

2017 Multistate Conservation Grant Program

Grant Proposal

Executive Summary

(Limit – 2 Pages)

1. **Project Title:** Science and Conservation collaboration through the National Fish Habitat Partnership
2. **Full Legal Name of Organization:** National Fish Habitat Board. If awarded, the grant will be administered on behalf of the National Fish Habitat Board by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, 1100 First Street NE, Suite 825, Washington DC, 20002
3. **Organization Information:**
 - a. Applicant Classification: 501(c)6
 - b. Nongovernmental Organization Classification (if applicable):
4. **Lead Applicant's Contact Information:**

Mr. Tom Champeau, Chief (Inland Fisheries), Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission
Chair, National Fish Habitat Board
c/o Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
1100 First Street NE, Suite 825
Washington, DC 20002
Email: tom.champeau@myfwc.com
Phone Number: 850-556-7684
5. **Name and Affiliation of Co-Investigator(s)/Partner(s) (if applicable):**

Ryan Roberts (AFWA)
Gary Whelan (MI DNR)
6. **Project Length:** 3 years. **Will re-apply for year 2&3 funding. (2017 marks year 2 of 3)**
7. ***Funding Requested:**

\$143,711.87 (seeking in **2017**)
Seeking in 2018 (\$300,000)
3 year total: (\$536,000)

*2016 funding granted at \$86,000 of \$300,000 requested.
8. **Estimate of Partnership Funds to be Leveraged (if applicable):** \$1,000,000
9. **Funding Source.**
 - a. Funding Source:
 - b. Percent WR:
 - c. Percent SFR: 100%

10. **State Benefit Requirement:** The scope of this grant award through our Fish Habitat Partnerships would cover 30 states.
11. **Primary National Conservation Need (NCN) Addressed:** NCN 2: Strengthening the National Fish Habitat Partnership
12. **Terms and Conditions.** *Use of MSCGP Grants - All applicants must ensure that their proposed project does not fund, in whole or in part, an activity that promotes or encourages opposition to the regulated hunting or trapping of wildlife or taking of sport fish.*

I agree with the above terms and conditions.

13. Summary Statement (200 words or less):

Project Narrative
(Limit – 10 Pages)

Title Science and Conservation collaboration through the National Fish Habitat Partnership

Objective(s)

Priority information needs identified by FHPs vary across regions, several of which this project will help address. In Hawaii this grant will support improving hydrography data, building upon an assessment of island estuaries and developing freshwater flow and sediment yield variability on nearshore coastal habitats. In the West, this grant will strengthen capacity for the Western Native Trout Initiative and Desert Fish Habitat Partnership through construction of quality assessments and strategic planning helping each FHP identify conservation priorities, including those that overlap between the partnerships. The assessments will also elevate the use of science information in project selection by enhancing science and data coordination and information sharing among the two partnerships and between the two partnerships and the NFHP National Science and Data Committee and support the 2020 assessment of fish habitat. Overall, this grant will substantially improve data resources that are required set restoration and protection priorities for aquatic habitats across the U.S. This project would address several of those needs, ensuring the continued progress that the FHPs are making on the ground and enhanced greatly by recent Multistate Conservation Grants awards.

Through regional collaboration among FHPs, this grant will:

- Collectively advance FHP habitat assessments through identification of mutual data needs, data acquisition and landscape-level analysis for the benefit of fish, mussels, and other aquatic animals;
- Provide region and system-specific fish population, habitat, and human impact data to fill regional data gaps and to assist the Board's Science & Data Committee in the continual improvement of the National Status of Fish Habitats Report;

- Help achieve conservation results through strategic actions that improve the ecological condition of intact systems, rehabilitate natural processes in systems currently degraded, or prevent the decline of intact and healthy systems leading to better fish habitat conditions, increased numbers of self-sustaining fish populations, and increased fishing opportunities; and
- Allow further critical collaboration to occur among FHPs on projects and initiatives, especially in regions with shared habitat and species interests amongst partners.

Outcomes/Benefits

The National Fish Habitat Partnership brings a focused and coordinated approach to conserving, rehabilitating, and enhancing the nation's aquatic habitats under the objectives of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. This proposal strengthens that approach by linking the oversight responsibility of the Board and the operational responsibility of the FHPs to achieve national and regional science and data driven conservation goals.

