

Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership

Interim Steering Committee (ISC)

October 22, 2008
Rehoboth Beach, DE

Draft Agenda

Wednesday, October 22, 2008

Welcome, G. Schuler **8:00 am**

❖ Welcome and Introductions

NFHAP Board Information, E. Greene **8:10 am**

❖ Partnerships Committee

At its May meeting, the National Fish Habitat Board approved a standing "Partnerships Committee" as a forum for preliminary discussion, fact-finding, and formulating recommendations for Board action regarding Fish Habitat Partnerships. The Committee is to include Board members, staff, and representatives of Fish Habitat Partnerships.

Gary Myers (Board member)

Marion Conover (Board member proxy)

Steve Moyer (Board member proxy)

Steve Perry (EBTJV)

Robin Knox (WNTI)

Scott Robinson (SARP)

Pat Rivers (Midwest Glacial Lakes)

Chris Cantrell (Desert Fish)

Emily Greene (Atlantic Coastal)

Linda Kelsey (FWS)

Maureen Gallagher (FWS)

Tom Mendenhall (BLM)

Dave Schmid (Forest Service)

Janet Cushing (Board staff)

Susan-Marie Stedman (Board staff)

❖ Progress on Draft Documents

"Policy and Guidance for Fish Habitat Partnerships": National Fish Habitat Board's guidance really targets three audiences: 1) people who want to get involved, 2) people who are organizing an FHP, and 3) people who are operating a recognized FHP. In the attached revision, these audiences are identified, and Sections 1-3 are tailored for their use. Several of your comments expressed concern about encouraging new FHPs to form. Indeed, the FHP guidance was written at a time when we were encouraging new FHPs. That time is past. The attached revision encourages people and groups to **FIRST** get involved with existing FHPs. New FHPs are warranted only in areas that are not yet covered.

Endorsement by regional Fish & Wildlife Associations or other similar entities is included as an option for demonstrating commitment by partners on page 3.

A couple of you suggested a global change of "aquatic habitat" to "fish habitat". That change has been made throughout, though we now have a discrepancy in terminology with the draft NFHAP legislation.

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Alternatively, a limited number of FHPs may be based on system types in those cases where system characteristics transcend geographic boundaries. Examples may include such as reservoirs, natural lakes, or urban estuaries. System type FHPs will work closely with geographic FHPs to enhance science and conservation for that the system type within the areas covered by geographic FHPs.

Per Board actions: FHPs are responsible for all Administrative and operation functions. And a text box was included, providing an example of working at multiple scales.

Went first to the Partnerships Committee and then to all of the partnerships.

“A Framework for Assessing the Nation’s Fish Habitat” National Fish Habitat Science and Data Committee. Chairs, Gary Whelan and Doug Beard primary authors. Meant as a companion document and science and data strategy for the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. Provides a process to describe all waters and grade their condition; options to address key factors; methods and mechanisms to properly prioritize and evaluate projects; and a process to establish measurable outcomes.

Classification and base condition factors in database for rivers and streams for continental December 2008. Lakes and Inshore coastal waters of the continental US, and R&S for Alaska and Hawaii.

What does it mean for us: The guidelines state that we’ll adopt these guidelines for resource assessment and project evaluation. But FHPs are encouraged to expand the assessment information base beyond the national framework to additional variables or surrogate variables that are shown to better measure or classify their systems. They have ideas on how to link the two, but are looking to NOAA for the coastal assessment. I’m not sure exactly how that will play out for us, but to certain extent, we’re in a position to a certain extent, lead this process for coastal waters. So, to an extent it can help guide the development of our strategic plan.

“Recommended Strategic Plan Framework for Candidate Fish Habitat Partnerships”

Purpose of this document is to simply beef up the guidance, not intended to be prescriptive, but rather offer recommendations. Consistent Terminology, and to help guide FHPs. There is no one right way, but there is a wrong way. Asked for any written comments from FHPS and on the call. Margaret Conolly: leadership detail.

❖ Legislation Status

Senators Joe Lieberman (I-CT), Christopher Bond (R-MO), Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY), and George Voinovich (R-OH), introduced the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act of 2008, a comprehensive strategy to allocate conservation dollars for effective restoration of our national waterways. Authorizes the appropriation of each of the fiscal years 2009 through 2013: \$75,000,000 (p34). Introduced in the 110th Congress. On another note, attached please find the National Fish Habitat Act, introduced to the Senate on September 24th. Will be introduced again in the 111th Congress.

➤ Notes: wanted it to have no more detail that should be, wanted to keep the board flexible. Wanted to maintain the ground-up process.

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- Changes: Increase number of folks on the board and need to include industry groups on the board, otherwise they'll stand outside the process and throw stones. Board: some board members expressed decent, concerned the ability to get anything done will be jeopardized
- Changes made Interior the lead, instead of Interior and Commerce were originally leaders.
- Made USGS lead science Board. Board: clarification USGS lead for inland, NOAA for coastal.
- Include a piece that allocates some money directly to states for the purposes of NFHAP, not just NFHAP.

❖ Other Highlights from October Board Meeting

- Plans for upcoming FY
- Communications Plan
- Short term and long term plan
- One-Year out workshop, proposed: June 22nd in DC. Provide opportunity for face to face communication among partners. Review progress, renew commitment and enthusiasm and maximize the likelihood that the 2010 milestones are met.

