



Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership Steering Committee September 24, 2024 meeting minutes

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 10:00AM

Attendance:

Steering Committee Members: Emily, Maura, Kevin (proxy for Jess), Ben, Alexa, Katherine, Samantha, Jillian

Advisor: Peter Micciche

Guests: Brandon Drzazgowski (KWF), Rosie Masui (KBNERR)

Agenda

Peter Micciche asked to be added to speak about Alaska Native representation on the NFHP board of directors.

Ben asked to be added to comment about the KPB recent adoption of new waterbodies into the anadromous waters catalog (this topic was ultimately not discussed)

Opening Business

- Committee Chair Election/Selection/Volunteer (Dodson)

Trent reviewed the recommendation from the April meeting for the steering committee to consider electing a chair to run the meeting. An example of what the duties for the chair (and vice-chair) could be if the committee chose to move forward (see memo). Emily noted that the Mat-Su partnership has a scheduled rotation of the chair as well as a note taker. The committee was receptive of possibly adopting a committee structure would include a chair in some form (either elected or rotational).

- Coordinator Selection Process (Schake)

At present there is no set process for the committee to select a coordinator. Trent indicated that the KWF considered continuing with contracting with a part-time coordinator, but decided to

serve as the coordinator as had been done by the previous KWF employees. He acknowledges that he did a poor job in keeping the committee apprised of his decision. We will look at other FPs to see what their process is and will incorporate direction into the revision/update of the KPFHP Policies and Procedures.

- **Steering Committee Election Processes/Recruitment (Schumacher)**

KPFHP Policies and Procedures (P&P) differ slightly from the Strategic plan when addressing the composition of the Steering Committee and how it is formed. Since the P&P document is newer than the SP, the information contained therein was considered for the discussion. The details surrounding the Steering Committee Election process appear to be more policy oriented and lack an accrual procedure. One aspect detailed in the P&P states that committee members will serve 3-year terms that will stagger. Trent provided an example of how this may look (see memo).

It seems that the Steering Committee has not been following the policies outlined in the P&P document (at least no documentation was found to suggest the contrary). While NOAA, USFWS, and ADF&F have “permanent” seats, all others should be elected annually by the partners via ballot. It was evident that more detailed procedures are needed to execute the election as presented in the P&P document.

- **Partnership Member Contacts/Recruitment (Dodson)**

Trent discussed with the committee the need to update our current member/partner contacts and the importance (as it pertains to voting for steering committee members) to designate a single representative from each group. A form for future groups interested in becoming member/partners is on the KPFHP website. This fall Trent will touch base with all of our current members/partners to update their information. It is important for us to maintain periodic contact with our members/partners to keep them apprised of our work and to gauge their interests and priorities.

- **Policies and Procedures Review/Revision (Dodson)**

Throughout the previous discussions, the importance of reviewing and updating our P&P document became evident. We will form an Ad Hoc committee to tackle this project. Trent will assemble the group and work on making the updates this fall and get them in ready for 2025.

Reports

- **AFS Report (Meyer)**

Ben provided a report for his recent trip to the American Fisheries Society National Meeting. The following notes were provided by Ben as a follow up:

Presented about KPFHP in the session “Fish Habitat Partnerships: Local, Regional, and National Collaboration to Conserve Aquatic Habitats.

- Links
 - [AFS 2024 KPFHP Abstract Download](#)
 - [AFS 2024 KPFHP Powerpoint Download](#)
- Participated in panel discussion of 4 other Partnership Coordinators
 - Discussion on how to assemble and submit “Transformational” scale fish passage projects (\$10 - \$50 million) ([see submission link](#)). BIL funds
 - Highlighted KPFHP examples in national context. Example: Kenai River Center’s elevated light penetrating (ELP) example demonstration project
 - Discussion on how to recruit and maintain a Science and Data committee

Presented about local Anadromous Habitat Mapping in the session, “Data-Driven, Community Guided: The Future of Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management”

- [YouTube recording of presentation](#)

Favorite presentation overall: “Conserving Ka Loko o Kiholo: Lessons learned in stewardship of a traditional fishpond,” Rebecca Most, The Nature Conservancy

- **NFHP Board of Directors’ Visit (Dodson)**

Trent reported on the recent NFHP Board of Directors’ meeting in Anchorage (Jul 31-Aug 2) and their visit to the Kenai Peninsula. The tour started at the Russian River to learn about the Steam Watch Program...and see a bear! From there they headed to Soldotna for lunch at Centennial Park. To continue the tour, the group walked to the Centennial Park Boat Ramp to see the restoration work done by the Cost Share Program (ADF&G and USFWS) and Trout Unlimited. The final stop was Tern Lake where ADF&G presented the Inflow Reservation Program and Anadromous Waters Cataloging.

