

RESERVOIR FISHERIES HABITAT PARTNERSHIP

RFHP News and Updates

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Inauguration of Monthly Newsletter

We are launching a monthly newsletter to help keep supporters, friends and participants in the Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership fully informed of its current events, ongoing activities, major developments, and future plans. To be effective, the newsletter needs your help. Please submit news, announcements, and other items that may be of interest to the partnership to Karl Hess (karl_hess@fws.gov, 703-358-2293). Materials received by the last Wednesday of the current month will be included in the next month's newsletter.

Proposed Reservoir Definition

At the conclusion of the November NCTC meeting, Phil Durocher asked the Science and Data Subcommittee to develop a working definition of reservoirs appropriate to the needs of the partnership. The following definition is submitted for consideration:

A Reservoir is a manmade body of water 500 acres or larger at normal operating pool formed by the impoundment of waters accessible to the public and that support, or have the potential to support, a sport fishery.

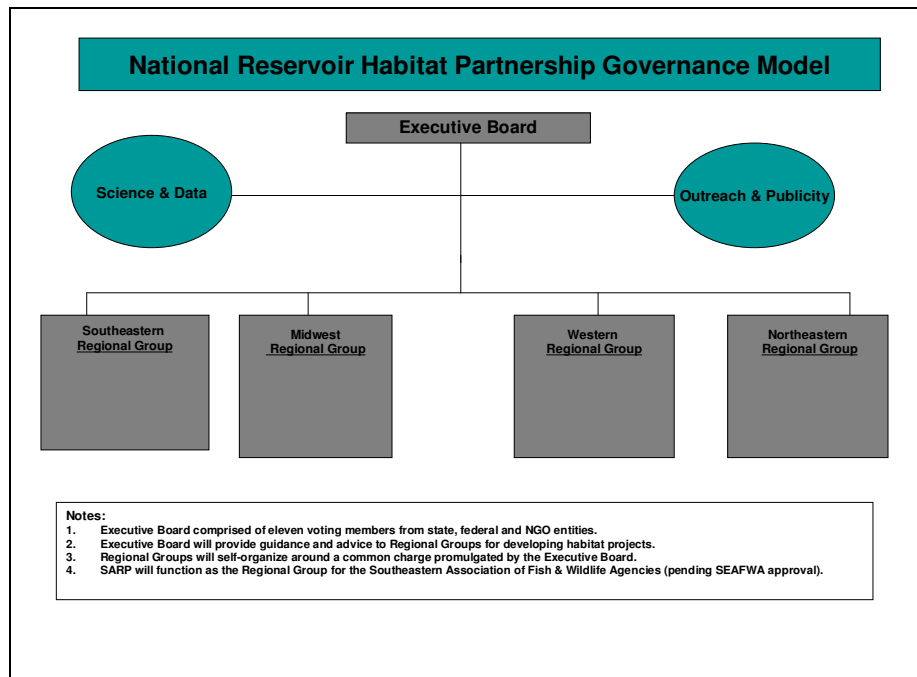
The 500-acre size limit was made on pragmatic grounds, reflecting the subcommittee's belief that (a) a smaller set of reservoirs would be more manageable for launching the partnership; (b) reservoirs >500 acres would likely yield greater benefits per unit of investment; (c) smaller reservoirs located within the same drainage of larger, qualifying reservoirs would likely be included in most projects, given the watershed focus of the partnership; and (d) data on reservoir health and function would be more abundant and accessible for reservoirs >500 acres. Since developing the definition, at least one state has indicated that the 500-acre limit would preclude its participation in the partnership. The subcommittee believes that the RFHP policy on reservoir size should be flexible to account for the unique circumstances of each state. Please indicate if you believe the size limit should be reduced to 200 acres or otherwise modified. Please send comments on the definition and the size limit to Karl Hess (karl_hess@fws.gov).

RFHP Subcommittees Underway

One of the outcomes of the November 2008 partnership meeting at NCTC in Shepherdstown was the creation of three subcommittees: *Governance*, *Outreach and Partnerships*, and *Science and Data*. If you are interested in participating in one or more of these working subcommittees, please contact Phil Durocher for *Outreach and Partnership* (Phil.Durocher@tpwd.state.tx.us), Mike Armstrong for *Governance* (mlarmstrong@agfc.state.ar.us), or Karl Hess for *Science and Data* (karl_hess@fws.gov). Summary and updates for each subcommittee are...

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 its partnership to include the full range of traditional and non-traditional interests critical to its success. Since the November NCTC meeting, the subcommittee has held two conference calls. Actions underway include: (1) development of a national contact list for expanding the partnership; (2) revision of the partnership brochure to reflect current status of the partnership; (3) preparation of a mass mailing of the updated brochure and an accompanying letter of request of support for and membership in the RFHP to all names on the contact list (scheduled for mid-March); and (4) development of a RFHP website (see announcement below). The next subcommittee call is scheduled for 2pm CST, Tuesday, March 3, 2009. If you wish to join the call, or learn more about the subcommittee’s work and membership, contact Phil Durocher.

Governance – The Governance Subcommittee is charged with developing an administrative structure for the Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership. 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 (see Diagram below).



