

Steering Committee Meeting

Tuesday, March 12, 2024 1:30 – 4 pm

Remote Meeting – Virtual Only

Join via Microsoft Teams: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

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AGENDA

Facilitator: Laurie Stuart

Notetaker: Michael Mazzacavallo

Attendees:

Peter Probasco/Mat-Su Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission (MSBFWC), Trent Liebich/US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Laurie Stuart/Tyonek Tribal Conservation District (TTCD), Chennery Fife (sitting in for Aaron Prussian/Trout Unlimited (TU), Margaret Stern/Susitna River Coalition (SRC), Matt Lacroix/Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Theo Garcia (Knik Tribe), Sue Manger/Cook Inletkeeper (CIK), Jessica Speed (TU)

Some committee member's last meetings, for instance SRC term ends, MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission, and TTCD terms are ending. Stay tuned for updates to whether they will continue to represent. SRC has served two consecutive terms in an at-large seat so cannot reapply at this time.

Science to Conservation Outcomes: Cold Water Refugia - Progress and Future Action. Presentation update by Sue Mauger, Cook Inletkeeper (20 min)

- *Update on Science to Conservation Outcomes initiative. It came about from a Symposium planning committee call for session ideas in late 2021. Sue Mauger approached Jessica with an idea and Mike Daigneault was pulled in for input and then continued to engage.*
- *Based on scientific data the Partnership was involved in funding and how to bring that science to conservation actions.*
- *November 2021 a first hosted discussion during the virtual Symposium*
- *2022 was a busy year, pulled a lot of folks together, site tour on Deshka, small group conversations to help guide the discussion and what things outside of thermal refugia could also be moved from science outputs to tangible conservation outcomes.*
- *2023 had less activity, but also had a greater focus on what is the gap on where data is stored and how users access and better find data that could be used to inform conservation priorities and decisions.*
 - *ADFG helped add thermal refugia on the Deska into the Susitna Rec River Plan during the public commenting period.*
 - *Sue further commented "will this lead to additional protections?"*

- *Future: Now that we have learned about some of the data challenges how do we move forward?*
- *Where does this fit into the Partnership?*
 - *Could this be included into the updates to the strategic plan?*
 - *Is this a good pilot model (thus far) or what changes would you make to better move other issues from science data to conservation outcomes?*
 - *Who would be the champion organization for other studies or filling of data gaps to move science to conservation outcomes.*

Action:

Jessica will continue to work with Sue on ways we can move this effort forward.

Partnership Business (95 min)

- *Approve November and December 2023 and January 2024 Steering Committee Meeting Notes (5 min) *[November](#), [December](#), and [January](#) notes*
 - *Notes approved with no additional comments*
- *Update: Waterbody Setback Advisory Board, Matt LaCroix, Environmental Protection Agency/Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership Advisory Board Representative (15 min)*
 - *Matt represents The Partnership on the Mat-Su Borough (MSB) Waterbody Setback Advisory Board.*
 - *Lots of violations in the Mat-Su Borough, especially around lakes.*
 - *This issue needed a closer look, rather than adopting a new ordinance, and the MSB assembly agreed and adopted the measure to establish a setback advisory board.*
 - *The board meets monthly, starting last November. The board needs to prepare a report to the assembly by September 2024.*
 - *The purpose of the Board is to make recommendations on setbacks, potential ways to bring some of those in violation into code, and better ways to enforce new ordinance.*
 - *If you have any questions or concerns about the issue and the process, call Matt.*
 - *Suggest potential work session to get in the weeds on this issue for all those interested.*
 - *A member suggested a separate meeting to dig deeper, because we have little time for partnership business as it is during steering committee meetings, and there is not the needed time during Steering Committee meetings.*

Action:

Jessica work with Matt LaCroix to organize separate meeting open to partners and anyone interested, in April or May.

- *FY25 National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) funded projects (15 min)*
 - *Review and finalize ranked list of projects to be submitted to NFHP Board*
 - *A unanimous vote by the Partners to fund the coordinator position as the top priority project.*
 - *If the partnership is more successful in fund raising for coordination and outreach/ engagement positions, access money NFHP funding can be diverted to other projects.*
 - *NFHP let us know we scored in the top tier and will receive highest level of funding for 2024 proposals.*

- National USFWS, Stan Allen, rep let Jessica Speed know that we are likely to know in May for general funding for 2024 projects, with potential for USFWS to develop and finalize agreements so funds could possibly be used by July.
- National NFHP recommended putting lower ranked FY2024 projects that may not receive funding into the FY2025 project list to fill the gap for maximum FY25 ask.
 - This would include Knik's project that may be out of reach with limited FY24 funding. Theo agreed to update the dates in their proposal and steering committee agreed to include it in the FY25 list of projects to NFHP.
 - Discussion on the pros and cons of adding the Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association (CIAA) Elodea Survey proposal to the list of FY25 projects. The discussion included whether CIAA still had the capacity or could still do the project for the proposed budget. The steering committee ultimately agreed to include the proposal onto the list.

Action:

Jessica Speed will follow up with CIAA.

