



A Fish Habitat Partnership

**Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 29th, 2013**

**Conference Call
10:00 AM-11:30AM**

Stated purpose of this meeting: Update the Steering Committee on the Partnership and NFHP

Action Items in Red

Meeting convened at 10:00 AM Central Time. Steering Committee (SC) Members Present: Chairman Dirk Peterson MN DNR, Maureen Gallagher USFWS (for Todd Turner) and also Regional Rep, Katie Haws (Coordinator), Gary Whelan (for Jim Dexter) MI DNR, Carroll Schaal (for Mike Staggs) WI DNR, Todd Tisler USFS, Ken Lubinski (for Leon Carl) USGS, Kristen Blann (for Doug Shaw) TNC, Susan Tesarik WI Lakes, Jeremy Price (for Bill James) IN DNR, and Barbara Pardo Jones (USFWS Joint Venture)

Coordinator welcomed participants and convened the meeting at 10:00 AM.

Roll call of participants.

Comments from the Chair Dirk Peterson shared some of his thoughts with the group. He was appreciative of good work that all have been doing in support of the Partnership. It takes time to make progress, and requires deliberate and forward thinking actions. He singled out the selection of three MGLP watershed out of the "Ten Waters to watch", as a nice achievement for our group. Focus on lakes and "lakesheds" is important to get people thinking of the importance of these resources.

Coordinator's Update Katie Haws gave the Coordinator's update, focusing on several items of interest to the Steering Committee. She reported on the following activities;

- Coordinator and Mike Duval (former MN Work Group Member) attended the Fish Habitat Partnership Excellence Training in Portland, Oregon January 28-31. This was a

first-ever event for all FHP Coordinators plus one person from each partnership. The training. The training focused on strategizing on organization growth and development, as well as networking to share ideas between FHP's.

- Coordinator attended the February NFHP Board Meeting in Arlington, VA and gave a presentation on MGLP to the Board. Our multi-pronged approach seemed well received by the NFHP Board.
- Maureen Gallagher showed SC members the upgrades on the midwestfishhabitats.org Web-site. The neat new operational features include data downloads for the assessments of all six Midwest FHP's, project maps and descriptions, the Babe Winkelman PSA, and links to each of the FHP individual web-sites. Future enhancements available July 1st will include on-line project proposal forms, project endorsement forms, and FHP interest forms.
- Coordinator gave an update on recent outreach accomplishments which included

-“2013 NFHP Waters to Watch” designation of Tippecanoe River Watershed Indiana, Leech Lake Watershed Minnesota, and Lake Calumet Watershed (Millennium Reserve Project), Illinois. MGLP's three watersheds were part of NFHP's “Ten Waters to Watch” campaign. Building upon the designation, communities can increase the importance of fish habitat restoration and protection, as well as focus attention on these important watersheds through news story development and other actions.

-Babe Winkelman PSA completed (Gallagher's initiative) and shown on his fishing shows reaching several million viewers. This PSA highlights the Midwest Fish Habitat Partnerships and focuses on the importance of fish habitat. It also directs viewers to the MidwestFishHabitats.org website.

-Coordinator gave poster presentations at MN Chapter of AFS meeting, and Wisconsin Lakes Convention, Green Bay, spreading the word about our partnership and projects.

-Lakeland Public Television, Brainerd/Bemidji, MN recently produced a 3 minute story about habitat restoration/dam removal projects being planned for the Chippewa National Forest with funding from MGLP. This news story showed migrating fish being sampled by staff, and underscored the importance of fish habitat and system connectivity. **Coordinator will send u-tube link for this news story to SC and Work Group.**

- Funding/501 C 3. Haws/Gallagher gave an overview of this topic, with Gary Whelan also providing perspective. It is difficult to accept donations currently with our agency structure. The only FHP to get a 501C3 status to date is the Reservoir Partnership, with

their “Friends of Reservoirs.” The NFHP Board is considering this issue, and will likely have a decision on whether this mechanism will be used for the national organization, likely by the June Board Meeting.

