National Park Service Summary - Implementing the National Fish Habitat Action Plan

NFHAP 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 and provides a qualitative baseline for increased future cooperation and coordination among agencies and their partners. This report is organized by the four key implementation strategies of the Action Plan:

- 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.

Report to the Secretary of the Department of the Interior
National Park Service National Fish Habitat Plan Highlights

November 2012

Purpose: Provide examples of bureau accomplishments and progress supporting the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP)
Contents: The following tables are based on the implementation strategy of the NFHAP

Foster New and Support Existing FHPs

National Fish Habitat Action Plan - Implementation Strategy #1: *Support existing Fish Habitat Partnerships and foster new efforts.*

Agency	Project Title	Timeline	NFHAP Goal Addressed
NPS	Partnerships	ongoing	1, 2, 3, and 4
	Brief Project or Program Description		
	NPS is an active member of the following NFHAP Partnerships: • Western Native Trout Initiative • Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture • Matanuska-Susitna Basin • Southwest Alaska Conservation Partnership • Desert Fisheries Habitat Partnership (NPS hosts this Partnership's website) • Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership		

Mobilize and Focus National Support

National Fish Habitat Action Plan - Implementation Strategy #2: *Mobilize and focus national and local support for achieving fish habitat conservation goals.*

Agency	Project Title	Timeline	NFHAP Goal Addressed
NPS	Response to the Invasion of Lionfish in Marine Parks	2007 - 2012	1, 2, 3, and 4
	Brief Project or Program Description		
	The Lionfish Management Plan was developed in 2011 with participation from parks, non-governmental organizations and universities. This guidance is designed to protect or mitigate impacts on aquatic resources, protect human health and safety, and inform the public of impacts from aquatic nuisance species like the lionfish.		

Measure and Communicate Aquatic Habitat Needs National Fish Habitat Action Plan - Implementation Strategy #3: *Measure and communicate the status and needs of aquatic habits.*			
Agency	**Project Title**	**Timeline**	**NFHAP Goal Addressed**
NPS	Establish Baseline Conditions Prior to the Invasion of Asian Carp to Facilitate Control and Restoration	ongoing	1, 2, and 4
	Brief Project or Program Description		
	NPS units in the upper Mississippi River are conducting surveys that use stable isotope and lipid analyses to determine which areas are vulnerable to the invasion of Asian carp and establish baseline conditions for future mitigation efforts.		
NPS	Dry Tortugas National Park Research Natural Area, Florida	ongoing	1, 2, 3, and 4
	Brief Project or Program Description		
	The Research Natural Area (RNA) was established in 2007 to restore and protect coral reefs and fish in concert with the adjacent Tortugas Ecological Reserve. A 2012 Joint RNA Science Plan report by NPS and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission found that the RNA contributes to spawning and recruitment of several fish species for major fisheries throughout the Florida Keys and southeast Florida reef tract.		
NPS	Benthic Habitat Mapping of Fish Habitats in Ocean and Great Lakes National Parks.	2008 - present	1 and 2
	Brief Project or Program Description		
	Mapping of coral reefs, kelp forests, and Great Lakes and Atlantic Ocean benthic habitats to provide critical information concerning the extent and distribution of fish habitats. Parks where maps are completed include Point Reyes National Seashore and Golden Gate National Recreation Area, California; Virgin Islands National Park, Coral Reef National Monument and Buck Island Reef National Monument, US Virgin Islands; and most of Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, Alaska. San Juan Island National Historical Park, Washington and Channel Islands National Park, California also are being mapped.		
NPS	Glacier National Park Bull Trout Protection	ongoing	1, 2, and 3
	Brief Project or Program Description		
	Projects at Glacier National Park are focused on protecting habitat for native bull trout by constructing barriers on Quartz and Akokala Creeks to prevent invasion by non-native salmonids and by actively removing lake trout from Quartz Lake.		

