



## Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership Organization and Operating Procedures

### Introduction

The Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership (SEAKFHP/Partnership) formed as a result of working group activities that began in 2010 to bring together local communities, non-profit organizations, state and federal agencies, and residents to conserve fish habitat through coordinated strategies and partnership actions.

SEAKFHP partners share a common vision to ensure *healthy, thriving habitats that support all life stages of Southeast Alaska resident, anadromous, estuarine and marine dependent fishes across their historical range.*

The mission of the Partnership is evolving under dialog and interactions among our founding partners and is currently stated as *“to foster and facilitate regionally relevant strategies to support cooperative fish habitat conservation, restoration, and management in freshwater, estuarine and marine ecosystems across Southeast Alaska and includes consideration of economic, social, and cultural interests of local communities in its endeavors.”*

The Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership is a collaborative effort. This focus on a bottom-up, locally driven, voluntary and non-regulatory effort was inspired by the approach outlined in the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP; [www.fishhabitat.org](http://www.fishhabitat.org)). The mission of NFHAP is to “protect, restore, and enhance the nation’s fish and aquatic communities through partnerships that foster fish habitat conservation and improve the quality of life for the American people.” Currently the SEAKFHP is recognized by the National Fish Habitat Board as a “candidate” fish habitat partnership. The Partnership will work towards formal recognition under Board directed guidelines and proceed in a manner consistent with goals and objectives addressed in the NFHAP.

### Organizing and Operating Principles

The Partnership formed and operates with these principles for decision-making and collaboration:

- Strive to work and make decisions by consensus;
- The Partnership will be consistent in composition and operation under National Fish Habitat Board guidance and will be comprised of representatives of local, state, and federal governments, tribal entities and other organizations providing a broad regional representation of stakeholders interested in fish habitat conservation in Southeast Alaska.
- The Partnership will coordinate with Alaska-based partnerships and other regional fish habitat partnerships which include Alaska to share information, identify common issues, and support common initiatives when possible.
- The Partnership will ensure accountability and transparency for all of its activities.
- Partnership activities will focus on issues pertaining to fish habitat conservation (as contrasted with other issues such as fishery management allocation decisions) and the development of scientific information that informs decisions about fish habitat conservation. For purposes of the Partnership ‘conservation’ includes land and water protection, habitat and fish passage restoration, and habitat enhancement. It is recognized that the Partnership is not a regulatory authority governing lands or waters.
- The Partnership will apply the best available scientific information to Partnership funding decisions and the development and evaluation of Partnership projects.

- The Partnership is a voluntary, self-directed organization actively working to achieve the goals and objectives of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan and the SEAKFHP Strategic Action Plan.
- The Partnership works to achieve the goals of its Strategic Action Plan through collaboration of its partners and support and guidance from standing and ad hoc committees.
- Individual member groups of the Partnership retain their various missions and activities and participate in the Partnership to the extent they are able to support the Partnership's vision, mission, and strategic action plans. All resource agencies who are members of the SEAKFHP maintain all statutory authorities and do not relinquish any of their responsibilities for managing fish or habitat related resources or budgetary responsibilities per their agency missions through partnership participation.

### **Organizational Structure**

As noted above, the Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership works to achieve the goals of its Strategic Action Plan through collaboration of its partners and guidance from standing and ad hoc committees.

### **Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee is the advisory body for the Partnership. The Steering Committee will be consistent in composition with the National Fish Habitat Board and be comprised of representatives of local, state, and federal governments, tribal entities, academia/conservation entities, and other organizations interested in fish habitat conservation.

There are a total of 11 seats on the Steering Committee. Six of the seats will be held by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, US Forest Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, and the Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition. Currently Trout Unlimited and The Nature Conservancy fill two additional non-designated seats. Additional organizations will be selected from the Partnership to fill three remaining seats, one for a municipal or local government, one for a tribal entity and one At-large seat.

The non-dedicated seats will be for two year terms with the opportunity to extend for additional terms through reappointment. Non-designated seat terms will be staggered so that all seats do not turn over at the same time. Letters of interest in the open seat(s) will be solicited in November, the Steering Committee will select new members at a special meeting in December, and the terms will begin in January.

Letters of interest will explain why the partner organization wants to join the Steering Committee and how they expect to contribute to the guidance of the Partnership.

