



Blue Marsh Lake, PA



Board Meeting Book

**September 12, 2023
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM EDT
(Virtual)**

**Zoom: [https://fishwildlife-org.zoom.us/j/82854734635?](https://fishwildlife-org.zoom.us/j/82854734635?pwd=N21aQWlWMDZNVWhNa3AzSDRsbmFSUT09)
pwd=N21aQWlWMDZNVWhNa3AzSDRsbmFSUT09**

Meeting ID: 828 5473 4635 Passcode: 110211

National Fish Habitat Virtual Board Meeting

Tuesday, September 12, 2023 (1:00 PM – 5:00 PM) EST

Zoom link: <https://fishwildlife-org.zoom.us/j/82854734635?pwd=N21aQWIWMDZNVWhNa3AzSDRsbmFSUT09>

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Time (PM ET)	Agenda Item	Board Tab	Lead(s)
1:00	<p>Welcome & Attendance <i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome new Board members. • Board action to approve the September meeting agenda. • Board action to approve the June meeting summary. 	Tab 1	Robert Boyles (<i>Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Board Chair</i>) & Board Staff
1:10	<p>Board Reminders & Board Member Terms <i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of NFHP calendar. • Board awareness of upcoming expiring Board terms and calendar for future Board member recruitment. 	Tab 2	Alex Atkinson (<i>NOAA Fisheries, Board Staff</i>) & Ryan Roberts (<i>AFWA, Board Staff</i>)
1:25	<p>USFWS Update <i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of USFWS feedback from Board FY24 proposed project list. 		Steve Guertin (<i>USFWS, Board member</i>)
1:40	<p>Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment Update <i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of the recent completion of the assessment and its results and impacts. 	Tab 3	Jessica Coakley (<i>Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council</i>) and Tori Kentner (<i>Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council</i>)

Time (PM ET)	Agenda Item	Board Tab	Lead(s)
2:10	<p>Preview of December (In-Person) Board Meeting</p> <p><i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness and update on December National Fish Habitat Board Meeting. • Board awareness of FHP Workshop planning. 		Robert Boyles (<i>Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Board Chair</i>)
2:20	<p>World Fisheries Congress Update</p> <p><i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness and discussion of NFHP presence at upcoming 2024 World Fisheries Congress. 		Doug Austen (<i>AFS, NFHP Board Member</i>)
2:25-2:35	BREAK		
2:35 – 2:45	<p>FY25 FHP Scoring Rubric</p> <p><i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of the updated FHP rubric for FY25 scoring. 		Stan Allen (<i>PSMFC, Board Review Team Lead</i>) & Bryan Moore (<i>TU, Board Review Team Lead</i>)
2:45	<p>Board Committee Updates</p> <p>Communications Committee</p> <p><i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness and vote on 2023 of Waters to Watch nominations. • Board awareness of Communications Committee updates. 	Tab 4	John LeCoq (<i>Fishpond, Communications Committee Chair</i>)

Time (PM ET)	Agenda Item	Board Tab	Lead(s)
2:55	<p>Policy Committee</p> <p><i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of Policy Committee activities and discussions. • Board awareness of benefits to estimating of Federal agency activities contributing to NFHP in support of Sections 206 & 212 of the ACE Act. • Board awareness of ACE Act reauthorization budget. 		Tim Schaeffer (<i>PA Fish & Boat Commission, NFHP Policy Committee Chair</i>)
3:35	<p>Partnerships Committee</p> <p><i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of the FHP Buddy system. • Board awareness of Partnerships Committee Terms of Reference. • Board discussion of FHP operational funding. • Board vote on FHP buddy system proposal. 	Tab 5	Stan Allen (<i>PSMFC, Partnerships Committee Co-Chair</i>) & Joe Nohner (<i>MGLP Coordinator, NFHP Partnerships Committee Co-Chair</i>)
3:45	<p>Governance Committee</p> <p><i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of progress on NFHP Board by-laws and Board member guidance. 		Doug Austen (<i>AFS, NFHP Governance Committee Chair</i>)
4:15	<p>Science & Data Committee</p> <p><i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness and discussion of the 3 RFPs for the National Assessment. • Board awareness of Board virtual decision on the NCPs. 	Tab 6	Gary Whelan (<i>Board Staff, Science and Data Committee Co-Chair</i>), Daniel Wieferrich (<i>USGS, Board Staff, Science and Data Committee Co-Chair</i>), & Kate Sherman (<i>Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, Board Staff</i>)
4:30	Adjourn		

