



Steering Committee Meeting
Tuesday, September 13, 2022 1:30 – 4 pm
Remote Meeting

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AGENDA

Facilitator: Michael Mazzacavallo

Notetaker: Margaret

Luke Byker, partners program and fish passage for the valley and Kodiak

Lisa Ka'ahue, Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association

Nick DeCovich, ADF&G, Partnership Science and Data Committee

Laurie Stuart, Tyonek Tribal Conservation District

Michael Mazzacavallo, ADF&G

Jessica Speed, TU, Partnership Coordinator

Trent Liebich-USFWS

Margaret Stern-Susitna River Coalition

Latter part of meeting:

Sean Prince, Wolverine Lake landowner

Craig Staskopf, Wolverine Lake landowner

Kevin Keith, ADF&G

Welcome to Lucas Byker (Luke) – a new fish and wildlife biologist with USFWS Habitat Restoration Program working on fish passage in the Mat-Su. Luke shared some of his background and his role with USFWS in Mat-Su.

Partnership Business (75 min)

- Approve July 2022 Steering Committee Meeting notes (5 min) ***July notes**

Thanks to Trent for taking the July meeting notes. No edits. Jessica will post online under resources tab.

- Partnership Budget – (15 min) ***FY23 budget (pending)**
 - Discussion and decision

Jessica shared some updates on the FY23 Partnership budget since introduced at the July meeting. Updates included some carry-over funding from last year's USFWS award since personnel expenses are appearing lower than estimated. Since last meeting Jessica and

Laurie have been meeting to work on a development plan for the Partnership, BLM has expressed interest in some continued support of Partnership outreach and operations efforts.

Actions:

- *Jessica keep working with Laurie on a development plan*
- *Jessica follow-up with Matt, and Trent and Laurie as appropriate to work out BLM support mechanisms and any needed details.*
- *All – review the Partnership budget. Ask for any clarifications or questions. Barring any substantive requested changes, after a two week review period the budget will be considered approved.*

- *National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) project funding – updates and planning for FY24 project solicitation (20 min) [*NFHP Board Project Review, All FHP Submitted Projects](#) (Jessica)*

 - *Discussion*

This partnership receives funding for projects through National Fish Habitat Partnership - including partnership coordination and operations. There continue to be changes with the process following the ACE Act legislation that guides the NFHP program. Big thanks to USFWS for continued grant support.

FY22 National Fish Habitat Partnership Funding – Trent reports that cooperative agreements should be completed for all Mat-Su projects receiving FY22 project funding.

In late March the Steering Committee submitted a ranked list of Mat-Su projects we were recommending for funding through NFHP – along with a competitive funding application, used to determine our partnership’s score relative to the 20 others across the country – and to determine how much project funding allocated to our region. Jessica let us know last meeting we scored a level 2, vs the more usual level 3 (top funding tier). Which is anticipated to bring in nearly \$200,000 for local area projects vs nearly \$300,000 received by level three ranked partnerships.

Mat-Su scored 6th out of the 20 fish habitat partnerships across the country. Jessica followed up with two NFHP Board members who were involved in report evaluation, and requested seeing Mat-Su’s overall scores so we can identify how to be more competitive in the FY24 funding cycle – and also consider updating our pending request for proposals.

Note that the NFHP Board should be able to provide guidance to fish habitat partnerships by the end of 2022 calendar year, in terms of how they will be evaluated in 2022.

Actions:

Jessica – continue to follow-up with NFHP Board regarding scoring and guidance to inform Mat-Su’s FY24 request for proposals.

- Fundraising support from NFHP – Beyond the Pond chapter agreement (20 min) *Chapter agreement
 - Discussion and decision
- *Beyond the Pond is the fundraising arm of the National Fish Habitat Partnership Board. It has been in existence for over five years but as yet has been limited in its fundraising capacity. <https://beyondthepondusa.com/>*
- *Individual FHP's have been requested to complete a chapter agreement if they would like to receive potential future funds through Beyond the Pond.*

Actions:

- *Laurie suggests getting a Mat-Su success story on the BTP website for Mat-Su. Jessica will follow-up. .*
- *Jessica will outreach within Trout Unlimited and with more FHP's and make a recommendation to the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership Steering Committee - whether to become a chapter or not and give the Steering Committee adequate time to consider.*
- Mat-Su Salmon Symposium – hosting a Partnership session (15 min)
 - Discussion of potential partnership session ideas

The 15th annual Mat-Su Salmon Science and Conservation Symposium will be on November 14th and 15th. This is a big opportunity to gain input from Partnership members.

Some ideas that have come up include:

- *Hosting a session related to significant funding opportunities – including Bipartisan infrastructure funding – what are partner needs, current collaborative efforts (statewide and/or regional) and how to support Mat-Su Salmon partners.*
- *Strategic Action Plan Update – Mat-Su's strategic plan term ends December of 2023. This is an early opportunity to gain valuable insight from partners – possibly as part of a scoping process to inform the breadth and depth of another update.*
- *Science to conservation outcomes: Cold Water Refugia Meetings – sharing out what we have been working on – including workplan goals. Gain continued insight from partners – including regarding some of the barriers to moving science to conservation outcomes brought up by hosting these meetings.*
- *We could potentially have a virtual or possibly in-person training(s) or meeting on a third day (Wednesday November 16th), which was of interest to the Steering Committee. Any ideas on trainings? Let Jessica know. (e.g. facilitated fish passage meeting for Mat-Su – basics of who is doing what, what has been accomplished, what remains what are the opportunities and barriers to success.)*

