



## Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership 2012-2013 Implementation Plan

The Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP) 2012-2013 Implementation Plan is a subset of the 2012-2016 ACFHP Conservation Strategic Plan. It contains a set of objectives and strategic actions and related tasks that can be accomplished over the course of a two year period. The achievement of each task is lead by an individual within the Partnership with the help of a team and additional partners.

### Section A: Habitat Protection Objectives

**Protection Objective 1:** Ensure adequate and effective fish movement past existing or potential barriers to maintain connectivity within Subregional Priority Habitats.

**A.1.1 Strategic Action:** Coordinate with partners to synthesize existing information in order to identify and prioritize watersheds for conservation where fragmentation of, or barriers to, fish dispersal are a potentially critical threat to be addressed.

Tasks:

- Consult with appropriate ASMFC entities (i.e., diadromous species management entity; Fish Passage Working Group; TCs for each diadromous species) to determine whether there are existing priority lists for restoration, subregionally.
- Compile existing lists (i.e., American Rivers in NC through the Aquatic Connectivity Team, is presently compiling a list of priority barriers). In NH, get Restoration Partners priority list; compile FERC filed diadromous fish restoration plans for watersheds in which they have been prepared; TNC NE Connectivity Project; state diadromous restoration plans.
- Determine what scale of watershed (e.g. HUC 8, HUC 12) ACFHP wishes to address. Begin by developing a spreadsheet that lists priorities and identifies their HUCs. Compile a list of land trusts.

**Protection Objective 4:** Minimize or reduce adverse impacts to Subregional Priority Habitats associated with coastal development and water dependent activities (e.g. recreational boating, and marine transportation).

**A.4.1. Strategic Action:** Identify current work being done on this objective (e.g. guidance on dredging and low impact development) and determine how ACFHP can best partner with these efforts.

Task:

- Communicate impacts to audiences that can make a difference (e.g., for recreational boating scouring impacts, communicate with Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation to disseminate our guidance; also state boat annual licensing offices within DNRs or other state agencies).

**Protection Objective 6:** Increase public awareness of the threats facing sub-regional priority habitats and the protection measures available to avoid and minimize those threats.

**A.6.1 Strategic Action:** Develop and disseminate public outreach materials on the adverse impacts of human activities on fish and fish habitat as well as ways to avoid and minimize those impacts.

Task:

- Compile pertinent existing outreach materials from state, federal, and other groups, and distribute this information at boating courses, ACFHP website, glossy card with ACFHP logo, or through existing federal networks.

## **Section B: Habitat Restoration Objectives**

**Restoration Objective 1:** Restore and enhance hydrological or physical connections between Subregional Priority Habitats to promote fish utilization and improve overall aquatic health.

**B.1.2 Strategic Action:** Restore tidal hydrology in priority wetland areas (e.g. repairing or removing culverts or berms restricting flow or separating wetlands).

Task:

- Fund on-the ground projects through USFWS-NFHP funding

**B.1.3 Strategic Action:** Identify priority areas in each subregion where Priority Habitats have been degraded or eliminated by past alterations to hydrology, and where conditions for restoration of habitats exist.

Task:

- Determine where partners are already working to remove barriers, to identify priorities and gaps.

**B.1.5 Strategic Action:** Coordinate with partners to compile fish movement/habitat restoration techniques and guidance documents to aid partners in the planning, design, implementation, and monitoring of effective fish movement improvement projects.

Tasks:

- Compile existing technical guidance, identify gaps and means to address, then update current information

**Restoration Objective 2:** Restore Subregional Priority Habitats, such as replanting eelgrass beds or restoring oyster beds, in locations where threats have been minimized or removed (does not include dam or other barrier removal).

**B.2.1 Strategic Action:** Restore Subregional Priority Habitats in each subregion where:

(a) they have been damaged or destroyed by past declines in water quality or human activities, such as dredging, filling, development, or vessel operation; AND (b) conditions for restoration of habitats exist; AND (c) goal(s) of habitat restoration can be maintained.

