

Executive Summary

I. Title of Project: Conserving Fish Habitat from Whitewater to Bluewater

II. Applicant Information: Patrick Campfield

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III. Project Objective(s):

Objective 1: Collectively advance each partnership's habitat assessments through identification of mutual data needs, data acquisition and landscape-level-analysis techniques for the benefit of fish, mussels, and other aquatic animals. Assist the National Fish Habitat Science and Data Committee in improving the 2015 status report by identifying major data gaps in regional-specific fish population, habitat, and human impact monitoring data.

Objective 2: Coordinate Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP), Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP), and Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV) partner engagement and outreach activities to strengthen and expand an already robust base of on-the-ground conservation partners. Assess the structure and function of the three FHPs and identify and implement strategies to enhance their organizational capacity.

Objective 3: Retain and enhance critical capacity to implement each of the individual FHP's Partnership Strategic Plans by facilitating completion of prioritized, on-the-ground, partner-led fish habitat conservation projects that achieve measurable results towards National Fish Habitat Action Plan goals and interim strategies and are easily communicated and understood.

IV. Proposed Length of Project: 1 year

V. Funding Requested: March 1, 2012-February 28, 2013: \$261,440.38

VI. Funding Source: 100% SFR

VII. States Benefited: 27 States: ME, NH, VT, RI, MA, CT, NY, NJ, PA, DE, WV, MD, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL, AL, MS, LA, AR, TN, KY, OH, MO, TX and OK; all states in USFWS Region 5 (ME, NH, VT, RI, MA, CT, NY, NJ, PA, DE, WV, MD, VA); all states in USFWS Region 4, excluding Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands (NC, SC, GA, FL, AL, MS, LA, AR, TN, KY); all states of the Northeastern Association of Fish Wildlife Agencies (NEAFWA), all states of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA), and three states of the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA).

VIII. NCN Addressed: NCN 5: Formation and Operation of Fish Habitat Partnerships to Facilitate NFHAP Implementation.

IX. Summary Statement: This project will support and enhance the continued operation of, and enhance coordination between, the ACFHP, SARP, and EBTJV to implement the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. Funds from this grant will support the three primary operational categories for each of the three FHPs: communication and outreach; steering committee operation; and scientific assessment. This will be achieved through coordination within and between Partnerships, as well as with the NFHAP Board and Science Data Committee, thus contributing to the achievement of National Fish Habitat Action Plan goals and objectives, and fostering implementation of NFHAP Board guidelines. FHPs will evaluate their progress towards achieving the NCN using a set of objectives and clear measures.

A. Title: Conserving Fish Habitat from Whitewater to Bluewater

B. Objective(s): The purpose of this project is to advance the coordinated implementation of strategic plans and habitat assessments of the ACFHP, SARP, and EBTJV and promote a more cohesive implementation of NFHAP Conservation Strategies and Targets across 27 states, thus providing meaningful and measurable benefits to the NCN and the State fish and wildlife agencies. The FHPs will identify aquatic data gaps at the regional scale, and develop complementary communications and outreach strategies. The objectives of this project are as follows:

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Objective 2: Coordinate ACFHP, SARP, and EBTJV partner engagement and outreach activities to strengthen and expand an already robust base of on-the-ground conservation partners. Assess the structure and function of the three FHPs and identify and implement strategies to enhance their organizational capacity.

Objective 3: Retain and enhance critical capacity to implement each of the individual FHP's Partnership Strategic Plans by facilitating completion of prioritized, on-the-ground, partner-led fish habitat conservation projects that achieve measurable results towards National Fish Habitat Action Plan goals and interim strategies and are easily communicated and understood.

Each objective is clearly defined and achievable and contains milestones, expected outcomes, and measures by which to evaluate progress towards the objective and subsequently the project's contribution towards addressing the NCN.

