

Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Management Structure

ACFHP Steering Committee Charter

The Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Steering Committee is a self-directed group of individuals interested in achieving the partnership's long-term vision of "*healthy, thriving habitats of sufficient quantity and quality to support all life stages of Atlantic coastal, estuarine-dependent, and diadromous fishes.*" It has no authority beyond those of its individual members. Participation on the ACFHP Steering Committee is voluntary.

The Steering Committee is the decision-making body of the ACFHP, and has oversight responsibility for all ACFHP activities. The activities of the Steering Committee will directly support the Atlantic Coastal Conservation Strategic Plan, which will identify the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes for the ACFHP.

ACFHP Steering Committee By-Laws

Membership and Organization

1. ACFHP Steering Committee membership shall not exceed 25 voting members. This will include no more than one person voting from each state, federal agency, tribe, interstate organization, non-governmental organization, and academic institution that is a signatory to the ACFHP Memorandum of Understanding. An addition of up to 3 ex-officio members, selected by the Steering Committee, may be included.
2. ACFHP Steering Committee members should represent the highest level of their organization as feasible. This representation should be at the administrative level, so that Steering Committee members have some authority to commit financial resources, staff resources, or other types of organizational support.
3. ACFHP partners with active seats on the Steering Committee may name a proxy or recommend a replacement at any time. Current Steering Committee members remain seated on the Steering Committee until replaced. A Steering Committee member's failure to attend or supply an appropriate proxy for three consecutive Steering Committee meetings, or teleconferences, may result in the member being replaced.
4. New ACFHP partners wishing to participate on the Steering Committee may petition the Steering Committee at any time. Petitions will be acted upon by the Steering Committee at their next scheduled meeting or teleconference. In the event that the Steering Committee has 25 voting members already, the group must decide if the new member's participation will be more relevant for the current issues of concern than some current member.

5. The ACFHP Steering Committee's Executive Committee will consist of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Steering Committee, and the ASMFC Science Director, or their proxies. The Executive Committee shall determine meeting dates, locations, and agendas, in consultation with the ACFHP Coordinator.
6. Steering Committee members shall nominate and elect a Steering Committee Chair and Vice Chair to each serve a two-year term. If the Steering Committee Chair does not wish to be considered for another term, they shall be replaced by the current Steering Committee Vice Chair upon completion of the two years. In the event that the Vice Chair is unable or unwilling to take the position of Chair, the Steering Committee shall elect a new Chair.
7. Steering Committee members may be accompanied by additional agency/organization staff to provide technical expertise/information related to items on a meeting agenda.

Steering Committee Meeting Management

1. The ACFHP Steering Committee shall schedule one meeting per year at a minimum. Additional Steering Committee meetings may be called by the Steering Committee Chair, in consultation with the ACFHP Coordinator. While partnership funds may be available for travel, generally Steering Committee members are expected to attend meetings at their own (or their organization's) expense. In the event that a member is unable to attend, they may participate via teleconference, provided this can be arranged.
2. ACFHP Steering Committee meetings will be led by the Steering Committee Chair, Vice Chair, or designee. Most decisions will be made by consensus. For Steering Committee actions that require a vote, a quorum consisting of a majority of, or at least 10, voting members will be required, whichever is fewer. Steering Committee members may designate proxies to vote in their absence. A simple majority of participating voting members will carry the motion.
3. ACFHP Steering Committee business will also need to be conducted via e-mail, fax, or teleconference. Teleconference meetings will be scheduled as needed. Business conducted by the Steering Committee through these venues will carry the same authority as business conducted in person.
4. In the event that a Steering Committee member is unable to attend a meeting or conference call, they should designate a proxy from their agency/organization to represent them in their absence.
5. The ACFHP Steering Committee business will include, but not be limited to: guiding the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of Atlantic coastal, estuarine-dependent, and diadromous fish conservation strategies at coastwide, regional, and local scales; promoting cooperation and coordination among partners and stakeholders that leads to enhanced conservation of these fish and their habitat; approving ACFHP projects for funding or endorsement; providing direction and input to the ACFHP working groups; creating additional ACFHP working groups and ad-hoc task groups as needed; supporting the

partnerships and initiatives of the ACFHP with financial and/or staff resources; participating in advocacy efforts/information campaigns to garner additional resources to meet ACFHP objectives (within agency/organization guidelines); and reporting to partners and stakeholders on the status and accomplishments of the ACFHP Conservation Strategic Plan.

Partnership-At-Large

The ACFHP partnership acknowledges that the 25-member Steering Committee does not include representation from every agency and organization in the partnership, therefore,

1. Each partnering agency and organization will designate a person of contact to expedite communications.
2. Decisions on funding distribution and project selection will be conducted by the Steering Committee, with the full input of the partnership-at-large.

Coordination and Support

A full-time coordinator for the ACFHP will be established and maintained through partnership funding sources. The ACFHP Coordinator will provide primary staff support to the ACFHP Steering Committee, working groups, and subpartnerships, and will be responsible for disseminating information, coordinating and facilitating overall implementation of actions and projects within the ACFHP, coordinating outreach activities, and pursuing funding and grant opportunities.

Working Groups

1. The ACFHP Steering Committee can organize standing or ad-hoc working groups at any time; working group Chairs will be selected by the given working group members. Working group members may be appointed by individual Steering Committee members, or may be volunteers. To facilitate as much involvement from the partnership as possible and to share ACFHP leadership opportunities, working group Chairs are not required to be current Steering Committee members.
2. Working groups will be responsible for defining, refining, or accomplishing tasks that assist with meeting ACFHP goals and objectives. The Chair of each working group, or their designee, will attend Steering Committee meetings and participate in scheduled teleconferences.

Dues and Budget

1. There will be no dues assessed to ACFHP Steering Committee members.
2. There is no Steering Committee budget per se; resources available to conduct ACFHP activities will collectively come from the participating partners and directed project grants.

3. Annually, the ACFHP Coordinator or ASMFC Science Director will report to the Steering Committee on the status of the ACFHP budget.

Procedure to Change By-Laws

Any member of the ACFHP Steering Committee can propose changes to the by-laws. These proposed changes will be circulated to the Steering Committee for a period of at least 30 days for review and comment, after which a Steering Committee vote will be taken to accept or deny the changes. To change the by-laws, a 2/3 majority vote of the Steering Committee is required.