



NATIONAL  
**FISH HABITAT**  
PARTNERSHIP



Meeting Book for The  
National Fish Habitat Board

June 19, 2019  
Webinar

## National Fish Habitat Board Webinar

June 19, 2019

### Agenda and Board Book Tabs

Conference line: 800.768.2983, Passcode: 8383466

WebEx link: <https://cc.callinfo.com/r/1656ppwfeys21&eom>

2:00 – 2:25	<p><u>Welcome, Attendance, Introductions, and Housekeeping</u> <i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board action</b> to approve the agenda and March meeting summary.</li> <li>• <b>Board awareness</b> of 2019 member term renewals.</li> <li>• <b>Board awareness</b> of 2019 Board budget.</li> <li>• <b>Board awareness</b> of future meeting schedule and locations.</li> </ul>	Tab 0	Chris Moore ( <i>Board Vice Chair – Mid Atlantic Fisheries Management Council</i> )
2:25 – 2:35	<p><u>Update on FWS allocation and competitive project funds for FHPs</u> <i>Desired outcome:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board awareness</b> of USFWS allocation and the status of FY19 competitive project funds for FHPs.</li> </ul>		David Hoskins ( <i>Board Member, USFWS</i> )
2:35 – 3:00	<p><u>Beyond the Pond Update</u> <i>Desired outcome:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board awareness</b> of Beyond the Pond plans for 2019.</li> </ul>		Kelly Hepler ( <i>Board Chair, Beyond the Pond</i> )
3:00 – 3:20	<p><u>NFHP Action Plan Accomplishments Update</u> <i>Desired outcome:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board awareness</b> of NFHP accomplishments within the Action Plan areas.</li> <li>• <b>Board decision</b> on which approach needed to update the Action Plan.</li> </ul>	Tab 1	Gary Whelan ( <i>SDC Co-Chair - Board Staff/MI DNR</i> )
3:20 – 3:50	<p><u>Legislative Team &amp; Working Group Update</u> <i>Desired outcome:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board awareness</b> of status of the National Fish Habitat Conservation through Partnership Act.</li> <li>• <b>Board awareness</b> of Legislative Working Group activities.</li> </ul>	Tab 2	Christy Plumer ( <i>Board Member/TRCP</i> ), Mike Leonard ( <i>Board Member/Sportfishing</i> ), Bryan Moore ( <i>Board Member, TU</i> )
3:50 – 4:00	<p><u>Partnerships Committee Update</u> <i>Desired outcome:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board approval</b> of final 2018 FHP Review Report.</li> <li>• <b>Board awareness</b> of 2019 Committee activities.</li> </ul>	Tab 3	Stan Allen ( <i>Board Member, PSMFC</i> )
4:00	<p><u>Adjourn</u></p>		



**Title: National Fish Habitat Action Plan Revision**

**Desired Outcome:**

- **Board briefing** on the status of meeting the goals, objectives, and commitments of the 2012 National Fish Habitat Action Plan.
- **Board decision** on the desired amount of and schedule for revising the National Fish Habitat Action Plan.

**Background:**

The National Fish Habitat Partnership Board (Board) has reviewed and revised the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (Plan) on a 6-year cycle with the initial plan completed in 2006 and a revision completed in 2012. Given this cycle, it is time for the Board to consider the extent of revision required to update the current Plan and schedule for these revisions. An initial overview of possible options was provided at the March 2019 Board meeting and a request was made to provide a status report on the progress made toward the 2012 Plan which is included in this Board report. The following summarizes:

- i) the current contents of the Action Plan (last revised in 2012);
- ii) progress to date on the Action Plan; and
- iii) Action plan revision options and schedule

for the Board to consider as part of the 2018-2019 Action Plan revision.

**2012 Plan Overview**

The specific parts of the 2012 Plan, which the Board is currently operating under, are:

- The case for action
  - A partnership based on action
  - Economics of fish habitat
  - Terminology and acronyms
  - Accomplishments
  - Plan highlights
    - Mission and goals maintained
    - New objectives
- Mission and goals
  - Mission (unchanged from the 2006 Plan)
    - The mission of the National Fish Habitat Partnership 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.

- Goals – (unchanged from the 2006 Plan)
  - Protect and maintain intact and healthy aquatic systems
  - Prevent further degradation of fish habitats that have been adversely affected.
  - Reverse declines in the quality and quantity of aquatic habitats to improve the overall health of fish and other aquatic organisms.
  - Increase the quality and quantity of fish habitats that support a broad natural diversity of fish and other aquatic species.
- Objectives – (as revised in the 2012 Plan)
  - Objective 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 opportunities.
  - Objective 2 – Establish a consensus set of national conservation strategies as a framework to guide future actions and investment by the Fish Habitat Partnerships by 2013.
  - 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 habitat play in the quality of life and economic well-being of local communities.
  - Objective 4 – 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.
  - 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.
- Partnership in Action vignettes
  - Deadman’s Island, FL – SARP
  - Table Rock Lake, MO and AR – RFHP
  - Bear Creek, Wisconsin – DARE
  - Fish Passage in the Little Susitna Watershed, AK – MSBSFHP
- Focus Areas
  - Recreational fishing and fish habitat conservation
  - Commercial fishing and fish habitat conservation
- Our Focus on Strategic Actions – Four Strategies
  - Support FHPs and ensure their effectiveness
  - Mobilize and focus national and local support for achieving fish habitat conservation goals
  - Measure and communicate the status and needs of aquatic habitats
  - Provide national leadership and coordination to conserve fish habitats
- Roles
  - National Fish Habitat Board
  - Staff and Committees
  - FHPs
- NFHP Identity and Benefits



