



Steering Committee Meeting

Alaska Department of Fish & Game, Suite 4

1800 Glenn Highway, Palmer

Tuesday, May 14, 2019 1:30 – 4 pm

NOTES

Facilitator: Trent Liebich

Notetaker: Christy Cincotta

Coordinator: Jessica Speed

Steering Committee Participants: Carrie Brophil, Adrian Baer, Sarah Wilbur (sitting in for Jessica Johnson), Tom Capiello, Erika Ammann, Ted Eischeid

Guest: Ann Marie Larquier

Partnership Business (1 ¼ hrs)

- The March 12, 2019 Steering Committee Meeting Notes were approved with one correction. Notes are posted on the [Partnership website](#).
- Partnership Strategic Action Plan Update (Member, Strategic Plan Committee)
 - Review and discussion of priority conservation objectives updated by the Science and Data Committee
Since the March Steering Committee meeting, the Science and Data committee has met and has updated five of the twelve conservation threats and strategies (Overarching Science Strategies, Alteration of Riparian Areas, Culverts that Block Fish Passage, Aquatic Invasive Species, and Motorized Off-Road Recreation). Laura Eldred sent the updated strategies to this committee. The Steering Committee discussed the updated and strategies and the need to include a glossary with the completed document to address technical terms. The Steering Committee will review and provide comments on these objectives to Jessica by May 23rd. Jessica has reached out to subject matter experts for updates to the remaining seven priorities., She will send this second set of updated strategies to the Steering Committee for feedback on May 22nd, with any feedback due June 7th.
 - Remaining activity for the plan update and next steps
After all conservation objectives have been updated, these will be folded into the overall context document. Jessica will finalize this document in June. Once this is complete, the context document will then need to be stepped down to an organizational task list document.
- USFWS Allocation report update (USFWS staff or Jessica)
Trent provided a brief overview of this process. The allocation report is typically due in early January, but due to delays at the federal level this year the deadline in June 5. The report is mostly assembled and will be ready for submission on time. After June 5, allocation reports from all fish habitat partnerships will be reviewed and ranked. We will most likely be informed of our ranking in July and can anticipate a funding amount based on past years,

but we won't know for sure the amount that we'll receive until late July or August. As it will still take a few weeks to get funds to applicants, this may cause difficulties for field work this year for funded projects. All money should be obligated within federal fiscal year (by Sept 30). Coordination amount has been \$75k in past, but this year we'll have the option to be approved for \$85k (to be decided by the Steering Committee at a future date).

- Partnership Budget
 - Discussion and possible approval
The budget will be presented and reviewed at the July meeting. Jessica shared an update about a recent meeting with Matt Varner at BLM to discuss potential BLM financial support for the partnership. Trent is currently working with Matt on an inter-agency agreement through USFWS to get funds to the Partnership, and we should know the amount that BLM will provide by the end of July at the latest. Jessica shared that the Partnership may have less TNC financial and in-kind support than in the past as well as some gaps to fill from last year and that this should be considered in the budget.

Committee Updates (15 min)

- Capacity and Development (Christy/Jessica)
The next meeting is scheduled for May 21, to follow up on the next steps for the strategic focus document. This committee will look not only at BLM but other potential funding sources in developing a fundraising plan.
- Symposium Planning (Jessica):
This committee will be meeting in May, and is currently working on identifying a keynote speaker. Ideas for this year's symposium include key themes of youth and education as well as an indigenous focus. The group brainstormed a few ideas and suggestions for speakers.
- Science and Data (Laura or Jon): Laura and Jon did not attend this meeting. Trent shared that this committee has mainly been focused on updating conservation objectives, and their next meeting is in September.

Other & General Partner Updates (all or any attendees) (20 min)

- Mat-Su Elodea Task Force Update (Christy):
Alexander and Sucker Lakes have been closed to sport fishing this season as a measure to help prevent spread. Landowners in the task force are very active and committed to addressing this issue. In 2019, chemical (diquat) will go into both lakes as a suppression measure while DNR and partners continue to fundraise. There are many challenges, but also lots of support and many potential funding sources.
- Updates from other fish habitat partnership meetings or activity (E.g., all Alaska FHP meeting, Kenai Symposium):
Erika is meeting later this week with Jessica and Brandon (Kenai Peninsula FHP coordinator) to discuss ways to focus on near shore and marine environments through both fish habitat partnerships. There will be more information at the July meeting.
- Other:
 - Mat-Su Borough: Ted shared that the assembly held a workshop in March involving wetlands. Assembly-person Jim Sykes is working with a committee on a wetland ordinance that would allow for Borough input on permitting for projects that involve 5 acres or more of wetlands. This ordinance should come before the assembly in the fall. The Borough is also looking at using salmon-safe practices as demonstration project that would work for developers for subdivisions.

- Jessica –TNC recently received a USFWS regional director’s outstanding partner award in recognition of their long-term involvement with the salmon partnership. This award recognizes the good work of the Partnership (including the many people that have had a significant hand in its growth over the years), and how it has grown from 4 partners to now 65 partners. Jessica also shared that this year’s site tour will likely take place in late August. Tentative save the date for August 27 and 28
- Christy shared that there is an upcoming NRCS state technical meeting on May 29 in Palmer that is open to the public.
- Trent shared that their office will be hiring an engineer to help with doing more fish passage designs in house. Trent also shared that USFWS budgets for the fish passage, coastal, and partners programs came in strong this year.

Presentation: Instream Flow Reservations – What are they and How do They Work?

Ann Marie Larquier, ADF&G (30 min)

Ann Marie presented information on instream flow reservations to provide more background on this topic (as the Partnership has funded a lot of instream flow projects in the past). The ADFG instream flow program was established to meet water demands to sustain healthy fish and wildlife habitat by protecting instream flow. Ann Marie provided an overview of state water laws and the instream flow reservation process. DNR currently has a large backlog of instream flow reservation applications due to limited capacity. ADFG has filed on stream miles and lakes throughout the Borough, and 270 stream miles have been adjudicated and approved. ADFG also works closely with USFWS on streamgauge networks. As flow regimes can change over time, water reservations can come back up for review. There is a 10 year review process listed in the AK statute, but DNR has not implemented this process yet. The group discussed stream flow data for the Eklutna River, and the role of several partners in gathering this data.

Upcoming Events:

- National Fish Habitat Partnership Coordinators Call, 10am-12pm, May 16,2019
- All Alaska Fish Habitat Partnerships Meeting, October 24th, 2019, Anchorage
- Mat-Su Salmon Science and Conservation Symposium November 13 & 14,2019, Palmer, AK

Next meeting:

- Tuesday, July 9th 1:30-4pm – Trent proposed hosting this meeting at USFWS BLM Campbell track office, including a cookout beforehand. USFWS will provide lunch, and guests can bring sides. Adrian Baer will facilitate and Erika Ammann will take notes.