



Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership

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Dear National Fish Habitat Board members:

January 10, 2014

On behalf of the Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership (SEAKFHP) we are pleased to provide you with our application for formal recognition per guidelines provided in the *Policies and Guidance for Fish Habitat Partnerships* (2008).

As a “candidate” partnership SEAKFHP has operated under National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) goals and has made significant progress toward developing a fully functioning fish habitat partnership in Southeast Alaska. A primary purpose of our early development has been to act as a clearinghouse for information through identifying, aggregating and archiving regional assessments and other relevant regional guidance documents as well as providing coordination services aiding existing conservation efforts in our region. We believe this is what currently makes us most relevant to our partners and other stakeholders across Southeast Alaska.

We have been successful in building a strong organizational framework, securing initial funding resources to provide coordination support for the partnership and building infrastructure so SEAKFHP is positioned to become a strong and effective presence in Southeast Alaska. In addition, we have focused on supporting restoration practitioners in obtaining project funding, identifying project partners, promoting the sharing of data and providing an endorsement process for on-the-ground restoration projects. Directed coordination support has been instrumental in bringing participants from across the region together for meetings, seminars and symposia; developing and maintaining the partnership website and its vast data resources (www.seakfhp.org) and interacting with other fish habitat partnerships in Alaska and the Lower 48, including participating in the newly formed collaboration of Coastal Fish Habitat Partnerships.

Included in our application is our strategic action plan; we consider this a final working draft capturing the vision our founding partners have shaped for what we believe the SEAKFHP can do to insure healthy fisheries, communities and economies in Southeast Alaska. This plan was shared during the 2013 Southeast Alaska Watershed Symposium, an event co-hosted by the partnership this past November. Since that time we have captured broad regional review of our plan and have strengthened it as a result. We look forward to review and feedback on our plan by members and staff to the National Fish Habitat Board.

You will see a significant portion of our focus to date has been on services the partnership can provide – we believe this is one of the core strengths of our initial partnership efforts. This focus will help shape the partnership in its formative years by strengthening regional relationships and leveraging local funding and expertise for on-the-ground projects. That said, the acquisition of funding from the NFHP for operational support will play a key role in our ability to carry out our work. We are on a path to developing key regional strategies which will protect and restore important habitats in our region and these broad partnership strategies are identified in the final draft plan.

We believe we are now servicing Southeast Alaska as a fully functioning fish habitat partnership. Full partnership recognition will assist us in finalizing our strategic plan and refining our conservation strategies so we are able to proceed with achieving both the individual goals of our partnership as well as those held in common with the National Fish Habitat Partnership.

If you have any questions regarding the review of our application, please contact the SEAKFHP coordinator, Deborah Hart, at coordinator@sealaskafishhabitat.org.

Best Regards,

Mark Kaelke
Steering Committee Chairs, Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership

Neil Stichert