



## Fall Steering Committee Meeting

October 21 – 22, 2024 | Annapolis, MD

### Summary

The ACFHP Steering Committee approved several key items, including the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) membership application and the FY26 Project Funding Application. The committee also discussed an operations budget increase from \$85,000 to \$125,000, with an additional \$40,000 in coordination funding under consideration. Updates on Science & Data initiatives included plans to inform guidance for seed-based SAV (i.e., Eelgrass) restoration techniques and develop related workshops. Two new work groups were created to engage with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Relicensing process for hydropower projects and updates to State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPs). Additionally, the committee began developing the next 2025-2026 ACFHP action plan to guide upcoming priorities. Guest speakers Jason Olive (USFWS), Alex McOwen (NOAA), and Daniel Wieferich (USGS) contributed updates on National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) activities and insights on national habitat initiatives and opportunities for collaboration.

Project updates included progress on FY24 restoration efforts, such as the Maryland Coastal Bays Salt Marsh Restoration project, which recently expanded its scope from 39 to 114 acres of wetland restoration across two private properties, and the design and permitting for the Upper E.R. Collins Dam Removal, opening 3 miles of the Pequest River in New Jersey. For FY25, ACFHP retained top-tier funding status, securing approximately \$300,000 for three projects: Cedar Grove Dam and No Name Dam removals on the Pequest River, which will restore 57 miles of river habitat as part of a larger dam removal initiative that includes the Upper and Lower E.R. Dams, and the Matanzas River Oyster Reef Restoration in Florida, which will create 500 feet of living shoreline using innovative oyster arches. The meeting also highlighted the new [NFHP Project Accomplishment Map](#), now live on the NFHP website ([fishhabitat.org](https://fishhabitat.org)), which showcases project successes and active initiatives across the 20 regional fish habitat partnerships (FHPs).