Tasks:

- Establish funding mechanisms and or ideas for funding mechanisms to do on the ground work. Seek additional funding for ACFHP (e.g. NOAA grants, FWS-NFHAP etc.) and figure out what administrative components are needed.
- Compile list of restoration partners/practitioners (e.g. NEPs, state management plans, ACFHP MOU signatories , etc.) and survey them regarding the focus and priorities in their planning area (e.g., priority habitats, priority threats, and priority implementation actions) in order to assist in steering appropriate restoration practitioners to ACFHP priority actions.

## Section C: Science and Data Objectives

**Science and Data Objective 2:** Work to achieve ACFHP Science and Data Needs (ACFHP, 2011) and fulfill science and data responsibilities established by NFHAP.

**C.2.1 Strategic Action:** Develop additional products and conduct continuing analysis of the Species-Habitat Matrix.

### Tasks:

- Identify number of publications and specific journals to submit manuscript for the existing matrix
- Prepare outline
- Prepare publication(s); submit for review to all coauthors
- Peer-review

**C.2.3 Strategic Action:** Beginning with the results of the Assessment and the work conducted by the National Fish Habitat Science and Data Committee, refine data and associated GIS layers to produce maps and other products that can be used to inform the goals and objectives laid out in this plan and to develop time-bound, spatially-explicit, and quantitative conservation objectives in future Plans or revisions to the Strategic Conservation Plan.

### Tasks:

- Check with Moe Nelson (NOS) to see if working on this strategic action fits under his work plan
- Review habitat assessments that have been done for the FHPs in Region 3 and 6 and determine if ACFHP would like a similar product.
- If steering committee and science and data committee are interested, determine if the organization that worked on the habitat assessments in Region 3 (Downstream Strategies) is available and how much they would charge or other contractor.
- Subcommittee conference call to take ideas from the National Assessment and Midwest FHP's assessments and make a work plan to make them useful at a regional scale and for coastal habitats. Work plan would include action items and a timeline.
- ID funding sources

## Section D: Communications and Outreach Objectives

**Communications and Outreach Objective 1:** Develop or maintain physical or virtual information or avenues for communicating information to partners and the broader conservation community.

**D.1.1 Strategic Action:** Maintain a website that meets the needs of partners and the broader conservation community.

Tasks:

- Update the Funding, Conference, Other Events, Funded Projects, Endorsed Projects, and Outreach pages
- Send out periodic Breaking News items and maintain archives

**D.1.3 Strategic Action:** Attend events such as conferences or meetings to promote ACFHP's mission and activities and encourage new partners to join.

Tasks:

- Present at American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting and/or Restore America's Estuaries Conference

**Communications and Outreach Objective 2:** Develop or maintain relationships with partners and the broader conservation community.

**D.2.2 Strategic Action:** Cooperate and exchange lessons learned with other landscape or regional partnerships and the National Fish Habitat Board.

Tasks:

- Develop individual FHP and joint messaging strategies that would identify key target audiences and generate core messages for members of the partnerships to communicate clearly and consistently with those audiences.

**D.2.3 Strategic Action:** Promote the missions of ACFHP and NFHAP by participating in NFHAP's legislative strategy to further the objectives of all fish habitat partnerships and coordinate such activities with the legislative staff in each partner organization.

Tasks:

- Identify staff working with congressional staff
- Meet with state staff who work with their delegation
- Review guides and identify Federal Representatives or Senators, particularly those that are on resources appropriation committees.

## Section E: Finance Objectives

**Finance Objective 2:** Secure operational funding for ACFHP.

**E.2.2 Strategic Action:** Secure project funding opportunities.

Tasks:

- Solicit, rank, and submit a list of priority projects to FWS for FY13 NFHP funding.

- Apply for NOAA Community Based Restoration funding
- Endorse applicable projects for NFWF/NOAA protection funding

**E.2.3 Strategic Action:** Identify private partners who can assist in providing matching funds to support operational and on-the-ground project activities.

Tasks:

- Identify a list of potential foundations to contact (organized by state and region).
- Identify a short list of foundations, who are particularly applicable, and schedule a phone call or meeting