National Fish Habitat Virtual Board Meeting

Tuesday, June 13, 2023 from 1:00 – 5:00 PM ET

Zoom link: <https://fishwildlife-org.zoom.us/j/86561769103?pwd=d1gzQnc1MEtLNi9wL2dwSHpoNXN1dz09>

	Last Name	First Name	Present?
1	Allen	Stan	X
2	Austen	Doug	X
3	Booth/Batten	Austin/Ben	X
4	Boyles	Robert	X
5	Cantrell	Chris	X
6	Eischeid	Ted	X
7	Gilliland	Gene	X
8	Guertin	Steve	X
9	Conley/Harper	Kimberly/Rob	X
10	Kinsinger/Beard	Anne/Doug	X
11	Kruse	Carter	-
12	LeCoq	John	X
13	Leonard/Chester	Mike/Annie	-
14	Linnell	Karen	X
15	Moore	Chris	X
16	Moore	Bryan	X
17	Rivers	Pat	-
18	Perry	Steve	X
19	Plumer	Christy	X
20	Rauch/Robinson	Sam/Carrie	X
21	Ringia	Adam	X
22	Rivers	Pat	-
23	Schaeffer	Timothy D.	X
24	Singler	Amy	X
25	Trushenski	Jesse	X

Other Attendees:

- Jason Olive (NFHP Staff)
- Alex Atkinson (NFHP Staff)
- Ryan Roberts (NFHP Staff)
- Kate Sherman (NFHP Staff)
- Gary Whelan (NFHP Staff)
- Daniel Wieferich (NFHP Staff)
- Mark Humpert (AFWA)
- Benton Pang
- Steve Krentz (USFWS)
- Max Calloway (PLCI)
- Eric MacMillan (USFWS)
- Shannon Boyle (USFWS)
- Christopher Estes
- Todd Ewing (SARP)
- Doug Nygren (RFHP)
- Gordon Smith (Hawaii FHP)
- Lori Maloney (EBTJV)
- Therese Thompson (WNTI)
- Joe Nohner (MGLP)
- Jennifer Graves (DFHP)

- Sara Strassman (KFHP)
- Jessica Hogrefe (USFWS)
- Michael Daigneault (USFWS)

Approved By Motion:

- June 2023 Meeting Agenda – approved by consensus.
- February Meeting Summary – approved by consensus.
- FY2024 Fish Habitat Conservation Project List – motion by Steve Perry, second by Karen Linnell (Doug Beard and Steve Guertin both abstained from voting).
- Move into Executive session to discuss candidates for corporate industry board seat: motion by Steve Perry, second by Karen Linnell.
- Move out of Executive session: motion by Chris Moore, second Chris Cantrell.
- FHP Congressional Designation Form and Timeline – motion by Chris Moore, second by Steve Perry.

Meeting Summary:

Time (PM ET)	Agenda Item	Board Tab	Lead(s)
1:00	<p>Welcome & Attendance <i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome new Board members. • Board action to approve the June meeting agenda. • Board action to approve the February meeting summary. 	Tab 1	<p>Robert Boyles (<i>Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Board Chair</i>) & Board Staff</p>
<p>The meeting began by the Chairman calling the meeting to order and the staff taking attendance. The Board went around and introduced themselves to the newest Board member, Amy Singler. Amy Singler, who is in a joint position between The Nature Conservancy and American Rivers, highlighted her focus on dam removal and culvert replacement work in the northeastern US. She is based in western, Massachusetts. The Board also welcomed the new USFWS NFHP Program Coordinator, Jason Olive and noted Gary Whelan’s recent retirement from Michigan DNR. The Board unanimously approved the meeting agenda and February meeting summary.</p>			
1:10	<p>Board Reminders & Resources <i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of NFHP calendar June & July. • Board awareness of recent orientations. 	Tab 2	<p>Alex Atkinson (<i>NOAA Fisheries, Board Staff</i>) & Ryan Roberts (<i>AFWA, Board Staff</i>)</p>

- **Board awareness** of plans for December 5-7 Board Meeting & December 4-5 FHP workshop.

Alex Atkinson, Board staff (NOAA Fisheries), reviewed recently completed FHP and new Board member orientations and directed Board members to check out the NFHP YouTube page since the FHP coordinator orientation was recorded. Alex acknowledged the large contribution from existing FHP coordinators to the new FHP coordinator orientation to make it a very useful and information-filled webinar. The upcoming monthly FHP calls were highlighted coming up on June 28 and July 12 and reminded the Board to check out the online NFHP calendar. The next Board meeting will be held virtually on September 12 from 1-5 PM ET. Ryan Roberts, Board staff (AFWA), reviewed the plans for the in-person NFHP Board meeting and FHP workshop in December 2023. The FHP workshop will be held December 4-5 (half day on December 5) and the Board meeting will be held December 5-7 at a hotel in Charleston, SC. We hope to get to take advantage of SC DNR facilities and boats to tour a SARP oyster restoration site. It was noted that the December Board meeting overlaps with the National Assembly of Sportsmen’s Caucus and it would be useful to distribute the agenda soon so Board members can plan accordingly.