- FY24 Budget (10 min) **FY24 Budget*
 - Review and decision
 - We are behind in this process. The steering committee had not yet reviewed and approved the current budget which we are currently operating in until Aug 31, 2024.
 - Jessica walked through the budget and provided background.
 - Revenue majority comes from the NFHP.
 - Jessica applied for additional funds from BLM.
 - Steering Committee approved budget.

Action:

If possible, get draft budget for FY25 budget for the May meeting.

- Ad hoc fundraising working group update
 - Theo Garcia, Nellie Williams, Matt Varner, Laurie Stuart and Jessica Speed met between steering committee meetings to discuss ad hoc fundraising efforts.
 - Worked on a priority list to be able to know how to prioritize fundraising.
 - Alaska Community Foundation Grant for strategic planning effort.
 - BLM funding for the next several years.
 - TU might not be able to sustain \$26,000 annual in the future and the need to ask for more NFHP funding.
 - Need more in-kind nonfederal match.
 - Funding resilience through corporate donations.
 - Add to the May Steering Committee Meeting a nonfederal fundraising discussion.
 - Maybe reach out to other coordinators to see how they are addressing the nonfederal match.
 - Laurie: Could potentially ask the UAA Cook inlet Salmon meeting to use some of their funds to help support the Partnership is regards to supporting the Symposium as a jump

off spot. Rather than have them leverage our time for their budget.

Moving discussion to email, because limited time remaining in this meeting.

- Next steps for updating the Partnership’s Strategic Plan (15 min)
 - Discussion and possible decision
- Partnership Annual Workplan (25 min) **2024 Draft Partnership Workplan*
 - Review and input, possible decision.
- Partnership committee job descriptions (10 min) **[Committee job descriptions](#)*
 - Review and input, possible decision.

Committee Updates (10 min) (*Find written below under “Committee Updates.”*)

- Science and Data
- Outreach
- Symposium Planning

Other Updates (15 min)

- National or statewide updates
 - *The NFHP Board is making plans to be in Alaska this summer and are looking to schedule their summer meeting in Anchorage, this July 31-Aug 1. Site tours could follow afternoon of August 1st and all-day August 2nd.*
 - *Propose ideas for potential Mat-Su site tours....Deska could work, but expensive to boat folks out there.*
 - *Kenia Mayor Peter Micciche recently filled the local government seat on the NFHP board, previously held by Ted Eischeid of Mat-Su Borough.*
- Partner updates
SRC
 - *Susitna Rec River Plan Board voted out of existence.*
 - *Proposed Coal mine being discussed as part of the West Susitna Access Road*

Upcoming Events and Relevant Dates:

- [Alaska Invasive Species Partnership](#) Meeting Wednesday, Wednesday March 6th, 9am-12pm
- [MSB Waterbody Setback Advisory Board](#), March 12th, 6pm
- [2024 Alaska Stream Crossing Virtual Workshop](#). March 18-21, 10-3pm daily, 2024.
- [MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission](#), March 21st, 4pm
- American Fisheries Society [Alaska Chapter Meeting](#), March 24 – 29, Seward
- [Alaska Tribal Conference on Environmental Management](#) (ATCEM) – March 26-29, Anchorage.
- Mat-Su Elodea Working Group Meeting, April meeting TBD
- National Fish Habitat Partnership Board Meeting, April 30 – May 1st, Washington D.C. 2024
- Statewide Tribal Fish Passage Working Group – June meeting TBD
- Plants for Salmon Community Planting Day, June 15th , 10am to 2pm Yoder Rd. bridge, Talkeetna
- Stream Mechanic’s Introduction to River Forms and Processes Course – June 11-14 in Sutton, AK; contact Andrea James at aljames@chickaloon-nsn.gov.

- Stream Mechanic’s Stream Quantification Tool/Stream Functions Pyramid Course – August 12-16 in Sutton, AK; contact Andrea James at aljames@chickaloon-nsn.gov.

Next meeting (5 min)

- Tuesday, May 14th 1:30-4pm. Decision re: In person, virtual or hybrid.

Facilitator: *Theo Garcia*

Notetaker: *Trent Liebich*

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

- Science and Data
 - Committee met in February and April to provide technical review for FY25 NFHP funding proposals.
 - Laura Pevan left her position at Chickaloon, so there is a current committee chair vacancy to be filled.
- Outreach
 - Submitted general salmon habitat outreach letter to Board of Fisheries for Upper Cook Inlet Finfish meeting.
 - Save-the-date: Plants for Salmon Community Planting Day, June 15th 10-2pm, Montana Creek at Yoder Rd. bridge, Talkeetna. Note: This event is being planned by a stand-alone multi-partner committee engaged in restoration of this site (SRC, USFWS, Knik Tribe, ADFG, TU, MSB, Mat-Su Salmon Partnership).
 - Following some staffing changes, is occurring for Outreach Committee with anticipated next meeting date Late March/April, 2024, when planning will begin for summer site tour.
 - Ideas for a focus and location for this year’s summer site tour are welcome.
 - Please share updates for list-serve or social media for posting, through the month of January.
- Symposium Planning
 - 2024 Symposium Planning Committee has been recruited (DEC, Knik Tribe, UAA, GLT, ADFG, TTCD and Chickaloon) and will have first planning meeting March 11th. There is still room on the planning committee for additional partners.