



Steering Committee Meeting
Tuesday, May 14, 2024 1:30 – 4 pm

Hybrid Meeting

In person: Alces conference room at ADF&G Office – 1800 Glenn Highway, Palmer

Remote option: Microsoft Teams: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 230 162 185 076

Passcode: NQ8Kbg

[+1 571-447-9184](tel:+15714479184),408116025# United States, Arlington

Phone Conference ID: 408 116 025#

[Find a local number](#)

AGENDA

Facilitator: Theo Garcia

Notetaker: Trent Liebich

Attendees –

Theo Garcia, Knik Tribe

Elias Wilson, Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) – Big Lake study on boat wake

Kevin Keith, ADFG – sitting in for M. Mazzacavallo

J. Speed, Trout Unlimited (TU) – Partnership coordinator

Gabe Kitter – MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission (First meeting)

Pete Probasco – MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission (last meeting)

Matt Varner – BLM

Emily Mailman – NOAA Restoration Center

Trent Liebich – USFWS Habitat Restoration

Laurie Stuart – Tyonek Tribal Conservation District (TTCD)

Marc Lamoreaux – Native Village Eklutna / Eklutna Tribal Conservation District

Welcome new and returning Steering Committee members

Special welcome to new and returning SC members –

- *Laurie Stuart returning term for TTCD (at-lg seat)*
- *Gabe Kitter filling the MSB Fish and wildlife Commission seat previously held by Pete Probasco (local government seat)*
- *Marc Lamoreaux and Kyle Robillard for Native Village of Eklutna (NVE). Marc previously served two terms, but it's been a while! (at-lg seat)*

Gabe Kitter – Lifelong valley resident, resource user. As a parent he's looking for ways to invest in our area, be a steward of the land, and ensure resources persist for future generations. Most interested in restoration fisheries.

Marc Lamoreaux – Diverse academic background and experience with Eklutna. Very interested in restoring the fisheries of the Eklutna river.

Laurie Stuart – Grew up Kenai Peninsula. Looking to bring perspective/represent rural west side cook inlet communities. Very interested in organization development / change as the partnership continues to mature.

Partnership Business

- Approve March 2024 Steering Committee Meeting Notes (5 min) **Draft March Notes*
 - Decision to approve

- *Thanks to Laurie for facilitating and Michael for taking notes.*
- *No edits to March notes. Jessica S. will put in partnership files and on website under resources tab.*

- Partnership Annual Workplan (Jessica Speed)(20 min) **2024 Partnership Workplan (pending)*
 - Discussion and decision to approve

*How do we measure our success against this workplan?
Status = done or not / percent complete?*

This is a very useful document for new members to see the annual workflow

Review this list annually? January might be the best meeting time to review past years performance and outline our upcoming year. Our last steering committee meeting in the calendar year is mid-November prior to the annual science symposium

It's already May, 2024 – lets approve this now and test it as a workplan for re-evaluation in January.

Group decision to approve the document as-is for use now and re-evaluation in January

- FY25 Budget (30 min) **FY25 Draft Budget (pending)*
 - Discussion and decision to approve FY25 budget (Jessica Speed)

\$20,000 needed for Mat-Su Symposium – through other agency/partner contributions we are usually able to reduce this funding ask.

Recommending that coordinator salary not be included as the symposium need. Keep all coordinator salary in a single line item

Lots of discussion surrounding budget planning vs actuals.

- Discussion: Fundraising needs - general and non-federal (Laurie Stuart)

Request to have a budget/fundraising discussion in July. In the interim, Laurie is offering to work with Jessica to create a budget with numbers that are a better fit for fundraising opportunities.

Acknowledge the grey area between the steering committee vs an actual board and where the fiduciary responsibilities lie in terms of budget planning.

BLM will know more about availability of ~\$4,700 funding to Mat-Su NFHP in about a month as their budget is finalized. Mat-Su NFHP is currently scored as a “category 1” proposal within BLM and now it’s a matter of determining if funding is available. It’s not likely to be funded at the full amount for the full duration since this request came in within the fiscal year vs being planned for future budgets. If funded, the funds would be available once award is processed (roughly 1 month wait) and would likely remain available for 5yrs.

