# Melissa Laser Fish Habitat Conservation Award



This award is established in memory of Dr. Melissa Laser who passed away unexpectedly on April 27, 2010. Melissa was a biologist with the Maine Department of Marine Resources where she worked tirelessly to protect, improve and restore aquatic ecosystems in Maine and along the entire Atlantic Coast.

Melissa was an astute strategic thinker, editing and coordinating the *Strategic and Operational Plan for the Restoration of Diadromous and Resident Fishes to the Penobscot River*. She coordinated fish passage projects, working with barrier owners on management options, writing grants to fund projects, and tracking and prioritizing connectivity projects. As a leader, she managed and oversaw the biological field staff for the Maine Western Region and was the Bureau of Sea Run Fisheries and Habitat Program lead for habitat restoration studies and projects. She was also an effective champion for Atlantic salmon, directing and coordinating Endangered Species Act-related actions pertaining to the species. She assisted the Bureau Director with development of the Atlantic Salmon Decision Making Framework. She was looking forward to working with migratory striped bass in a new capacity as Maine's representative on the ASMFC Striped Bass Technical Committee.

Melissa brought her smiling dedication and enthusiasm to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Habitat Committee and Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership's Steering Committee, catalyzed by the Commission in 2006. Her contributions to these committees and to her home state were tremendous. She is deeply missed.

The Melissa Laser Fish Habitat Conservation Award will be awarded by the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership to the individual(s) deemed to further the conservation, protection, restoration, and enhancement of habitat for native Atlantic coastal, estuarine-dependent, and diadromous fishes in a unique or extraordinary manner.

## **Melissa Laser Fish Habitat Conservation Award Instructions**

Please submit a 250 word document to Lisa Havel (<u>LHavel@asmfc.org</u>) by **April 26, 2019** noting the following information:

- (a) how and to what project the individual or individuals contributed. Please note if the individual or individuals are directly associated with ACFHP (i.e. member of a committee, working group, or funded/endorsed project team);
- (b) a description of how this project furthers the goals or mission of ACFHP; and
- (c) what qualities the individual or individuals possess that set them apart from others.
- (d) letters of support are welcomed but not required.

Nominations must be submitted through an ACFHP partner organization or ex-officio member of an ACFHP committee or working group. A maximum of one nomination may come from each ACFHP MOU Partner organization or ex-officio member. Please see the attached contact list.

- The award will be presented at the ACFHP Annual Meeting, which will be held in New Castle, New Hampshire the last week of October 2019.
- An award will include:
  - (a) a plaque;
  - (b) accommodations and transportation to the meeting; and
  - (c) a breaking news item published on the ACFHP website (<u>www.atlanticfishhabitat.org</u>) and sent to recipient.

#### PARTNER CONTACTS (PRIMARY)

## ALBEMARLE-PAMLICO NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

DR WILLIAM CROWELL

ALBEMARLE-PAMLICO NATIONAL ESTARY PROGRAM

1601 MAIL SERVICE CENTER RALEIGH, NC 27699-1601

E-Mail: bill.crowell@ncmail.net

Tel: 919-715-1327

Fax:

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#### AMERICAN LITTORAL SOCIETY

ALEK MODJESKI

AMERICAN LITTORAL SOCIETY

18 N HARTSHORNE DR HIGHLANDS, NJ 07732

E-Mail: alek@littoralsociety.org

Tel: 732-291-0055

Fax:

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#### **AMERICAN RIVERS**

JESSIE THOMAS-BLATE

**AMERICAN RIVERS** 

1101 14th ST. NW SUITE 1400

WASHINGTON, DC 20005

E-Mail: jthomas@amrivers.org

Tel: 202-347-7550

Fax:

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# ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

PATRICK CAMPFIELD

**ASMFC** 

1050 N HIGHLAND ST

**STE 200A-N** 

ARLINGTON, VA 22201-2196

E-Mail: pcampfield@asmfc.org

**Tel:** 703-842-0726 **Fax:** 703-843-0741

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### DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

JEFF TINSMAN

DE DFW

3002 BAYSIDE DR.

DOVER, DE 19901-7160

**E-Mail:** jeffrey.tinsman@state.de.us

**Tel:** 302-735-2974 **Fax:** 302-739-6780

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#### **ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND**

JACOB KRITZER

**ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND** 

**18 TREMONT ST** 

BOSTON, MA 02108-2301 **E-Mail:** jkritzer@edf.org

**Tel:** 617-723-2996 **Fax:** 617-723-2999

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## FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

**KENT SMITH** 

FFWCC AQUATIC HABITAT RESTORATION & CONS.