1:15	<p>USFWS Update <i>Desired outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board awareness of USFWS new hires. • Board awareness of FY23 funding status & BIL funding. 	<p>Steve Guertin (<i>USFWS, Board member</i>)</p>
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Steve Guertin introduced the USFWS new hire as the NFHP coordinator, Jason Olive, who comes from the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission where he was Chief. Jason has a wealth of fisheries biology experience and is active in the American Fisheries Society and Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Steve also shared the status of the NFHP budget indicating that the FY23 funding (\$7.2M in total - \$6M in support of FHP projects, \$1.3M for USFWS support) has been allocated to the regions who are working with FHPs to provide technical assistance and get projects up and running. For FY24, Steve indicated that the USFWS requested a \$500K increase for a total NFHP budget request of \$7.7M. Given the recent Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023, we may see a tightening of Federal budgets and are likely to see a continuing resolution for at FY23 funding levels.

Finally, Steve turned things over to Shannon Boyle who presented on the Interagency Fish Passage Task Force which aims to coordinate 13 Federal agency partners engaged in fish passage work to maximize conservation outcomes. The Task Force has a variety of tasks underway and plans on having a second fish passage partner workshop on October 10-11, 2023 in Denver, Colorado following up on the summer 2022 meeting at the National Conservation Training Center. There was Board member discussion about the opportunity we have to fund Fish Habitat Partnership projects with these new federal funds. The Board was also reminded that applications (for some Federal agency funding) must come in through a competitive Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and agencies are working to

share with FHPs how to apply so NOFOs can be shared with NFHP partners. A Board member also raised a question about the Waters of The United States rule which removes protections for wetlands. It was noted to add some time to the next Board meeting to share the Department of Interior solicitor’s interpretation of this rule and how it could impact NFHP.

1:35 **NOAA Fisheries Update**

Desired outcomes:

- **Board awareness** of NOAA Fisheries’ FY23 BIL & NFHP funding.

Sam Rauch (*NOAA Fisheries, Board member*) & **Carrie**

Robinson (*NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation Director*)

Sam Rauch introduced that NOAA is excited to share some NOAA updates with the Board. Since 2019, NOAA has offered dedicated funding to NFHP projects that improve habitats and engage recreational fishers. Carrie Robinson, Director of NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation, presented this year’s NFHP projects selected for funding that included four projects:

- Community based coral restoration in West Oahu in the Hawaii Fish Habitat Partnership;
- Sea grass restoration in areas damaged by boats in the Florida keys in the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership;
- Stream bank restoration with anglers in two popular trout and salmon fishing rivers near Anchorage in the Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership and the Mat Su Salmon Habitat Partnership; and
- Stream bank restoration and angler outreach working with the City and Borough of Juneau in the Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership.

Carrie also shared a presentation with the Board about NOAA’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding thus far and upcoming opportunities to apply for funding. Between BIL and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), NOAA will award over \$1.3B over the next 5 years. In FY22, NOAA awarded BIL funding via four different competitions: fish passage, Tribal fish passage, transformational habitat work, and underserved communities. A NFHP project in the Mat Su Salmon Habitat Partnership was selected for funding under the first round of BIL funding via the Tribal Fish Passage Opportunity – the Chickaloon Village Tribal Council will receive \$1.9M to remove fish barriers, increase the knowledge and capacity of tribal staff members, and facilitate a Mat-Su fish passage working group. NOAA has been gathering lessons learned from entities and encouraging all applicants who were not selected for funding to request a feedback meeting.

2:05 **Board Vote on FY24 FHP Funding**

Desired outcomes:

- **Board vote** on the FY24 Fish Habitat Conservation Project proposals presented by the Board review team leads.