In general, this project will support activities of the Fish Habitat Partnerships that will help to achieve four of the objectives in the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, 2nd Edition:

1. *Achieve measurable habitat conservation results* through strategic actions of Fish Habitat Partnerships that improve ecological condition, restore natural processes, or prevent the decline of intact and healthy systems leading to better fish habitat conditions and increased fishing opportunities.
2. *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 well-being of local communities.
3. *Fill gaps in the National Fish Habitat Assessment* and its associated database to empower strategic conservation action supported by broadly available scientific information, and integrate socio-economic data in the analysis to improve people's lives in a manner consistent with fish habitat conservation goals.
4. *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.

Problem Statement

Healthy waterways and thriving fish populations are vital to the well-being of American society, providing clean water, food, and recreation. They are important for less tangible reasons as well, as anyone who has fished a tranquil stream or paddled a salty bay can attest. Healthy waters sustain their ecological functions and resilience while meeting the social and economic needs of human society. Unfortunately, in many places around the United States, fish and the habitats on which they depend are in decline. This is a particular concern to the 48 million recreational anglers who pursue fish and to many others who depend upon fish and shellfish for sustenance and commerce. Revenue from recreational and commercial fisheries added more than \$125 billion to our nation's economy in 2006. Almost 40 percent of the nation's freshwater fish species are considered at risk or vulnerable to extinction. Habitat loss is the most common cause for extinction of freshwater fish in the United States over the past century. Many saltwater fish

are also in decline due to habitat degradation; Congress declared in 1997 that one of the greatest long-term threats to the viability of commercial and recreational fisheries is the continuing loss of marine, estuarine, and other aquatic habitats.

Experience

Since 2006, The Partnership has supported 599 projects benefiting fish habitat in all 50 states. The Partnership works to conserve fish habitat nationwide, leveraging federal, state, tribal, and private funding resources to achieve the greatest impact on fish populations through priority conservation projects of 20 regionally-based Fish Habitat Partnerships.

Approach

Galvanized into action by continuing losses of aquatic habitat, an unprecedented coalition of anglers, conservation groups, scientists, state and federal agencies, and industry leaders forged the National Fish Habitat Action Plan in 2006. The Action Plan is an investment strategy for making the most effective use of habitat conservation dollars and achieving real gains in aquatic habitat quality and quantity by protecting, restoring, and enhancing key fisheries habitats.

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1. *Achieve measurable habitat conservation results* through strategic actions of Fish Habitat Partnerships that improve ecological condition, restore natural processes, or prevent the decline of intact and healthy systems leading to better fish habitat conditions and increased fishing opportunities.
2. *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 well-being of local communities.
3. *Fill gaps in the National Fish Habitat Assessment* and its associated database to empower strategic conservation action supported by broadly available scientific information, and integrate socio-economic data in the analysis to improve people's lives in a manner consistent with fish habitat conservation goals.
4. *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.

More specifically, the project will provide the following deliverables:

- **(Western Native Trout Initiative/Desert Fish Habitat Partnership) (\$17,293.00)**
Continue the successful MSG collaboration between WNTI and Desert FHP to complete an integrated aquatic assessment in the Rio Grande Basin in FY17. Siglo Group/The University of Texas has assembled data on and completed predictive distribution models for all fish species in the Rio Grande Basin (in the United States), including projected distribution under climate change. These models and data are key components to integrated aquatic assessments. The Rio Grande aquatic assessment will use these available species models, and integrate them with information on aquatic habitat conditions and riverine connectivity to rank all watersheds in the basin for conservation, which, in turn, will be available for use in WNTI and DFHP decision-making processes, including cross-partnership coordination. This outcome will substantially improve the quality of the 2020 National Fish Habitat condition assessment data for this basin. Subsequent years of funding will be used to complete integrated aquatic assessments for other basins, such as the Bonneville Basin or Lahontan Basin where native trout species and subspecies overlap in distribution with non-salmonid species. These aquatic assessments will strengthen WNTI/DFHP strategic planning and help each FHP identify conservation priorities, including those that overlap between the partnerships. The assessments will also elevate the use of science information in project selection by enhancing science and data coordination and information sharing among the two partnerships and between the two partnerships and the NFHP National Science and Data Committee and support the 2020 assessment of fish habitat. The Southern Rockies LCC has committed some funding to this assessment, but not enough to fully fund it, so MSG funds would be used to completely fund the project (\$8,800/year).
Goal 2: Both WNTI and DFHP were original NFHP partnerships and both are operating under a strategic framework that was developed with extensive input from all partners in 2006/2007. Both partnerships have completed interim updates to their strategic plans and strategic priorities in recent years, but a large-scale in-depth review has not been possible with available resources. With declining funding at the national level, both partnerships need to strengthen strategic partnerships and promote public awareness of conservation efforts for western native trout and desert fish and their habitats, and to increase overall NFHP-based Western Regional Fish Habitat Partnerships project awareness and understanding of goals and accomplishments. With 2017 being the ten year “anniversary” of both FHPs, further effort to revisit and review strategic partnerships, priorities, successes, and continuing challenges is imperative. This effort will begin a process of strengthening strategic partnership development and setting goals for 2017-2027. (\$9,366/year)
- **(Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture, Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership, Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership) (\$23,057.75)**
In three eastern Fish Habitat Partnerships, continue to develop and work with connectivity teams in participating FHPs. Collectively define and communicate the scientific basis of river restoration through connectivity improvement throughout the