- Identity
  - Base our actions on science and data
  - Focus our resources on making a measurable difference
  - Measure our outcomes
  - Monitor and disseminate our results
  - Encourage public-private partnerships
  - Build on existing collaborative efforts
  - Don't stop until the job is done
- Benefits
  - Clean and sufficient amounts of water, a critical measure of landscape health and the well-being of people.
  - Healthy, resilient habitats that are critical to fish and wildlife, water conservation, flood control and people.
  - Improved recreational, commercial and subsistence fishing, boating, fish and wildlife viewing, and other uses of aquatic resources.
  - Strong local economies and increased well-being for all Americans.
  - Effective use of limited funds to produce measurable benefits to fish and people.
  - Improved understanding of habitat connectivity and how aquatic systems function and are maintained.
- Role of Sound Science and Data
- FHP Map 2012, establishment dates, and websites
- Role of Effective Communications
- Appendices
  - Appendix 1 – MOU between DOI, DOA and DOC for implementing the Plan
  - Appendix 2 – FHPs and their development
  - Appendix 3 – Board and Committees
  - Appendix 4 – Strategies and Resources of Federal Agencies
  - Appendix 5 – Science and Data Strategy
  - Appendix 6 – Communication Strategy

### **Progress on the 2012 Action Plan**

The Plan had a total of 4 goals, 5 objectives with 2 to 7 commitments (agreed upon sub-objectives) per objective, and an overall Plan set of an additional 22 Plan commitments (Attachment 1). Each of these were scored using a 1 to 5 scale with 5 being completed (highest) and 1 being ongoing with no progress made (lowest). If there was clear progress on an ongoing item, the score was 4. If an ongoing item had some progress, it was scored a 3. A score of 2 was given to items that were ongoing with minimal progress. Incomplete tasks that had unclear progress were given a score of 1.5. Some tasks did not quite meet a whole number score and were given partial scores in between scores. Individual scores along with status and comments are provided in Attachment 1.

The overall progress on the four goals had a mean score of 2.75 (range 2-4). Goal 4 had the highest score for work on increasing fish habitat and Goals 1 and 2 had the lowest scores for protection and maintaining intact habitat and preventing further degradation.

The progress on the four commitments for **Objective 1** had a mean score of 3.12 (range 2.5-3.5). The commitments to measurable habitat results through the actions of FHPs and strategic project selection scored the highest in this group at 3.5. The commitment to measurable results to ensure efficiency and effectiveness scored the lowest of this group at 2.5.

The progress on the three commitments for **Objective 2** had a mean score of 3.0 (range 1-3). The commitment to developing a consensus set of national conservation strategies was completed in 2013 and scored a 5. These national conservation strategies should be reviewed as part of the revised Plan. The use of regional strategies to develop a national conservation framework was not implemented and scored a 1.

The progress on the two ongoing commitments for **Objective 3** had a mean score of 1.5 with both scored at 1.5 and progress was not clear for either one across NFHP.

The progress on the four ongoing commitments for **Objective 4** had a mean score of 2.25 (range 1-3). Commitments to National Fish Habitat Assessment (Assessment) and filling gaps in the Assessment were scored 3. The development and inclusion of socioeconomic information in the Board's data system did not have progress made on it and scored a 1.

The progress on the seven ongoing commitments for **Objective 5** had a mean score of 2.0 (range 1.5-4). The commitment to use a broad range of communication methods for project results made clear progress and scored the highest in this group at 4.0. Ongoing commitments to communicate collective conservation outcomes and approaches by FHPs, awareness of FHP benefits to communities, voluntary community-based conservation, and regional habitat planning were all score at 1.5 as progress is unclear across all of NFHP.

Overall, progress on all five ongoing objectives, using the objective means, had a mean score of 2.37 (range 1.5-3.12). Objective 1, achieving measurable conservation habitat results, scored the highest at 3.12. Objective 3, broadening the community of support, scored the lowest at 1.5.

The twenty-two overall Plan commitments had an average score of 2.68 (range 1.5-4.5). The commitments to develop and sustain FHPs scored the highest at 4.5 as it is likely the FHPs are fully populated across the country and recent efforts to provide sustainable core funds have made all FHPs functional. Commitments to provide science-based methods and tools to help FHPs determine progress, enable and facilitate learning among all partners, and Board coordination and focus for incentives at state/territorial levels all scored the lowest at 1.5 as their progress is unclear across all of NFHP.

Overall, progress was made in many areas of the Plan, but much more would need to be done to complete the envisioned 2012 Plan work as expressed in the goals, objectives, and supporting commitments. More effort is needed to provide measurable metrics for Plan components and information is needed to fully examine several commitments. Few commitments were fully completed and much of the Plan remains to be addressed. Many of the uncompleted items likely will need:

- i) updating to reflect changes in terminology;
- ii) Board review in some cases, and in many cases; and
- iii) significant new resources to fully implement and complete.

### Plan Revision Options

To guide the needed planning, facilitation, and development of supporting information to the Board to accomplish the revision of the existing Action Plan, the following are three potential options for Board consideration:

1. Keep existing plan with updates to out-of-date statistics
  - No change to mission, goals, objectives, or commitments
  - Update supporting language and FHP vignettes
  
2. Revise selected sections and update out-of-date statistics with review and revisions to the following sections:
  - Mission
  - Goals
  - Objectives and commitments
  - Roles of the Board, FHPs, Science and Data, and Communications
  - Update supporting language and FHP vignettes
  
3. Revise all sections of the document
  - Review and revise all 2016 Plan sections
  - Update supporting language and FHP vignettes

### Plan Revision Schedule

Depending on the Board direction, the Board staff will prepare the necessary facilitation plan and initial documents for Board discussion on the June 2019 conference. The facilitation plan will be implemented immediately after the June 2019 call, and depending on the revision option selected, the new Plan will be completed during the October 2019 (Option 1) to June 2020 (Option 3) timeframe.

### Staff Recommendation:

Given the current status of the 2012 Plan goals, objectives and commitments, I recommend that modified Option 2 would be appropriate with a focus on the objectives and commitments as the mission and goals are still relevant today. The supporting language and FHP vignettes would need to be updated in this scenario. The recommended modified Option 2 would be completed during the March to June timeframe depending on how much review and revision are needed to the objectives and commitments.