Tab 3

Stan Allen (*Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, NFHP Partnerships Committee Co-Chair*)

& **Bryan Moore** (*Trout Unlimited, NFHP Partnerships Committee Co-Chair*)

Stan Allen presented the FY24 Fish Habitat Conservation funding recommendation on behalf of the Board review team. Stan reminded the Board of the ACE Act requirements and deadlines and thanked the members of this year's Board review team including: Stan Allen, Bryan Moore, Carter Kruse, Pat Rivers, Adam Ringia, Steve Perry, Jesse Trushenski, and Gary Whelan. This group formed two small groups and scored 12-13 FHPs each and developed three tiers of FHP funding allocations based on the FHP scores. FHPs were scored on the "hard" and "soft" ACE Act criteria, justification for operational funds, and their overall application. New this year, all of the FHPs received a report card with their scores in each category along with reviewer comments. The three funding tiers are: \$300K, \$200K, and \$85K and the 132 proposed FHP projects are matched by almost \$20M in non-federal funds. Stan also shared the details of the Board operations proposal and the request for funding to support the NFHP assessment (total \$509,174).

The Board review team recommends that the Board put forward 134 Fish Habitat Conservation projects totaling \$8.6M plus the \$509,174 for Board operations and assessment for review by the Secretary of Interior.

The Board had a brief discussion about the feedback that Board members have heard from FHPs about the process and many noted how the review process went smoothly this year thanks to the new features of the NFHP Project Tracking Database and dashboard that Board reviewers used to carry out their reviews. Several FHPs did not have a coordinator during the time of project submission so Kate Sherman, NFHP staff, worked with those FHPs to get their proposed projects entered. Other feedback included the challenge posed by the long time lag between proposing projects and receiving funding, a need for increased transparency in the scoring and tier development process, and FHPs noted that receiving the specific scoring rubric before this fall for the FY25 funding process would be more helpful so they can tailor their requests for proposals to address those scoring criteria. Finally, there was discussion about the overall proportion of science-focused projects versus on the ground restoration projects.

The Board approved the motion to submit the FY24 Recommended Project list, as presented by Stan, to the Secretary of Interior by July 1.

2:30 **Board Vote on Corporate Industry Seat in
Executive Session**

Desired outcomes:

- Board will break into executive session.
- **Board vote** to select a candidate to fill the corporate industry Board member seat.

Robert Boyles (*Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Board Chair*)

The Board members moved into executive session to discuss the candidates for the corporate industry seat. When the Board resumed public session, they voted to select Mr. Jake Slager of Coca Cola Company to join the NFHP Board.

2:45 – 2:55 BREAK

3:00 ACE Act Implementation Status Update

Ryan Roberts (*Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Board Staff*)

Desired outcomes:

- **Board awareness** of the status of ACE Act implementation.
- **Board discussion** about budget and scientific and technical assistance funds.

Ryan Roberts, NFHP staff, shared a presentation with the Board about the status of implementing the provisions of the ACE Act since it was signed into law in 2020. He reviewed all of the NFHP provisions and noted which have or are being completed and which have not yet been completed or have been an implementation challenge. The Board has successfully completed or made progress on ACE Act sections 203-205 and 209. The Interagency Operational Plan (IOP) and the funding authorization sections (sections 208 and 212) are two that remain not yet fully implemented.

Part of the discussion focused on the scientific and technical assistance funding (\$400K) that is authorized to five Federal agencies (USFWS, USGS, NOAA, EPA, and USFS) in the ACE Act and whether the Federal agencies have been including the request in their budget requests. Federal agencies noted that they have been providing in-kind support that likely totals more than the \$400K authorized in the ACE Act, but the funding has not been included in NOAA or USGS recent budget requests. There was also a caution against requesting a very detailed accounting of Federal agency contributions since that could jeopardize future funding if it were to exceed the authorized amount in the ACE Act. However, it was noted that assessments of in-kind contributions from Federal agencies would be useful for the Policy Committee as we near reauthorization of the ACE Act.

The Board discussed whether the non-federal Board members would support sending a letter from the Board Chair asking that Congress fully fund NFHP (including the \$400K) as has been done by previous NFHP Chairs. The non-federal members of the Board supported continuing to make this request via letter from the NFHP Chair to the appropriate Congressional committees.

Board Committee Updates

3:30 Science & Data Committee

Tab 4 **Gary Whelan** (*Board Staff, Science and Data Committee Co-Chair*), **Daniel Wieferich** (*USGS, Board Staff, Science and Data*)

Desired outcomes:

- **Board awareness** of the 2025 National Fish Habitat Assessment progress.
- **Board awareness** of the Project Tracking Database updates.

Committee Co-Chair), & Kate Sherman (Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, Board Staff)

Gary Whelan, co-chair of the Science and Data Committee, shared that the committee is currently scoping three options for completing the updated 2025 National Habitat Assessment, as required by the ACE Act. The three options include various updates to the 2015 assessment and the committee plans to share work plans for each option to the Board for comment later this summer (August). The Board will then select their preferred option for implementation at the September 12 virtual Board meeting. Gary also outlined estimated funding requirements for completing the assessment including \$175K for two years to support 1.5 FTEs (post-doc or GIS specialist and a GIS tech). The source of these funds has yet to be identified.