Eastern U.S. Develop, update, and share connectivity assessment tools and resources specific to FHP state needs.

- **(4 Alaska Fish Habitat Partnerships) (\$17,293.32)**

The 2 goals of this project are: 1) Continue collaboration with AKHydro to edit Alaska hydrography and update the NHD for Alaska (\$10,000/yr); and 2) Continue to enhance coordination between AK FHPs, Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game (ADFG), and the National Science and Data Committee (\$8,000/year). A lack of adequate hydrography mapping and other habitat-related data sets makes it difficult to fairly evaluate Alaska in the National Fish Habitat Partnership's 5-year fish habitat condition assessment. The lack of good hydrography data also impacts individual Alaska Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHP) as they work to achieve conservation objectives including: designing and prioritizing fish passage projects, implement actions to inform efficient sampling for additions to the Anadromous Waters Catalog to protect fish habitat, assessing current and future thermal regimes for guiding climate change adaptation planning, designing water quality monitoring sampling programs, and better monitoring and planning for sustaining sport fishing, subsistence resource uses. This project will build upon accomplishments to improve and update NHD in Alaska and by the end of this two-year grant period we anticipate completing 2 NHD+ pilot-projects for the Mat-Su Salmon Habitat Partnership and Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership. This project will also support collaborative efforts by ADFG that helps ensure that Alaska FHPs are successful when implementing projects designed to conserve fish habitat or protect and restore Pacific salmon, trout and char. ADFG provides not only the support, field expertise, and scientific capacity necessary to advance fish habitat conservation goals but also provides engagement and collaboration through its involvement with the network of Alaska FHPs

- **Driftless Area Restoration Effort (\$11,528.88)**

The Driftless Area Restoration Effort-fish habitat partnership will be hiring a full-time Stream Restoration Specialist to do long term planning and installation of stream restoration projects with landowners, cooperating agencies and our partners. Additional funding is being raised through foundations and state grants to support this new specialist position, but additional dollars are needed. This position will do all aspects of a stream restoration project and project planning, surveying, design and over-site of installation. The Driftless Area recently received two multimillion federal grants to be administered by DARE (Driftless Area Regional Conservation Partnership Program grant and a Kickapoo Mississippi River Basin Initiative). These two grants over the next five years will provide millions of additional dollars to partner on to do stream restoration in the Driftless Area.

- **Hawaii Fish Habitat Partnership (\$11,528.88)**

Hawaiian Estuary Habitat Assessments – approximately 50 semi-enclosed waterbodies are found throughout the main Hawaiian Islands where freshwater from the land mixes with seawater. These highly-productive aquatic systems are not well characterized despite acting as important nursery and refuge habitat for numerous species of recreationally and commercially-important marine fish species. This project will support benthic and littoral habitat surveys, document physical-chemical water quality characteristics of important estuaries in Hawaii. This condition assessment will provide current information for prioritizing conservation and management of Hawaiian estuaries and will contribute detailed information to future revisions of the National Assessment of Fish Habitat. *Partners:* Hawaii DLNR-Division of Aquatic Resources, Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii (RCUH).

- **California Fish Passage Forum and Pacific Marine and Estuarine Partnership (\$23,057.74)**

In California, the CA Fish Passage Forum will continue to refine APASS Optimized Fish Passage Barrier Prioritization Tool. This will further describe habitat quality attributes, document unknown barriers and develop improved cost criteria to enhance the utility and reliability of APASS barrier optimization algorithms and support maintenance and operation of California’s Fish Passage Assessment Database. The Forum will advance developing a stream temperature network database for California as well as using a temperature-based stream habitat estimation methodology to understand current conditions and model scenarios with variable temperature regimes, an issue that has become increasingly important with long-term drought.

