

Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership  
Science and Data Committee Working Group  
Meeting Summary – February 13, 2013

SEAKFHP Steering Committee Members present:

- USFS –Sheila Jacobson
- ADF&G – Roger Harding and Jeff Nichols
- NOAA – Cindy Hartmann Moore
- ADEC – Brock Tabor
- USFWS – Neil Stichert
- TU – Mark Kaelke
- TNC – Norman Cohen
- Sitka Conservation Society – Scott Harris
- SEAKFHP At Large Member – K Koski
- SEAKFHP Coordinator: Debbie Hart, meeting recorder

Guests:

- USFS – Greg Killinger

Introductions – Debbie convened the meeting and provided a brief review of the major task for the meeting which is to review the request for project endorsement by TNC and USFS for the Tongass Keystone Initiative.

SEAKFHP Project Endorsement Overview – The group reviewed National Fish Habitat Board guidance on project endorsement and briefly discussed why the SEAKFHP was providing this opportunity at this time highlighting recent efforts by the S&D working group to develop guidelines and an application for SEAKFHP partners and other stakeholders in the region to request project endorsement from the partnership.

Tongass Keystone Initiative and SEAKFHP Project Endorsement Request – Sheila provided an overview of the Tongass Keystone Initiative, a project both the USFS and TNC are working collaboratively on and are requesting SEAKFHP project endorsement for. She provided the endorsement request in an application format that was developed from a template in use by the Pacific Marine Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership and also supplied a variety of background documents to help provide a thorough review opportunity for the various restoration projects planned under the Tongass Keystone Initiative.

Request Review and S&D Working Group Discussion - In a round robin fashion the group asked questions of the project proposers and provided thorough review to the project request.

The S&D working group identified potential concerns or questions related to the project that were addressed by key project personnel. One concern was whether this project is tied to concurrent commercial timber harvest and if the NEPA considered restoration actions and timber harvest independently or collectively. Project proponents ensured the S&D that restoration activities and any timber harvest occurring will be guided by distinct NEPA decisions. Other concerns were related to how the project outcome and monitoring would be made available to future practitioners and the public; the USFS and TNC identified formal data sharing policies that address this concern.

The S&D agreed to move forward a recommendation to the SEAKFHP Steering Committee that this project be endorsed by the SEAKFHP. Project endorsement implies alignment of goals and strategies of the Partnership are reflected in the planning, prioritization, implementation,

and desired outcomes of a project. The S&D working group believes the project as a whole includes strategic planning, participation from a diversity of stakeholders, and attempts to restore degraded fish habitat and populations/sustainability of salmonid species that are important for a variety of users in Southeast Alaska. Jeff Nichols was asked to prepare a formal recommendation for the steering committee. Debbie was asked to prepare a draft project endorsement letter for the steering committee to review.

Wrap Up/Action Items:

- Jeff Nichols was asked to prepare a formal recommendation for the steering committee.
- Debbie was asked to prepare a draft project endorsement letter for the steering committee to review.