Kate Sherman, NFHP staff, presented the latest upgrades to the NFHP Project Tracking Database including a form for FHPs to enter their FY24 proposed projects and a password protected dashboard where the Board Review Team was able to review all the FY24 FHP-submitted materials. The committee is working on a public-facing dashboard that will feature much of the FHP project information. FHP projects are continuing to be migrated from the old database and are being QA/QC'ed. Board level projects will also be added to the new databased including the Bass Pro funded work, NOAA Recreational Fishing NFHP projects, and Beyond the Pond.

3:50 **Policy Committee**
Desired outcomes:

- **Board awareness** of timelines for ACE Act and re-authorization.

Tim Schaeffer (*PA Fish & Boat Commission, NFHP Policy Committee Chair*)

Tim Schaeffer, Policy Committee Chair, shared that the Policy Committee is seeking a new Board member to join the committee. They are also seeking an FHP representative to serve as an ad-hoc no-voting member. He also highlighted that the Policy Committee is working to meet with Congressional Committee staff to confirm the path forward to get the FHPs designated by Congress. This effort is being coordinated with the Partnerships Committee who is developing the FHP form template and process timeline in order to meet the 2025 deadline.

Christy Plumer, Policy Committee member, reported that there are a couple changes occurring on Capitol Hill that impact the ACE Act Committees of jurisdiction. The senior staff of the House Natural Resources Committee, Kiel Weaver is departing, Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee Chair, Senator Tom Carper (NY), has announced his retirement, and Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (RI) is slated to be the next EPW Committee Chair or Ranking Member. This will likely

mean that members of the Policy Committee will look to have meetings with these new members and staff to educate them about NFHP and the upcoming reauthorization.

4:10 **Partnerships Committee**

Desired outcomes:

- **Board vote** on the process and form for Congressional designation for FHPs.
- **Board awareness and discussion** of the FHP & Board Member Buddy System.

Tab 5

Stan Allen (*Turner Enterprises, Partnerships Committee Board member*) & **Joe Nohner** (*MGLP Coordinator, NFHP Partnerships Committee Co-Chair*)

Stan Allen presented the recommended timeline for Congressional FHP designation to accompany the FHP form for the Board’s consideration and vote. The Partnerships Committee is collaborating with the Policy Committee regarding the submission to Congress. The timeline begins in June 2023 and FHPs are to draft and submit the Congressional designation form to the Board by December 31, 2023. The Board will provide feedback on the draft application and then FHPs have until June 1, 2024 to submit their final application for Congressional designation.

Joe Nohner presented the concept of a “buddy system” to the Board for their feedback and consideration. This system would pair FHPs with Board members based on geography and expertise and serve to build mutual relationship between FHPs and the Board. The relationship would be flexible based on each Board member. FHP coordinators and Board members shared their support for this concept and the Partnerships Committee will be further scoping it in advance of the next Board meeting.

4:30 **Governance Committee**

Desired outcomes:

- **Board awareness** of the draft Board policy and attorney questions list.

Doug Austen (*AFS, NFHP Governance Committee Chair*)

Doug Austen presented a brief update from the Governance Committee. The Committee does not yet have bylaws drafted for Board review but will share them prior to the September Board meeting. The Committee is also preparing a list of questions to send to the attorney advisory team and is helping to strategically frame those questions. The Committee is also seeking an FHP liaison representative to serve as an ad-hoc, non-voting member of the Governance Committee.

4:50 **Communications Committee**

Desired outcomes:

- **Board awareness** of upcoming NFHP communications products.
- **Board awareness** of website and social media analytics.

Tab 6

Johnny LeCoq (*Fishpond, NFHP Communications Committee Chair*)

Johnny LeCoq presented a brief update from the Communications Committee that included a list of recently completed (Communications Strategy, Logo Guidance) and in-progress (new infographic, 2022 Annual Report) products and that the Committee will be opening the 2023 Waters To Watch campaign to FHP nominations very soon. He also highlighted social media and newsletter analytics.

