

## **Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Spring 2015 Meeting Summary**

*April 20 – 22, 2015*

*Hyatt Regency Pier Sixty-Six Crystal Room*

*Ft. Lauderdale, FL*

**ACFHP Staff Present:** Lisa Havel, Patrick Campfield (on telephone).

**Guests/Presenters:** Jeff Beal (FL FWCC, also ACFHP Science and Data Committee), David Gilliam (Nova Southeastern University), and Erin McDevitt (FLFWCC), Jessica Coakley (MAFMC), Jessica Graham (SARP), Steve Perry (EBTJV)

**SC Members Present:** Russ Babb (NJ), Lou Chiarella (NMFS-NE), Julie Devers (USFWS-NE), Bob Groskin (International Federation of Fly Fishers), Jimmy Johnson (NC), Wilson Laney (USFWS-SE), Gary Mahon (USGS SE Ecological Science Center, proxy for Rachel Muir), Callie McMunigal (USFWS-NE), January Murray (GA), Cheri Patterson (NH), Chris Powell (RI), Dawn McReynolds (NY), George Schuler (TNC), Kent Smith (FL), Caroly Shumway (Merrimac River Watershed Council), and Marek Topolski (MD).

**SC Members On telephone:** Ben Lorson (PA).

After introductions, three invited speakers provided presentations to the ACFHP Steering Committee on local fish habitat issues. Dr. Dave Gilliam from Nova Southeastern University gave a presentation on his lab's staghorn coral restoration efforts in South Florida. Erin McDevitt, from Florida FWCC presented on the effects of marine debris (focusing on derelict vessels, abandoned fishing gear, tires, and a case study on an abandoned net) on fish habitat. Jeff Beal, also from Florida FWCC, updated the Committee on lionfish invasion into the local estuaries, and the measures the state is taking to reduce their expansion.

Marek Topolski gave a presentation on estuarine acidification, and the Steering Committee committed to incorporating more of an estuarine acidification-focus both in science and data efforts and in the next Conservation Strategic Plan.

There was an update on the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council habitat work from Jessica Coakley, and Jessica Graham presented the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership's current data and restoration projects.

Marek Topolski provided an update on the progress ACFHP and the ASMFC Artificial Reef Committee has made toward developing a proposal for offshore reef restoration and monitoring, and the Steering Committee agreed to continue pursuing these efforts and apply for the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council funding once the Request for Proposals is released later this year.

National, Coastal, and Regional Fish Habitat Partnership updates were provided by Ryan Roberts, Lisa Havel, and Steve Perry, respectively. National updates include details on the status of the 501(c)(3) fund, rebranding and marketing, major items from the November and March Board meetings, and an overview of the NFHP and USFWS reports that were submitted earlier this year. Coastal updates included continued communication via conference calls and a newsletter four times per year, as well as a presentation provided by the ACFHP Coordinator at the 2014 Restore America's Estuaries Meeting on Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership accomplishments. Regional (Whitewater to Bluewater) updates included the status of the 2015 Multi-State Conservation Grant, our intention to participate in the Letter of Intent for the 2016

Multi-State Conservation Grant, and our fish passage and outreach work over the past six months.

Lou Chiarella updated the Committee on the National Marine Fisheries Service's National Recreational Fisheries Implementation Plan, which carried into discussions throughout the rest of the meeting.

The Steering Committee discussed the status of each task in the Implementation Plan, and because a majority of the tasks had been completed, new tasks were added for 2015. This discussion led into the status of the Conservation Strategic Plan, which operates from 2012 – 2016.

Julies Devers presented a review of the projects that were funded through US Fish and Wildlife Service funding (NFHP-USFWS) last year, and discussed the projects that ACFHP has funded since 2009. The projects recommended for funding for this year were discussed, and a subcommittee was formed to deliberate on updating the funding criteria. Julie Devers also gave an update on the North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative-funded decision support tool to assess aquatic habitats and threats in North Atlantic watersheds. The winter flounder assessment report is in the process of being written, and the river herring assessment is likely going to move forward using The Nature Conservancy's anadromous fish prioritization data.