As a board member, Peter felt that overall it was a great visit with the Board getting a first-hand experience of the vastness and complexity of Alaska and the Kenai Peninsula. He is confident that the Board will be back to Alaska sooner than later and we could be prepared to give them a more “on-the-river” experience.

New Business

- **AK Instream Flow Regulations (Meyer)**

Ben noted that DNR is taking comments from the public in reference to revisions to the water management regulations.

- <https://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/water/regrevision/>

Since the Partnership is funding a project directly related to this regulation, Ben asked if the Steering Committee would be willing to make a comment. While most of the committee members felt that it was appropriate to write a letter to DNR, ADF&G felt that, since they had been directed to not make official comments, comments of behalf of the partnership (of which ADF&G is a member) would contradict this direction. Many members were of the belief that ADF&G could be left from the list of signatures or it could be noted that ADF&G was not a part of the comment. ADF&G believed that since the Partnership makes its decisions via consensus, that this would still not work. Some committee members felt that a vote could also be taken (per the P&P) to decide that matter. The matter will be further discussed at the October meeting.

Ben provided an addendum (included at the end) to the minutes with more details for our next meeting.

- Outreach Committee and Plan (Dodson)

Due to time constraints the Steering Committee did not discuss this point.

- Donation Portal on NFHP Website (Dodson)

Trent noted that the NFHP has a page that allows each Partnership to receive donations. The money is held in a bank account for each Partnership to be used for marketing, projects, etc. We will create a link on the KPFP website to the donation page on the NFHP site.

- Proposed Work Plan (Dodson)

The 2024 workplan is on the KPFP website, on the Steering Committee page (password protected). Only a few updates are required to reflect dates that have changed/determined since the plan was completed in April.

- 24/25 Meeting Schedule (Dodson)

- Membership Meeting Feb 2025
- Joint Symposium April 21-22, 2025

Trent provided a schedule for Steering Committee meeting dates and times for October 2024-April 2025 (see memo). The schedule closely followed the previous meeting schedule of October 2023-April 2024. The Committee preferred to schedule October and November meetings via a doodle poll and would like to see the January 2025-April 2025 schedule on the same day and time every month (i.e. the third Wednesday of every month from 10AM-12PM).

Round Table

Peter noted that he has contacted Michael Opheim as a possible candidate for serving on the NFHP board of directors. He asked the group to forward him names and contacts for other potential candidates to represent Native American/Native Alaskans on the board.

Katherine noted that she had a few folks in mind and would forward their info to Peter.

- **Partner updates**

Due to time, partners were encouraged to send updates to Trent to be included in the minutes.

Update for Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

- KBNERR's 25th Anniversary Watershed Field Tour went really well. We had 43 people, lots of agency partners, NOAA VIPs, City of Homer Staff, Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, City Council Members (Homer and Kachemak City), KBNERR Community Council members, and volunteers who joined us to learn about how KBNERR's science is informing management and conservation of freshwater resources directly in Homer and across the Kenai Peninsula.
- KBNERR's Research Program is working with NOAA NMFS Habitat Division to establish sentinel sites for monitoring nearshore juvenile fish populations throughout Kachemak Bay . We will be hosting an internship next summer who will lead our beach seining efforts at several sites.
- - Rosie Masui (attended mtg w/ Katherine) will be working with Erin Larson to coordinate the joint Mat-Su/KP Fish Habitat Partnership Symposium in April. Please contact Erin if you are interested in being on the planning committee. Erin is PI on KBNERR's Salmon Watershed Stewards grant. (Erin Larson is based in Anchorage at UAA's AK Center for Conservation Science, which KBNERR is housed under).
- KBNERR's research team built a beaver dam analog (BDA) as part of a peatland research project this summer. We are hosting a small site visit next week for some key stakeholders. If you are interested in learning more about BDAs, or joining an interagency beaver working group, please contact Syverine Bentz, KBNERR's Coastal Training Program Coordinator: syverine@alaska.edu
- Question for the KP-FHP Steering Committee: Would February's partnership meeting be an appropriate time for us all to review objectives for the Joint FHP Symposium?

Steering Committee Members:

Appointed Members

NOAA – Emily Mailman (Appointed 1/1/2024)

USFWS – Maura Schumacher (Appointed 1/1/2024)

ADFG - Jess Johnson (Appointed?)

Elected Members

KPB – Samantha Lopez (Elected?)

USFS – Jillian Jablonski (Elected 4/26/2024?)

KWF – Benjamin Meyer (Elected?)

KBNERR – Katherine Schake (Elected?)

TU – Alexa Millward (Elected 9/15/23)

Advisors:

Kenai Peninsula Borough – Peter Micciche

USFWS - Mike Daigneault

Next Meeting:

TBD, October 2024

Upcoming Meetings/Events

KP-CISMA Post-Summer Meeting – September 26

NFHP FHP Coordinator’s Meeting – October 9

NFHP Board of Director’s Meeting – November 6

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