5:00 **Adjourn**

CHRIS CANTRELL

(WAFWA Representative), Arizona Game and Fish, Engineering and Construction Services Branch Chief - Term exp. 11/23

ANNE KINSINGER

(Serves by virtue of office), U.S. Geological Survey, Associate Director, Ecosystems

SAM RAUCH

(Serves by virtue of office), NOAA (National Marine Fisheries Service), Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs

JAKE SLAGER

(Corporate Industry Representative), Coca-Cola, Sr. Manager, Colleges & Universities - Term exp. 5/26

STEVE PERRY

(Landowner Representative of an active Fish Habitat Partnership) Term exp. 2/24

JESSE TRUSHENSKI

(Agricultural Production), Riverence, Chief Science Officer - Term exp. 2/24

STAN ALLEN

(Councils/Commissions), Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, Sr. Program Manager - Term exp. 2/24

CHRISTY PLUMER

(Marine Rec. Fishing Representative), Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Chief Conservation Officer - Term exp. 2/24

BRYAN MOORE

(Habitat Conservation Organization), Trout Unlimited, Chief Intergovernmental Officer - Term exp. 2/25

ROBERT BOYLES

(AFWA Representative), South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, Director (Board Chairman) - Term exp. 2/26

TIM SCHAEFFER

(NEAFWA Representative), PA Fish and Boat Commission, Executive Director - Term exp. 11/23

ROB HARPER

(Serves by virtue of office), U.S. Forest Service, Assistant Director

ADAM RINGIA

(Tribal Representative), Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission, Executive Director - Term exp. 2/25

JOHN LECOQ

(Corporate Industry Representative), Fishpond USA, CEO - Term exp. 2/24

CARTER KRUSE

(National Private Landowner Representative), Turner Enterprises, Director of Conservation - Term exp. 2/24

AMY SINGLER

(Habitat Cons. Representative), Director, River Restoration, American Rivers & River Restoration Advisor, TNC - Term exp. 2/26

MIKE LEONARD

(Recreational Sportfishing Industry Representative), American Sportfishing Association, VP of Gov. Affairs - Term exp. 2/25

STEVE GUERTIN

(Serves by virtue of office), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Deputy Director

PAT RIVERS

(MAFWA Representative), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Deputy Director - Term exp. 2/25

AUSTIN BOOTH

(SEAFWA Representative), Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Director - Term exp. 2/26

KAREN LINNELL

(Tribal Representative), Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission - Executive Director - Term exp. 2/25

TED EISCHEID

(Local Government Representative), Matanuska-Susitna Borough, AK, Planner - Term exp. 2/24

GENE GILLILAND

(Freshwater Recreational Angling Representative), Bass Anglers Sportsman Society, Conservation Director - Term exp. 2/26

DOUG AUSTEN

(Science Based Fisheries Organization Representative), American Fisheries Society, Executive Director - Term exp. 2/24

CHRIS MOORE

(Commercial Fishing Representative), Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Executive Director - Term exp. 2/24

Northeast Regional Marine Fish Habitat Assessment

The Northeast Regional Marine Fish Habitat Assessment (NRHA; <https://www.mafmc.org/nrha>) is a collaborative, multi-disciplinary effort to describe and characterize estuarine, coastal, and offshore fish habitat distribution, abundance, and quality in the Northeast. Based on a plan approved by NRHA's Steering Committee, a work team spent three years collecting and analyzing data and populating the Data Explorer with information for more than 65 finfish and shellfish species through 2019. New data and products will be added over time.

Jessica Coakley, MAFMC (jcoakley@mafmc.org)

Michelle Bachman, NEFMC (mbachman@nefmc.org)

Christopher Haak, Monmouth University/NOAA

(chrishaak@monmouth.edu)

Tori Kentner, MAFMC (tkentner@mafmc.org)

Laurel Smith, NMFS NEFSC (laurel.smith@noaa.gov)

Communications Committee Report

Committee members: Steve Guertin, John LeCoq, Chris Cantrell, Pat Rivers, Gene Gilliland

The 2023 Waters to Watch Nominations and associated files can be found here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rIFm6KzrqSQamudrbMx0ukgww3dG0r29?usp=sharing>

Board Action: The Communications Committee is seeking Board approval of the Waters to Watch nominations for 2023.

Announcement: The Waters to Watch will be announced in conjunction with National Hunting and Fishing Day, September 23, 2023.

Upcoming Communications Products for NFHP

- NFHP Annual Report – (Late September)

As you know the National Fish Habitat Partnership has a [Website](#), and is on social networks, [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). We will strive to update the Board with analytics from our website at each Board meeting. Google has recently updated their analytics tracking process and we will work with our Website Developer to mesh our website with the new analytics platform (G4) that Google is using.

