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SOUTHEAST ALASKA FISH HABITAT PARTNERSHIP RECOGNIZED BY NATIONAL FISH HABITAT BOARD

The National Fish Habitat Partnership now has 19 Partnerships Focused on Habitat Conservation

(Washington, DC) - On Monday, March 10 during the second day of the National Fish Habitat Board's spring meeting the Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership (SEAKFHP) was granted full recognition status. Fish Habitat Partnerships are the primary work units of the National Fish Habitat Partnership and take the lead in bringing partners together to put conservation projects "on-the-ground" that make a difference for fish and their habitats across the nation. These partnerships are formed around important aquatic habitats, distinct geographic areas, "keystone" fish species or system types. With the recent board action, there are now 19 of these highly productive partnerships working across the nation to build strong coalitions dedicated to protecting, restoring and enhancing America's fish habitats.

The Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership spans the entire southern panhandle of Alaska including the dynamic watersheds and waterways that make up the Alexander Archipelago. This region ranks as one of the largest, most complex, and intact estuarine and temperate rainforest on earth, and is filled with many small, vibrant communities with economies and ways of living linked closely to fish and fishing. In addition, this diverse coastal archipelago from its icefields to its estuaries supports a unique diversity of fish. The mission of the Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership is to support cooperative fish habitat conservation, restoration, and management in freshwater, estuarine and marine ecosystems across Southeast Alaska with consideration of economic, social, and cultural interests of local communities in its endeavors.

"The Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership did an outstanding job in preparing a well thought out partnership strategy in advance of coming to the Board seeking formal recognition." said Kelly Hepler, Chair of the National Fish Habitat Board. "The Board will provide every opportunity possible to help this partnership grow and succeed in providing critical on-the-ground conservation in southeast Alaska. "

"We are delighted with the recent approval from the Board; this recognition will assist us in our efforts to foster cooperative fish habitat conservation across the many watersheds and waterways that make up the southern panhandle of Alaska." Deborah Hart, SEAKFHP Coordinator

"We are pleased the Board formally recognized the Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership as a member of the national network of Fish Habitat Partnerships. The Southeast Partnership along with other partnerships in Alaska and across the nation greatly expands the capacity of the Service and our state partners to conserve and restore habitat for the benefit of fish and aquatic species and the American public." Geoffrey Haskett, Alaska Regional Director, USFWS

“Trout Unlimited is thrilled the Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership has received formal recognition from the national board. We look forward to continuing our work with other regional partners to collaborate on fish habitat conservation and restoration issues across the Tongass National Forest, the country’s largest and most salmon-rich national forest. The National Fish Habitat Board’s decision to give the group formal partner status will definitely be a key step in that effort going forward,” said Mark Kaelke, Trout Unlimited, Southeast Alaska Project Director.

"The SEAKFHP will assist the Forest Service in Alaska to leverage support for our salmon habitat restoration efforts that strive to enhance one of the most productive fisheries in North America." Wayne Owen, Director –Wildlife, Fisheries, Ecology, Watershed and Subsistence, Alaska Region, U.S. Forest Service

Below is a list of partners cooperating in on-the-ground conservation with the Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership:

- o U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Juneau Habitat Restoration Team
- o U.S. Forest Service, Alaska Region/Tongass National Forest
- o NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service, Alaska Region, Habitat Conservation Division
- o Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- o Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
- o Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
- o City and Borough of Yakutat
- o Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition
- o The Nature Conservancy
- o Trout Unlimited
- o Sitka Conservation Society
- o Alaska Coastal Rainforest Center
- o University of Alaska Southeast GIS Library

More information on the Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership can be found on their website:
www.seakfhp.org

About the National Fish Habitat Partnership:

Since 2006, The National Fish Habitat Partnership has been a partner in 417 projects in 46 states benefiting fish habitat. The National Fish Habitat Partnership works to conserve fish habitat nationwide, leveraging federal, state, and private funding sources to achieve the greatest impact on fish populations through priority conservation projects. The national partnership implements the National Fish Habitat Action Plan and supports 18 regional grassroots partner organizations. For more information visit:

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