



**Steering Committee Meeting
Tuesday, January 14, 2025 1:30 – 4 pm**

Hybrid Meeting
Conference room, USFWS Anchorage Field Office
4700 BLM Road Anchorage

Join via Teams: [Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 239 556 838 123

Passcode: 2z9nt7Em

[+1 571-447-9184,,737788319#](#)

Phone conference ID: 737 788 319#

MINUTES

Facilitator: Laurie Stuart

Notetaker: Maija DiSalvo

In attendance: Anna Senecal (USFWS), Laurie Stuart (TTCD), Jessica Speed (TU), Michael Mazzacavallo (ADF&G), Theo Garcia (KT), Matt Varner (BLM), Cory Galvan (new Land and Environment Coordinator for NVE)

Partnership Business

Approval of September 2024 Steering Committee Meeting Notes – No discussion, approved.

ACE Act Reauthorization: Implications for project funding and the Partnership

Jessica Speed provided an update.

Fall 2021 – law passed to guide NFHP program; network of 20 partnerships. In Dec 2024, passed a reauthorization through 2030; within the process, NFHP representative put together proposed changes that were largely accepted; key changes are outlined in the [powerpoint](#) and include:

- Addition of two Board Seats (BLM, and ensuring EFMC and MFC have a seat)
- ACE Act funding timeline to remove the “following fiscal year” timeline so time between funding application and actual receiving of funding is shorter.
Feedback from partners, funding is an issue in the success; takes so long to get the funding; opp to work with NFHP to get input into what we would like to see. Not immediate but is in effect.
- Changes to federal match (1:1 match at Partnership level, not individual project; operations funding doesn’t require match either). This will allow more flexibility.

Laurie – concern about where the exemption for tribal entities is; does that match amount get transferred to other proposals or project total?

Jessica – partnership funding tribal projects could be penalized; great flag; will ask that question

Jessica – other coordinators had questions about if unused match can be used towards other projects. Answer seemed to be ‘no’ because coordination is no longer considered a ‘project’.

Jessica – As written, our RFP requires 1:1 non-federal match; given this change, do we want to update this? Conditional decision, when we get questions asked from NFHP, do we want to move forward? Could impact the number of proposals received.

Laurie – how do we decide match contributions; are exempt projects weighted the same?

Jessica – recent feedback indicated the award we are currently operating under for coordination no longer requires match (immediately); will confirm that however; Overall, will get more detail on rollout timeframe.

- Changes in the Congressional designation process
Last year, Mat-Su submitted an application for congressional designation to the NFHP Board; NFHP will submit those this month. According to ACE re-authorization, if Congress does not review and make a decision within 90 days of submission, Partnership applications are considered approved.

Continuing Conversation from January 8th Partnership Strategy Meeting

- Who is the Partnership? What is our role/service?

Jessica – continue conversation from strategy session; what can we move forward, what are next steps? Met with Nellie, began work on workplan based on notes; some items we know are happening – RFP, joint symposium; addendum to SP. Looking at priorities – are there any that we know we can take away? Looking for ways to move forward without ignoring key conversation pieces.

Work Plan (Jessica and Nellie): Michael – work on filling in the items we know for sure; seek funding to hire Foraker group to help with outreach to partners and answer the question of who we are and who we want to be; what might we have to scale back on to accomplish our goals

Jessica – Work with Foraker may be separate from Strategic Plan Update - will want to keep these as separate items. Part of SP scoping, was a series of questions put together in the past. Foraker did a SWAT analysis in 2018.

Laurie – can get a few quotes from different firms

Jessica – is this a part of the larger SP update?

Theo – communicate to Foraker what the involvement would be

Jessica – do a scope of work now? Send out to a couple of contractors, or just self-identification? Laurie – put all of it out, ask for phasing, what can we get for \$10k?

Jessica – look at grant opportunities – Rasmusen Foundation

Maija – does a work plan need to happen sooner or separately?

Laurie – will move forward on quotes (identity, strategic planning)

2025 Partnership priorities

Jessica – add items right now into bottom of 2025 work plan

- RFP Process (FY26/FY27)
- Report to NFHP
- Strategic Plan Update
- Tikahtnu Joint Symposium
- Riparian Planting Day
- Summer Site Tour
- Symposium Reimagined
- 20th Anniversary of Partnership
- ACWA Grant Engagement - MSB

Laurie – start first phase, establish budget – acquire funding – develop plans from there

Summer Site Tour – could other partners initiate? Invite us to see their projects, etc.

Laurie – Are there any funded projects that could lend themselves? Helicopter tour?

Jessica – MSB, Knik, NVE – fish passage, invasives, etc – August – want invites out by June (May steering committee meeting – maybe March is ideal)

Theo – Knik could potentially provide shuttle

Maija – youth engagement? Weed pull?

Jessica – NFHP for 20th anniversary – “progress report” tied in with the strategic plan update. Will add more content to work plan and share with the group

Tikahtnu Cook Inlet Salmon Symposium: Jointly Held by Mat-Su and Kenai Fish

- Discussion: What are the opportunities? How do we want to engage?

