

Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership (SEAKFHP)
Science and Data Committee
Meeting Summary – April 16, 2013

Meeting Participants

SEAKFHP Steering Committee members present:

- ADF&G – Roger Harding
- NOAA – Cindy Hartmann Moore
- USF&WS – Neil Stichert
- USFS: Sheila Jacobson and Julianne Thompson
- Takshanuk Watershed Council: Brad Ryan
- UAS GIS Library: Kim Homan
- USFS PNW: Dave D'Amore
- ADEC: Gretchen Pikul
- UAF: Shannon Atkinson

Introductions and Partner Updates – Debbie Hart, SEAKFHP coordinator, convened the meeting and introduced Neil Stichert, USFWS/SEAKFHP Steering Committee chair who provided a brief overview of the efforts to date by the SEAKFHP Science and Data work group, and reasons for outreaching to a larger group now as the partnership moves ahead to convene the formal SEAKFHP Science and Data Committee.

Meeting participants introduced themselves and shared updates on projects or activities that are of interest to the larger group; a few highlights include:

- USFS Pacific Northwest Research Station – Dave will look to a future opportunity to share a few of the concluding studies of streamside thinning treatments and the fate of nitrogen and phosphorus from salmon to soil along streams
- USFS – Julianne shared that Gordy Reeves is wrapping up a vulnerability assessment focused on climate change and new information with connections between snow levels and salmon
- USFS – Sheila noted they have been working on a new strategy for restoration effectiveness monitoring and will be looking to host a meeting on this topic in early June
- USFWS – Neil shared a brief update on upcoming fish passage projects they will be working on this summer (Hollis and Haines) and also an update on the new coastal mapping portal project
- SAWC – Brad gave a brief update on progress made on putting forth a prospectus to the Army Corps of Engineers for the In Lieu Fee Program
- NOAA – Cindy shared that ShoreZone is working on an effort to incorporate information from the Fish Atlas
- ADF&G – Roger shared that there is transition taking place within ADF&G; Sue has moved to a new position within Wildlife Division and will continue to oversee statewide LCC coordination, her duties to coordinate statewide NFHAP duties will now be taken on by Roger
- UAS GIS Library – Kim provided a brief update on the new efforts underway to advance hosting data in Southeast Alaska and to others across the state, specifically improvements in developing web map tools and additions for the Coastal Module (which will span the NPLCC boundary)
- UAF – Shannon shared an update on the Southeast Alaska Research and Development Cluster Initiative

- ADEC – Gretchen introduced herself, sharing that she has now taken over job duties that Brock had regarding DEC’s non-point source program, the Alaska Clean Water Action program and oversight for the ACWA and Beach Grants

SEAKFHP Science and Data Committee Chair Selection – Debbie provided a brief overview of the roles outlined for the SEAKFHP Science and Data Committee and asked for volunteers to chair or co-chair the committee. Neil provided more in depth guidance on what the responsibilities of the chair(s) would be. Dialog occurred among the group framing the value this committee brings to the partnership and to the region in general. Brad shared some of his perspectives on how a smaller NGO may benefit from this partnership noting the needs for assistance in reconciling differences between agencies, municipalities and community needs and the challenges that exist in looking at fish habitat conditions and identifying issues and remedies before problems become too severe. The group also discussed how best to utilize capacity of the committee to work on freshwater and marine issues. Discussion led to two co-chairs volunteering to help direct and oversee the SEAKFHP Science and Data Committee; Jeff Nichols (ADF&G) will provide freshwater/riparian oversight and Cindy Hartmann-Moore (NOAA) will provide nearshore/marine oversight and both will share estuarine oversight.

National Fish Habitat Assessment Update – Debbie provided a brief review of the actions of the NFHP Science and Data Committee including a broad overview of the national fish habitat assessment strategy and formal assessment completed in 2010 (Through a Fish’s Eye – the Status of Fish Habitats in the United States 2010) as well as plans for an update to the assessment in 2015. Researchers Dr. Infante and Dr. Daniel are working to compile assessment products that Fish Habitat Partnerships have completed or are working towards. Debbie shared the spreadsheet survey this team has recently submitted to FHPs. She also noted recent outreach to Jared Ross, who is a graduate student at Michigan State University working with Dr. Infante and Dr. Daniel to identify relationships between fish habitat, timber harvest and other landscape-scale factors for anadromous streams in Southeast Alaska. Jared had recently contacted Kim Homan and the GIS Library looking for data resources. Debbie suggested a small group from the S&D Committee may want to meet with these folks to learn more about their NFHP work and also their specific interests in Southeast Alaska. The group also noted the challenges associated with a national assessment, spatial challenges, and difficulties in aligning data layers among regional areas and across different geographies. The group briefly discussed regional needs in Southeast Alaska and ways the assessment may better inform these and how a group like the SEAKFHP S&D Committee may play a role in that.