**Title:** Legislative Update

**Desired outcome:** Board awareness of and engagement on the National Fish Habitat Conservation Through Partnership Act

**Background:**

Since the inception of the National Fish Habitat Partnership, a NFHP legislative coalition has been working to craft a legislative proposal that would achieve the goals of the Board and establish an organic statute for the Partnership and the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. The NFHP legislative team includes representatives from The Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the American Sportfishing Association, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, American Fisheries Society, the Coastal Conservation Association and the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation. Since 2006, this team has worked closely together to advance this legislative proposal – now known as the National Fish Habitat Conservation Through Partnerships Act (NFHCTPA).

Previous versions of NFHCTPA have enjoyed broad bipartisan support in Congress, including bipartisan approval by the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee (the Senate Committee of jurisdiction) and the Senate Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) Committee. Until this Congress, the legislation had not been introduced in the House of Representatives since 2009, and instead the legislative team had focused on the Senate as the most likely body in which to advance the bill. For several reasons, Congressional approval of NFHCTPA has been complicated, with leadership shifts, initial concerns about the scope and extent of the program, a general distaste for new federal programs and the cost of the legislation among the primary obstacles.

In recent years, smaller pieces of legislation such as NFHCTPA are often unsuccessful as stand-alone bills and must move forward on larger legislative packages such as comprehensive energy legislation or public lands packages. For several Congresses now, the legislative team has worked to ensure NFHCTPA language is an integral component of any sportsmen's package.

**2019 Legislative Priority and Accomplishments:**

**Board Priority Task A:** *Continue coordination with legislative affairs team in supporting developments of the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act; (assign to eligible Board members and legislative team)*

**Accomplishments:** The shift in House Majority from Republicans to Democrats marks the first time Democrats have taken control of the chamber since the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. With this change, we are hoping to push NFHCTPA through both chambers and get it signed into law before the end of the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress. The National Fish Habitat Conservation Through Partnership Act was introduced as a standalone bill in both the House and Senate, as H.R. 1747 introduced by Reps. Wittman (R-VA, 1<sup>st</sup>) and Veasey (D-TX, 33<sup>rd</sup>) and S. 754 introduced by Sens. Crapo (R-ID) and Cardin (D-MD) respectively. Additionally, the NFHCTPA language has been introduced as a component of a broader package of fish and wildlife bills by Rep. Thompson (R-CA, 5<sup>th</sup>). H.R. 1326, *Authorizing Critical Conservation and Enabling Sportsmen and Sportswomen Act (ACCESS Act)* includes *Title V – Fish habitat Conservation* to codify the National Fish Habitat Partnership Program. One caveat to this bill is that the NFHCTPA language featured needs a few tweaks to mirror that of the two standalone bills.

With Chairman Grijalva (D-AZ, 3<sup>rd</sup>) now at the helm of the House Committee on Natural Resources, replacing Rob Bishop (R-UT, 1<sup>st</sup>), our legislative coalition has been focusing much of our attention on



the Water, Oceans, and Wildlife (WOW) Subcommittee. Subcommittee majority staff are generally supportive of the program, but as of late, have been focusing on codifying NFHCTPA through the passage of the ACCESS Act and not as an independent, stand-alone bill. The ACCESS Act received a hearing in the WOW Subcommittee on March 26, 2019 which highlighted the Subcommittee minority's discontent with several of its provisions. With NFHCTPA needing to move as expeditiously as possible this Congress, we are concerned the broader ACCESS Act may have too much baggage to easily pass out of Committee and the full House. We have similar issues in the Senate with focused interest by the Senate EPW Committee – the Senate Committee of jurisdiction – on a similar package introduced in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress called the *HELP for Wildlife Act*. Not yet introduced in this new Congress, EPW Committee Chairman Barrasso staff has indicated their preference for this package to move first before advancing stand-alone bills such as NFHCTPA.

***Approach:*** Since the start of the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, the NFHP legislative coalition has advanced as our top priority the education of key Congressional members on the importance of enacting NFHCTPA. Specifically, the legislative coalition has been busy setting up co-sponsor meeting requests in both the House and Senate for H.R. 1474 and S. 754. While much of our focus has been on members of the House Natural Resource and Senate EPW Committees, lack of a legislative schedule for the bills has recently stifled some of our momentum. We also have some obstacles tied to House Natural Resources Committee Minority staff's qualms with NFHCTPA language and their standing question as to why NFHCTPA language is necessary to codify the National Fish Habitat Program. We are working with our bill sponsors to overcome both of these concerns as well as request a House hearing for the bill. During our Hill visits, we have been making use of the newly updated toolkit and the various one-pagers that were distributed on April 22, 2019. We encourage Board Members to look at these materials if you have not yet and make use of them during your outreach and Hill visits.

**Title:** Partnerships Committee March 2019 Update

**Desired outcomes:**

- **Board awareness** of Partnerships Committee 2019 planned and ongoing activities.

**Background**

The Partnerships Committee serves as a forum for preliminary discussions, fact-finding, and formulating recommendations for Board actions that affect Fish Habitat Partnerships.

**Members:**

Jeff Boxrucker (RFHP)

*Tri-Chairs*

Doug Boyd (SBPC)

Stan Allen (PSMFC)

Jessica Graham (SARP)

Bryan Moore (TU)

Debbie Hart (SEAK FHP)

Therese Thompson (WNTI)

Lisa Havel (ACFHP)

Heidi Keuler (F&F FHP)

*Staff*

Joe Nohner (MGLFHP)

Alex Atkinson (NMFS)

Steve Perry (EBTJV)

**2019 Priorities**

- **Priority A:** Develop an approach for future Multistate Conservation Grant Program submissions (in collaboration with the Budget and Finance Committee).

**Update:** The application approach for the 2020 Multistate Conservation Grants was modified so that any FHPs applying submitted proposals that fit into the common theme of outreach and communications.

