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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (4/18/11):

10 “WATERS TO WATCH” HIGHLIGHTS SUCCESS IN CONSERVATION THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – The National Fish Habitat Action Plan (www.fishhabitat.org) has unveiled the **2011 10 “Waters to Watch”** list, a collection of rivers, streams, lakes and estuaries that will benefit from strategic conservation efforts to protect, restore or enhance their current condition over the next year.

These waters represent a snapshot of this year’s voluntary habitat conservation efforts in progress. These and other locally driven conservation projects are prioritized and implemented by regional Fish Habitat Partnerships that have formalized under the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. The objective of the Action Plan is to conserve priority freshwater, estuarine and marine habitats essential to the many fish and wildlife species that depend on them.

The fish habitat partnerships, under the Action Plan, cover all 50 states and are comprised of local and regional community groups, non-profit organizations, watershed groups, Native American tribes, local, state and federal agencies, and individuals.

The 10 “Waters to Watch” are representative of freshwater to marine habitats across the country including rivers, lakes, reservoirs and estuaries that benefit through the conservation efforts of these Fish Habitat Partnerships formed under the Action Plan—a bold initiative implemented in 2006 to avoid and reverse persistent declines in our nation’s aquatic habitats.

The initial Action Plan’s 10 “Waters to Watch” list was unveiled in 2007 and in 2011 will feature its 50th project. Since 2006, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has provided \$12 million to support 257 on-the-ground Action Plan projects in 43 states, leveraging \$30 million in partner match, to address the priorities of Action Plan Fish Habitat Partnerships. Additional funds have been provided by several other State and Federal agencies and Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and industry partners.

“Our approach—teaming state, local, tribal, and federal agencies with private partners and stakeholders—is helping to dramatically improve the condition of these waters and in many cases bring

these waters back to life in an extremely efficient way,” said Kelly Hepler, Chairman of the National Fish Habitat Board. “With the Waters to Watch initiative announcing its 50th project in 2011, we have seen a variety of these projects turn the corner since 2007, watching these conservation practices take effect in real time. Through sound science and research and through the work of locally driven partnerships, these select Action Plan projects can be held high as a vision of what quality habitat should and can be, and how it benefits all people throughout the United States.”

The 10 Waters to Watch in 2011 include:

- **Alewife Brook/Scoy Pond, New York -**
(National Fish Habitat Partnership – Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership)
- **Au Sable River, Michigan -**
(National Fish Habitat Partnership – Great Lakes Basin Fish Habitat Partnership)
- **Barrataria Bay, Louisiana –**
(National Fish Habitat Partnership – Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership)
- **Batten Kill River, New York -**
(National Fish Habitat Partnership – Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture)
- **Cottonwood Creek, Alaska –**
(National Fish Habitat Partnership – Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership)
- **Duchesne River, Utah –**
(National Fish Habitat Partnership – Desert Fish Habitat Partnership)
- **Llano River, Texas -**
(National Fish Habitat Partnership – Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership)
- **Manistee River, Michigan–**
(National Fish Habitat Partnership – Great Lakes Basin Fish Habitat Partnership)
- **St. Charles Creek, Idaho -**
(National Fish Habitat Partnership – Western Native Trout Initiative)
- **Waipa Stream, Hawaii –**
(National Fish Habitat Partnership – Hawaii Fish Habitat Partnership)

Since its launch six years ago, the National Fish Habitat Action Plan has received wide public support. To date nearly 1,700 partners have pledged their support including a range of organizations and individuals interested in the health of the nation’s fisheries such as fishing clubs, international conservation organizations, federal agencies, angling industries and academia.

These ten habitat conservation efforts highlighted in 2011 are a small sample of the many habitat conservation projects implemented under the Action Plan. The 2011, as well as past 10 “Waters to

Watch” lists can be viewed at www.fishhabitat.org along with complete information on the scope of the Action Plan.

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About the National Fish Habitat Action Plan

The National Fish Habitat Action Plan is the most comprehensive effort ever attempted to voluntarily conserve freshwater, estuarine and marine waterways and habitat across the country. The Action Plan is a science-based investment strategy to conserve waterways and make conservation dollars stretch farther by combining federal and privately raised funds to build regional partnerships. For more information, visit www.fishhabitat.org.

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