



Steering Committee Meeting
Tuesday, March 8, 2022 1:30 – 4 pm

Remote Meeting

Join via Zoom:

<https://troutunlimited.zoom.us/j/83581247988?pwd=MnE0ZnB1RjlGODlscStsK2krSXJVZz09>

One tap mobile: +12532158782,,83581247988#,,,,*146161# US

Standard dial: +1 253 215 8782 US

Meeting ID: 835 8124 7988

Passcode: 146161

AGENDA

Facilitator: Theo Garcia

Notetaker: Michael Mazzacavallo

Attendance Michael Mazzacavallo, (ADFG), Eric Booton (TU), Trent Leibich (FWS), Theo Garcia (Knik), Andy Wizik (CIAA), Jessica Speed (TU), Erika Ammann (NOAA), Mike Daigneault (FWS), Margaret Stern (SRC), Anjanette Steer (UAA), Matt Varner (BLM), and Laurie Stuart (TTCD).

Welcome new Steering Committee members!

Jessica Speed introduced the two new at-large steering committee members (Matt Varner and Laurie Stuart). Everyone else in attendance introduced themselves and gave a brief back ground.

Partnership Business (85 min)

- Approve January 2022 Steering Committee Meeting Notes (5 min) **January notes January meeting noted were approved without edits. Andy Wizik asked Michael Mazzacavallo to provide background information regarding the junk cars at the Eklutna Tailrace.*
- Steering Committee Seats –(Jessica) (25 min) **Partnership operations guidelines_draft*
 - Local government seat: Update
 - Steering Committee co-chair role: Discussion

Jessica Speed gave updates to the new language in the Partnership's Organizational Structure in the bylaws. The changes include updating language for the local government seat to broaden the criteria for the seat to include any local government in the greater Mat-Su Borough. This change was in response to the Mat-Su Borough no longer wanting to hold their standing seat. Also discussed was the addition of one at-large seat on the committee. This new seat will start out as a one-year term. This will allow the Steering Committee to reassess the additional at-large seat, but also to have two at-large seats come up for renewal during odd years and two during even years.

The steering committee did not have issues with the language changes to the Organizational Structure and changes to the bylaws were accepted.

- Proposals for National Fish Habitat Partnership Funding (Trent & Jessica) (20 min)

**Summary spreadsheet*

- Status of FY22 project funding

Trent: Currently the US Federal Government is operating under a continual resolution, set to expire on March 11. Once a budget is approved, it will become clearer how much money will be divide up amongst the Habitat Partnerships. Trent expects the budget to be flat funding, meaning NFHP should expect to receive funding similar to last year. Trent also provided some quick background on the ACE Act for Laurie and Matt.

- Check-in on proposals received, process and expectations for FY23 proposal review

Jessica: Call for proposals were due on February 25, 2022. We received 6 proposals and 1 proposal to fund the coordinator position. The Steering Committee will meet next Monday (March 18) to go over the proposals as a group. Representatives from the Science and Data committee will be at this meeting to provide technical feedback gathered from their meeting on held on March 7. Jessica will send out the score sheet soon to all committee members.

- Other National Fish Habitat Partnership updates?

The two tribal seats on the National Fish Habitat Board were finally filled last month. They include Karen Linnell, who is an Alaskan. She is the Executive Director of the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission. The other member is Adam Ringia, who is the Executive Director for the Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission.

It was also noted that Ted Eischied is still on the board, and the Steering Committee should reachout to our local representatives on the National Fish Habitat Board.

- [West Susitna Access Road](#), proposed [Susitna oil and gas leases](#) and [Recreational Rivers Board](#) (25 min)

- Is there an appropriate engagement role for the Partnership as identified in our Strategic Action Plan? Discussion and decision

Margrett Stern and Eric Booton: Gave updates on where in the process AIDEA is at on the West Susitna Access Road Project and a bit of background on the proposed project (i.e. number of stream crossings, number of bridges, and culverts).

General discussion opened up about the project. Questions were asked that included will the culverts be passage to lamprey and will the road have to follow Mat-Su Borough culvert criteria. Discussion was cut short due to time. The steering committee agreed it would be appropriate to help inform the public science and best practices regarding fish habitat, wetlands, and riparian habitat.

The committee will discuss in a future meeting other ways the Partnership and engage in the process. Due to lack of time, the discussion of the oil and gas leases and Mat-Su Rec Rivers was cut short.

- Looking ahead: Partnership Strategic Action Plan Update (10 min) [*2019 Addendum](#)
 - Discussion

Jessica Speed: Just wanted to point everyone's radar the 2019 Addendum to the Strategic Plan sets to expire at the end of 2023. Though it seems far away, we should start thinking about how we want to proceed with updating the SAP. She might start reaching out to folks to see if people are interested in forming a small working group. She also would like Steering members to think about what method we would like to proceed with. Historically, the steering committee used the Conservation Action Plan (CAP) method, but in 2019 they used a process and format TTCD uses, which was simpler. Jessica would like feedback on if we want to go back to the CAP procedure, use TTCD's model, or if any of the steering members had other ideas about putting together an effective strategic plan.

Committee Updates (25 min)(*Find written committee updates below)

- Science and Data (Anjanette or Nick)

Anjanette gave the update of the SDC. On March 7th, the SDC meet to review the 6 proposals received for technical merit and realistic methods. The produces a summary of clarification questions that were sent out to each proposal PI to clarify any questions the SDC had or to provide additional information. Overall, there were not many questions the SDC had. Anjanette or Nick or both will be at the Steering Committee meeting on March 14th to go over each proposal.