The Steering Committee shall:

- Act as the guiding body for the Partnership;
- Assist in coordinating and leading efforts that engage partner organizations;
- Provide strategic advice and vision to the SEAKFHP and offer capacity and technical assistance when possible;
- Support the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of activities described in the Partnership's Strategic Action Plan at appropriate local and regional scales;

- Promote planning and collaboration efforts within the SEAKFHP and among partner affiliates and stakeholders;
- As funding opportunities arise, using consistent criteria evaluate, rank, and support projects or activities for funding;
- Contribute to outreach efforts necessary to obtain additional resources (including non-federal match requirements) to meet SEAKFHP objectives;
- Report to partners and other stakeholders on the status and accomplishments of the SEAKFHP;
- Support as needed the National Fish Habitat Board process for review and evaluation of SEAKFHP activities and actions;
- Provide direction and technical support to the general public, affiliated partners, or other stakeholders interested or involved in efforts to protect, maintain, or restore fish habitats;
- Coordinate with recognized National Fish Habitat Partnerships and other entities involved in fish habitat protection, maintenance, and restoration where potential overlap in jurisdiction, species distribution, or geographic proximity contributes to redundancy;
- Develop and form technical sub-committees on an as-needed basis to assist in the implementation and operation of the SEAKFHP;
- Sponsor or co-sponsor fish habitat training sessions and conferences to better disseminate and share information relating to the practice and benefits of restoring fish habitat in Southeast Alaska;
- Provide guidance and leadership to the SEAKFHP Coordinator. On an annual or bi-annual basis, develop a contract of services for the SEAKFHP Coordinator which identifies coordinator duties and responsibilities. The contract of services will also identify all compensation in the forms of wages, office use, equipment, and travel needs.

### **Steering Committee Organizations and Representatives (Seat Terms noted)**

#### **2011-12: Interim Steering Committee**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Neil Stichert; Co-Chair  
 NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service, K Koski and Cindy Hartmann Moore  
 USFS's Tongass National Forest, Sheila Jacobson  
 Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Roger Harding and Jeff Nichols  
 Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Brock Tabor  
 Trout Unlimited, Mark Kaelke, Co-Chair  
 The Nature Conservancy, Norman Cohen  
 Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition, Jessica Kayser

#### **2012 -13: Steering Committee**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Neil Stichert; Co-Chair (dedicated seat, chair term 2013-2014)  
 NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service, Cindy Hartmann Moore (dedicated seat)  
 USFS's Tongass National Forest, Sheila Jacobson (dedicated seat)  
 Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Roger Harding (dedicated seat)  
 Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Brock Tabor (dedicated seat)

Trout Unlimited, Mark Kaelke, Co-Chair (seat term 2013-2015, chair term 2013-2015)  
The Nature Conservancy, Norman Cohen (seat term 2013-2014)  
Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition, Jessica Kayser (dedicated seat)  
Tribal seat – Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, Raymond Paddock  
(2013-2015)  
Municipal seat – City and Borough of Yakutat, Bill Lucey (2013-2014)  
At-large seat – Private Citizen, K Koski (term 2013-2014)

### **Standing Committees and Working Groups**

Several committees and working groups have been established to implement goals of the Partnership and its strategic action plan. Additional committees or work groups may be formed to perform particular tasks or projects of the Partnership.

- **Science and Data Committee:** This working group is in the early stages of forming and specific roles and responsibilities are being determined now. It is anticipated that this committee will provide the science based foundation for actions of the Partnership.
- **Ad Hoc Committees and Working Groups:** Additional committees or work groups may be formed on a temporary basis as to perform particular tasks or projects of the Partnership.

### **Partner Organizations**

The Partners will include agencies, non-profit and non-governmental organizations, tribal entities, businesses and private citizens.

Partners shall:

- Promote conservation of fish habitat in Southeast Alaska;
- Work to meet SEAKFHP goals by contributing funds, people, equipment, or share access to resources and activities when possible;
- Attend annual meetings of the Partnership;
- Serve on Partnership committees and working groups;
- Be eligible to review and comment on the SEAKFHP Strategic Action Plan;
- Be listed on Partnership publications;
- Be eligible to apply for funding that comes through the Partnership to implement the Strategic Action Plan, if eligible by the criteria of the funding source;
- Be eligible for project endorsement by the Partnership.

### **SEAKFHP Coordinator**

Dependent upon available funds a SEAKFHP Coordinator assists the Steering Committee in accomplishing goals and objectives of the Partnership. The coordinator provides primary staff support to the Steering Committee. He/she is responsible for disseminating information, coordinating meetings, coordinating and facilitating overall implementation of actions and projects of the Partnership, outreach activities, and pursuing funding and grant opportunities. At times the coordinator may be employed and provided office support by one or more of the member agencies or organizations. Current SEAKFHP Coordinator: Deborah Hart (hartdebbi@gmail.com/907-723-0258)

### **SEAKFHP Business Office and Contact Information**

Currently the office location for the SEAKFHP is provided by Trout Unlimited, located at 419 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 200, Juneau,, Alaska 99801. Web, email and phone contacts are: [www.seakfhp.org](http://www.seakfhp.org) (underdevelopment) /Coordinator@SEAlaskaFishHabitat.org/907-723-0258