**Steering Committee Meeting**

Alaska Department of Fish & Game, Suite 2

1800 Glenn Highway, Palmer

**Tuesday, July 8th, 2014 1:30 – 4 pm**

Call in # (907) 746-6347 🡨 confirmed correct number for ADFG conference room

*Meeting began 1:30 pm*

**Steering Committee Members - Present:**

Frankie Barker (Mat-Su Borough – Facilitator)

Liz Robinson (Envision Mat-Su – Notetaker)

Jessica Winnestaffer (Chickaloon Village Traditional Council)

Corinne Smith (The Nature Conservancy)

David Wigglesworth (USFW)

Roger Harding (Alaska Department of Fish and Game – via phone)

Bill Rice (US Fish and Wildlife Service – via phone)

Jeff Davis (Aquatic Research & Restoration Institute – via phone)

**Steering Committee Members - Absent:**

Arni Thompson (Alaska Salmon Alliance)

Erika Ammann (NOAA)

**Coordinator:**

Jessica Speed

**Guests:**

Sam Ivey (Alaska Department of Fish and Game)

Steve Whitney (Bullitt Foundation)

**Partnership Business**

1. **Discuss and approve updated RFP process for FY15 (Roger and Jessica)**

Ideally the RFP will be posted this week with a finalized score-card and timeframe. Most items have remained unchanged except for outreach expectations, now more encouragement for outreach components.

**1.** Discussion of RFP guidelines:

* Bill mentioned new distinction between “match” and “leverage” on the RFP application guidelines. More clarity needed in cost-sharing component.
* Group discussion of “project endorsements” versus “letters of support” – consensus that we want to endorse projects we cannot fund but would like to. Consensus that sentence at final paragraph (“partners encouraged to fill out the project endorsement letter”) should be deleted.
* Group discussion of who proposals should be sent to by applicants – consensus that proposals should be sent to Libby with Bill and Doug CC’d.

**2.** Discussion of score sheet:

* Corrine noted that the score sheet has been greatly simplified since the last version. However, score sheet is not ready to go out.
* Discussion of definition of “salmon” – which species to include? Bill recommended that we ensure scoring focuses directly on the strategic action plan of the partnership. Preference will be given to anadromous salmon.
* The word “clearly” is repetitive and its frequency will be reduced within the score sheet.
* Discussion of research projects – NFHP cannot fund research but can fund assessments. New scoring gives equal weight to outreach/assessment and “on the ground” projects. However, clarity is lacking as to difference of what qualifies as “research” and “assessment”. Committee consensus is that this is a grey area, particularly for “applied science” projects which could result in great benefit for salmon habitat. In the future, recommendations will be made to “grey area” projects in order to help them advance the specific objectives identified within the MSBSHP strategic action plan.
* Jessica W. noted that only one bullet within the score card is for the match/leverage funds which includes both and expressed concern that this may convey that the “match” is a low-priority. Bill R. commented that the goal for NFHP funds is a “dollar for dollar” match.
* Needs to be clarified that projects which can be completed within a 1 year time frame do not necessarily score higher than multi-year projects. Also needs to be claified what constitutes the one year – the federal or organization’s fiscal year, one year from the date funds are available to the grantee, or the state date of the project to the end of the project? A statement will be added that projects extended over multiple years must be broken into one-year phases from the project start date.
* Discussion of applicant qualifications – wording will be revised to more accurately reflect which qualifications should be described (the project manager, the personnel, the organization, the people connected to or involved in the project as consulting aides, etc).
* Frankie noted that score sheet language and RFP guidelines language should be as similar as possible.
* Discussion of whether the “424” should be mentioned in match definition. This reference will be deleted.

Steering committee members must get all recommendations on RFP and score sheet to Jessica S. by 12 pm on Wednesday, 7/9/14.

Jessica W. will edit the RFP guidelines and Jessica S. will edit the score sheet.

Due to all of the revisions, Jessica W. will send another “RFP coming up” announcement and then send the full RFP upon her return to the office after 7/21/14.

With respect to the RFP timeline, Jessica S. noted that a November steering committee meeting date has not yet been selected. It is imperative that meeting date in November is finalized soon – committee members must select a date ASAP via the doodle poll previously sent out.

1. **Partnership endorsement of projects (Corinne and Bill)**

Corrine explained that the intent is for MSBSHP to endorse projects (not proposals) for other funding opportunities. The MSBSHP will then provide a letter of endorsement. Applicants must fill out a form about the project showing how the project links back to the MSBSHP strategic action plan. Review and endorsement is done by consensus of the steering committee.