C. Problem Statement: The National Fish Habitat Action Plan was established in 2006 to address declining health of aquatic habitats in a regionally-coordinated, multi-stakeholder and cross-jurisdictional fashion. The Fish Habitat Partnerships are the primary entities through which the National Fish Habitat Action Plan is implemented, and their continued operation is essential to the success and survival of this national effort. NCN 5 is the primary NCN that the proposed project addresses. This project will support and enhance the continued operation of and enhance coordination between the ACFHP, SARP, and EBTJV to facilitate National Fish Habitat Action Plan implementation. Funds from this grant will support the following activities for each of the three FHPs: coordination and communication; steering committee operation; mutual data compilation, development, and sharing methodologies, to improve habitat condition assessments and project selection criteria, for the three FHPs and their member states and other partners. This project will contribute to the achievement of National Fish Habitat Action Plan goals and objectives, foster implementation of NFHAP Board guidelines, and support coordination between ACFHP, SARP and EBTJV as well as with the NFHAP Board and Science Data

Committee and the newly formed Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs). The states, and their respective fish and wildlife agencies, that will benefit from the enhanced coordination and assessment capabilities provided by this project are as follows: ME, VT, NH, MA, CT, RI, NY, NJ, PA, OH, DE, WV, MD, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL, AL, MS, LA, AR, TN, KY, TX, OK, and MO. In addition, this project will contribute to achieving NCN needs 1, 3 and 4.

D. Experience: Under a previous MSCGP grant, administered through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), it was successful in developing a Board-approved Fish Habitat Partnership, ACFHP. Under this contract, the ACFHP succeeded in hiring a coordinator, completing two science projects (one partially under contract, and one through significant in kind support), and developing an organizational webpage (through contract), outreach materials, and governance documents. Partner recipients of this grant the SARP and EBTJV, have received MSCGP grants in the past, which have been successfully used to operate and grow these highly successful Fish Habitat Partnerships. The EBTJV has completed a range-wide assessment of brook trout habitats including categorization of the status of and identification of the primary threats to these habitats; developed and initiated a range-wide conservation strategy for eastern brook trout; via partners, implemented more than 25 on-the ground habitat improvement projects; and is in the process of refining the range-wide habitat assessment at the catchment scale. EBTJV data and priorities have also been incorporated into the interagency implementation strategies developed under the President's Executive Order 13058 and USDA Farm Bill Programs in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

E. Approach:

Objective 1: Collectively advance each partnership's habitat assessments through identification of mutual data needs, data acquisition and landscape-level-analysis techniques for the benefit of fish, mussels, and other aquatic animals. Assist the National Fish Habitat Science and Data Committee in improving the 2015 status report by identifying major data gaps in regional-specific fish population, habitat, and human impact monitoring data.

Outputs/Milestones:

- By June 30, 2012, regular webinar meetings of the Science and Data Committees of the three FHPs will be established to enable them to share, identify and assemble existing data pertaining to threats to fish habitats. The three FHPs met with the three large LCCs of this region (North Atlantic, South Atlantic, and Gulf Coastal Plains and Ozarks) in early 2011 to begin to identify mutual science and habitat assessment needs related to implementation of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. This project will allow the FHPs to continue to develop those relationships and collaborate effectively. Common data needs identified in the 2011 meeting that will be addressed during this project include riparian area conditions, barriers to aquatic animal movement, alteration of instream flows and inflows to estuaries, water quality, sedimentation, and geo-referenced fish population data. Discussion and results from meetings can be documented and published on online.
- By December 31, 2012, develop a written list of action items resulting from the joint Science and Data Committee webinars that will be the focus of the efforts of the

committees. This information will be published online and can be provided to the LCCs, JVs, universities and other regional partners.

Outcomes:

- Effective regional cooperation among conservation partnerships that maximizes the conservation benefits of each partnership and the actions of individual partners.
- Continued and increased FHP engagement and collaboration with other regional conservation efforts such as the National Fish Passage Program, Coastal and Partners for Fish and Wildlife Programs, Bird Joint Ventures, Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, Climate Science Centers, Regional Ocean Governance bodies, and Regional Coastal and Marine Alliances.
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Measures:

Whether or not a list of actions items is generated from the meetings that will enable the three FHPs to share, identify and assemble existing data pertaining to threats to fish habitats.

Objective 2: Coordinate ACFHP, SARP, and EBTJV partner engagement and outreach activities to strengthen and expand an already robust base of on-the-ground conservation partners. Assess the structure and function of the three FHPs and identify and implement strategies to enhance their organizational capacity.

Sub-objective 2.1: Develop and implement a streamlined communications strategy and outreach products for the three Eastern U.S. Fish Habitat Partnerships that highlights both synergies and distinguishing characteristics across the individual FHPs, and identifies FHP needs that would be best served individually and those that would benefit from a collective message.

