board measure that all FHPs struggled with that should be addressed by the Board.

- Multi-State Conservation Grants: The Board discussed the opportunities for better coordinating the competition for Multi-State Conservation Grants dollars that support national and FHP-specific NFHP science and data needs. The Board agreed to seek preliminary input from FHPs to assess possible commonalities across FHP needs and to inform the development of a broadly worded Letter of Intent by the May 11 deadline. The Board would like to be involved in the development of a possible full proposal.

- Fish and Wildlife Service Funding: The FWS provided a report to the Board on the status of NFHP funding managed by the FWS including:
  - Current funding level remains at $7.1M.
  - Since 2007, FWS has requested cumulatively $35M.
  - The FWS is looking into a more rationalized approach to funding the partnerships in 2013.

- Communications Team update: The Board received an update on communication team plans to expand the use of social media platforms, complete the website update, use the newly signed Interagency MOU to build NFHP messaging, and opportunities to build a grassroots network.

- Legislation: There is a potential opportunity for NFHP legislation to be included in a larger sportsman package. There may also be opportunities to approach Congressman Dix with a legacy opportunity.

- Interagency Memorandum of Understanding: The Board received an update on the recent signing and implementation of the interagency Memorandum of Understanding between Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and Interior. The MOU includes a requirement for each agency to report progress to its Secretary every other year beginning in September 2012. The Board recognized this report as an opportunity to establish a baseline understanding of Federal agency support for NFHP and elevate recognition of NFHAP and the Board's role to the departments.

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- Landscape Conservation Cooperatives: Within the FWS, there is growing pressure from the Hill and OMB to demonstrate shared conservation delivery and planning across landscape- and ecosystem-level programs. OMB is interested in fewer species-based silos in the FWS budget and more outcomes based on collaborative goals. Within the FWS budget, LCCs may be a connector across Joint Ventures and NFHP. The Habitat Conservation Committee will serve as a bridge to ensure NFHP conservation goals are reflected in FWS efforts to respond to OMB and Congressional budget concerns about landscape and ecosystem-level programs

- NOAA's Habitat Blueprint: NOAA has also received questions about coordinated outcomes and goals across all of NOAA's habitat programs from the Hill and OMB. The Habitat Blueprint is NOAA's strategy to better align NOAA's habitat-related programs, position habitat as a fisheries tool more prominently within NOAA and demonstrate the impact and value of these habitat programs. With NOAA's recent success in addressing overfishing, NOAA is looking ahead to habitat as the next big opportunity to support sustainable fisheries. With this strategy NOAA will be better able to support NFHP.

- NFWF/NOAA Funding opportunity: NFWF updated the Board on the funding opportunity for coastal habitat protection projects. Pre-proposals are due May 1 and Board members are welcome to review them.

Motions Approved by consensus:

- Agenda and January 2012 conference call Minutes: Approved.
- 2013 Board meeting dates: Approved (see list below).
- 2012 Board Priorities Team and Committee Assignments: Approved
- Science and Data Committee Terms of Reference and Operation: Approved

Action items:

- Joe Starinchak will discuss possible partnership with Walmart at upcoming "National Behavior Change Campaign" meeting.
- Agenda for the July 2012 Board meeting should include:
  - Executive Leadership Team annual review.
  - Report from Committee/Team leads on annual workplans.
  - Proposal for Board action on developing effectiveness measures.
  - Proposal for Board action on the FHP Performance Evaluation Report.
  - Discussion of Multi-State Conservation Grant full proposal.
  - Update from Federal Caucus plans for first MOU report.
- Board staff should revisit the "Case for Action" in the updated Action Plan in light of Board comments.
- The Communications committee should:
  - Develop concise messaging about the Action Plan that targets groups that are already part of the partnership (vs. the general public).
  - Develop a general awareness campaign that includes key messages illustrated by 10-Waters-to Watch project results and outcomes for the general public.
- Board staff will provide the Board with a draft of the Multi-State-Conservation Grant Letter of Intent.
- Federal Caucus will consider opportunities for collaboration around carbon sequestration.

Future 2012 meetings:

- July 10 and 11 – Portland, ME
- October 16-17 – Table Rock Lake, MO

Future 2013 meetings:

- January 16 – 2pm eastern time conference call
- February 26 and 27 – Arlington, VA

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- June 25-26 – Southeast (TBD)

Board approved policy and/or technical documents:

- 2012 Board Priorities Team and Committee Assignments
- Science and Data Committee Terms of Reference and Operation

Additional attendees:

Karen Abrams, NOAA-HQ and Board staff
Tom Busiahn, FWS-HQ and Board staff
Ryan Roberts, AFWA and Board Communications Director
Gary Whelan, MI DNR, Co-chair, Science and Data Committee
Andrea Ostroff, USGS, Co-chair, Science and Data Committee

Mitch Bergeson, USFWS
Thomas Bigford, NOAA-NMFS
Maureen Gallagher, FWS-Midwest Region
Jamie Geiger, USFWS-Northeast Region
Nat Gillespie, USFS
Emily Green, ACFHP
Mark Hudy, USFS
Linda Kelsey, USFWS

Robin Knox, Western Native Trout Initiative
Terra Lederhouse, NOAA-NMFS
Stafford Lehr, CA DFG
Kara Meckley, NOAA-NMFS
Rick Murphree, Trout Unlimited
Moe Nelson, NOAA-NOS
Scott Robinson, SARP
Chris Savage, USFS –Western Office
Joe Starinchak, FWS-HQ
Erica Stock, Western Native Trout Initiative
Ben Thatcher, USFWS
Todd Turner, USFWS-Midwest Region
Amy Unthank, USFS
Susan Wells, USFWS

By telephone:
Jeff Boxrucker – Reservoir FHP

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