



**National Fish Habitat Partnership**  
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May 23, 2014

Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership  
c/o Deborah Hart  
419 6th Street, Suite 200  
Juneau, Alaska 99824

Dear Ms. Hart:

Congratulations! The National Fish Habitat Board (Board) approved the Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership's (SEAKFHP) application to become a fully recognized Fish Habitat Partnership under the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, at its March 9-10, 2014 meeting.

Southeast Alaska, the largest contiguous mature coastal temperate rainforest in the nation, has largely undisturbed landscape and is a unique place filled with small, geographically isolated communities each relying on local highly productive fishery resources. While salmon and other freshwater and marine fish populations remain strong here, compartmental decision making, multiple land use priorities, localized declines in fish abundance and areas facing habitat degradation spurred the formation of the SEAKFHP, which works to support cooperative fish habitat conservation, restoration and management across Southeast Alaska with consideration of economic, social, and cultural interests of local communities.

The Board's recognition of SEAKFHP as a Fish Habitat Partnership marks the beginning of a new long-term relationship. Our work together has just begun. In that spirit, the Board provides the following observations and recommendations regarding your role as a Fish Habitat Partnership.

The Board commends SEAKFHP for establishing a goal of protecting fish habitat in freshwater systems, estuaries and nearshore-marine areas and for indicating that as the partnership matures; focus may expand to other fish and invertebrate species or key stressors that are noted in the strategic plan. It is noted that the focus of the partnership to date has been anadromous fish. SEAKFHP, with the assistance of other marine focused partners, should consider expanding work into estuaries in accordance with their strategic plan.

The SEAKFHP is requested to coordinate with other FHPs that have similar, overlapping, or complementary interests. These include the already existing FHPs in Alaska and the coastal FHPs. These FHPs are expected to reciprocate the relationship.

The Board requests that the Partnership closely coordinate with the Science & Data Committee to ensure that all SEAKFHP habitat assessments are compatible with the National Fish Habitat Assessment, and their data systems are compatible with the National Data System.

The Board also recommends that SEAKFHP connect and coordinate with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council on areas of mutual interest.

We look forward to working in partnership with you to protect, restore, and enhance the nation's fish and aquatic communities and improve the quality of life for the American people. For its part, the Board will be your advocate to bring new financial and technical resources to achieve the goals of the Action Plan. Together, we can make a difference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kelly R Hepler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Kelly" is written with a large, looped 'K'. The middle initial "R" is smaller and positioned between the first and last names. The last name "Hepler" is written with a large, looped 'H' and a trailing flourish.

Kelly Hepler, Chair  
National Fish Habitat Board