Jessica – no additional updates - shared the flyer; April 21/22 in Anchorage; next planning meeting Monday, Jan 27th; event purpose is information sharing and building collaborative potential – UAA would be interested in shaping it however the partnerships and partners would like to.

Some discussion of still a need for more information for the Steering Committee and engagement.

150 person max – will there be a virtual option? Not yet sure.

Jessica – hesitant to promote too much if unsure of what is happening. How can we value add – cook inlet water quality summit; could help connect the dots with other cook inlet efforts, an opportunity to bring people around cook inlet together; Would like to hear ideas for what successful outcomes might be. What do we want to get out of it?

Laurie – can talk to Erin and share some of the MSSHP questions and discussion.

Housekeeping:

- Review draft Steering Committee meeting schedule and key topics

Overview of meeting calendar; in RFP timeframe; closes Feb 10 – will begin review of projects; SC – March meeting will finalize list of projects; Jessica will send out a doodle poll (March 3-6)

RFP feedback – coordination proposal; submit to NFHP during same timeframe. Funding ceiling is \$125,000 for the second year to include coordinator salary, small amount for travel and symposium; tailor to what we think we’ll do in that timeline; TU will no longer have

funding source for match in fall of 2026, so offsets decrease in match requirement and increased NFHP ceiling.

RFP scoring – simplifying process? Assign someone to score and then a smaller list of questions for the committee; have similar process for knik scholarship program.

Invite UAA to March steering committee meeting; Jessica – could invite Peter Micciche (on NFHP board); hybrid March 11 – virtual.

Updates

- National updates
- Partner updates

Theo - Thanks to DOT/ADFG (Michael) for culvert/fish passage project update; Jessica – Matt LaCroix couldn't make it for waterbody setback update, working on update; in draft form and comment closing date is Jan 21; not essential for partnership to provide comments, but would be great to show support through a letter. Not taking a position, but offering thank you; new – includes riparian buffer; weave in strategic plan guidance; will send out for review; Summary doc in notes; poster from KZ; information about proposed changes.

Upcoming Events and Relevant Dates:

- Public comment on MSB Waterbody Setback Board's [draft proposed updates](#) to MSB waterbody setback ordinance due January 21, 2025.
- National Fish Habitat Partnership Board Meeting, January 28 and 29, 2025, Las Vegas/hybrid.
- Alaska Chapter AFS. March 17-21, 2025 Ketchikan.
- Tikahtnu Cook Inlet Salmon Symposium, April 21, 22, 2025, Anchorage.

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 11th, 2025.

Facilitator: Maija DiSalvo

Notetaker: Anna Senecal

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

- Science and Data
 - Held fall SDC meeting October 7th. [Notes here.](#)
 - Led by Committee member Sue Mauger, the committee helped craft the data transfer session at the 2024 Mat-Su Salmon Symposium.
 - Draft database [document from that session here](#). SDC is currently providing input on it. Additional input welcome.
- Outreach
 - Did not meet.
- Symposium Planning
 - 9 person planning committee (including 3 Mat-Su Tribes) held five fall planning meetings leading up to Symposium.
 - Successfully hosted 2024 Mat-Su Salmon Symposium. Approximately 100 people each day with three different keynote speakers highlighting theme of “Making the invisible visible: Unraveling freshwater mysteries through science and storytelling”.

Jeremy Monroe of Freshwaters Illustrated shared how they work to conserve freshwater worlds through visual storytelling. Jenifer McInyre, Washington State University and Patrick Tomco, UAA talked about stormwater contaminant 6PPD-quinone.

- Hosted over 30 oral and poster (8) presentations including a data transfer session that continued discussions of the challenge in ensuring that current science can inform community decision makers and a panel focused on 6PPD-quinone in the Mat-Su and what we can do about it.
- Again included a special art display from Palmer Highschool students as well as a student submission from Knik Charter school in the poster session.
- Held an evening social and music jam at Feather and Flour (over 60 people) featuring local Palmer musician Aspenyarrow who shared an original salmon song.
- In 2024 increased individual ticket price to \$50/ticket versus previous \$25/ticket. This, with good attendance more than doubled registration revenue from previous recent years supporting cost recovery to host this event.
- Working with UAA/Kachemak Research Reserve to plan and host Tikahtnu Cook Inlet Salmon Symposium, April 21/22, 2025.
- Adhoc working groups and/or initiatives
 - Matt LaCroix continued work on Waterbody Setback Advisory Board (WBSAB). They completed their draft of proposed updates to current MSB waterbody setback ordinance. [Find draft here](#). Comments are due January 2021 to msbplanning@matsugov.us. Learn more on [MSB website](#) and find Matt's [overview of proposed changes here](#). Also find Kendra Zamzow's (MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission) [Symposium poster here](#).
 - Science to conservation outcomes pilot. Met multiple times to plan Symposium engagement and Sue Mauger led the effort with the Science and Data Committee to continue the data transfer conversation stemming from partner feedback during interviews and discussion started at the 2023 Symposium.