- **Priority B:** Review the FHP Evaluation process and identify measures that can be further refined for the next FHP Evaluation in 2021.

**Update:** The 2018 FHP Evaluation Review Team finalized the FHP Evaluation report in May and is in the process of surveying FHP coordinators and the Review Team members to get their feedback on how to improve the process for 2021. The Committee will develop a lessons learned guidance document which will outline effective approaches used in 2018 and suggested revisions to measures that need adjusting.

- **Priority C:** Review and propose revisions or changes to the NFHP Document of Interdependence.

**Update:** The Partnerships Committee will review and identify areas within the Document of Interdependence that require updating or revising during 2019 in coordination with the Action Plan, Charter, and Member Guide revisions. This priority will not advance until the Action Plan review is underway since the two documents are inter-related. The Committee will likely present suggested revisions to the Board in October.

- **Priority D:** Work with staff to develop purpose and agenda and implement a 2020 Fish Habitat Partnership workshop.

**Update:** On their May 6<sup>th</sup> full Committee call, the group reviewed the post-workshop survey results from the October 2018 FHP Workshop and began Committee discussions about the next FHP workshop in 2020. The Committee identified a small team to plan the 2020 FHP Workshop and discussed potential workshop topics with FHPs at the May 16<sup>th</sup> FHP bi-monthly call.

- **Priority E:** Work with the Communications Committee to review the project nominations for the 2019 Waters to Watch campaign.

**Update:** The Committee will participate in an early June call with the Communications Committee to review nominations.



# 2018 Fish Habitat Partnership Evaluation Report

NATIONAL FISH HABITAT BOARD – PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE

**Fish Habitat Partnership Performance Evaluation  
Final Report  
June 2019**

*Introduction*

The National Fish Habitat Partnership is an unprecedented effort to build and support partnerships that are strategically focused on fish habitat conservation. The National Fish Habitat Action Plan (Action Plan) guides this initiative and establishes processes for bringing partners together, challenging them to collaboratively advance strategic priorities, as well as measure and report on the outcomes of their conservation actions. The geographic scope and focus on fish habitat conservation distinguishes the National Fish Habitat Partnership from other more local fish habitat initiatives.

To uphold the high standards set by the Action Plan, the National Fish Habitat Board (Board) adopted a set of ten measures aimed at evaluating Fish Habitat Partnership performance levels for core operational functions (i.e., coordination, scientific assessment, strategic planning, data management, project administration, communications, and outreach). At its July 2012 meeting, the Board voted to begin the first “formal” performance evaluation of Fish Habitat Partnerships in January 2015, covering a 3-year period (2012-2014), and to repeat this process every 3 years thereafter. Following the 2015 performance evaluation process, the following recommendations were adopted by the Board:

1. The 2015 FHP Evaluation Team recommends that this evaluation process be improved and repeated in 2018.
2. The Partnership Committee should include interested FHP Coordinators and Review Team members to consider and recommend improvements to the performance measure wording and overall evaluation process for Board consideration during 2016.

For the 2018 FHP Evaluation, a new ‘pilot’ measure was approved by the Board and included in the list of measures. Because this was a ‘pilot’ measure, it was scored by the Review Team, but the results will be presented both with and without including the scores from measure 5. The Board will consider the results of the 2018 FHP Performance Evaluation and determine whether to include this measure for formal scoring in a future performance evaluation process.

*Why a Board Evaluation Process?*

The USFWS developed a funding allocation method in 2013 that required each FHP to submit information used by USFWS staff to score various criteria. While the NFHP Board did not want to duplicate this process, our main objective was to conduct reviews of FHP progress from the Boards perspective and encourage Board interaction with the FHPs. Also, in the event the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act becomes law, the Board may have increased responsibility to review FHP performance and allocate funding provided under the Act. For this reason, the Board tasked the Partnership Committee with developing a set of ten performance



measures (attachment 1). Measures 1 – 4 are most similar to USFWS Criterion, however, Measures 5 – 11 differ most from the USFWS criteria.

*Objectives of the 2018 Evaluation*

The Evaluation Team followed the same objectives from the 2015 process, but with an added objective to improve upon the 2015 evaluation process. The evaluation objectives are as follows:

1. Test the process to achieve improvement.
2. Engage Board members in the process to help them learn more about the FHPs.
3. Establish two-way communication with FHPs and Evaluation Team to improve the process.
4. Identify successful strategies of more established FHPs to aid newly-formed ones.
5. Identify areas of shared successes and challenges among FHPs

*Performance Evaluation Process*

The Partnership Committee developed the performance evaluation process in 2015. The process was slightly modified for the 2018 review to include a new pilot measure. The Board approved Review Team membership and a timeline (below) in January 2018:

**2018 FHP Performance Evaluation Team:**

**Chaired by:** Tom Champeau

Stan Allen – *Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission*

Bryan Moore – *Trout Unlimited*

Doug Nygren – *Midwest Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies*

Tom Lang – *Texas Parks & Wildlife Department*

Gary Whelan – *Michigan Department of Natural Resources*

Susan Wells – *US Fish and Wildlife Service*

Alex Atkinson – *NFHP Board Staff (NOAA contractor)*

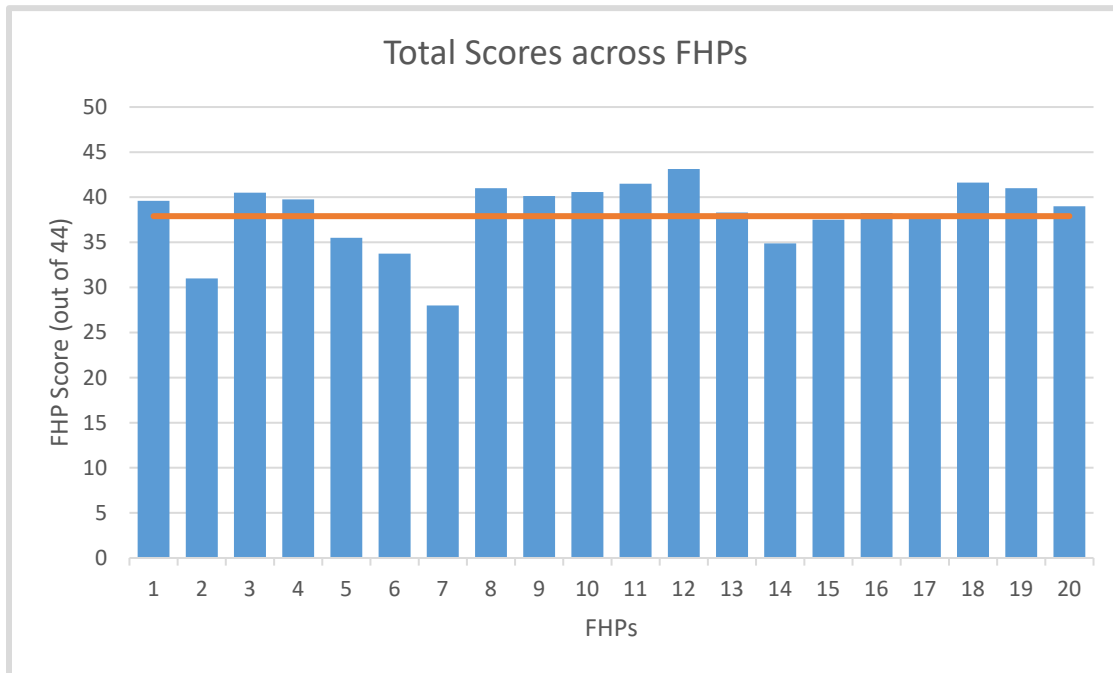
1. Board staff distributes FHP Performance Evaluation form, spreadsheet, and scoring criteria on behalf of the Board	April 7, 2018
2. Each FHP submits a completed performance evaluation form	COB June 15, 2018
3. Board staff distributes compiled FHP evaluation forms and scoring materials to the Review Team	Rolling between May 31 and July 2, 2018
4. Review Team discusses scoring results via conference call	Week of August 1
5. Review Team provides evaluation outcomes to FHPs for review	September 11, 2018
6. Review Team conducts optional feedback calls with FHPs (scores will be modified in this time period if necessary)	September – October 2018
7. Final scores and a draft summary report are provided to the FHPs and included in the Board briefing book	March 2019
8. Finalized scores presented to the Board via teleconference/webinar	June 2019

*Summary of Results of Team Scoring*

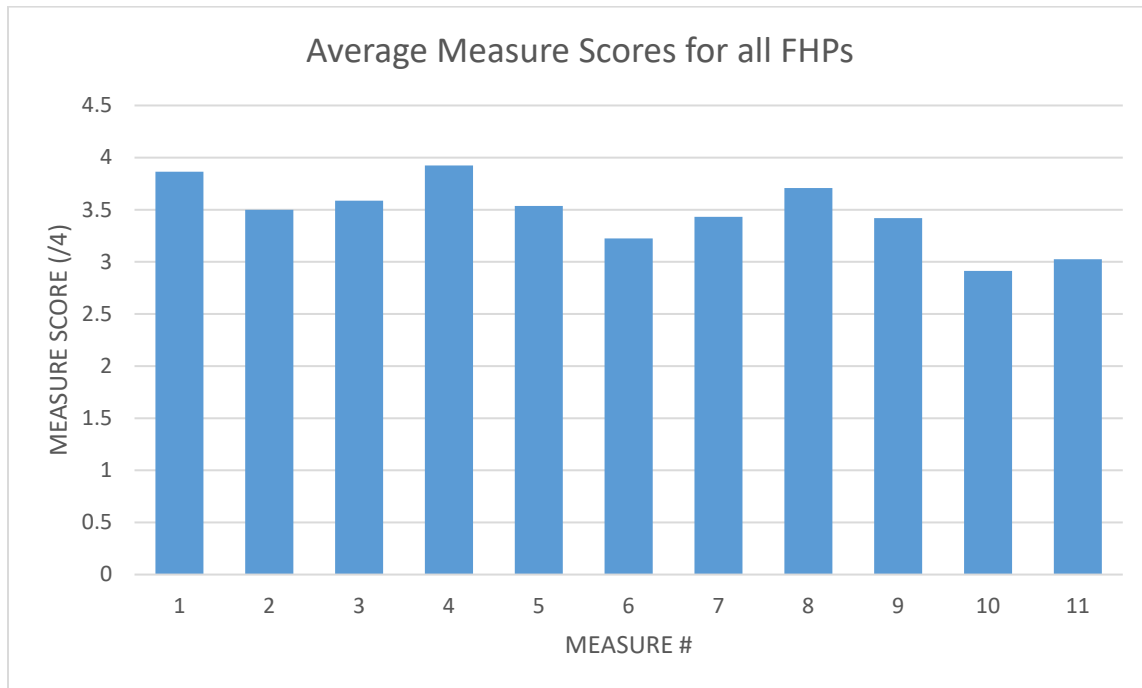
In the 2018 FHP Evaluation Process the Review Team used small teams to analyze materials and develop scores. The Review Team held an initial call in which the Team walked through a sample FHP Evaluation package with each measure to ensure each team member had a full and consistent view of the objective and scoring criteria for each measure. Pairs of Review Team members evaluated each FHP Evaluation package together to obtain scores. Those 4 team scores were discussed and reconciled on a Review Team call. To calculate the final score, each of the small teams' criteria scores were averaged and those averages were summed to obtain the final overall FHP score. FHP scores were finalized after optional feedback calls with reviewers.

All 20 of the Fish Habitat Partnerships participated in the evaluation. Scores ranged from 28 to 43 (out of a possible 44 including the pilot measure 5) with an average of 38.2, but overall were higher than the average score of 33 from the 2015 evaluation (Figure 1). Excluding the measure 5 scores from the average results in an average overall scores of 34.7 (out of a possible 40). Figure 2 shows the average scores across all FHPs for each measure. All 20 FHPs participated in the review.