Provide National Leadership and Coordination National Fish Habitat Action Plan - Implementation Strategy #4: *Provide national leadership and coordination to conserve fish habitats.*			
Agency	**Project Title**	**Timeline**	**NFHAP Goal**
NPS	Restoration of Native Species in High Elevation Aquatic Ecosystems at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks	ongoing	1, 2, 3, and 4
	Brief Project or Program Description		
	Eradication of non-native fish from five high-elevation lakes and the associated streams for the purpose of restoring habitat for mountain yellow-legged frogs that have disappeared from 92% of their historically occupied sites in the Sierra Nevada. The project will contribute to the restoration of a number of other native aquatic organisms (macroinvertebrates and zooplankton) and the native species that rely on them as a source of food.		
NPS	Restoration of Native Cutthroat by Controlling Lake Trout in Yellowstone Lake.	ongoing	2 and 3
	Brief Project or Program Description		
	This project supports the long-term effort to recover Yellowstone cutthroat trout in Yellowstone Lake by removing lake trout. It implements the recommendation of a 2008 Science Panel that concluded lake trout could be effectively suppressed through a 3 -5 year surge increase in fishing effort that is being achieved through the use of a commercial fishing crew. In addition, the Park will be developing a lake trout population estimate and benchmarks for control.		
NPS	Eradicate Non-Native Fish to Restore Biological Integrity in Five North Cascades National Park Mountain Lakes	ongoing	1
	Brief Project or Program Description		
	This project is focused on restoring native zooplankton, benthic invertebrate and amphibian communities by removing non-native fish species from five naturally fishless lakes. Eliminating reproducing non-native fish from these lakes may also contribute to the recovery of downstream populations of native fish, including coastal and west slope cutthroat trout and the federally listed bull trout and steelhead.		

Agency	Project Title	Timeline	NFHAP Goal
NPS	Restore Native Fish Populations and Habitats in 20% Fee Parks	2001 - 2011	1, 2, 3, and 4
	Brief Project or Program Description		
	• Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore: Restoration of coaster brook trout populations in Lake Superior tributaries. • Dinosaur National Monument: Removal of tamarisk to restore spawning habitat for the federally listed Colorado River pikeminnow. • Point Reyes National Seashore: Eradication of cape ivy to restore spawning habitat for anadromous fish in coastal streams. • Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area: Removal of non-native vegetation to restore habitat for southern steelhead. • Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area: Stabilize stream crossings to protect native fish and mussels. • North Cascades National Park: Remove non-native fish from mountain lakes to restore aquatic conditions.		

Elwha River Restoration Project

Olympic National Park, November 2010

Lake Mills, Elwha River. Photo by NPS.

Project Summary: A contract to remove Glines Canyon and Elwha Dams, the largest dam removal in North America's history was awarded to begin in September 2011. Removal of these dams was determined to be the only practicable approach to restoring the physical and biological resources of the Elwha River ecosystem in Olympic National Park. Two water treatment plants were constructed to insure adequate clean water supplies during restoration. Levees were constructed to protect private lands and tribal reservation property. Fish passages were improved and riparian vegetation is being cleared or propagated for restoration projects led by tribal re-vegetation crews. This is a multi-agency project that has already resulted in successful fish movement due to dam removal. Park and tribal staff are working together and with many other area partners to provide current information and promote regional and national awareness of this landmark restoration project.

Strategic Value: This project demonstrates the capacity to rehabilitate a river that has been impeded by dams. As the largest-to-date dam removal project in North America, research on river morphology, habitat restoration efficacy, and population recovery of fishes can be studied as an example for future efforts where appropriate.

Benefits: Salmon that have been unable to reach tributaries upstream of the dams have already been documented in these waters. Once the dams are removed and the river restored, numbers of salmon and steelhead are expected to exceed 390,000 returning adult fish annually. Understanding how sediment that has accumulated behind dams is transported post-dam removal in a large system provides necessary information for management of other dams. This is an example of interagency and inter-governmental coordination resulting in significant aquatic habitat improvement.