NFHP Federal Agency Accomplishments Report

In March 2012, the Secretaries of Agriculture, Commerce, and the Interior signed a memorandum of understanding to promote collaborative, science-based conservation of the nation's waterways and fisheries through the National Fish Habitat Partnership and the implementation of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan.

The National Fish Habitat Action Plan (Action Plan) provides a national strategy to address aquatic habitat from the interior to the oceans. The Action Plan is a science-based, voluntary, and non-regulatory effort providing a nationwide strategy to harness the energies, expertise, and existing programs of Federal and state agencies, conservation organizations, foundations, and individuals. It supports cooperative, proactive, aquatic habitat protection and restoration goals at multiple geographic scales.

The mission of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan is to protect, restore and enhance the nation's fish and aquatic communities through partnerships that foster fish habitat conservation and improve the quality of life for the American people.

The goals of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan are:

1. Protect and maintain intact and healthy aquatic systems.
2. Prevent further degradation of fish habitats that have been adversely affected.
3. Reverse declines in the quality and quantity of aquatic habitats to improve the overall health of fish and other aquatic organisms.
4. Increase the quality and quantity of fish habitats that support a broad natural diversity of fish and other aquatic species.

This report highlights agency accomplishments and progress, through September 2012, in implementing the Action Plan through four key strategies:

- Supporting existing fish habitat partnerships and fostering new efforts.
- Mobilizing and focusing national and local support for achieving fish habitat conservation goals.
- Measuring and communicating the status and needs of aquatic habitats.
- Providing national leadership and coordination to conserve fish habitats.

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Multi-Bureau NFHP Highlights

Submitted to the Secretary of the Department of the Interior

Purpose: Provide examples of bureau accomplishments and progress supporting the National Fish Habitat Action Plan

Contents: An assemblage of four tables based on the Implementation Strategy of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. Following the tables are collections of one-page fact sheets that provide project specific bureau highlights.

Foster New and Support Existing FHPs (reference the NFHAP Implementation Strategy #1 -*Support existing Fish Habitat Partnerships and foster new efforts.)*			
Agency	**Project Title**	**Timeline**	**NFHAP Goal**
FWS	My Awesome NFHP Project	2006-present	1, 2, 3 , and 4
	Brief Project or Program Description		
	• The USFWS plays a large role in supporting a number of FHPs by providing staff, funding support, and technical assistance • FHP support and assistance is delivered through Service programs like the National Fish Passage Program, Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices, and in cooperation with NGOs, community organizations, state and other federal agencies.		
BLM	Leadership in the Desert Fish Habitat Partnership	2005-current	1, 2, 3, and 4
	Brief Project of Program Description		
	• Beginning in 2005, the BLM worked with state, federal, and local partners in the west to develop the Desert Fish Habitat Partnership • The BLM played an integral role in the budding partnership, including providing a coordinator during the critical time when the partnership applied for NFHP recognition and developed the strategic plan • The BLM continues to be a vital member, providing leadership on the executive committee and involvement on the steering committee.		
NOAA	Kenai Fish Habitat Partnership, Mat-Su Fish Habitat Partnership, and Southwest Fish Habitat Partnership support	2006-present	1, 2, 3 , and 4
	Brief Project of Program Description		
	AKR staff participate on the steering committees of 3 of the 4 recognized partnerships that are present in Alaska (The Kenai Fish Habitat Partnership, the Mat-Su fish Habitat Partnership and the Southwest Fish Habitat Partnership). Staff have dedicated considerable amount of time and provided technical expertise for the Strategic Planning processes for these partnerships, including drafting portions of the Strategic Plans and setting priorities. Staff continue to support these partnerships through active participation in activities such as planning and execution of symposia to share the results of activities funded by the partnerships. Staff have supported the 2 candidate partnerships in similar activities. In particular, AKR staff were instrumental in moving forward with the Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership.		