**Figure 1.** Total score for 20 FHPs that participated in the evaluation (including pilot measure 5 and an average line at 38.2).



**Figure 2.** Average score for each of the eleven performance measures across 20 FHPs (including pilot measure 5).



**2018 Measures where FHPs demonstrated excellent progress (≥3.5):**

1. How well FHP projects focused on addressing FHP and/or national conservation priorities.
2. How well FHPs used effectiveness measures to document project outcomes.
3. How well projects focused on protecting vulnerable fish habitats and causes for declines.
4. How well FHP project funding was matched by non-NFHP and federal dollars.
5. How well FHPs addressed National Conservation Strategies in 4 main categories.\*pilot measure
8. How well FHPs utilized resource condition assessment to determine conservation priorities.

**2018 Measures where FHPs demonstrated good progress (3.0 – 3.4):**

6. How well FHPs utilize the Board’s minimum benchmark criteria when prioritizing projects for funding.
7. How well FHPs engaged in with neighboring/overlapping FHPs and other conservation entities.
8. How well FHPs engaged in a variety of outreach activities.
11. How well FHPs demonstrated progress towards addressing priorities.

**2018 Measure where FHPs demonstrated fair progress (<3.0):**

10. How well FHPs coordinated data and regional assessment information with the NFHP Science and Data Committee.

*Results of the Outcomes of Team and FHP Discussions*

The results of individual FHP scores were sent to each Coordinator and/or Steering Committee Chair. The small teams hosted optional individual FHP feedback calls to discuss the evaluation objectives, process, and results with Coordinators and/or Steering Committee Chair. The Evaluation Team met after all feedback calls were held to compare and compile the outcomes from all the follow-up conversations.

Thus far, the evaluation process has sparked several questions including:

- Do we continue to include the pilot measure 5 on National Conservation Strategies in future FHP Evaluations?
- FHPs appear to still struggle to answer measures 10 & 11.
  - How can we improve the clarity of the questions or better indicate what is expected (if the questions are unclear)?
  - Based on the results from measure 10, it appears that there still could be better coordination and communication between FHPs and the Science and Data Committee.
  - Based on the results from measure 11, it appears that FHPs could improve how they're tracking progress on their projects over the last 3 years. How can the Partnerships Committee and Board members support this need?

*Recommendations to the Board*

1. The 2018 FHP Evaluation Team recommends that this evaluation process be improved where possible and repeated in 2021 (or sooner if needed).
2. The Partnership Committee will review the 2018 process and results and make recommendations for improvements to future evaluations.
3. If the National Fish Habitat Conservation Through Partnerships Act (NFHCTPA) legislation were to pass, the Board would need to revise the FHP Evaluation process to ensure it meets the Congress reporting requirements as outlined in the legislation.

**Title: Science and Data Committee Report**

**Desired Outcome:**

- **Board understanding** of Science and Data Committee accomplishments as they relate to 2019 Board Priorities

**2019 Priorities and Outcomes:**

**Priority L: Science and Data Committee Operations**

- Updating Science and Data Committee (SDC) membership following SDC Terms of Reference.
- The SDC met on April 26 via conference call to update SDC membership on NFHP progress and Board actions.
- Scheduling two webinars with the Northeast Coastal and Chesapeake Bay Assessment Teams to brief SDC members on current coastal assessment progress.
- Outreach
  - Overall Board National Fish Habitat Assessment strategy written up as a peer-reviewed book chapter in *Multispecies and Watershed Approaches to Freshwater Fish Conservation*, an upcoming American Fisheries Society publication with an expected publication date of October 2019. Chapter has been accepted for publication and page proofs are currently in review.

**Priority N: Planning and Initiation of Future Assessment Work.**

- Inland
  - No progress has been made on the Board's new Inland Fish Habitat Assessment as funding is currently not available. New funding sources are being sought at this time. The delay in funding has created the following outcomes at this time:
    - No new work done on improving and updating the inland component of the National Fish Habitat Assessment.
    - National Fish Habitat Assessment staff are not available to assist FHPs in their assessment work or to facilitate needed coordination between the National and FHP Assessment products. The loss of funding also will mean that new core staff would need to be hired.
    - The Board planned update to the 2015 National Fish Habitat Assessment will not be available until 2023 at the earliest assuming funding is available in the near term.
    - USGS staff working on methods to help support transition of data and analyses to new versions of the NHDPlus, which should be considered in future assessments.



- New hydrology information from USGS that will support the approved National Inland Fish Habitat Assessment strategy is now available for the Lower 48 states. The SDC has requested funding through the Multi-States Conservation Grant process to start incorporating these data into the National Assessment Data System using a select group of regions and watersheds. This initial work will greatly speed up the incorporation of the rest of this dataset into our data system. The dataset was published in:
  - Miller, M.P., D.M. Carlisle, D.W. Wolock, and M. Wiczorek. 2018. A database of natural monthly streamflow estimates from 1950 to 2015 for the conterminous United States. *Journal of the American Water Resources Association* 54(6): 1258-1269.
- Coastal
  - Work continues on the Northeast Regional Coastal Habitat Assessment using the Board approved assessment direction, and facilitation by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Jessica Coakley and Chris Moore). The overall assessment guidance document is completed, initial inshore and offshore project teams have been populated and making progress, potential model approaches are under review, and funding continues to be acquired to work on the assessment. Recent accomplishments are as follows:
    - On March 29, 2019, the Northeast Regional Marine Fish Habitat Assessment Steering Committee met to review and approve the final draft work plan (Appendix A), and to approve the proposed work for this assessment starting in April 2019. A follow-up conference call is scheduled for June 24 to review progress.
    - Five actions were identified as necessary to describe and characterize estuarine, coastal, and offshore fish habitat distribution, abundance, and quality in the Northeast in the draft workplan. These actions will address: 1) abundance and trends in habitat types in the inshore area, 2) habitat vulnerability, 3) spatial descriptions of species habitat use in the offshore area, 4) oceanographic influences on offshore habitat; and 5) habitat data visualization and decision support tool development. The work to support these actions is proposed for April 2019 - April 2022.
    - The assessment covers the Northeast U.S. Shelf, and extends from the North Carolina/South Carolina boundary to the western end of the Scotian Shelf and includes the Mid-Atlantic Bight, Southern New England, Georges Bank, and the Gulf of Maine. The geographic scope of this workplan includes all waters extending from the inshore tidal boundary in state waters to the eastern-most boundary of the EEZ (200 miles offshore), and extends from the Canadian/US Border southwards to the North Carolina/South Carolina border. The Steering Committee identified 61+ focus fish species for this habitat assessment. All species are highly important to fisheries management organizations within the region.