Actions:

- *Let Symposium planning committee or Jessica know if you have additional ideas and input*

Break (5 min)

Committee Updates (10 min) (*Find written committee updates below)

- Symposium (Jessica) – *covered already.*

- Outreach (Theo or Jessica) **Site tour hand-outl, site tour was a great outreach event. see written update below and tour hand-out.*
- Science and Data (Nick or Jessica) *Committee did not meet - NA*
- Science to Conservation Outcomes – Cold Water Refugia (Jessica) - *site tour was a goal in the group's workplan. Considering a session at the Symposium – will meet late September to discuss.*
- Capacity and Development (Laurie or Jessica) *–Jessica and Laurie are working on a development plan. Will connect with Trent Leibich for additional input, and Nelli Williams of TU when back from sabbatical.*

Addition to the Agenda/Wolverine Lake Dam

Early in the summer Jessica was contacted by Ed Tomkins, a landowner at Wolverine Lake, outlining some fish passage concerns and asking for some support. Jessica invited Ed/someone from his group of interest to share an update to the Steering Committee – to provide an opportunity for the SC organizations to learn about the concerns outlined by Ed Tomkins and others. Thanks to Sean Prince and Craig Staskopf for taking the time to share an update on Wolverine Lake and outlining some of their concerns regarding the salmon and trout populations there - related to lake levels and the importance of a dam structure to maintain an adequately high water level.

Actions:

- *Sean and Craig were encouraged by USFWS partners to pursue widespread landowner support as well as nature based solutions – that is ones that would be found in nature (e.g. what a beaver would construct, not human-made materials e.g. concrete barrier). USFWS is also interested in learning more about the ATV crossing at outlet stream to Wolverine Lk.*
- *Jessica share other resources – Symposium and MSB FWC contact information.*

Other Updates (25 min)

- National or statewide updates
- IJJA Fish Passage Workshop
- Partner updates (all)

Michael Mazzacavallo has a new role focused on fish passage with ADF&G

Kevin Keith joined us, and is the new Research Coordinator for Habitat Restoration with ADF&G – inclusive of stream bank rehabilitation and statewide anadromous waters catalogue work. Welcome Kevin and congratulations Michael.

Please add any missing updates to the notes

Upcoming Events:

- NFHP Virtual Meet and Greet, September 9th; and/or Monday, September 12th, 2022, virtual
- [Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Advisory Board](#), next meeting is October, TBD
- Mat-Su Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission, Thursday, September 22, at 4 PM, Palmer, AK
- Statewide Invasive Species Conference, November 1-3, 2022, Anchorage, AK

- Mat-Su Salmon Science and Conservation Symposium, November 14th and 15th, 2022, Palmer, AK

Next meeting: *Tuesday November 8th from 1:30-4pm*

**(NOT November 15th – there is no conflict with the Symposium).*

Facilitator: Matt Varner

Notetaker: Andy Wizik

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

- **Outreach**

- The Partnership hosted its 7th annual summer site tour for community leaders. This year's tour had 38 people at Deshka Landing for an introductory talk, and brought 33 people out on the Deshka River to share collaborative science occurring there, and to provide community leaders with current information on stream temperature and potential impacts to salmon and their habitat in the Mat-Su. Partners have for instance, identified cold water inputs (cold water refugia), which could serve as critical habitat in maintaining the Deshka River as a salmon stronghold in a warming future. Learn more on the [Partnership blog post](#) (including list of resources), [article in frontiersman](#), Deshka River stream [temperature monitoring summary](#) and [site tour handout](#).
- A proposal nominating the Deshka River as a 2022 National Water to Watch was submitted to the National Fish Habitat Partnership. The Board will confirm successful nominations late September.
- Please share updates for monthly list-serve bulletins, and/or other Partnership outlets with Grant (grant.robinson@tu.org).

- **Science and Data**

- Did not meet. Next meeting is anticipated this fall.

- **Symposium Planning**

- Mat-Su Salmon Science and Conservation Symposium will be November 14th and 15th, 2022 at the Palmer Depot in Palmer, AK. **Symposium registration and call for abstracts is open!** Learn more on the [Partnership website](#), and [register online here](#). Please print the event flyer and post in your office and/or share in your relevant networks. Also please encourage staff and partners you think would have a presentation of interest and relevance to submit an abstract.
- This is the Partnership's Annual General Meeting. It presents a great opportunity in bringing partners together. The committee is continuing to craft the format, if you have ideas and input, please let us know. We will also be looking for volunteers.
- Youth involvement - currently working with Palmer Highschool art teacher and representative from Palmer Arts Council. Students will be creating 3D salmon to be installed in the Palmer Depot.

- **Capacity and Development**

- Laurie and Jessica met to discuss funding needs and crafting of a development plan for the Partnership to grow capacity and consistent funding support.

- **Science to Conservation Outcomes – Cold Water Refugia** adhoc planning committee (Sue Mauger, Jessica Speed, Mike Daigneault)

- Site tour filled an outreach goal in science to conservation outcomes – Cold Water Refugia workplan.

Steering Committee note-taker/facilitator list for 2022/early 2023

Facilitator:

Trent - January
Theo - March
Eric - May
Melissa /Margaret - July
Michael - September
Matt-- November
Laurie - January 2023
Andy or Michael - March 2023
New local gov seat - May 2023

Notetaker:

Eric - January
Michael - March
Melissa /Margaret - May
Trent - July
Margaret - September
Andy- November
Theo – January
Laurie – March