MARINE HABITAT MANAGEMENT

620 S. MERIDIAN ST.

TALLAHASSEE, FL 32399-1600

E-Mail: kent.smith@myfwc.com

**Tel:** 850-922-4330 **Fax:** 850-922-4338

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#### **GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

**PAUL MEDDERS** 

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

ONE CONSERVATION WAY

BRUNSWICK, GA 31520-8686

E-Mail: paul.medders@dnr.ga.gov

**Tel:** 912-264-7218

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## HOULTON BAND OF MALISEET INDIANS

SHARRI VENNO

MALISEET TRIBE DNR

88 BELL RD

LITTLETON, ME 04730-6704

E-Mail: envplanner@maliseets.com

**Tel:** 207-532-4273 X215 **Fax:** 207-532-6883

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## MAINE DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

PATRICK KELIHER

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

172 STATE HOUSE STATION

HALLOWELL, ME 04347

E-Mail: PATRICK.KELIHER@MAINE.GOV

**Tel:** 207-287-9972 **Fax:** 207-287-9975

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## MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

MAREK TOPOLSKI

MD DNR

580 TAYLOR AVE

B-2

ANNAPOLIS, MD 21401-2352

E-Mail: mtopolski@dnr.state.md.us

**Tel:** 410-260-8263 **Fax:** 410-260-8279

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# MASSACHUSETTS DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES

MARK ROUSSEAU

MA DMF

30 EMERSON AVE.

GLOUCESTER, MA 01930

E-Mail: MARK.ROUSSEAU@STATE.MA.US

**Tel:** 978-282-0308 x162 **Fax:** 617-727-3337

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#### NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

LOU CHIARELLA NMFS NERO

55 GREAT REPUBLIC DR GLOUCESTER, MA 01930-2276

E-Mail: lou.chiarella@noaa.gov

**Tel:** 978-281-9277 **Fax:** 978-281-9301

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## NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

JOSHUA CARLONI

NH F&G

225 MAIN STREET DURHAM, NH 03824-4732

E-Mail: JOSHUA.CARLONI@WILDLIFE.NH.GOV

**Tel:** 603-868-1095 **Fax:** 603-868-3305

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## **NEW JERSEY DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

**RUSS BABB** 

NJ DFW MARINE FISHERIES ADMINISTRATION BUREAU OF SHELLFISHERIES

1672 E BUCKSHUTEM RD MILLVILLE, NJ 08332-7521

E-Mail: RUSSBABB@DELAWAREBAYOFFICE.COM

**Tel:** 856-785-0730 **Fax:** 856-785-0853

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### NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

DAWN MCREYNOLDS

NYS DEC BUREAU OF MARINE RESOURCES

205 N BELLE MEAD RD #1 EAST SETAUKET, NY 11733-3456

E-Mail: DXMCREYN@GW.DEC.STATE.NY.US

**Tel:** 631-444-0452

Fax:

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## **NORTH CAROLINA COASTAL FEDERATION**

TODD MILLER

NORTH CAROLINA COASTAL FEDERATION

3609 N.C. 24 (OCEAN) NEWPORT, NC 28570

E-Mail: ToddM@nccoast.org

**Tel:** 252-393-8195

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#### NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

JIMMY JOHNSON

NC DENR-OFFICE OF CONSERVATION, PLANNING, AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

943 WASHINGTON SQUARE MALL

WASHINGTON, NC 27889-3542

E-Mail: JIMMY.JOHNSON@NCDENR.GOV

**Tel:** 252-948-3952 **Fax:** 252-975-3716

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#### **OYSTER RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP**

STEPHAN ABEL

OYSTER RECOVERY PROGRAM

PO BOX 6775

ANNAPOLIS, MD 21401-6775 **E-Mail:** sabel@oysterrecovery.org

Tel: Fax:

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#### PARTNERSHIP FOR THE DELAWARE ESTUARY

DANIELLE KREEGER
PARTNERSHIP FOR THE DE ESTUARY
ONE RIVERWALK PLAZA
110 S. POPLAR ST. #202
WILMINGTON, DE 19801-5034

E-Mail: dkreeger@DelawareEstuary.org

**Tel:** 302-655-4990 **Fax:** 302-655-4991

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## PENNSYLVANIA FISH AND BOAT COMMISSION

**BEN LORSON** 

**DIVISION OF HABITAT MANAGEMENT** 

450 ROBINSON LN

BELLEFONTE, PA 16823-7437 **E-Mail:** blorson@pa.gov

**Tel:** 814-359-5106

Fax:

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### RHODE ISLAND DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

CHRIS POWELL (EX-OFFICIO)

38 MT. HOPE AVE

JAMESTOWN, RI 02835-1466

E-Mail: jchristopherpowell@gmail.com

**Tel:** 401-423-1492

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#### SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DENISE SANGER

SC DNR MRRI

217 Fort Johnson Road

CHARLESTON, SC 29412-9110 **E-Mail:** vandolahr@dnr.sc.gov

**Tel:** 843-953-9074 **Fax:** 843-953-9820

**UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDIFE SERVICE** 

**CALLIE MCMUNIGAL** 

**USFWS** 

400 E MAIN ST

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, WV 24986

E-Mail: callie\_mcmunigal@fws.gov

**Tel:** 304-536-4760 ext. 151

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## **UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY**

STEPHEN FAULKNER

USGS

11649 LEETOWN RD.

KEARNEYSVILLE, WV 25430

**E-mail:** faulkners@usgs.gov

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# **VERMONT FISH AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT**

**ERIC PALMER** 

VT F&W

103 S. MAIN ST.

WATERBURY, VT 05671-9800

E-Mail: eric.palmer@state.vt.us

**Tel:** 802-241-3476

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## VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION

TONY WATKINSON

**VMRC** 

2600 WASHINGTON AVE NEWPORT NEWS, VA 23607-

E-Mail: TONY.WATKINSON@MRC.VIRGINIA.GOV

**Tel:** 757-247-2255 **Fax:** 757-247-8062