

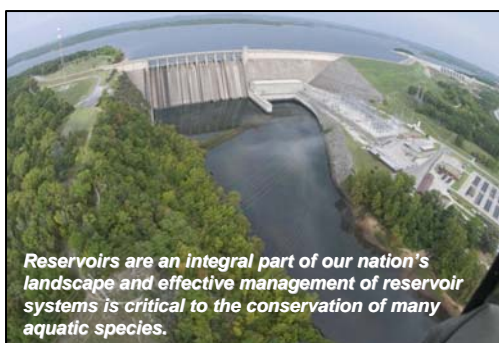
# RESERVOIR FISHERIES HABITAT PARTNERSHIP



**To promote and facilitate the restoration and conservation of fish habitat in reservoirs and associated watersheds through partnerships and cooperative efforts, coordination and sharing of information, and public awareness and knowledge of issues and challenges.**

Reservoirs provide flood abatement, power generation and water supply for agricultural, industrial and municipal uses in most areas. They also enhance the quality of life for many Americans by providing a multitude of recreational opportunities including fishing, boating, swimming and camping. The scenic appeal of reservoirs has spurred the growth of tourism, luring millions of people each year to enjoy these national treasures and bringing significant economic benefits to surrounding communities.

The Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership is being formed to provide strategic coordination and direction for the conservation of aquatic habitat in reservoir systems and watersheds. The partnership brings together a diverse group of committed partners focused on integrating watershed conservation, in-reservoir management, and the management of downstream flows in order to provide coherent strategies for addressing aquatic habitat issues.



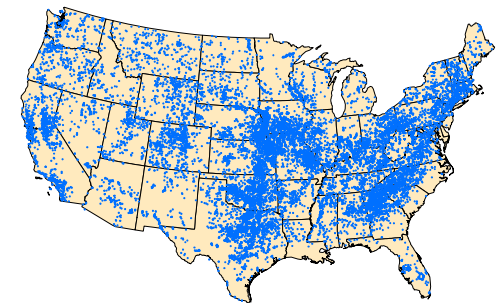
## NATIONAL FISH HABITAT ACTION PLAN

America's fisheries are facing a conservation crisis. Nearly 40% of North American fish species are designated as imperiled. More than two-thirds of these are listed as federally threatened or endangered. Habitat alteration is the principal factor in this conservation crisis and the principal motivation for the development of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. The action plan is a national investment strategy to make conservation dollars go further in restoring our waters to sustainable health. Recognizing their shared interests are at stake, hundreds of public and private partners are forming fish habitat partnerships in areas where America's aquatic life are most vulnerable. This is the most comprehensive effort ever attempted to address the causes of fish habitat decline, not just the symptoms. Given that reservoirs are critical components of the aquatic landscape in the US, a fish habitat partnership is needed that will focus attention on the myriad of fish habitat issues associated with reservoirs and their watersheds.

## CONSERVING AQUATIC HABITAT

Reservoir construction has dramatically altered our nation's waters and has had unforeseen consequences on aquatic ecosystems. However, reservoirs are an integral part of our nation's landscape. Effective management of reservoir

systems, including their associated watersheds is critical to conserving the habitats and health of many aquatic species.



• Reservoirs with Dams > 30 ft in height

## HABITAT ISSUES

Some of the principal factors impacting the health of aquatic habitat in reservoir systems include:

- Water Quality
- Sedimentation
- Invasive Species
- Water Level Management
- Barriers to Fish Passage
- Shoreline Development
- Harmful Algal Blooms
- Loss of Structural Fish Habitat



Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership Website: [www.reservoirpartnership.org](http://www.reservoirpartnership.org)

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE RESERVOIR FISHERIES HABITAT PARTNERSHIP

■ **RFHP Reservoir Assessment and Conservation Strategy Workshop** – On November 20-22, 2008, more than 50 stakeholders met at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in Shepherdstown, WV to begin development of a strategic plan for the Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership (RFHP) and identify a framework for assessing the health of aquatic habitat in reservoir systems.

■ **RFHP Subcommittees Underway** - One of the outcomes of the November 2008 workshop at NCTC was the formation of three working subcommittees: *Governance*; *Outreach and Partnership*; and *Science and Data*. Summaries of the scope and progress of the subcommittees are outlined below.

**Outreach and Partnership** – The Outreach and Partnership Subcommittee is charged with increasing the visibility of the RFHP, fostering public awareness and understanding of its purpose and goals, and expanding the partnership to include the full range of traditional and non-traditional interests critical to its success. Since the November 2008 workshop at NCTC, the subcommittee has focused on: (1) development of a national contact list for expanding the partnership; (2) preparation of a letter of request of support for and membership in the RFHP to all names on the contact list; and (3) expansion of the RFHP website.

**Governance** – The Governance Subcommittee is charged with developing an administrative structure for the RFHP. A working group of the subcommittee has drafted a preliminary governance plan. Under that draft plan, the administrative structure of the RFHP would be comprised of an Executive Board, a Science & Data Team, an Outreach & Publicity Team and four Regional Work Groups. The regional work groups would be geographically aligned with the four administrative regions of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies. In the southeast, the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership would serve as the regional work group for RFHP activities.

**Science and Data** – The Science and Data Subcommittee is charged with the development of the scientific framework around which prioritization and funding of projects by the Executive Board will be made, and the performance of those projects monitored and



*Attendees of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reservoir Assessment and Conservation Strategy Workshop held May 5-8, 2009 at Big Cedar Lodge on the shores of Table Rock Lake.*

evaluated. This requires development of a system of reservoir classification, assessment, and ranking. Currently, the subcommittee is expanding on a qualitative methodology developed by Dr. Steve Miranda (Mississippi State University) to assess reservoir health. That assessment work is now underway in California, Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Iowa, Kansas, Arkansas and North Carolina for all reservoirs in excess of 250 acres. At the same time, each of the eight states is conducting a parallel quantitative assessment of reservoir health based on metrics identified by the subcommittee in consultation with the AFS Southern Division Reservoir Committee. The anticipated outcome of this work is an assessment template that can be used by the other states in the partnership. In addition to this work, the subcommittee is (1) coordinating with NFHAP Science and Data and Michigan State University to enhance the NFHAP fish habitat database for lakes and reservoirs; (2) developing a classification scheme for reservoirs; and (3) creating a methodology for scoring, ranking and prioritizing reservoirs for funding.

■ **2<sup>nd</sup> RFHP Reservoir Assessment and Conservation Strategy Workshop** – The second major planning workshop of the RFHP was held May 5-8, 2009 at Big Cedar Lodge on the shores of Table Rock Lake near Branson, MO. The RFHP continues to make major strides toward development of a conservation strategy for the partnership and other components required in the application for formal recognition as a fish habitat

partnership under the National Fish Habitat Action Plan.

## JOIN US!

Support of the Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership will further enhance fishing opportunities for the public and therefore put more dollars on the ground for fish and habitat conservation.

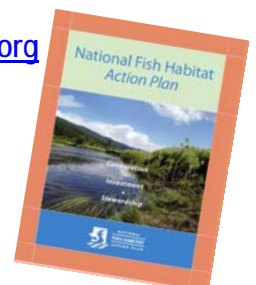
Please join other partners who share your passion for fishing and healthy fish habitat. Please visit our website for more information.

### Contact:

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To learn more about the National Fish Habitat Action Plan and to get involved, visit the website at:

[www.fishhabitat.org](http://www.fishhabitat.org)



Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership Website: [www.reservoirpartnership.org](http://www.reservoirpartnership.org)