**Steering Committee Meeting**

**ADF&G Conference Room**

**1800 Glenn Highway, Palmer**

**Tuesday, July 9, 2013, 1:30 – 4 pm**

**Meeting Notes**

**Facilitator**: Frankie Barker

**Notetaker**: Roger Harding

**Attendance**: Corinne Smith, Frankie Barker, Jessica Speed, Eric Rothwell, Libby Benolkin, Dave Albert, Jim DePasquale

Phone: David Wigglesworth, Roger Harding, and Bill Rice.

**Mat-Su Salmon Partnership Business**

Agenda Updates:

1. Report onUSFWS Regional Director meeting with FHP coordinators, May 24, 2013.
2. Information about award Mat-Su might qualify for from the Alaska Chapter of the American Planning Association
3. Update on TNC Palmer office opening.

Strategic Plan update (Corinne):

Draft Strategic Action Plan (SAP) has been circulated but so far not much feedback. Primarily looking for big picture items missing from the SP but editing grammar is good too. The “Organizational piece” prepared by Frankie was sent separately on 7/9 but will ultimately be included in SAP. Some discussion on research (grad students) vs. assessments (monitoring) and what NFHP can fund; SP should be used as guide to help identify funding priorities. Good discussion on what SP is trying to accomplish: is it simply being updated or have previous goals been met. Dave Albert raised question about whether there is language in SP about what has changed and how it might be a good idea to have realistic review of prior goals. This lead to discussion about should a review of goals be included in this SP (as an appendix) or as a progress report; should progress be reported by working groups in their respective sections or should there be better standardization of sections and introductory paragraphs? Perhaps when final draft of SP is sent out for review the working groups could be asked to include something on their progress.

Question was raised about whether or not there should be some mention in SP of the collaboration among the all Alaskan FHP and LCC’s. General consensus was to acknowledge in SP how Mat-SU FHP is coordinating with LCCs on NHD and sharing symposia etc.; probably include in organizational section.

Concerns were raised about TOC and headings in draft SP; formatting should be ignored as will be automatically updated. The CAP methodology and where FHP can have some effects might best be explained in “Conservation Strategies”. This plan should be assumed to be good for 5 years but some goals might be further out but dates should be realistic as to what can be done.

Dave Albert raised question about habitat size, conditions, and extent of fish habitat in streams and pointed out there was more information on terrestrial habitat than fish habitat (Dave mentioned as an example page 39). One of key attributes of fish habitat is to ensure habitat is available to all life stages e.g. spawning and overwintering, and to make more consistent in order to better evaluate changes. Discussion on monitoring and while it is hard to measure, efforts should continue to monitor changes and updates or even validating the AWC would benefit all users and borough. Best baseline to use in monitoring might be spawning/habitat modeling approach as it is more modern and all by systematical looking at habitat. Monitoring could be put under science strategy.

Dave Albert used the case study on culverts and talked about using diagrams similar to Figure 3 (page 19) to describe displaying situation analysis and various strategies. It was suggested that other strategies could be also be described diagrammatically as well and possibly be added to strategic plan later in year, however they would not be available for distribution with the RFP.

Discussion on variability assessments and how to develop benchmarks: there is a need to have indicators under David W. reported being glad to hear that strategic plan was getting into assessments as that will help with funding issues (more on this later in notes) and a spreadsheet was a good start.

Other discussion included:

1. “Measures of Conservation Success section”: should this be in an annual report of basically this is what we did?
2. Frankie talked about how Portland meeting helped pull pieces together to create something more like a work plan for others. Other big category sections that need work include governance, staffing, finances, funding resources, and communication and outreach.

Discussion on SP update included adding something in SP about coordination with other AK FHP and LCCs that could possibly be part of education plan.

Deadlines were set:

1. Feedback on draft plan due to Corinne this Friday July 12.
2. Feedback on organizational development section to Frankie next Wednesday July 17.

**RPF scoring & process revision update**

Initial discussion focused on whether points should be awarded to applicants that have signed consent forms from landowners; FHP does not want to fund projects without consent. Instead of awarding 5 points for consent form would it be better to make it a condition for eligibility. Discussion to redistribute 5 points and possible add 3 points to equipment cost sharing. David reminded group that FWS cannot fund equipment purchase and it is better as cost share; FWS can fund equipment rental. Consensus was to add 3 points to “overall cost effectiveness”. The scoring sheet will be included with RFP package but it will be made clear that scoring will be confidential and only 1 aspect of application process.

Timeframe for sending out RFP and review of completed applications was discussed. Bill plans to send out the RFP on July 29 so please get any comments to him by Thursday July 18th. Face to face scoring meeting was discussed and tentative date for meeting is September 17th. Applications will be due back to partnership by Sept 6th and once applications have been scanned they will be distributed to steering committee members, hopefully by September 9th. May want to invite technical people to assist with scoring if any proposals are technical. Committee members will have from September 9 to **September 17** to review and score their projects. The steering committee suggested having one combined regular steering and scoring meeting. Scores and ranking will be finalized that same day. Tentative meeting date is **Tuesday September 17th** from 12 to 5pm. Those who cannot attend can send in their scores.