ACTION ITEM - Debbie will coordinate a meeting with the SEAKFHP S&D Committee co-chairs, Neil and others interested with representatives from Michigan State University (Jared Ross, Masters Student and program leads Dr. Infante and Dr. Daniel) to learn more about their efforts in coordinating data needs and potential links for the 2015 National Assessment specific to Southeast Alaska

Fish Habitat Status and Assessment Review for Southeast Alaska - Debbie shared a brief overview of the SEAKFHP efforts to develop a strategic action plan and highlighted the need to develop a regional fish habitat assessment summary or “snap shot” for Southeast Alaska (in essence conducting an inventory of habitat assessments completed in the region).

ACTION ITEM - A variety of action items were created to identify and aggregate available fish habitat assessment information across Southeast Alaska, these include:

- Sheila and Julianne will work to identify and aggregate USFS watershed assessments, landscape plans and restorations plans available across the Tongass National Forest. They will provide some feedback to this group on an estimated time line for this information to be gathered and as a result the next S&D Committee meeting will be set based upon that time frame.

- Neil will initiate a similar identification and aggregation effort for similar assessments for non-federal land owners and NGOs
- Roger will work to locate watershed restoration documentation developed by ADF&G's FRED Division
- Cindy will identify and aggregate marine/estuarine assessments
- Debbie will contact Allison Bidlack at the ACRC for feedback on their efforts in developing a regional research directory and clearing house for regional projects and investigate new developments in working with other data portal environments that may be applicable to our needs in identifying and sharing this assessment information.

SEAKFHP Project Endorsement Process –Debbie shared a draft guidelines document and application form for partners and stakeholders to use in submitting a request for SEAKFHP project endorsement. She also provided an overview of the working group efforts on this to date and provided the background on how this effort was recently conducted to endorse a project submitted by the USFS and TNC when they applied for the NOAA habitat restoration grant. Sheila shared her experience in submitting an application and going through the review process with the S&D working group. Neil shared perspectives on this effort and identified the need to consider the different ways partners or stakeholders may request endorsement, he suggested a small group form to review the new guidelines document.

ACTION ITEM - Debbie will convene a small group to review the draft SEAKFHP Project Endorsement Guidelines document as well as include current NFHP Board guidance and guidelines and application forms in use by other Fish Habitat Partnerships. Shannon Atkinson offered to review the current guidelines and offer comments.

Wrap Up/Action Items:

- SEAKFHP Science and Data Committee chairmanship - Two co-chairs were selected to help direct and oversee the SEAKFHP Science and Data Committee; Jeff Nichols (ADF&G) and Cindy Hartmann-Moore (NOAA)
- NFHP Science and Data Committee/outreach to representatives at Michigan State University - Debbie will coordinate a meeting with the SEAKFHP S&D Committee co-chairs, Neil and others interested with representatives from Michigan State University (Jared Ross, Masters student and program leads Dr. Infante and Dr. Daniel) to learn more about their efforts in coordinating data needs and potential links for the 2015 National Assessment specific to Southeast Alaska.
- Southeast Alaska fish habitat assessment snap shop: A variety of action items were created to identify and aggregate available fish habitat assessment information across Southeast Alaska, these include:
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environments that may be applicable to our needs in identifying and sharing this assessment information.

- SEAKFHP Project Endorsement Criteria – Debbie will convene a small group to review the draft SEAKFHP Project Endorsement Guidelines document as well as include current NFHP Board guidance and guidelines and application forms in use by other Fish Habitat Partnerships. Shannon Atkinson offered to review the current guidelines and offer comments.
- A working meeting of the SEAKFHP S&D Committee is anticipated for mid-late May.