Outputs/Milestones:

- Starting within three months of project approval and continuing throughout the project period, joint FHP Communications and Outreach meetings will be held quarterly via conference call and/or WebEx with coordinators and/or appointed staff from the partner FHPs to provide regular, focused coordination of overall communications and outreach efforts.
- By June 31, 2012, develop individual FHP and joint messaging strategies that would identify key target audiences and generate core messages for members of the partnerships to communicate clearly and consistently with those audiences.
- By December 31, 2012, develop content for and the design of an “Implementing the NFHAP from Whitewater to Bluewater” program web page which would include:
 - a map illustrating the territory jointly covered by the Eastern FHPs and the areas and communities where they work;
 - links to or integrated with partner websites;
 - select keystone or iconic species profiles that that would feature the work that FHP partners are doing related to these species

- A representative from each FHP will attend at least one conference or other meetings to give presentations/updates either individually or jointly where possible, to various conservation audiences, to inform attendees of FHP purpose and activities, and gain support.
- Throughout the project period, FHPs will maintain their individual websites and outreach materials (e.g. fact sheets, feature article(s) in partner newsletters and other available outlets, existing social networking tools, etc.) that will be dovetailed, where appropriate, with the other Eastern FHPs resources and efforts.

Outcomes:

- Improved communication between FHPs and with partners, key decision makers, potential funders and the general public;
- a unified and strengthened message across the FHPs, should result in increased public support;
- up-to-date and informative outreach tools and materials; and
- better collaboration between individual FHPs will strengthen collective efforts to implement NFHAP.

Measures:

- Joint FHP meetings are held on schedule and include representatives from member(s) of each of the three FHPs;
- visits to the ‘Whitewater to Bluewater’ web page and individual FHP websites;
- number of fact sheets generated or articles featured in various communication outlets and the estimated number of people to which the publications are distributed; and
- the number of conferences or equivalent outreach events where an FHP representative made a presentation/update.

Sub-objective 2.2: Assess the structure and function of the three FHPs; identify strengths and weaknesses with current delivery of the FHPs; and provide recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and capacity of the FHPs to achieve their missions and goals.

Outputs/Milestones:

- ACFHP, EBTJV, & SARP develop Terms of Reference (ToR) or Request for Proposals (RFP) for services to evaluate the structure and function of the three FHPs and make recommendations to improve their organizational capacity by February 2012.
- The FHPs select a qualified applicant by March 2012.
- FHPs in collaboration with the successful applicant complete a review of the FHPs external/internal environment and the past performance to create a detailed understanding of current strategic position and organizational capacity by June 2012.
- Based on the capacity assessment, the FHPs develop Sustainable FHP Plans, outlining organizational capacity objectives and begin to implement those plans by February 28, 2013.

Outcomes:

- Objectives and strategies for maintaining or enhancing FHP organizational strengths and improving upon organizational weaknesses, within each individual FHP and across the three Eastern FHPs.

Measures:

- The extent to which the three-year Sustainable FHP Plan is supported by FHP Steering Committees and partners.

Sub-objective 2.3: Build sufficient organizational capacity within and across the three Eastern U.S. Fish Habitat Partnerships to fully implement the Sustainable FHP Program and Plan (i.e. Sub-objective 2.2)

Outputs/Milestones:

- Each of the FHPs will designate member(s) to serve as part of a collaborative organizational capacity network.

The successful applicant will present the findings to the Partner representatives at the joint meeting (ie. report/recommendations) by November 30, 2012 for the group to review and discuss.

Outcomes: Increased capacity within the three FHPs and their members to secure project and operational support and communicate the value of aquatic habitat conservation efforts in the region, and implement their strategic plans and the National Fish Habitat Action Plan.

Measures:

- The extent of FHP Steering Committees and partner engagement and willingness to implement their Sustainable FHP Plan;

Objective 3: Retain and enhance critical capacity to implement each of the individual FHP’s Partnership Strategic Plans by facilitating completion of prioritized, on-the-ground, partner-led fish habitat conservation projects that achieve measurable results towards National Fish Habitat Action Plan goals and interim strategies and are easily communicated and understood.

Sub-objective 3.1: Support regular meetings of the individual FHPs to engage with partners, identify opportunities to implement the FHP Strategic Plans, and prioritize actions toward protection and restoring function of eastern aquatic habitats.