- Work continues on the West Coast Assessment. Examples of these products are on the Pacific Marine & Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership (PMEP, [www.pacificfishhabitat.org](http://www.pacificfishhabitat.org)) website with part of the West Coast Assessment work displayed as an estuary viewer and explorer that includes information on current and historical estuary extent, estuary points, biotic habitat, tidal wetland losses, and eelgrass habitat.
- The Great Lakes Assessment strategy using the Great Lakes Aquatic Habitat Framework ([www.glahf.org/framework](http://www.glahf.org/framework)) is currently under review with long-term operation and development being developed in concert with the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and project partners. A presentation on this data system was made at the Annual Great Lakes Fishery Commission meeting on May 30.

### **Priority O: Continue work on the NFHP Project Tracking Database**

- Kate Sherman (Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, PSMFC) continues to improve the NFHP Project Tracking Database using NOAA (FY2018) and MSCG (FY2019) funding. The following progress has been made:
  - Work directly with Partnership coordinators to assist with USFWS end of year reporting for projects funded FY 2015-2018.  
*Status update:* Assisted FHPs in updates to Q2-6 of USFWS Accomplishment reports, and project location maps for FHP's. See Figure 1 & 2 for examples. \*13/19 FHP's received reports because their project information was up-to-date for the reporting period. Presented on the April FHP Coordinators call on example reporting for USFWS Accomplishment Reports.
  - Assist Partnerships with data management plans and maintain a help service for Partnerships working with their data on the system;  
*Status update:* Ongoing.
  - Improve reporting capabilities of the system;  
*Status update:* Created reports the NFHP Breakfast Briefing hosted by CSF in March 2019 to share project summaries, and project information by state and congressional district. Created a special report for district 08 in CA after a special request by Mike Leonard. See Figure 3 for example.
  - Maintain the database on PSMFC servers, including server maintenance, server updates, and data backups.  
*Status update:* Ongoing.

Figure 1: Example Q2 standardized table output from NFHP Project Tracking Database. Example from EBTJV.

Project Title	FHP Priority Species	FHP Priority Area	Brief project description (max. 250 characters)
Nash Stream Restoration & Columbia Road Culverts, Odell, Coos County, NH	Brook Trout		This Project restored the habitat for native fish in the Nash Stream watershed using well-established process-based restoration principles.
Upper Shavers Fork Instream and Riparian Habitat Restoration, WV	Brook Trout		Enhancement of aquatic habitat connectivity and genetic exchange within the Upper Shavers Fork fluvial metapopulation of wild Brook Trout.
Sparta Glen Brook Restoration, NJ	Brook Trout		This project restores critical instream habitat within Sparta Glen Brook, including natural pool regimes and spawning areas, restores toe of slope protection, and further stabilizes upland fringe areas, as well as the riparian corridor along a 0.68 mile s
Great Pond Tributary Culvert Replacement, Little Cards Brook, Franklin, ME	Brook Trout		This project will replace the existing multiple round culvert with an open bottom arch culvert, with span that exceeds 1.2 times the bank full width requirements.
Watershed Connectivity Project, Beebe River Watershed, Campton and Sandwich, NH	Brook Trout		This project removes and replaces five stream crossings in the Beebe River Watershed on a 5,435 acre parcel recently acquired by The Conservation Fund. These crossings are on five separate tributary streams that flow into the Beebe River.
Restoring a Brook Trout Metapopulation within the Little Cataloochee Creek & Anthony Creek Watersheds, Great Smoky Mountains National Park	Brook Trout		The purpose of this Project is to restore Brook Trout into 2.64 km of Little Cataloochee Creek and 2.8 km of Anthony Creek within its native range in Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GRSM) as identified in the GRSM Fishery Management Plan.
East Branch Passumpsic River Dam Removal, VT	Brook Trout		This Project removes a deteriorating dam, which will improve natural flow regimes, free-flowing river conditions, water quality and temperature, sediment release and transport, and connectivity resulting in the restoration of Aquatic Organism Passage.
Enhancing and Connecting Wild Brook Trout populations in the West Mountain Wildlife Management Area, VT	Brook Trout		This Project replaces one impassable culvert with a bridge, removes one culvert, and improves 1.25 miles of Brook Trout spawning and juvenile rearing habitat.

Figure 2: Example of standardized map output of project locations from NFHP Project Tracking Database. Example from DFHP.

