National Fish Habitat Board Meeting Summary: July 10-11, 2012

Members Present:

Kelly Hepler (AK DFG- Chair)
Steve Perry (NH FGD/ NEAFWA– Vice Chair)
Stan Allen (PSMFC)– for Randy Fischer
Mike Andrews (TNC)
Doug Boyd (SFBPC)
Brad Gentner (Gentner Consulting Group/CCA)
Gary Kania (Congressional Sportsmens Foundation)- for Chris Horton
Joe Larscheid (IA DNR/MAFWA)
Fred Matt (Native American FW Society)
Stan Moberly (Northwest Marine Technology/AFS)
Steve Moyer (TU) – for Chris Wood
Tom Bigford (NOAA Fisheries) – for Sam Rauch
Ron Regan (AFWA),
Mike Stone (WY GFD/WAFWA)
Jeff Underwood (US FWS)– for Dan Ashe
Krystyna Wolniakowski (NFWF)
Anne Zimmerman (US FS)

Members Absent:

Nick Wiley (FL FWCC/SEAFWA), Bob Mahood (SAFMC), Gordon Robertson (ASA)

Board motions approved by consensus:

- April 2012 meeting summary.
- Establishment of an Effectiveness Measures Working Group that includes members from Fish Habitat Partnerships and uses S&D Committee proposed approaches to determine how best to ascertain effectiveness measures.
- Strategy for the 2015 National Assessment.
- Performance Evaluation Report recommendations (in concept).

Approval by acclamation:

- Draft second edition of the Action Plan with recommended addition of the MOU and changes to the introductory letter to recognize overall funding needs.

Board motion not approved:

- Creation of a new annual NFHP award category to recognize outstanding Fish Habitat Partnerships.

Board approved policy and/or technical documents:

- Strategy for the 2015 National Assessment.
- National Science and Data Committee Recommendations on Developing an Effectiveness Framework for the NFHP.
- Second edition of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan.
- FHP Performance Evaluation Report and Recommendations.

Action items:

- Agenda for the October 2012 Board meeting should consider including:
  - Report from the Effectiveness Working Group on the full cost of developing effectiveness measures and Working Group membership.
  - Draft legislative team strategy will report on their legislative communications strategy.
  - Options and implications for establishing National Fish Habitat Board as a Section 501(c(3)) Non-profit organization.
  - Overview of the TRACs system and how NFHP could be integrated.
  - Update from the Sport Fish Boating Partnership Council.
  - Coordinating NFHP and Federal Initiatives.
  - Election of Board Chair and Vice Chair

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- Board Chair and Vice Chair should establish regularly scheduled meetings with agency leadership about MOU implementation.

- Legislative team and Communications committee will develop a template for FHPs to use for congressional outreach and to respond to the FHP performance measure to communicate with policy makers. This product should be discussed at the next Partnership Call.

- Legislative team should develop a legislative outreach strategy with AFWA to implement over the next year.

- FHPs should keep track of unfunded priority project needs to show the extent of habitat funding requirements and discuss how accomplish this task at the next Partnership Coordination Call.

- Board staff will revise the introductory letter in the second edition of the Action Plan to incorporate funding needs of at least the Science and Data efforts and include the MOU as part of Appendix 3 or as its own Appendix.

- The Funding Committee should initiate a connection with the Environmental Grantmakers Association (ega.org).

- The Board will develop a policy document for the Sport Fish Boating Partnership Council on that outlines basic tenets of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan for inclusion their strategic review of the FWS Fisheries Program. Staff will provide the Board with the report summarizing the SFBPC's most recent strategic review.

Executive Leadership Team Decisions and Action Items:
Meeting participants included Kelly Hepler, Steve Perry, Sam Rauch, and Ron Regan.

Decisions:

- Agreed to provisionally adopt the draft transitional terms consistent with the charter and distributed these terms at the meeting for at-large Board members. Final approval is pending input by absent ELT members Rowan Gould and Jon Gasset.
- Conduct an annual review each July of one third of at-large Board members according to transitional terms.

Actions:

- Ron Regan will confirm draft transitional terms with Rowan Gould and John Gasset.
- Board staff will provide ELT and Board with list of at-large Board members due for review at least three months prior to ELT review in July.

Key Discussion Items:

- Habitat Conservation Committee Report: Mike Stone will be playing a key role in establishing that committee and is looking for volunteers. In addition to further exploring linkages with LCCs, Board members suggested the committee revisit the interim conservation strategies.