- NFHP Board meeting in Alaska (*Jessica Speed*) (30 min)
 - Discussion of engagement opportunities and key messages and takeaways we want the NFHP Board to leave with
 - Mat-Su site visit and introduction to partners (August 1st, 2024)
 - Discussion and input on draft tour **Draft Tour Itinerary*

We are part of a broader network of 20 Fish Habitat Partnerships across the country. The guiding body for the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) has meetings every two months and will be holding their summer meeting in Anchorage.

Taking board out to several sites in Mat-Su Valley and Kenai Peninsula.

Logistics will be the key. Board members are lodging in Anchorage so limited time for site visits. Great opportunities to tell our story but don’t try to include too much or we will lose our message.

Consider a single site visit to Moose Creek to show the river restored. Fish carcasses observed is the best proof you can get that fish are utilizing the restored access to rivers. Access to this site could be challenging.

Is it reasonable to consider some of these NFHP funded projects as foundational elements that serve as catalysts for larger watershed efforts? Moose creek in Chickaloon has recently been funded by BIL for additional restoration work. Eklutna river discussions might look very different if the lower dam was still in place as a barrier to fish passage.

Tribal projects could be valuable to highlight. Discussion about match requirements and how it affects partnerships overall success now that tribal match is not required.

Site at turn-off to Big Lake that we used in August 2023 site-tour would be relatively easy access for board members. Would sockeye be present during board meeting?

Theo is interested in a committee to help create a strong message/site tour and doing a pre-site tour to consider sites in advance of board meeting.

What’s our story....Why is Alaska a good investment for NFHP???

- MSB Waterbody setback Advisory Board (*Matt LaCroix*) (20 min)
 - Matt LaCroix’s proposed MSB setback ordinance language and Partnership hosted meetings **Matt’s proposed setback ordinance language.*
 - Opportunity for feedback and discussion

Matt LaCroix of EPA is the Partnership representative on the MSB Waterbody Setback Advisory Board. He is going to share where things are at in that process – and specifically some proposed setback ordinance language he has proposed to the Setback Advisory Board.

Last advisory board meeting MSB planning director, Alex Strawn provided a very simple update recommendation on setback ordinance language. Matt LaCroix provided more intensive changes to language

The last meeting was the first time the board discussed potential changes to setback ordinance language. So far it's been very limited public engagement. Very few people have come and said directly what they would like to see. Advisory Board members are eager to see what people would like and are looking for that input. May and June are the best time for the Board to act on public input. Expecting to see increased public engagement once the board has a recommendation on how to proceed with setback ordinance language. Likely late-summer or fall. Advisory Board report is due to the assembly in September.

4 ways to provide input:

- 1) Advisory board website
- 2) Draft text that you can comment on
- 3) Questionnaire that people can respond to
- 4) Public meetings – in person or call-in. Third meeting coming up.

Next call is scheduled for 1-3pm on May 21

Currently a 75' setback that only applies to certain structures and does not otherwise regulate activity within the 75ft of the shoreline – including no vegetative buffer requirement. It has no mechanism for enforcement.

Committee Updates: (20 min)

- Science and Data
 - Decision to approve needed: John Reed/USGS to join science and data committee.
- Symposium Planning
 - Decision needed: Symposium dates and location.
 - Any input on current keynote list?
- Outreach
 - Discussion: summer site tour locations, tentative dates

Will be sent out via email from Jessica due to time being up for the meeting

Other Updates (20 min)

National or statewide updates

Will be sent out via email from Jessica due to time being up for the meeting

- Partner updates

Note the below list of upcoming events. Any key flags? See correction below.

ADFG has 2 techs coming onboard this summer to conduct culvert surveys throughout Mat-Su, particularly interested in looking at culverts that are 10-15yrs old to see how they're holding up

NOAA is announcing funding decisions on projects in coming weeks. Partners will learn first then full public announcement

MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission – adding 2 more weirs at Chulatna Lake and another location. Also funding genetic studies for Cook Inlet.