Mobilize and Focus National Support (reference the NFHAP Implementation Strategy #2 -*Mobilize and focus national and local support for achieving fish habitat conservation goals.)*			
Agency	**Project Title**	**Timeline**	**NFHAP Goal**
FWS			
	Brief Project or Program Description		
BLM	Weber River Watershed Improvement	2009-present	3
	Brief Project of Program Description		
	• Working with federal, state, and local partners through the Desert Fish Habitat Partnership and Trout Unlimited, the BLM is leading the effort to restore connectivity and hydrologic function to the Weber River. To date, 6 barriers have been removed, opening over 20 miles of river to imperiled species such as bluehead sucker, flannelmouth sucker, and Bonneville cutthroat trout.		
NOAA			
	Brief Project of Program Description		

Measure and Communicate Aquatic Habitat Needs (reference the NFHAP Implementation Strategy #3 -*Measure and communicate the status and needs of aquatic habits.)*			
Agency	**Project Title**	**Timeline**	**NFHAP Goal**
FWS	LIDAR data and aerial imagery acquisition for the Mat-Su Valley and nearby areas	2010-2012	1 and 2
	Brief Project or Program Description		
	• Aquatic habitat assessments are conducted by technical experts from USFWS Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices and in conjunction with partners like the USGS. • This project acquired LIDAR and orthorectified aerial imagery for about 2,000 square miles of the Matanuska-Susitna Basin. • The resulting geospatial dataset will be used to determine the baseline status of aquatic habitat in the Mat-su Basin and will also be available to the public.		
BLM	Public Awareness of Western Watersheds	Ongoing	1, 2, 3, and 4
	Brief Project of Program Description		
	• BLM staff throughout the west have given multiple presentations on the status of watersheds and the efforts of fish habitat partnerships, including at local, tribal, and national meetings.		
NOAA	National Fish Habitat Assessment	2011	
	Brief Project of Program Description		
	• In 2010, NOAA completed the coastal portion of the National Fish Habitat Assessment that was incorporated into the "Through a Fish's Eye" report released by NFHP in April 2011. The final report has been submitted to a r-reviewed journal and additional analysis and data will be released as a NOAA Technical Memo. • The coastal team has already begun work on the 2015 assessment, which will include a more robust assessment model, incorporate additional data sets, and evaluate the assessment using fish and shellfish data. This assessment will be regionally based to take advantage of regional variability and associated data sets.		

Provide National Leadership and Coordination (reference the NFHAP Implementation Strategy #4 -*Provide national leadership and coordination to conserve fish habitats.)*			
Agency	**Project Title**	**Timeline**	**NFHAP Goal**
FWS			
	Brief Project or Program Description		
BLM	Public Awareness of Western Watersheds	Ongoing	1, 2, 3, and 4
	Brief Project of Program Description		
NOAA	National Fish Habitat Assessment	2011	
	Brief Project of Program Description		

NOAA Habitat Conservation

Conserving the Cape Fear River for Fish and You

Project Summary: NOAA and partners are working together to improve the health of the Cape Fear River for migratory fish. The Cape Fear River Partnership includes key federal, state, local, academic, and other organizations working together in the region to develop a multi-year action plan that will use a broad range of tools and capabilities to provide long-term habitat-based solutions for the most pressing challenges for migratory fish. The Action Plan will be completed by the end of 2012, with implementation to follow. The Atlantic Coast Fish Habitat Partnership is an active member of the Cape Fear River Partnership and is considering endorsement of the Action Plan.

Strategic Value: At more than 9,000 square miles, the Cape Fear River basin is one of the largest watersheds in North Carolina, stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to past Greensboro. Poor habitat quality in rivers and streams threatens fish, such as American shad, striped bass, river herring, and endangered Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon populations. Dams and other blockages prevent fish such as these from migrating upstream to spawn.

Benefits: Improved habitat conditions in the Cape Fear River will benefit not only these important fish species, but also the communities that depend on the river for its abundant water supply and rich recreational opportunities. Many North Carolina counties, cities, and businesses depend on the Cape Fear for water, such as Brunswick and New Hanover Counties, the Smithfield Packing Company, Fort Bragg, DuPont, and cities of Wilmington and Fayetteville.

The economic value of recreational fishing in the Cape Fear is estimated to be more than $1 million annually. This number has potential to grow substantially as populations of some fish species grow in the Cape Fear.