Regional Work Groups (RWG) would be the focus for developing and prioritizing reservoir habitat projects for their respective regions. The Executive Committee would provide guidance and direction to the RWGs for assessing reservoir conditions and advancing habitat projects. Funding decisions would rest with the Executive Committee. Still to be determined are the full roles and responsibilities of the Executive Committee and the operational procedures of the partnership. SARP would assume responsibility as the RWG for the Southeastern Regional Group. A conference call will be scheduled later this month. Those interested in joining that call, and the governance effort, should contact Mike Armstrong.

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 Committee will be made, and the performance of those projects monitored and evaluated. This requires development of a system of reservoir classification, assessment, and ranking. Currently, the subcommittee is expanding on a qualitative methodology developed by Steve Miranda (Mississippi State University) to assess reservoir health. That assessment work is now underway in California, Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Iowa, and North Carolina for all reservoirs in excess of 500 acres. At the same time, each of the six 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 (a) coordinating with NFHAP Science and Data and Michigan State University to enhance the NFHAP fish habitat data base for lakes and reservoirs; (b) develop a classification scheme for reservoirs; and (c) create a methodology for scoring, ranking and prioritizing reservoirs for funding. The work of the Science and Data Subcommittee is substantial. If you would like to participate in this subcommittee, and to join the next conference call, please contact Karl Hess.

RFHP Website in Progress

John Taylor (John.Taylor@tpwd.state.tx.us) has designed and put online a web page for the Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership. The site is still in progress, its architecture underway, and its links not yet populated. It is found at www.reservoirpartnership.org. If you click “background” you will be able to view and download the proceedings of all recent meetings of the partnership, including the November NCTC meeting. Karl Hess (karl_hess@fws.gov) is working with John on development of the web page. Initial design of the page and population of its major links is scheduled to be completed by mid-March. Additionally, John is developing a linked site where reservoir projects will be highlighted, showing the breadth of work the RFHP is targeting. Additionally, this newsletter will be accessible through the web site starting next month. Assistance is needed to complete the website. If you would like to join the website design and maintenance team, or if you have content, including good examples of reservoir fish habitat projects, please contact either John or Karl. Stay tuned for updates.

Big Cedar Lodge Meeting May 5-8, 2009

The next meeting of the RFHP is now confirmed for May 5-8, 2009, at Big Cedar Lodge, Table Rock Lake, in the northern Ozarks near Branson, MO. The purpose of the meeting is twofold. First, each subcommittee will have a full day to meet on its own, address pending business, assess progress, and identify remaining steps for completion of its remaining tasks. Second, the subcommittees will have a full day to meet in plenary session to share their products and, most importantly, to discuss, organize, schedule and initiate the RFHP application for Fish Habitat Partnership (FHP) and the draft RFHP Strategic Plan, which is the heart of the application process. Phil Durocher would like the partnership to submit the FHP application as early as this coming fall (August 21, 2009 for an October 7-9 decision) or no later than early winter (December 18, 2009 for a March 3-4, 2010 decision). To meet either of these deadlines, work must begin immediately on drafting the strategic plan and fully addressing the requirements of the application. At the conclusion of the meeting, the partnership will have the writing teams established and deadlines set for completion of these two tasks.

Each member of the partnership is encouraged to attend and participate in the work of this important event – even if he/she has not been engaged in a subcommittee until now. To attend, however, participants must be associated with a subcommittee. Be aware that slots for the meeting are limited by both lodging availability and meeting space. If you wish to attend, you must contact the appropriate subcommittee lead: Phil Durocher, *Outreach and Partnership* (Phil.Durocher@tpwd.state.tx.us), Mike Armstrong, *Governance* (mlarmstrong@agfc.state.ar.us), or Karl Hess, *Science and Data* (karl_hess@fws.gov). Those wishing to attend must confirm their attendance with their subcommittee lead no later than Friday, March 6, 2009. No lodging will be available after that date. All subcommittee leads should submit names of participants to Karl Hess by Monday, March 9.

In addition to extensive work sessions on both Wednesday and Thursday (May 6-7), the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) will deliver a presentation on Table Rock Lake on Wednesday and conduct a tour of reservoir conservation projects on Thursday afternoon. The tentative agenda of the meeting follows.

Agenda May 5-8, 2009

<i>Tuesday</i>	Arrival Big Cedar Lodge; 7pm Dinner hosted by Bass Pro Shops
<i>Wednesday</i>	Subcommittees Meet; Lunch Presentation by MDC
<i>Thursday</i>	Plenary Session of Subcommittees; Lake Tour by MDC
<i>Friday</i>	Completion Plenary Session; Departure by 11am (Optional Lunch/Visit at Bass Pro Shops, Branson, MO)

Meetings and Notices

- A new book addressing reservoir issues – and written, in part, by members of the RFHP – is now available: **Balancing Fisheries Management and Water Uses for Impounded River Systems**, Michael S. Allen, Steve Sammons, and Michael J. Maceina, editors, 697 pages, Published by the American Fisheries Society, Publication date: January 2009, ISBN: 978-1-934874-06-6, \$69.00 list price, \$48.00 AFS members
- The March meeting of the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Arlington, Virginia, will hold a session on ***Reservoir Fisheries: Angling for New Opportunities*** on Monday, March 16, 2009, 1:30pm – 5:30pm.