

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 (LHavel@asmfc.org) by **June 18, 2021** 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 mission or vision of ACFHP (mission and vision can be found in our [Conservation Strategic Plan](#)); 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 or visit <https://www.atlanticfishhabitat.org/our-team/>.

- The award will be presented at the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Annual Meeting, which will be held in Long Branch, New Jersey the week of October 18th, 2021.
- 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 (www.atlanticfishhabitat.org) and sent to recipient.

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