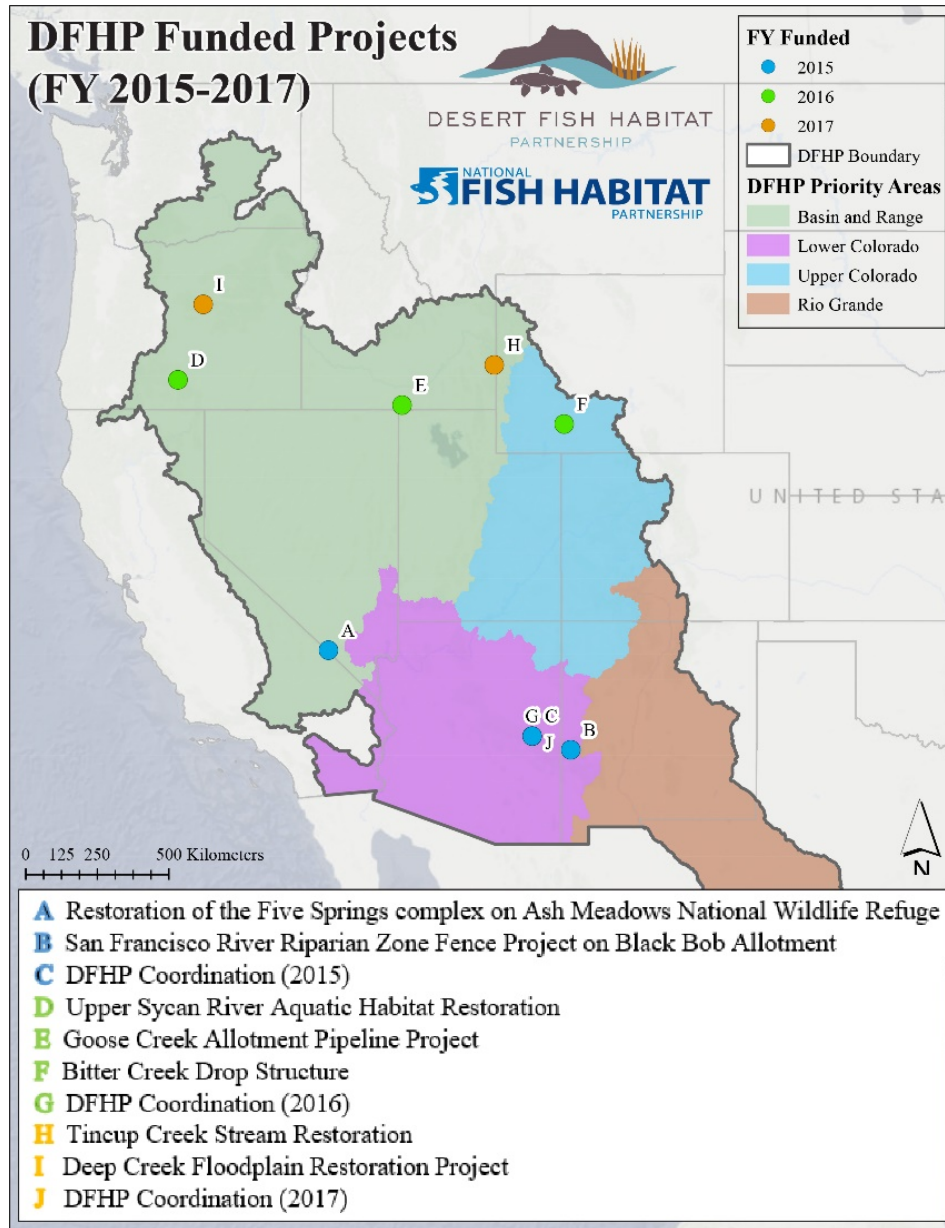
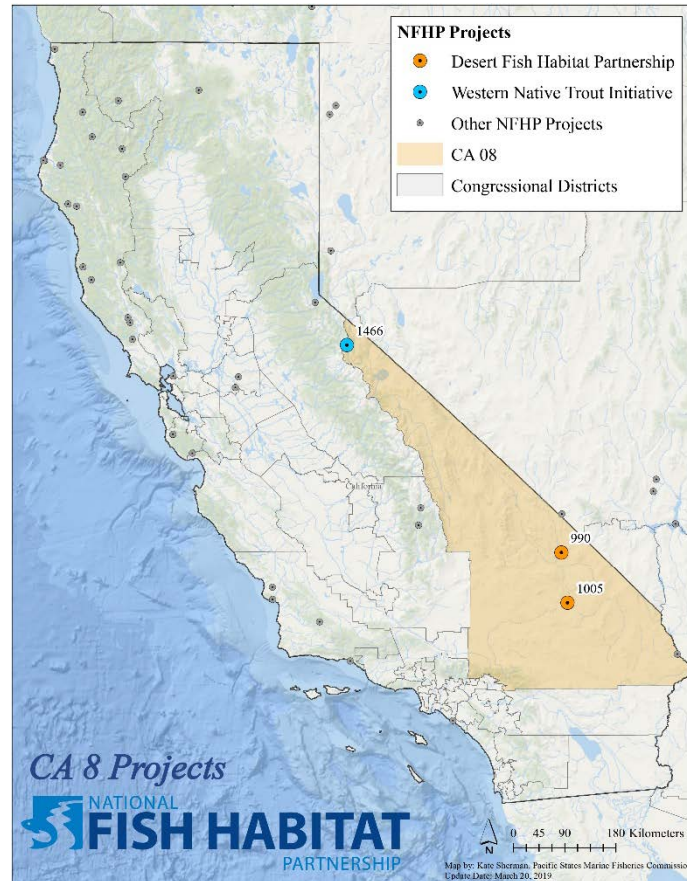


Figure 3: Example of output map of projects in CA 8 created as a special request by Mike Leonard.



**Priority P: Maintain and improve the NFHP Data System** (Daniel Wiefertich, USGS In-kind support)

- As a result of other USGS priorities, limited effort has been made on the NFHP Data System and viewer since the last Board update.
  - USGS continues to align NFHP assessment data in the National Biogeographic Map efforts. USGS has been working on open source solutions to summarize habitat condition indices and disturbances (i.e. severe, pervasive and total lists) to ecological and jurisdictional areas. These efforts will accept and process new areas as they are identified and can be adapted to help drive the next generation of the NFHP data system.

Report written by: Gary E. Whelan (MI DNR Fisheries Division) and Daniel Wiefertich (USGS)  
 Board Science and Data Co-Chairs  
 June 4, 2019