MGLP Habitat Projects Update 2013/2014

- 2013 projects (see below). The USFWS Director approved the 2013 Fish Habitat Projects on May 22nd. MGLP received the following amounts (this includes 30% overhead)

Proposals approved for 2013	Applicant	Funded Amount
MGLP Healthy Shorelines Initiative in the Upper Tippecanoe River Watershed, IN	Tippecanoe Watershed Foundation/Lyn Crighton	\$35,714
Protecting the Unique Sinkhole Lakes in the Pigeon River Country State Forest, MI through the Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership	Huron Pines/Sam Prentice	\$20,503
A Phase II Assessment for MGLP; Using Science to Evaluate Lake Health and Fish Potential in a Subset of Lakes in Eight Midwest States.	MN DNR	\$18,875

- 2014 Projects. Preliminary information is that there will be funds available for NFHP projects. There is a committee within USFWS that has met once, and is going to meet three more times to develop a final allocation method for funds. This is different than the allocation method described in the MGLP December10th meeting minutes. This new process will be competitive, with projects selected based on merits and other factors. The actual allocation method will be finalized by 7/1/2013, and announced by 8/1/2013 in time for the project submissions.
- Coordinator indicated that she would like to get the Request for Proposals (RFP) distributed by early June, even if the allocation method is not finalized. The MGLP Work

Group as well as our website will be used to get this RFP out for circulation. Gallagher stated that timelines will remain consistent which will mean a 9/1/2013 due date for project submissions. Also the online project proposal method will be utilized.

MGLP Funding 2014

2013 Partnership contributions from South Dakota and Wisconsin have been invoiced, USFS to follow. Tentative commitments have been made from South Dakota, Wisconsin and USFS for 2014.

Coordinator and Federal Aid staff will begin working on Income agreements for these funds starting July 1.

Chairman Peterson thanked partners for their contributions, and stated that we have close to 50% of the Coordinator salary and overhead covered by these contributions (including federal). 2/3 would be ideal, and Dirk once again asked members to consider a contribution to the continued functioning of the partnership. **Please respond to Coordinator if any funds may be available for the basic partnership functions and she will follow through with required process for funds transfer.**

Approval of the Endorsement Form

Coordinator gave overview of the "Endorsement Form." Partners will be able to request endorsement using an online version of an endorsement form. Haws had modified the generic form given to the partnership by NFHP, to a simple one page document which specifically ties to ours and NFHP's goals, and makes it easier to approve/reject such a request. There was discussion of the form which included an example given by Todd Tisler/Katie Haws which illustrated the value that endorsement can have in obtaining funding from wider sources (example ARRA funding received on the Chippewa National Forest).

Chairman Peterson asked for approval from the SC of this form, and it was approved by verbal affirmation.

Letters of Support Requests (endorsement)

After some discussion, approval for the Coordinator to send "Letters of Support" for two project proposals where our support was requested was granted by verbal affirmation. These projects were

- Blueways Nomination for the Minnesota River
- LSOHC Proposal to be submitted by Leech Lake Watershed Foundation (MN) for Cisco Lake/Lakeshore habitat protection

Coordinator to send out letters of support to requestors.

Discussion of several grant opportunities available

- "More Fish" Bring Back the Natives (6/3 deadline for pre-proposals)

- USFS Water Quality RFP (6/10 deadline for pre-proposals)
- USFWS Multi-State Grant (Gallagher submitted Midwest partnerships request last month for this grant)

Group discussed the first two opportunities, and Whelan suggested that with the short timeline, we might be better served to convene a work group on these for next year in order to develop ideas for projects, and to respond in a timely fashion to the grant pre-proposal opportunities.

Gallagher submitted the multi-state grant pre-proposal for all 6 partnerships and we should hear back in one month. The highest priority for funding included funding the year two land-owner workshops for “Fishers and Farmers”, and down-scaling priority areas for FHP’s.

There being no other business, a tentative meeting time in mid-September for the next SC meeting was suggested with project selection being the main focus , with polling to select a date to occur well ahead of that time to ensure good participation by members. **Coordinator to send out Doodle Poll for September Meeting.**

Chairman Peterson thanked partners for their participation, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM Central Time.

Note Acronyms: SC Steering Committee
 NFHP National Fisheries Habitat Partnership
 MGLP Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership
 PSA Public Service Announcement

ARRA American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Of 2009