**1.** Pike suppression endorsement letter (submitted by Adam Sepulveda, US Geological Survey):

* Sam talked about the applicant, with whom is familiar, and the project.
* Project is focused on “developing genetic monitoring tools to strengthen introduced northern pike suppression in the Cook Inlet watershed”. Project will result in better tools needed to assess of the current level of pike overharvest in order to determine needs for future pike suppression efforts.
* Bill expressed concerns about the efficacy and reliability of the technology used in the proposed project, but general support for the project’s aims.
* David suggested that we endorse the project by stating that we endorse the effort, but explicitly stating that we cannot speak to the scientific technique.
* Corinne noted that the letter does not address the MSBSHP strategic action plan. We will ask the applicant to respond with this information, then Jessica S. will draft the endorsement letter.
* Jessica S. noted that the next strategic action plan update must include more points about existing aquatic invasive.

**2.** Salmon habitat conservation endorsement letter (submitted by Kim Sollien, Great Land Trust):

* Concerns raised over long-term enforcement of easement agreements. Corrine spoke positively to Great Land Trust’s record and practices.
* No objections – Jessica S. will send the endorsement letter.

Bill suggested that the MSBSHP consider in the future endorsing some of the projects on the USFWS funded or co-funded projects list, eight of which have no connection to NFHP but do address MSBSHP strategic action plan items. Project applicants will need to ask for the endorsement and must be made aware of this opportunity in advance. This way the MSBSHP have documentation of work that is happening in the Mat-Su to be included in the Partnership’s own application for funding. Bill and Jessica S. will work together to identify potential endorsees.

1. **Map of Mat-Su waters (Corinne)**

Jim DePasquale (the Nature Conservancy) created a map of Mat-Su waters entitled “The Matanuska Basin”, which Corinne would like to distribute among partners and other interested parties. Corinne will send to SC hard and electronic copies that can be used for power points.

**Committee Updates**

1. **Science and Data (Bill)**

Bill has identified the goals and objectives of the Science & Data committee and membership parameters within his draft Science & Date committee description . Bill then solicited input from the steering committee as to how to select the “core group” of Science & Data Committee members (6-8 seats). Corinne recommended that the Science & Data committee operate by consensus rather than voting, as does the steering committee. Corinne recommended that the committee member selection be expertise-based rather than organization/agency-based. Corinne recommended that committee members not be required to be “actively involved” in science projects but instead give preference to their expertise. Frankie suggested we get back to Bill on this topic. Corinne suggested we circulate recommendations and names of potential committee members via e-mail.

1. **Symposium Planning (Jessica)**

Dates have been selected for November 18 & 19 for the annual symposium and a list of the top three keynote speaker candidates has been generated: Mary Culligan, Kate Meyers, Dan Schindler. The top two are the former. Mary Culligan is already in Alaska and can offer a perspective on partnerships and on a species that is in decline. Kate Meyers is now retired but was at UDub and is an impressive speaker. Next symposium committee is meeting this Thursday, 7/10/14.

The Mat-Su mayor (Larry DeVilbis) has been invited as a welcoming speaker.

1. **Outreach (Frankie)**

The new Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership progress report from 2005-2013 (12 pages) has been published and is ready for distribution.

**National NFHP**

1. **National FHP meeting in November (Jessica)**

November 2nd in National Harbor, Maryland. Coincides with “Restore Americas Estuaries” conference. There will be a FHP workshop and they are willing to fund one person from each partnership to go. Head of national science & data committee will do a presentation and would like a contribution from an Alaska partnership. The MSBSHP has requested to represent Alaska. David and Roger will be going (not paid for by the FHP). We will need a representative, ideally from the Science & Data committee to go to the conference and present on our science activities as well as represent the MSBSHP as well as the other Alaska partnerships. The NFHP will need to know by the end of July if someone will be available to go. Bill is a possibility. Discussion will continue via e-mail.

1. **Upcoming Events (not discussed):**
2. Joint-conference American Fisheries Society (AFS) and American Water Resources Association (AWRA) – October 20-24, 2014 in Juneau
3. NFHP Fish Habitat Partnerships teleconference Thursday, July 24th, 2014.

**Other notes:** Jessica S. will be out of the office July 11th through the 21st. We may need a Notetaker at the next meeting is Jessica W. is not available.

*Meeting ended 4:15 pm*

**Next meeting: September 9th, 2014**

**Facilitator:** Liz Robinson **Notetaker:** ???