



NATIONAL  
**FISH HABITAT**  
ACTION PLAN

**National Fish Habitat Action Plan**

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August 4, 2011

Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership  
c/o Mark Kaelke, Southeast Alaska Project Director  
Trout Unlimited  
419 Sixth Street  
Suite 200  
Juneau, AK, 99801

Dear Mr. Kaelke:

Thank you for your letter of June 26, 2011 to the National Fish Habitat Board (Board) indicating your partnership's interest in becoming a Fish Habitat Partnership under the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (Action Plan) and contributing to its implementation.

Fish Habitat Partnerships are the primary work units of the Action Plan, representing diverse groups of public and private partners with a shared interest in conserving fish habitat. Fish Habitat Partnerships develop a strategic vision and implementation plan that is scientifically sound and achievable; provide leadership to deliver fish habitat projects at regional and local levels; and cooperate with the Board and other Fish Habitat Partnerships in implementing the Action Plan.

The Board is responsible for developing appropriate policies and guidance for recognizing and supporting Fish Habitat Partnerships. The Board's guidance includes requirements for establishment and procedures for recognizing Fish Habitat Partnerships. The Board also serves as a vehicle to bring additional funds and technical resources to recognized Fish Habitat Partnerships.

The Board will consider the Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership (SEAKFHP) to be a "Candidate Fish Habitat Partnership" as defined in the guidance. Please maintain regular contact with Tom Busiahn, the Board's liaison to Fish Habitat Partnerships, as the SEAKFHP develops and becomes ready to request formal recognition by the Board. The Board staff will help you with information and advice on becoming a successful member of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan family.

We are pleased to learn that the SEAKFHP has brought together a variety of agencies and non-governmental organizations, and is working to expand the scope of collaborators. Your letter described a series of next steps that are consistent with the Board's guidance,

and, if completed, will bring the SEAKFHP to fruition. We urge you to engage local governments, businesses, and landowners in the partnership to be most effective in addressing development threats in a collaborative manner.

We are also pleased that you have initiated consultation with other recognized and candidate Fish Habitat Partnerships whose geographic scope may include portions of Southeast Alaska. SEAKFHP should consider sending a representative to a coordination meeting of western Fish Habitat Partnerships, organized by the Western Native Trout Initiative, on September 7, 2011 in Seattle. Regular coordination with neighboring and overlapping Partnerships will help to resolve competing or conflicting conservation goals, maximize geographic coverage, and minimize overlap among the partnerships.

We advise you to consult with the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) as you develop your partnership. WAFWA has strongly supported the development of Fish Habitat Partnerships in the western U.S., and has requested the opportunity to provide peer review of emerging partnerships prior to their formal recognition by the Board.

We suggest that your habitat assessment and strategic planning consider the effects of inland habitat conditions, including stream flows, on the condition of coastal waters. This is a difficult scientific problem faced by all coastal Fish Habitat Partnerships.

The Board appreciates your dedication to conserving fish habitat and your interest in implementing the Action Plan. If you have questions, please contact Tom Busiahn, the Board's Fish Habitat Partnership liaison, at 703-358-2056 or e-mail [tom\\_busiahn@fws.gov](mailto:tom_busiahn@fws.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly R Hepler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelly Hepler, Chairman  
National Fish Habitat Board