Outputs/Milestones:

- By June 30, 2012, an EBTJV coordinator is hired and effectively working with the EBTJV Committees and partners;
- By December 31, 2012, hold one joint meeting of coordinators and leadership (10-15 people) from the ACFHP, EBTJV, and SARP to facilitate inter-FHP exchange of successes and challenges and foster “Whitewater to Bluewater” collaboration;
- By December 31, 2012, hold one all-partner or steering committee meeting each for ACFHP, EBTJV, and SARP to review progress toward objectives and update strategic plans;

Outcomes:

- Cohesive FHPs that are informed and supportive of the effort;
- Prioritized projects are identified and implemented;
- Enhanced understanding of effective avenues for implementation of FHPs
- Strategies for effective inter-FHP communication among ACFHP, EBTJV and SARP

Measures:

- Partners' assessment of progress toward conservation strategies;
- Number of partners that participate in the Whitewater to Bluewater joint meeting
- Number of partners that participate in ACFHP, EBTJV, and SARP meetings and activities.

Sub-objective 3.2: Enhanced capacity of the ACFHP, EBTJV, and SARP to implement design, construction, and monitoring phases of on-the-ground aquatic habitat conservation projects and aquatic habitat education efforts.

Outputs/Milestones:

- Each FHP will fund an average of three or more on-the-ground and at least one communication/ outreach project annually;
- By February 28, 2013, ACFHP, EBTJV, and SARP have begun to implement strategies to improve delivery of FHP as identified in Objective 2

Outcomes:

- Restored function of aquatic habitats
- Increased ability to secure future funding for on-the ground and communications projects
- Enhanced understanding of effective strategies/ actions for implementation of FHPs

Measures:

- Number of on-the-ground projects implemented by partners
- Number of miles of lotic habitat and acres of lentic habitat that are protected or have function restored
- Funds available to the FHPs for on-the-ground projects
- Strategies to improve delivery of FHPs

Sub-objective 3.3: By September 30, 2012, identify and vet mechanisms for evaluating and reporting the benefits of fish habitat conservation projects to a wide range of audiences by monitoring region-specific variable(s) that will inform and add to the National Fish Habitat Action Plan tracking effort.

Outputs/Milestones:

- By September 30, 2012, identify and vet among the science and data partners for ACFHP, EBTJV, and SARP potential monitoring / reporting measures that may serve to track progress of FHPs, including consideration of current measures used to report accomplishments achieved with existing federal NFHAP funds.

Outcomes:

- A list of potential measures for describing progress in protection and restoration of system function of aquatic habitats in the eastern United States
- First steps completed towards an enhanced ability to monitor and communicate benefits of aquatic habitat protection, enhancement and restoration projects
- First steps completed towards an integrated approach that links upland (whitewater) and marine (bluewater) habitats and the conservation partnerships that address them.
- First steps completed towards measures identified via “Whitewater to Bluewater” collaboration are adopted by NFHAP as measures to track nation-wide progress of FHPs

Measures:

- Whether or not a list of potential measures is created that FHPs are willing to evaluate for selection and implementation.

F. Expected Results or Benefits: In addition to the specific outcomes and products, who will use them, and how they address the NCN, noted in section E., the benefits to state conservation agencies, include: (1) reducing data requests to states, (2) reducing variation in the products of the FHPs and LCCs, and (3) paying some travel costs for state agency members to participate in FHPs and related meetings. Many of the outcomes noted above will provide an infrastructure or framework that can be updated, added to, or improved upon, through use and as new information becomes available, allowing for extended use after the project is complete.

G. Certification regarding fishing/hunting: “By submitting this proposal, the organization’s primary contact and/or authorized representative identified in this grant application certifies that the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (1) will not use the grant funds to fund, in whole or in part, any activity of the organization that promotes or encourages opposition to the regulated hunting or trapping of wildlife or the regulated taking of fish; and (2) that the grant funds will not be used, in whole or in part, for an activity, project, or program that promotes or encourages opposition to the regulated hunting and trapping of wildlife or the regulated taking of fish.”

H. Certification regarding partnership funds: “By submitting this proposal, the organization’s primary contact and/or authorized representative identified in this grant application certifies that the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission: 1) understands that partnership fund contributions are assessed in the Association’s review and selection of its priority list of MSCGP projects, but are not considered by the USFWS to be an official non-federal match/cost-share; 2) will provide the partnership funds identified in order to complete the proposed project; 3) understands that if the promised partnership funds are not provided, and there is not a sufficient explanation, potential consequences could include a poor “quality assurance” evaluation by the National Grants Committee for the organization’s future MSCGP applications; the imposition of “special award conditions” on this proposed grant and/or future grants (pursuant to 43 CFR 12); and if the failure to provide partnership funds affects the scope/objective or deliverables or other terms and conditions of the grant, then the USFWS could take necessary enforcement and termination actions (pursuant to 43 CFR 12).