**Fish Passage Resolution** - update (Frankie)

Background information was given on the Fish Passage Resolution the Mat-Su assembly will be considering at its August 6th meeting. It was noted that this item has been on the FHP priority list for some time and individual members of the FHP need to come and voice support at the assembly meeting as this item needs a “full-court press”. Questions related to this ordinance include whether Borough employees can inspect culvert or if any engineer could approve and is this a condition for Borough acceptance of road? There have been several efforts to update the Subdivision Construction Manual and at one time thought that fish passage could be split out but not so simple.

Reminder: Public hearing for Mat-Su Borough’s fish passage resolution August 6th.

**National NFHP Update** (David W.)

A list of approved projects for funding will be distributed to steering committee (Note: this was distributed on 7/11).

David described the allocation process as a moving target but there should be new direction from the FWS by the end of July. Basically a FWS work group was created to review how the NFHP board recommended allocating funding and to make recommendations for revisions to the current FWS allocation methodolgy. As of now, it looks like the method will include a base allocation to each FHP and fund allocation based on performance. Under the Board's recommended method each FHP would get a base of $75,000 to support operations and funds based 3-year operating plan and performance evaluations. It is unclear at this time what aspects of the Boards recommended method will be incorporated into the final Service allocation policy. Mat-Su FHP has been doing positive things that will aid the partnership as future funding will most likely be based on some type of “performance” metrics. It is very important to document progress and Mat-Su has been doing a good job of that but needs to continue to focus on this aspect of its work.

David gave an update on the LCC funding to improve NHD in Alaska.  This funding will go to updating the NHD and allow for easier updates; a data steward will be funded for 1.5 years with the objectives of cleanning up the NHD data, securing more funding, and to be ready to receive NHD data. It was a great effort by AK FHPs which took this idea to LCC for funding.

David also gave an update on the all AK FHP efforts and about the recent meeting with FWS Regional Director Geoff Haskett and the Alaskan FHP coordinators. Everyone was well spoken and one outcome of this was a letter from Geoff to ADFG Commissioner Campbell requesting a meeting to strengthen AK FHPs and raise the importance of agency involvement.

**Committee Updates**

Symposium Planning Committee (Jessica)

The Mat-Su Salmon Symposium will be held at the Palmer Depot Nov 13th= and 14th David Batker, CEO of Earth Economics has been invited to be the Keynote speaker. The theme for the meeting is “Healthy Salmon and Healthy Communities”. There will be different social venues and formats this year but basically similar to last year’s symposium.

Outreach committee (Jessica)

The committee hasn’t met in a while but has been busy. An article was done on the Mat-Su FHP for the Coastal Fish Habitat Partnerships newsletter and should be out shortly. Katrina Mueller has been updating the Facebook page and getting hits. Jessica is working on informational folder on Mat-Su FHP which anyone could use as promotional tool. News articles will soon be posted to website with highlights on recent partners.

**Misc. Updates**

Arni Thomson with Alaska Salmon Alliance is trying to set up meeting with Senator Begich staff and this could happen in August. Jessica and Frankie will attend

Beer and Salmon initiative is still ongoing but nothing new to report.

Southwest and Southeast presentations at National FHP board meeting: Tim Troll and Neil Stichert gave good presentations to the National FHP Board and there was positive feedback from both. The National FHP Board rotates updates from the 18 partnerships at their national meetings.

Roger will be attending the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) meeting in Omaha July 19-22. At this meeting Roger will be attending the WNTI Steering Committee meeting and the WAFWA Inland and Marine Fisheries Committee (IMFC) meeting. At theWNNTI meeting there is an agenda item regarding FHP and Roger hopes to share a little on the Alaskan partnerships and how they are working collaboratively on several issues. Roger is planning on giving a brief presentation at the IMFC meeting introducing the SEAKFHP and if time allows, giving brief updates and recent accomplishments from other Alaskan FHPs.

**Agenda Updates**

Jim reported that TNC has opened up an office in Palmer and will be staffed by himself 4 days/week with Jessica and Corinne each about 1 day/week. Jim will be doing some modeling with hydro data and NHD.

Frankie talked about an award that Mat-Su might qualify for from the Alaska Chapter of the American Planning Association. They have a category for “conservation” and the deadline is Aug.23rd but she hasn’t looked too closely at application.

David reported that the Regional Director Partnership Award went to the Mat-Su borough for outstanding partner and was presented to them at a recent assembly meeting.

**Next Meeting:** The next Tentative meeting date is **Tuesday September 17th** from 12 to 5pm and will be a combined regular steering, and scoring meeting. Scores and ranking will be finalized that same day.

**Facilitator:** Corinne

**Notetaker:** Bill or Libby