

Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership  
Steering Committee Meeting Summary  
May 24, 2012

SEAKFHP Steering Committee Members present:

- USFWS - Neil Stichert, Meeting Chair and Interim Steering Committee Co-chair, Bill Hanson and John Hudson
- Trout Unlimited - Mark Kaelke, Interim Steering Committee Co-chair
- The Nature Conservancy – Norman Cohen, Christine Woll
- Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition – Jessica Kaiser
- ADF&G – Roger Harding and Jeff Nichols
- ADEC – Brock Tabor
- USFS –Sheila Jacobson
- NOAA – K. Koski
- SEAKFHP Coordinator: Debbie Hart

Advisors present:

- ADF&G FHP Coordinator: Sue Rodman
- USFWS FHP Coordinator: Cecil Rich

Welcome and Introductions – Neil Stichert provided welcoming comments to the group and outlined that the main objective of the meeting was to introduce Steering Committee members to the new SEAKFHP Coordinator, Debbie Hart. He led the group in round robin introductions of current participating steering committee members representing partnership groups. Christine Woll, a newly hired spatial ecologist with The Nature Conservancy in Juneau, met the group for the first time as well.

Neil provided some brief background on the current structure of the interim Steering Committee noting that both he and Mark Kaelke are currently serving as co-chairs.

Neil and Mark also mentioned that at previous Steering Committee meetings they have done content-based round robins to help facilitate updates from partners. He suggested the group consider this as an agenda item for future meetings.

SEAKFHP Coordinator Introductions – Debbie Hart introduced herself expressing her genuine interest in working with the SEAKFHP and participating members. She provided a bit of personal history and professional background. She shared that she grew up in Juneau, studied oceanography at Humboldt State University and received her Master's in Juneau at UAF's School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences. She provided details on her career with ADF&G and her interest in working with productive collaborative efforts.

Debbie provided a brief overview of what she believes her role as the SEAKFHP Coordinator is – and what it is not. She began by expressing that it is not her role to make decisions for the partnership but instead to help guide and provide support services to the partnership's Steering Committee. She highlighted a few specific roles: 1) assisting to build the membership of the SEAKFHP (through efforts such as stakeholder analysis and basic outreach); 2) assisting to formulate efficient governance structure for the partnership and Steering Committee (interim decision protocols, partnership Charter/MOU or formal signatory process, Steering Committee Bylaws, etc); 3) guiding strategic development of the partnerships purpose (mission, vision, goals, objectives and specific strategies), 4) facilitate general communications (Steering Committee meetings, monitor and nudge associated tasks and assignments, web development and other general outreach efforts, etc), 5) as needed do research and assist with

implementation efforts, 6) assist the Steering Committee in assessing and evaluating partnership efforts and updating strategic planning as needed. There will be other assignments for her position but this covers the most pressing items.

Debbie gave a brief description of how she will work to help facilitate organization and development of Steering Committee meeting agendas, soliciting meeting topics from members and working through the co-chairs on draft agenda development. She explained the current meeting agenda outline, noting the use of time to help keep meetings productive and on task but also offered these tools are to be helpful to the group and not be restrictive. She asked to meet with each Steering Committee member individually so she can learn more about their specific goals and expectations of the partnership effort and also how best to communicate and work with them and their respective entity. She noted that she identified this request as an action item on the agenda (anticipated action items are marked with an \* on agendas). Debbie will work to complete these meetings over the next two-weeks.

*Norman Cohen asked to clarify the role of the Steering Committee, wondering if it was clear that work (such as agenda development) was required of the group and that expectation was not being assumed through the role of the coordinator. Neil provided a reply and noted that the model they chose for the SEAKFHP Coordinator was different from other Alaska FHPs and more similar to the Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership (PMEFH). He outlined that the role of the SEAKFHP Coordinator will be to support the members of the Steering Committee rather than directing the coordinator be a lead on making decisions for the partnership. He suggested Steering Committee members review the PMEFP web site and review their timeline of partnership development; he noted it is well crafted and captures much of the details of their development process.*

AKSSF Update – Neil provided a brief update on the AKSSF Southeast Region Science Panel that met earlier in the day to provide a review and recommendation of high priority objectives for inclusion in the 2012 AKSSF Call for Proposals (CFP). Neil and Sheila are advisors on the panel. Debbie and Brock also attended the meeting. Main meeting highlights included:

- Overall PCSRF funding has decreased from \$80M (2011) to \$65M (2012).
- 2012 funding coming to the AKSSF anticipated to be \$6.5M.
- Additional 2011 carryover of \$3.7M will be available and added to the 2012 CFP.
- 2012 CFP (~\$10.2M) should be released late this summer.
- NOAA restricted program priorities for 2012 call, therefore only a subset of previous objectives may be used for the new 2012 funding. The older objectives may be used for the 2011 carryover.
- New federal policy available in 2012, no federal match required for Tribal entities
- The SE Panel made recommendations to retain many of the habitat priorities and Neil asked that Peter, ADF&G AKSSF Program Coordinator carry forward the SE Panel concerns on losing these priorities. Neil also offered to help sit in on meetings if needed.
- Neil also noted this was the least publically attended meeting he has seen and sees a need for greater outreach for public involvement.

