Title: Communications Committee Report

Desired outcome: An informational briefing to the Board on the committee's 2013 work plan and update the Board on progress of Board priorities for the committee in 2013.

Background: At its January 2013 conference call, Board priorities were approved for 2013 and priority tasks were assigned to the committees under the National Fish Habitat Partnership. The communications committee was assigned the following as its priority tasks as they relate to the relevant objective in the second edition of National Fish Habitat Action Plan:

Action Plan Objective 3: 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 economic well-being of local communities.

Priority Task D: Review 2012 Communications Strategy, and revise as necessary, to ensure there is a principal focus towards raising public awareness on the role healthy fish habitats play in the economic well-being of local communities; (Communications Committee)

Priority Task E: Increase the size of the Partner Coalition and improve the management and maintenance of the Partner Coalition database; (Communications Committee)

Priority Task F: Develop a comprehensive congressional and administration outreach strategy; (Congressional Affairs Team and Communications Committee)

Action Plan Objective 5: 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.

Priority Task N: Broaden the visibility of the 10 Waters to Watch list by selecting waters that reflect key fish habitat conservation priorities/needs, track advancements associated with current and past 10 Waters to Watch, and utilize these waters as a means to tell the story and increase awareness of bold efforts to reverse persistent declines in aquatic habitat; (Communications Committee)

2013 Work Plan Updates/Accomplishments

- ***Priority Task D:*** (Complete) The Communications Strategy (Tab xx) has been reviewed by the communications committee and revised to further incorporate priorities of raising public awareness of the importance of healthy fish habitats through the work of our FHPs.

- ***Priority Task E:*** (ongoing) The Partner Coalition has grown to over 2,000 from 1,600 in 2012. This increase was due in large part to actively marketing the Partnership in 2012 at events and increasing sign-ups for our database. Our database functionality has improved dramatically since our switch to our new website in August 2012. We can delineate certain regions of the country within our database, a feature we previously didn't have. We also have the ability to see who is opening our newsletter transmissions and delete email addresses that are no longer valid. Continuing to grow this database in 2013 will be an important function of the committee and a priority.

- ***Priority Task F:*** (In Progress) The framework of a congressional outreach strategy was developed and presented to the Board in October 2012 (112th Congress). The strategy is currently being revised for the 113th Congress. This strategy is a work in progress pending new legislation and identification of priority members and committees. Elements of a larger toolkit are in place, including a Partner Letter and general talking points of the benefits and value of the National Fish Habitat Partnership and the work of the FHPs.

- ***Priority Task N:*** (In Progress) The "Waters to Watch" guidance for FHPs (Tab xx) is being revised for 2013 and includes some new criteria and a new timeline for the 2013 submissions and announcements as well as a campaign to have a media rollout for each individual project to better highlight the effort and increase media awareness of the work of the FHPs.

Documents to be developed in 2013:

- Annual Report
- Partner toolkit
- Videos highlighting FHP work
- NFHP Fact Sheet

2012 Work Plan Outcomes

- Coordinated the rollout strategy for the second edition of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. Over half of the printed copies have been distributed.
- New website was launched in 2012 in conjunction with the second edition of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan.