SEAKFHP Science and Data Committee Operational Framework

Purpose

Provide scientific and data management expertise and oversight to advance the goals and objectives of the Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership (SEAKFHP) in a scientifically sound and strategic manner.

SEAKFHP Science and Data Committee Duties and Roles

- Provide technical science and data management expertise and support to the SEAKFHP.
    - Identify and facilitate any directed assessment or research needs for the SEAKFHP.
        - Identify additional expertise/staffing or other sub-committees to meet specific information needs that are beyond the capacity of the Science and Data Committee.
    - Provide the science based review and input to regional scientific assessments (Identification of Critical Threats/ SEAKFHP Strategic Action Plan) and provide guidance to the SEAKFHP Steering Committee regarding general science oriented information requests.
    - Review project proposals from entities requesting SEAKFHP endorsement, and ideally provide summary and 'opinion' to the greater SEAKFHP Steering Committee so the larger group makes final decisions based on information gathering and review by the Science and Data committee.
    - Identify, review, recommend, and ensure availability to partners a diversity of relevant spatial datasets and non-spatial information (including protocols) that will assist planning efforts associated with fish habitat identification, delineation, characterization, prioritization, and assessment in Southeast Alaska (SEAK); see Appendix 1 below which outlines more depth to this role.
    - May serve as liaison to regional data resource entities (stream ARC data/SEAK hydro, Southeast Alaska GIS Library, Transboundary Data Working Group, others…).
    - Identify and support cross cutting science based training needs to facilitate strengthening regional professional development and available resources for fish habitat conservation efforts.
        - This may include assisting in the identification and development of 'themes' associated with symposia/events sponsored by the SEAKFHP.
- Serve as a liaison from SEAKFHP to the NFHP Science and Data Committee and other Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs).
    - Facilitate coordination and review of science and data needs for national fish habitat assessments and when appropriate assist with assessment teams for data need identification and data acquisition.
    - Serve as a liaison from the SEAKFHP to other FHPs with specific emphasis on Alaska FHP's with respect to coordinating similar or overlapping science and data needs.
- Additional roles or responsibilities as directed by the SEAKFHP Steering Committee.

Committee Membership Structure

- Committee structure, appointments, term-limits, etc… will be broad as the committee initially forms and begins to work through the duties outlined above. The following are initial considerations for committee formation.
- Total committee size is aimed towards 10 individuals with members having scientific expertise or data management experience. Both freshwater and marine interests will be represented on the committee. (It is recognized at the early stages of committee development that building capacity for both freshwater and marine interests will be needed and that at some point tasks may be differentiated based upon expertise and capacity of the committee.)
- Initial outreach to build capacity on the committee will be broad and include the following:
    - 2-USFS Tongass Forest Managers (one seat aimed at a fish ecologist and one for a hydrologist) and 1-USFS Pacific Northwest Research Station, PNW
    - USFSW Habitat Restoration Biologist (Neil has expressed interest)
    - NOAA (Cindy will act as liaison initially and may link in the NMFS Science Center specialist based upon availability or as needs arise)
    - USGS/Water Resources Group (outreach needed for possible interest)
    - ADF&G (Jeff has expressed interest)
    - ADEC
    - 1 to 2 representatives from the University of Alaska Southeast and University of Alaska Fairbanks (outreach will be through the Alaska Coastal Rainforest Center, ACRC and the UAS GIS Library to help with university links)
    - TNC (outreach to GIS specialist and Science Director)
    - CCTHITA (Local and Traditional Knowledge expert)
    - Other data stewards (perhaps with SEAK-Hydro or ShoreZone, or other data centers/offices such as the North Pacific Landscape Conservation Cooperative, NPLCC)
    - Others with specific expertise or an interest such as K Koski, Don Martin, and Scott Harris

Appendix 1. SEAKFHP Science and Data Committee role related to relevant datasets, protocols, and guidelines

Will identify, review, recommend, and ensure availability to partners a diversity of relevant spatial datasets and non-spatial information (including protocols) that will assist planning efforts associated with fish habitat identification, delineation, characterization, prioritization, and assessment in Southeast Alaska (SEAK). Identifying key datasets complete with metadata, relevant protocols and strategies, and other informational documents and identifying sources of information which provides partner-access will provide consistency and a level of standardization necessary to address strategic planning goals of the Partnership. The S&D committee, upon request from partners or the SEAKFHP Steering Committee, may assist in evaluating and identifying key datasets or protocols to accomplish goals and objectives of projects that align with priorities of the SEAKFHP. The abundance and diversity of fish and fish habitat related protocols presents a potential obstacle to many partners challenged with identifying appropriate measures and means to satisfy project objectives with limited specific capacity.

A short list of protocols that may be used to advance SEAKFHP priorities includes:

- **Fish distribution inventory/survey** (AWC, AFFI, repeated 'index' counts, etc.)
- **Stream habitat inventory/survey** (USFS Tier I-IV, ADF&G-SF modified Tier II, etc.)
- **Watershed Condition Assessment** (USFS Watershed Condition Framework, USFS Proper Functioning Condition Assessment)
- **Culvert and fish passage inventory/assessment** (ADF&G Fish Passage Program, MOU: ADF&G-SF and AKDOT, USFWS Southeast Alaska Fish Passage Program, USFS Upstream Assessment of Fish Habitat)
- **Invasive species inventory and detection** (ADF&G Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan, HACCP, USFWS invasive plant inventory (??), etc.)
- **Road Condition Survey** (ADF&G-SF RCS, USFS (??), etc.)
- **Aquatic, riparian, wetland, upland (?) restoration guidelines** (USFWS-??, ADF&G-SF Streambank revegetation and protection Guide, USFS-Watershed Restoration Plan, etc.)
- **Estuary and nearshore marine habitat surveys** (ShoreZone, NMFS EFH, ??)
- **Stream gauging/in-stream flow requirements and methods** (DRN State of Alaska Instream Flow Handbook, ADF&G-SF methods including the Tennant Method, USGS Water Resources Data for Alaska, etc.)

A separate short list of ecosystems or habitats that require specific protocols for inventory and assessment that need further review by the S&D committee includes:

- Wetlands: identification, delineation, characterization
- Riparian zone assessment, characterization
- Estuarine and nearshore marine environment
- Neritic or offshore marine waters
- Freshwater lakes and ponds
- Ecoregion or broadscale SEAK Assessments