Budget

Funds will be split among each of the three eastern Partnerships in accordance with unmet needs and other available partner support.

Funds for ACFHP will be administered directly by ASMFC. Funds for SARP and EBTJV will be transferred from the ASMFC to SEAFWA and NFWF, respectively. ASMFC indirect is 20%, to be applied to ACFHP funds only; National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) indirect is 10%, to be applied to EBTJV funds only; no indirect will be applied to SARP funds.

Note full operational support for the three FHPs will require supplemental funding from sources other than MSCGP.

Expenses (in \$)	2012	
	MSCGP	P.F.
Personnel	116,800	90,900*
Fringe (25%)	29,200	
Travel	45,000	30,000**
Supplies	5,000	
Equipment		
Contractual	41,673.07	
Other		280,000 [†]
Total Direct Costs	237,673.07	400,900
Indirect Costs: 10% (avg of 20% ASMFC; 10% NFWF; 0% SARP)	23,767.31	
Total Expenses	261,440.38	400,900

* in-kind support including: partner time at the FHP joint meeting (15 partners total x 2 day meeting = 30 in-kind days) and one individual Steering Committee or All-Partnership Meeting per FHP (25 partners per FHP x 3 FHPs x 2 day meeting per FHP = 150 in-kind days), for a total of 180 partner days x \$505 rate per partner day. Rate per partner day is based on average annual salary as derived from salaries provided by individual partners.

**The travel funds (lodging, transportation, meals, etc.) contributed by partners are for Federal employees, who would not be reimbursed for travel.

[†]Estimated cost of 7 of the on-the-ground projects noted in Sub-objective 3.2

Qualifications of Key Personnel

Patrick Campfield, Science Director, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Patrick is responsible for oversight of the Commission's Marine Science Program, including stock assessment activities, fisheries data collection programs, and scientific support to the Atlantic coastal states. In addition to the Science Program, Patrick also oversees the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership and the Commission's Habitat Program. He has a B.S. in Marine Biology and M.S. in Fisheries Science and Management from the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science.

Scott Robinson, Coordinator, Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership

Scott has served as SARP Coordinator since September 2005. Prior to that he was a Fisheries Biologist for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources for eleven years. He is currently managing the administration of several grants, including a Multi-State Conservation Grant, for SARP. He received a B.S. degree and M.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology from Clemson University. He is a Certified Fisheries Professional and past President of the Georgia Chapter American Fisheries Society.

Emily Greene, Coordinator, Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership

Emily coordinates all ACFHP activities, providing daily support to the development and operations of ACFHP by facilitating committee and working group activities, managing contracted projects, identifying funding opportunities, and developing outreach activities. Emily has a B.S. in Biology and Environmental Science from the College of William and Mary and an M.E.M from the Nicholas School of Environment at Duke University.

Callie McMunigal, Appalachian Partnership Coordinator, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Callie currently serves as the EBTJV Coordinator. Since 2008, she has managed the \$600,000 of project funds that EBTJV receives each year. She also manages hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants and cooperative agreements each year for habitat projects. Callie has a B.S. and a M.S. in Hydrogeology and a minor in Geographic Information Systems from Florida Atlantic University and 15 years of experience working for state and federal government agencies on large scale partnership efforts.

George Schuler, Director of Conservation Science & Practice and Co-Director, Eastern U.S. Conservation Region Anadromous Fish Program, The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

George is currently the ACFHP Steering Committee Chair. George is responsible for coordinating diadromous fish policy and on the ground conservation efforts along the Atlantic Coast, developing and implementing measures and evaluations for conservation projects and supervising all areas of conservation science, strategic planning, project management, measures and evaluation for the Eastern New York Chapter of TNC. George has a B.S. in Environmental Science from Allegheny College and a M.S. in Environmental Studies from Yale University School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

Douglas Stang, Assistant Director – Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Doug is currently the EBTJV Steering Committee Chair and has served on the EBTJV Steering Committee since the partnership's inception. With the DEC, Doug provides oversight for the agency's broad fish, wildlife, marine and habitat programs delivered by more than 350 staff with annual program expenditures of \$58 million. Doug has a B.S. in Forestry and Wildlife (Fisheries Science) from Virginia Tech and a M.S. in Fishery Biology from Iowa State University.