Partnerships Committee Update

Committee Members:

- Jessica Speed
- Heidi Keuler
- Deborah Hart
- Lori Maloney
- Carter Kruse
- Therese Thompson
- Bryan Moore (co-chair)
- Todd Ewing
- Melissa Smith
- Joe Nohner (co-chair)
- Ted Eischeid
- Karen Linnell
- Stephen Perry
- Stan Allen (co-chair)
- Alex Atkinson (Board staff support)

Committee Updates:

1. **NFHP Partnerships Committee Terms of Reference**
 - a. Committee drafted and approved a terms of reference document to guide their operations and decision-making.
2. **FHP/Board Member Buddy System (Board action following meeting)**
 - a. Committee drafted and approved a document outlining the FHP/Board member buddy system.
 - b. Implementing the buddy system will now require Board members to identify the FHPs with which they'd like to buddy – this will be done via a survey to Board members.
3. **FHP Operational Funding (Board discussion at Board meeting)**
 - a. A survey of FHPs was conducted to collect information for the Partnerships and Policy Committees.
 - b. Some questions focused on FHP operational funding and identifying the right level for that funding which has been stable at \$85K per FHP for the last 5 years.
 - c. Summary of FHP survey results:
 - i. FHPs responses indicated the appropriate range of operational funds would be ~\$78K - \$125K.
 - ii. Top 3 current uses for operational funding responses included: FHP coordinator salary, coordinator travel, education and outreach, meetings of Steering Committee or FHP leadership, workshops, training, and small conservation projects.
 - iii. FHPs identified that capacity gained with additional funds would allow FHPs to do a variety of things (e.g. support health insurance for coordinator/more competitive salary, assist partners with Federal funding applications, financial management, closer project management,

communication and outreach, travel funding, fundraising capacity, ability to participate/fund projects beyond current capacities).

4. FHP workshop – December 4-5, 2023

- a. FHP Workshop will be held at NOAA facility in Charleston, SC.
- b. Ryan has been working with the FHP volunteers to plan a draft agenda for the FHP workshop.
- c. Currently seeking facilitation for the FHP workshop – likely through Management Assistance Team at AFWA.

Guidance Document

Committee: Partnership Committee

Membership: *The Partnership Committee is composed of a mix of Board Members and FHP Coordinators as follows. All Committee Members will have equal standing in conducting committee business. All new Committee Members will be approved by the existing Partnership Committee.*

Committee Purpose: The purpose of the Partnership Committee is to provide information, analysis, and recommendations for Board action on the full range of issues affecting the Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs) in response to Board requests or as generated by the Partnership Committee.

Meeting Frequency: Quarterly or more often as necessary

Decision-making authority:

This committee does not have formal decision-making authority on behalf of the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP).

Decision-making process:

The Committee shall make recommendation-related decisions through oral discussion in its meetings or written discussion via email. Materials for all decisions shall typically be provided at least two weeks prior to a decision on its recommendations. In rare cases, if the need for more rapid action is required by the Board, materials for the decision will be provided with as much time as possible prior to the final recommendation for decision. The Committee shall prioritize acting by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, a vote may be taken if a quorum of at least two thirds of the Committee Members (i.e., those listed as members in Appendix 1) is present. If a vote is held, a simple majority of those voting will determine the decision. In the case of a vote, those in the minority will have the option to provide a written briefing with their opinion to the Board in addition to the opinion being provided by the majority. The Committee will generally operate using Robert's Rules of Order. The Partnership Committee will provide its recommendations to the Board through a concise, written Issue Statement that includes background information, a proposal or discussion, and a recommendation with specified options for Board consideration.

Committee Chairs:

Between 2-3 co-equal Chairs will lead the committee, with a minimum of one Chair being a Board Member and one Chair being an FHP Coordinator. Chairs will be appointed by the Board Chair and serve a three-year term starting with the first meeting of the calendar year and with no limit to the number of terms served.

Anticipated time commitment:

Chairs: 20 hours/year

Staff Lead: 20 hours/year

Member: 10 hours/year

Revised and approved: [insert date]

Appendix 1. Membership and staff support

Co-Chairs: Stan Allen (term: 2022 - 2025), Bryan Moore (2023 – 2026), Joe Nohner (2023 - 2026)

Members

Stan Allen
Ted Eischeid
Todd Ewing
Deborah Hart
Heidi Keuler
Carter Kruse
Karen Linnell
Lori Maloney
Bryan Moore
Joe Nohner
Doug Nygren
Stephen Perry
Melissa Smith
Jessica Speed
Therese Thompson