- Effectiveness Measures: Board members discussed the value of measuring project effectiveness as an important component of measuring overall FHP and Partnership effectiveness. Board members also suggested that the workgroup:
  - Consider using the state wildlife grant program as a model for reporting outcomes.
  - Keep the process as simple as possible.
  - Keep in mind OMB's interests in outcome-based, comparable metrics across agencies.
  - Include project cost effectiveness.

- Strategy for the 2015 National Assessment: Board members discussed that in the absence of sufficient funding to cover total costs (estimated at $4-$5M), the Science and Data Committee will

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focus on the core, top priority components identified in the Strategy.

- NFHP Data Uploader and Exchanger: The Board discussed how this system would serve as a science and data clearinghouse for NFHP and the value of linking these data with existing database systems.

- Multi-States Conservation Grants: Decisions have not yet been made about the MSCG Letters of Intent. The Board discussed the value of working with the Partnerships farther ahead of time to pre-identify priority common needs.

- Federal Caucus Interagency MOU Report: The Board recommended that the MOU report:
  - Capture baseline agency investments and lay the groundwork to demonstrate future federal investment growth in NFHP.
  - Show the funding gaps, stress the outcomes of agency investment, and include tribal relationships.

- Atlantic Coast Fish Habitat Partnership Presentation: Focused on accomplishments, challenges and opportunities for this partnershjp.

- FHP Performance Evaluation: Board members discussed the pros and cons of using a scoring system and affirmed that the scoring is more to help FHPs identify gaps. The Board also discussed the importance of implementing recommendations that provide more consistency across reviewers and the role of the value of this process to roll up individual project effectiveness into some measure of FHP effectiveness.

- Communications Committee: Board members discussed the merits of adding a new category to the NFHP awards, the value of peer-based awards, and also the value using awards for only truly outstanding nominations. The Board recommended that Board staff consider an award category that recognizes an outstanding partnership project award which would include a peer element.

- Partnership Committee: The Partnership Committee has three principle focus areas it will be concentrating on in 2012. These include: providing guidance that assists with the implementation of Multi-state Conservation Grant project; assisting with developing strategies that help grow the National Fish Habitat Partnership's community of support; and developing a minimum benchmark set of fish habitat conservation project prioritization criteria that all Fish Habitat Partnerships should use in an effort to ensure the principle tenets of the Action Plan are covered in the processes used to rank fish habitat conservation projects.

- Legislation Update: The Board received an update on the status of the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act bill S.1201 which was reported out of the Senate's Environment and Public Works Committee and the inclusion of the NFHCA into the multi-bill sportsman's package proposed amendment to the Farm Bill which was not successful.

- FWS funding update: The Board discussed the merits and costs of supporting a small grants program and the difficulty with tracking unfunded needs using the Fishery Operational Needs System (FONS) system now and Tracking and Reporting Actions for the Conservation of Species (TRACS) in the future.

- Action Plan: The Board discussed how best to include the MOU and express the resources needs for implementing the Action Plan.

- Fundraising Committee Report: The Board discussed the value of using endorsement letters up front in the funding process for alternative fund sources such as the NFWF "Bring Back the Natives Program" and NOAA-NFWF grants for NFHP. The Board also heard suggestions from partnerships about NFWF using the FHPs to solicit projects more actively and ideas for efficiently endorsing

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priority projects.

- Sport Fish Boating Partnership Council: The Board discussed the upcoming review of the FWS Fisheries Program by the Sport Fish Boating Partnership Council and how best to engage the National Fish Habitat Board.

Future 2012 meetings:

- October 16-17 – Table Rock Lake, MO

Future 2013 meetings:

- January 16 – 2pm eastern time conference call
- February 26 and 27 – Arlington, VA
- June 25-26 – Southeast (TBD)

Additional attendees:

Karen Abrams, NOAA-HQ and Board staff
Tom Busiahn, US 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

John Boland – ME Fisheries and Wildlife
Jeff Boxrucker – Reservoir FHP
Mark Brouder – US FWS
Jonathan Celmer – AFWA
Lou Chiarella – NOAA
Maureen Gallagher – US FWS
Emily Greene – Atlantic Coast FHP
Mark Hudy – US FS
Pat Keliher – ME DMR
Linda Kelsey – US FWS
Robin Knox – Western Native Trout Initiative FHP
Steve Krentz – US FWS, Great Plains FHP
Callie McMunigal – US FWS
Mike Weimer – US FWS
Gwen White – DJ Case

By telephone:
Katie Haws - Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership
Cecilia Lewis - US FWS
Alan Ellsworth - National Park Service.

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