



Spring Steering Committee Meeting

May 20 – 22, 2025 | Portsmouth, NH

### Summary

The Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP) convened its Spring 2025 Steering Committee Meeting in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, from May 20–22. The meeting provided updates on funded restoration projects, including adjustments to FY2025 funding allocations and new project proposals for FY2026. Notably, the Partnership reallocated funds from completed dam removals to support the Burke’s Pond Dam Removal in Massachusetts and expand monitoring efforts for the Matanzas River Oyster Reef Restoration near St. Augustine, Florida. Proposed FY2026 projects included eelgrass and riverine habitat restoration across Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Delaware, and Maryland.

The committee also received updates from national partners including the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) and Beyond the Pond, which highlighted improvements to the NFHP funding timeline and recent fundraising success, respectively. Special guest speakers included Brianna Group from the Coastal Conservation Association of New Hampshire (CCA-NH), who presented on oyster restoration efforts in the Great Bay Estuary, and Nancy Pau from the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). Nancy highlighted restoration work in the Great Marsh, New England’s largest salt marsh ecosystem, which occupies nearly half (approximately 2,660 acres) of the Parker River NWR’s 4,662 acres. Both talks underscored the importance of habitat connectivity and local stewardship in achieving conservation goals across coastal New England. A new ArcGIS StoryMap titled “Making the Connection” was introduced, with a working group established to develop content and gather multimedia from partners. Additionally, ACFHP initiated planning for a 2026 Science & Data Workshop focused on submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) seed-transfer policy. Discussions centered on the workshop’s scope, legal considerations, potential funders, and timeline, with the goal of producing a science-based policy guidance document to inform regional management and restoration efforts.

The meeting concluded with the approval of the 2025–2026 Action Plan and updates on project monitoring strategies and FERC hydropower relicensing review. The next Steering Committee check-in is scheduled virtually for late July or early August 2025 to review progress on the StoryMap and SAV workshop planning.