- The Pacific Marine and Estuarine Partnership will continue to work with scientists and managers to create a robust estuarine and nearshore spatial framework for the West Coast with information on habitat types, species use, estuarine habitat loss and other stressors. A West Coast-wide classification and inventory of fish and habitat databases will be improved, including the collection, attribution and assimilation of fish and habitat datasets for the West Coast, and chart the course for next steps in achieving FHP strategic plan goals associated with identifying and prioritizing juvenile fish habitat on the West Coast.

- **Board Support for 10-year Anniversary of National Fish Habitat Partnership (\$16,000)**

April 2016 – April 2017 marks the 10th Anniversary of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan being signed by the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior and the President of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. This Anniversary provides an opportunity to tout the accomplishments of NFHP, increase public awareness, attract additional resources for the Partnership and highlight State involvement in the program.

The National Fish Habitat Board has identified some key meetings and conferences that they would like to highlight the National Fish Habitat Partnership program through and would utilize this funding to make it a reality. This request would cover meeting sponsorship and involvement, as well as supporting communications efforts for the Anniversary and for 2017 overall. This funding request will also help out with promoting our National Fish Habitat Assessment Report on behalf of the NFHP Science and Data Committee.

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 Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (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.”

Certification Regarding Partnership Funds (if applicable)

“By submitting this proposal, the organization’s primary contact and/or authorized representative identified in this grant application certifies that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies : 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

| | Fish Habitat Partnerships | MSCPG | P.F.* | |
|---------------|---|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| AFWA | Salary Benefits Travel \$8,000 Supplies \$8,000 | \$16,000.00 | | \$16,000.00 |
| Eastern U.S. | Atlantic Coastal FHP, Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture, Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership | 23,057.75 | | 23,057.75 |
| Midwest U.S. | Driftless Area | 11,528.88 | | 11,528.88 |
| Western U.S. | Desert FHP Western Native Trout Initiative | 17,293.32 | | 17,293.32 |
| Pacific Coast | Pacific Marine & Estuarine Partnership, California Fish Passage Forum | 23,057.74 | | 23,057.74 |
| Alaska | Kenai Peninsula FHP, Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership, Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership, Southeast Alaska FHP | 17,293.32 | | 17,293.32 |
| Hawaii | Hawaii Fish Habitat Partnership | 11,528.88 | | 11,528.88 |

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|--------------------|-------------------|
| | |
| Travel | 8,000.00 |
| Supplies | 8,000.00 |
| Contract | 103,759.89 |
| Total | 119,759.89 |
| Indirect | 23,951.98 |
| Grand Total | <u>143,711.87</u> |
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Qualifications of Key Personnel

Tom Champeau, Chairman, National Fish Habitat Board

Mr. Champeau became chair of the National Fish Habitat Board in 2015. Tom has spent 34 years with the Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission. While working in the field, Tom led major lake habitat restoration projects, worked with the local communities and the mining industry on lake design and management for phosphate mined pits, and defining fish community metrics for establishing minimum flows for rivers in Southwest Florida. Tom holds degrees from the University of Michigan and University of Nebraska.

Ryan Roberts, Program Manager, National Fish Habitat Partnership

Ryan Roberts is the Communications Coordinator for the National Fish Habitat Partnership. Mr. Roberts has 10 years of experience in public relations/communications and has worked on the National Fish Habitat Partnership since 2008. Mr. Roberts created several communications toolkits for use by National Fish Habitat Partnerships and created an overall communications strategy for the partnership. Mr. Roberts' contributions were key in the development and release of the Status of Fish Habitat Partnership 2010 Assessment and the 2nd Edition of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (2012). Mr. Roberts graduated from Penn State University with a B.S. in Telecommunications/Business (Minor).

Gary Whelan, NFHP Board Science and Data Committee Co-Chair

Gary Whelan is one of the two co-chairs of the NFHP Board Science and Data Committee and has worked on NFHP since its inception. Mr. Whelan is a Program Manager for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources – Fisheries Division where he manages the Research Section and a Habitat Management Unit. His fisheries career has spanned over 32 years and he has worked in nearly every aspect of fisheries in the State of Michigan. In his role for NFHP, he has been responsible for all of the Board's Science and Data efforts including the development and release of the Status of Fish Habitat Partnership 2010 and 2015 Assessments. He was also deeply involved in the development of the 1st (2006) and the 2nd Editions of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (2012). Mr. Whelan holds a B.S. in Zoology (Fisheries Management focus) from the University of Wyoming and a M.S. in Fisheries Management from the University of Missouri.

Staff level leadership and management support of the work of the Board group will be provided by AFWA, USFWS, NOAA, state agencies and other partners such as NGO's.

National Fish Habitat Board Members <http://fishhabitat.org/contacts/board>