2014 Executive Summary

Science and Data

For the past year, ACFHP has been working with The Nature Conservancy and other partners to prioritize, plan, and strategize responses to river herring habitat needs along the Atlantic coast. This project involves collaboration with state and federal agencies and non-governmental organizations and is funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Significant progress has been made in the development of a Decision Support Tool to Assess Aquatic Habitats & Threats in North Atlantic Watersheds & Estuaries. ACFHP and its partners are working with Downstream Strategies, LLC on a North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative-funded grant to model species distributions associated with documented habitat use. Models for eastern brook trout and winter flounder are close to completion, and data collection for river herring is underway.

The Species Habitat Matrix manuscript is completed and is in the process of being submitted for peer review. The Matrix is an evaluation of the relative importance of coastal, estuarine, and freshwater habitat types in terms of their value to the major life stages of over 100 fish species.

Strengthening Partnerships

ACFHP has continued its Whitewater to Bluewater initiative this year with its Fish Habitat Partnership neighbors, the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership and the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture. The initiative promotes a collaborative approach to implementing their respective goals and the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. Currently, we are working on an easily amendable Fish Passage Barrier Removal Fact Sheet that allows for conservation groups and agencies to modify the content to target audiences.

In early November, ACFHP will present at the 7th National Summit on Coastal and Estuarine Restoration during the Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (CFHP) session. This session includes presentations from CFHPs spanning the nation, as well as a panel discussion focused on aiding CFHP coordination efforts.

The National Fish Habitat Partnership was recently awarded $521,600 from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to promote strategic fish habitat conservation through regionally-coordinated science and collaboration. ACFHP was allocated $50,000 to help meet our goals in 2015.

Restoration and Protection

ACFHP has partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the fifth consecutive year to fund two on-the-ground restoration projects in 2014. The first focuses on oyster reef and salt marsh habitat restoration in Stump Sound, North Carolina, and is led by the North Carolina Coastal Federation. The second project, led by the New Hampshire Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, will restore two acres of oyster reef in Great Bay Estuary, Rockingham County, New Hampshire.