The SDC is also working on setting up a Zoom meeting with Matt Varner for him to explain his aquatic habitat monitoring protocols and how the Partnership could start using it to collect long term data in the Mat-Su Borough. The meeting invite will be distributed broadly.
- Outreach (Michael and Jessica)

Michael gave an update on the Big Lake Community Planting Day. Kink has confirmed they will provide the bulk of the plant material, so the event is a go. They are still fund raising and will provide a final scope for the event to the Committee in April.

Jessica gave updates on the OC work with the Wasilla Museum and plans for the Partnership to host an exhibit on Salmon in the Museum. Current plan is to provide ideas to the Museum this summer and have the exhibit open in the fall. The OC has also been working with the Kink Tribe on ways the Partnership can facilitate some education opportunities with the tribe.
- Symposium (Jessica or Grant)

Jessica gave an update. Grant will be taking over as leading the Symposium Committee. Knik is offering tribal members to volunteers. The committee is shy on members. So...if there is anyone interested please get a hold of Jessica Speed.
- Capacity and Development (Jessica)

Jessica gave no update because the Capacity and Development committee did not meet since the SCM.

Other Updates (25 min)

- Partner updates (all)

Andy Wizik: Gave an update on CIAA's Shell Lake pike eradication project, which was funded with the help of NFHP funds. They believe through eradication efforts have removed 99% of the invasive pike have been killed, in terms of relative abundance. CIAA is continuing to go out and monitor pike abundance through trapping. Next few years they plan on reducing the amount of trapping effort. There are considering smolt traps, weirs, and arial adult surveys to study salmon population response to the pike eradication.

Margret Stern: Susitna River Coalition is hosting a lamprey presentation by Trent Sutton on March 22. Links to the presentation below:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/3025019894494366>

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_q9fqe3hhRg2rjt15EcctsO?fbclid=IwAR15exOMOwnB5OoHWltgjntEOEiYMK9-gsdjKDolRzhuC6Ct13476Qpb2Nk

Eric Booton: Is currently reviewing the Eklutna Power Mitigation Studies. The Mitigation plan will also include a recreation study. Eric will also be discussing the Eklutna Project on the radio shoe Salmonfest Radio. Eric will share the link when made available.

He reminded that the West Mat-Su Access Road public comment period closes on March 30th. He also informed the Steering Committee about the Governor's request to reevaluate the Mat-Su Recreational Rivers Management Plan. Meetings have held monthly and scoping period should open up to the public in the next month or so.

Jessica Speed: Let the Steering Committee know that TU submitted a proposal to NOAA's Recreational Fishing RFP.

She also gave an update on the Science to Conservation Outcomes meeting held last November. Twenty one people participated in the meeting. Over the past few months, Jessica Speed, Mike Daigneault (FWS), and Sue Mauger (CIK) have reached out to all meeting participants to ask what they learned and next steps. They hope to schedule a follow-up meeting soon.

Theo Garcia: Talked about how Knik has been working with USFWS and ADFG to set up an agreement for Knik to teach courses to help build native community capacity for fish sampling, submitting updated to the AWC, and bioengineering installation. The agreement will also include helping facilitate Knik to be a commercial producer of native Alaska plant species for restoration projects.

Upcoming Events:

- American Fisheries Society [Alaska Chapter Meeting](#), February 28 - March 4th
- [Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Advisory Board](#), 10-12pm, March 16th and April 20th, 2022.
- [West Susitna Access Road Public Meeting](#), 4-7pm, March 23, 2022. Note: Public comment period closes March 31st, 2022.
- Mat-Su Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission meetings (public welcome), 3rd Thursday of every month, 4pm (except summer)
- National Fish Habitat Partnership Board Meeting, late March, 2022
- [5th Annual Lamprey Information Exchange Monthly Webinar Series](#), 2nd Tuesdays in 2022

Next meeting:

- Tuesday, May 10th 1:30-4pm

Facilitator: Eric Booton

Notetaker: Melissa Heuer/Margaret Stern

Committee Updates (*find list of committee members [here](#)*)

- **Science and Data**

- Anjanette participated in the science to conservation outcomes follow-up meeting in February
- Co-chairs and Science and Data Committee are providing technical review for the FY23 projects on April 7th, then walking Steering Committee members through these findings on March 14th. S and D Committee will also reach out with any key follow-up questions with applicants.
- Are looking forward to booking a presentation from Matt Varner/BLM on habitat assessments and applications within the Mat-Su at the next Science and Data Committee meeting.

- **Outreach**

- Continued development of riparian planting day event, collaboration with Wasilla Museum on salmon exhibit and collaboration with Knik Tribe to meet outreach goals and 1:1 non-federal match for Partnership Coordination and outreach. Planning a next outreach meeting for later in March.
- Please share updates for list-serve or other Partnership outlets should be shared with Grant for posting.

- **Capacity and Development**

- Committee did not meet.
- Jessica and Nelli Williams/TU met with Matt Varner to thank him for Outreach Coordinator Support (Grant's position), share updates and talk about overlapping interests.

- **Symposium Planning**

- Grant will be leading coordination, and we are also excited and grateful to have Symposium staff support from Knik Tribe in 2022.
- We are still in need of committee members (there are currently only 4) and we are actively recruiting. Targeted closing date is March 18th. Please share opportunity with candidates from your organization or relevant contacts who you think would be a good fit.
- Tentative dates: November 16th/17th or November 9th or 10th. Any overlapping events you are aware of before tentatively booking at Palmer Depot – please let us know.