NFHP – Ace Act has recently moved forward in re-authorization process and includes a national funding increase.

-Christopher Estes is discussing this history of NFHP in a presentation tomorrow

Upcoming Events and Relevant Dates:

- MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission, May 9, 4pm
- Statewide Tribal Fish Passage Working Group – May 14, 10-12pm
- MSB Waterbody Setback Advisory Board, May 14th, 6pm CORRECTION: May 22nd.
The History and Founding Purpose and Vision of the National Fish Habitat Partnership, Christopher Estes May 15, 10-11am. **Join meeting now** ID: 294 606 895 088, Pwd: 6xwcjv
- Partnership hosted Proposed Changes to MSB Waterbody Setbacks discussion, May 21st, 1-3pm.
- 2024 Streambank Rehabilitation Workshops: Mat-Su, May 21-22
- 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.
- National Fish Habitat Partnership Board Meeting, July 31-August 2nd, 2024, Anchorage, AK
- Stream Mechanic's Stream Quantification Tool/Stream Functions Pyramid Course – August 12-16 in Sutton, AK; contact Andrea James at aljames@chickaloon-nsn.gov.
- Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership Summer Site tour for Community leaders, August TBD
- Mat-Su Elodea Task Force Meeting, not till after field season.

Next meeting (5 min)

- Tuesday, July 9th 1:30-4pm.
 - Decision re: Virtual or hybrid.

Virtual only

Facilitator: Identify volunteer

Notetaker: Identify volunteer

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

- Science and Data
 - Have not met since March meeting.
 - Filling vacancies: John Reed/USGS has requested to serve on the Science and Data Committee. Requires SC consideration and approval. *Find his background below. USGS is open to other science support requests by Fish Habitat Partnerships across the country – including Alaska.

- Outreach
 - 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). Everyone welcome, please spread the word.
 - Group is working on meeting deliverables of NOAA Rec Fish Funding – dirt work and hydroseeding the rip rap this early summer at Montana Crk/Yoder Rd. site.
 - It's time to get clear on plans for the summer site tour for community leaders to be able to send out Save-the-date by late June. Please consider and share ideas with Jessica.
 - Submitted an abstract for fall American Fisheries Society meeting in the conservation through Fish Habitat Partnership's session. Will require travel support.
 - Actively recruiting for outreach committee. Please reach out to Jessica if interested and share with any partners you think a good fit.
 - Please share updates for list-serve or social media for posting.
- Symposium Planning
 - 2024 Symposium Planning Committee has met three times.
 - Dates: Proposed Symposium dates are November 18th (Monday) and 19th (Tuesday) , 2024
 - Location: We have been researching alternative Mat-Su locations and recommending Palmer Depot or The Barn – to be finalized by the committee.
 - Keynote(s): we have begun researching keynotes and are hoping for two – one each day. Current ideas include someone from Freshwater Illustrated, Will Atlas/Wild Salmon Center, Jessica Black/UAF. Other ideas and input welcome.

John Reed/USGS Background:

I am a data manager at the USGS Alaska Science Center (ASC) in Anchorage, with a background is in wildlife biology. Today, my supervisor, John Pearce, shared an email from David Hu about involvement in the Science and Data Committee. I would like to learn more about the committee and potentially participate as a representative of the ASC. Chris Zimmerman, the ASC Center Director, has expressed support for my participation.

Briefly, I have a master's degree from the University of Colorado. I have been at the ASC since May 2000, primarily involved with waterfowl research throughout coastal Alaska. In 2018, I moved into the Center's three-person data management team. In my current role, I review, archive, and disseminate data products from our science staff who represent all USGS mission areas (Ecosystems, Water Resources, Mineral Resources, and Natural Hazards). I also participate in several USGS-wide Data and Data Management groups. Thus, while I do not have specialized expertise in fisheries science, I do have a broad view of ASC & USGS research and data practices, which I hope could be a useful perspective for the Science and Data Committee.