Caroly Shumway updated the Committee on the river herring habitat restoration strategies final report due to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation on April 30<sup>th</sup>. She also led the discussion on science and data needs for the year, which will include an in-person meeting in the summer.

Pat Campfield shared a first draft of the ACFHP Business Plan with the Committee, and after the subcommittee reviews it, he will distribute it to the Steering Committee for comments.

The Steering Committee voted the North Carolina Coastal Federation into the Partnership after Christine Miller, Assistant Director, gave a presentation on the history and accomplishments of the Federation.

On the last day of the meeting the Steering Committee visited four restoration sites within the Lake Worth Lagoon, including Grassy Flats, a site that ACFHP endorsed in 2012.

## **Action Items Summary (page numbers refer to the meeting notes)**

Page 12

**Action item:** Lisa will contact Lisa Debruyckere to see if we can discuss OA during the next coastal FHP call, and see if we can bring someone in to talk about it. We could then see if the collective group would want to move forward on this issue.

Page 14

**Action item:** Lisa will like the ACFHP website to the habitat committee papers on offshore wind, dredging, etc.

**Action item:** Lisa will follow up on the possibility of having Roger Pugliese present at the fall 2015 meeting.

Page 22

**Action item:** Kent and Lisa will look into large grants for the coastal FHPs to apply for together.

Page 24

**Action item:** Kent will contact Brad and Margaret to discuss working with ACFHP.

**Action item:** Lisa will share the link to Lou's presentation with the steering committee.

**Action item:** Lisa will work with Kent to invite all ACFHP partners to the fall 2015 meeting. A call will be placed in August to further discuss this.

Page 26

**Action item:** Chris will look into replacing all conservation mooring buoys with the green buoys.

Page 27

**Action item:** The subcommittee on coastal threats action item needs to get together to discuss the desired product. Wilson will contact Lisa to set this up.

**Action item:** The subcommittee on coastal threat will consider Mark's suggestion, found in the text.

Page 28

**Action item:** Cheri will continue to move forward with the fish passage action items, and get more information, and compile it in a form useful to the committee.

Page 30

**Action item:** Dawn will continue to analyze the data from the survey and will reach out to people who responded to the survey and determine why they gave certain answers to some of the questions.

Page 33

**Action item:** Dawn will reword Restoration Objective 2 Action 1 Task 2 (Compile list of projects by survey of the committee and/or partners (NEP state management plants etc.) on what sub-regional priority habitats they are focusing and specifics on restoration sites) to reflect the actual work that has been carried out.

Page 37

**Action item:** Lisa will work with Chris on updating the status of the tasks and incorporating the new tasks that are being addressed. Chris will present the updated version at the fall meeting.

Page 43

**Action item:** All Steering Committee members should submit their top 3 answers to the question: What do we need from the Partnership that we can't do well without it? to Lisa at your earliest convenience.

Page 45

**Action item:** Lisa will add links to the one-page description of each project to the map.

**Action item:** Lisa will update all of the on-the-ground project one-pages to replace plans with accomplishments (including photographs).

Page 47

**Action item:** Lisa will include Russ Babb and January Murray in the reviews this year.

Page 49

**Action item:** Lisa will contact the Evaluation Criteria subcommittee to address the rewriting of the criteria: George, Dawn, Jimmy, Mark, Kent, and Julie.

Page 50

**Action item:** Lisa will work with Caroly and Marek to find the information needed for the Whitewater to Bluewater overlapping areas and common priority areas.

Page 56

**Action item:** Lisa will share the images and branding with the SC after the May 28<sup>th</sup> FHP call.

Page 63

**Action item:** Caroly will contact the Science and Data Committee to see if they are still interested in serving on the Committee.

Page 64

**Action item:** Everyone on the SC should go through the action items from last meeting (Appendix 1) and let Lisa know the status of the ones that you are involved in.