Talk to me if you're interested in details.

Interim Steering Committee Member Changes, G. Schuler

8:30 am

❖ Resignations & Petitions:

Resigned: Joel Fleming (GA), Margaret McGinty (MD),
Tom Bigford (NOAA-NMFS)

Petitions: No replacement for GA, Marek Topolski (MD), ? (NOAA-NMFS),
Patrick Campfield (ASMFC-Acting Science Director)

Memorandum of Understanding, G. Schuler

9:00 am

❖ **Status: New Signatories and Outstanding Signatories**

- New signatories to the MOU include the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program, and the Oyster Recovery Partnership.
 - The Oyster Recovery Partnership is a coalition of organizations, institutions, businesses and individuals dedicated to helping restore the health of the Chesapeake Bay by restoring the Bay's oyster population. The Partnership, a IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, was founded in 1994 by Chesapeake Appreciation Inc. The Partnership originated to accomplish the goals incorporated in the 1993 Maryland Oyster Roundtable Action Plan. Every year, tens of millions of hatchery-raised disease-free oysters produced at the University of Maryland's Center for Environmental Science Horn Point Lab are transported and planted on hundreds of acres of pre-selected and prepared oyster bars around the Bay. These bars are intensively monitored and managed to improve restoration success. Since 2000, the Maryland oyster partners have planted over 1 billion oysters on 60 large oyster bars, a majority of which are permanently protected or managed.
- Outstanding signatories to the MOU include in whole:
EDF, MD DNR, MA DMF, NOAA, USACE, USEPA
- Outstanding signatories to the MOU include in part:
Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, Oyster Recovery Partnership
- Interested: Several additional parties have expressed interest in the partnership, but who may or may not be considering signing the MOU:

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- Martha Maxwell-Doyle (originally involved in NJ), Barnegat Bay National Estuary Program FYI, we have recently established a Fisheries Workgroup under our Science and Technical Advisory Committee. Fisheries issues have been identified as a priority area in our new Strategic Plan.
- Maryland Artificial Reefs Initiative (MARI): Fall of 2006, tons of concrete material from the Woodrow Wilson Bridge renovation project became available. Maryland's Department of Natural Resources (DNR), working in concert with the Coastal Conservation Association Maryland (CCA MD), charter boat captains and other partners, seized this chance and quickly mobilized to acquire more than 3,900 tons of the material, which was used to bolster an existing reef off Point No Point in St. Mary's County. While the state's new artificial reef plan focuses on enhancing the benthic ecology of Maryland's waters and improving the sport fishing industry by creating more reefs, funding remains a challenge. To maintain momentum, CCA MD, in conjunction with the DNR, has rallied donors and other partners to establish the Maryland Artificial Reef Initiative (MARI). This program brings together a coalition of diverse stakeholders to accomplish meaningful and measurable goals that not only benefit the sport fishing industry but also provide priceless marine habitat.
- Passamaquoddy Tribe, Narragansett Indian Tribe, Penobscot Indian Nation, Eastern Band of Cherokee Nation, Seminole Tribe of Florida.

❖ **New Hampshire Disclaimer Review and Vote**

❖ **Next Steps:**

- **Signatures**
- **Future Additions to the Partnership**
 - SARP: States, ASMFC, G of M fishery management council, Gulf states marine fisheries commission, NMFS, USFWS
 - EBTJV: fed, state, academic, NGO = 'anticipated partners'. "SC anticipates a number of partners will come and go as their needs are met by the EBJV; signatories of the MOU are long-term supporters of goals and objectives for entire EBT range.

Break **10:00 am**

Endorsement Criteria, K. Smith, M. Laser, L. Chiarella **10:15 am**

- ❖ Criteria and Instructional Document Review and Vote
- Set up any kind of a timeline say, a month before every three months, the committee comes together to talk about any endorsements?
 - ❖ Establish Endorsement Subgroup
 - ❖ Pending Endorsements:
 - Association to Preserve Cape Cod
- Explain that letter writing, etc. is not something we can do, but if they want a letter of endorsement this would be something that the endorsement can consider.
 - NMFS and MA DMF harbor project
- Read Lou's proposal, is this still something seeking endorsement?
 - USGS Proposal
- Describe these two projects, explain that the letters of support are due on Friday. Cara's is a go. Jim's may or may not be something we can do. Interested on the committee's thoughts on this.

Communications and Outreach **11:15 am**

- ❖ SARP Update, M. Barrett-O'Leary

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Discussion of Key Outreach Goals in 2009, <i>G. Schuler</i> ❖ Communications Working Group Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review of Website RFP, <i>E. Greene</i> ▪ Distribution of Hats, <i>C. Powell</i> 	
Science and Data Working Group Update	12:30 pm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Species Habitat Matrix Status, <i>E. Greene</i> 	
Captain David H. Hart Award Luncheon	1:00 pm
Science and Data Working Group Update (cont.)	2:15 pm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Assessment of Existing Information Status, <i>M. Nelson, A. Zitello</i> 	
Funding in 2009, <i>E. Greene</i>	4:00 pm
Conferences, <i>E. Greene</i>	4:30 pm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Since June: United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc., Restoring America's Estuaries ❖ Upcoming: Geotools '09, Coastal Zone '09, Others 	
ACFHP 2009 Meeting Planning/Other Issues, <i>G. Schuler</i>	4:45 pm
Adjourn	5:00 pm

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