*Jeff asked why the SEAKFHP is focusing on AKSSF, is it to get funds or align the SEAKFHP goals with available funds? Neil replied he thought it was probably a bit of both especially in light of current limiting factors of collaboration and the pursuit of these specific funds (need for regional coordination and non-federal match challenges).*

NFHP Board meeting update – K. Koski, Roger Harding and Jeff Nichols were able to listen in to the National Fish Habitat Partnership Board meeting that took place earlier in the day. Sue Rodman and Cecil Rich also participated in the meeting. Jeff distributed a summary from the meeting and recapped a few highlights including that during the time when all partnerships are

asked to provide updates K. shared that the SEAKFHP has hired a new coordinator and that the SEAKFHP Steering Committee was meeting later in the day. Jeff also noted there was much discussion about a formal MOU that was signed by federal agencies concerning FHPs. Cecil Rich added notes to Jeff's written summary and shared more details on this MOU discussion. He shared that this effort is very helpful to the FHPs and could help to streamline and provide a great deal of federal support of all FHPs, perhaps even at the funding level such as the PCSRF funds and the process of providing input to funding program objectives. (A copy of the MOU will be distributed to Steering Committee members with this summary)

Sue shared her NFHP update information; she did not pursue a multi-state grant with emphasis for all Alaska FHPs but did submit one working with Mat-Su and Kenai regarding improving hydrography datasets.

*Neil asked how National Subcommittees are handled, are they left up to each partnership? Cecil responded, yes they are left to local partnerships.*

*Jeff and Neil asked if formal meeting summaries are available for bimonthly NFHP teleconferences. Cecil said they were not and that both he would provide his notes to the AK FHPs on these meetings.*

*Note: NFHP Board meetings are open to all and are teleconferenced and webexed. Meeting notes are posted to the NFHP national website [www.fishhabitat.org](http://www.fishhabitat.org).*

SEAKFHP Governance Structure ....Getting started – Debbie noted that the first task at hand for the Steering Committee will be to get an interim governance structure started so the committee can formalize how decisions are made, these will be especially helpful as they move to large tasks associated with developing formal bylaws and beginning the strategic planning process. To get things rolling she distributed some work that has previously been done by committee members including: 1) sending out to the group a “strawdog” Mission Statement (this was pulled directly from language used on the fact sheet drafted in November 2011), and 2) a draft copy of Steering Committee bylaws that were edited by committee members in February 2012. She noted that no action items are requested of the group at this time other than being familiar with these and recognizing that the group's first bit of work will be to get a sense of common purpose and develop guidance on how decisions get made by the Steering Committee. During her upcoming individual meetings with Steering Committee members much of this discussion will begin and will be the main focus for the next formal Steering Committee meeting. Debbie also briefly noted the concept of a Memorandum of Understanding offering this up to the group as food for thought – it may or may not be needed and it will be a decision the group will need to make. Norman pointed out that the current draft bylaws passed around are just bylaws of the Steering Committee and that perhaps a formal Charter or signatory sign on may be important to provide structure to the partnership. There was some general discussion on the pros/cons of a formal MOU process to accomplish this and more discussion on this topic will occur at future meetings.

Regarding the Mission Statement – K. made a quick suggestion to add language to the current draft and is underlined below:

***DRAFT Mission Statement*** - *The Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership fosters and facilitates regionally relevant strategies to support cooperative fish habitat conservation, restoration, and management in freshwater and marine estuaries across Southeast Alaska and includes consideration of economic, social, and cultural interests of Southeast Alaska communities in its endeavors.*

Tenakee Springs restoration project request update – Neil provided a request submitted to the partnership from Stan Moberly regarding a request for assistance with a possible mitigation

project in Tenakee Springs. Reasons to bring this forth is to share the information with the Steering Committee at large and also to ask the group to consider how best to respond to these types of requests at this time since the partnership is still in an un-formalized state. Sheila Jacobson shared that she has forwarded this information on to an appropriate contact within the Forest Service. Jessica Kayser asked the group if she could respond directly to Stan (and Art Bloom mentioned as a key Tenakee contact in the email). The group discussed this and agrees it makes good sense for Jessica to respond. Neil will also follow-up with Stan on this request.

Concept of Endorsements – Neil described additional requests that have recently come to the SEAKFHP in the form of a request for the partnership to endorse projects or funding proposals. At this time the partnership will refrain from providing endorsements but this topic will come up again at future Steering Committee meetings for reconsideration.

Jeff requested we develop a way to keep track of these requests. Debbie will follow-up on this request.

Outlook to future SEAKFHP meetings and tasks – Debbie asked the group for their availability and interest for a formal Steering Committee meeting in late June. The group agreed and looks to be available around the 25th and Debbie will follow-up shortly via Doodle Poll with a meeting request. Other upcoming meetings include: AK-FHPs Tues, May 29 2-4pm and NFHP Board meeting July 10.