Staff Lead: Alex Atkinson

Staff Support: Ryan Roberts and Jason Olive

Issue Statement for the National Fish Habitat Partnership Board

Board Member – Fish Habitat Partnership Buddy System

Background

The National Fish Habitat Partnership's (NFHP) Board is charged with duties outlined in America's Conservation Enhancement Act (Act). These duties include implementation of the Act, setting fish habitat conservation goals and priorities, recommending Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs) to Congress, and reviewing and recommending fish habitat conservation projects. Many of these duties require a thorough understanding of the 20 existing FHPs. FHPs vary in geography, resources, strategic approaches, and more. Board member understanding of FHPs and vice versa will facilitate decisions that help NFHP and its FHPs reach their full potential. As many Board members and FHP coordinators are relatively new, there is an opportunity for both to learn from and serve as resources for each other. To accomplish this objective, the Partnership Committee requested and received Board support at the June 2023 Board meeting to develop a proposal for Board consideration that would establish a "buddy system" among Board Members and FHPs.

Proposal

The Partnership Committee recommends that the Board implement a semi-formal "buddy system" whereby Board members and FHPs develop and maintain relationships to better understand each other's unique roles and perspectives. Board members would select one or more FHPs with which they would like to partner using a sign-up developed by Board staff. These relationships would be typically expected to be for three years (with the option to continue), but would be flexible based on Board Members' and FHPs' needs. Board members might consider pairing up with FHPs based on considerations such as the following:

- Geographic proximity based on the Board member's location or the area they represent
- Expertise and experience with issues related to a particular FHP
- Desire to learn more about a particular FHP

Once pairings are established, Board members and FHPs would follow up directly to determine a relationship that works best for them, including virtual or in-person interactions such as the following:

- Attending FHP committee meetings, grant reviews, or other activities
- Regular or as-needed meetings between Board Member(s) and FHP coordinators
- Sharing FHP documents of interest
- Discussing how Board activities and decisions would affect the FHP
- Other interactions

This Board - FHP Buddy System would be revisited at least every three years to evaluate whether it should be continued and, if so, whether there are modifications to improve its function. The Board may choose to consider a regular agenda item at its meetings highlighting lessons learned by Board members through these interactions.

Decision

Decision 1: Does the Board approve of the implementation of the Board - FHP Buddy System as described above?

- a. Yes
- b. Yes, with modifications as noted.
- c. No

Title: Science and Data Committee Report

Desired Outcomes:

- **Board awareness** of the 3 prospectuses for the 2025 National Fish Habitat Assessment (Assessment).
- **Board awareness** of the virtual Board vote on the National Conservation Priorities (NCPs) for FY2025.

2025 National Fish Habitat Assessment Planning

The Science and Data Committee (SDC) has scoped the three proposed Assessment options noted below and a prospectus for each option will be provided to the Board prior to the September Board Meeting. A brief presentation on each option will be presented during the September meeting. Comments and indications on which approach is most desired by the Board will be requested prior to the December Board Meeting where a final decision will be requested.

Assessment options being scoped:

- *2015 approach with updated datasets to include data to fill known data gaps (hydrology, grazing intensity, timber harvest, and socioeconomics). This approach will also add in completed regional coastal assessments, where available.*
- *2015 approach with updated datasets to include data to fill known data gaps (hydrology, grazing intensity, timber harvest, and socioeconomics) and incorporate additional large-scale habitats including lakes, impoundments, reservoirs, and coastal areas. This approach will also add in completed regional coastal assessments, where available.*
- *2015 approach with updated datasets to include data to fill known data gaps (hydrology, grazing intensity, timber harvest, and socioeconomics) with a climate/resiliency component. This approach will also add in completed regional coastal assessments, where available.*

Assessment planning proposed schedule:

- Finalize scoping and share materials with Board - September 2023
- Request board feedback and indications on the most desired option – September-November 2023
- Final Board decision on 2025 Assessment direction – December 2023

NFHP FY25 National Conservation Priority Update:

In August, the Board voted by way of email to decide whether to retain current NCPs through the FY2025 as recommended by the SDC. An email along with a full decision document was sent to all Board members on August 16th with a request to vote on the SDC NCP proposal. The decision document outlined a recommendation by the SDC and requested a Board vote to retain (Decision 1a) or reevaluate (Decision 1b) the FY2024 NCPs through FY2025. Since this is a recommendation clearly detailed in the America's Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act, the vote needed a 2/3 majority of the Board to pass. Votes were received from 20 Board members with 19 Board members voting for Decision 1a and one Board member voting for Decision 1b. The one Board member voting for Decision 1b voiced concerns with the priorities being too broad and all encompassing, and therefore not serving the roll of prioritization. The affirmative Board vote provided the required 2/3 majority of total Board members, and the current NCPs will be maintained through FY2025.