

RESERVOIR FISHERIES HABITAT PARTNERSHIP

RFHP News and Updates

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New Governance for RFHP

A new governance structure for the Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership is now in place. The Executive Committee, established by the RFHP Strategic Plan, met for the first time at Big Cedar Lodge near Branson, MO, on January 26, 2010. The Executive Committee has replaced the Steering Committee, which oversaw partnership operations for the past two years. The Executive Committee is made up of four State members, each representing one of the four regional Fish and Wildlife Associations, and four Federal agencies – Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), and Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). There are up to 9 additional committee seats set aside for outdoor recreation and fishing industry, conservation NGOs, and Tribal representatives. Currently, four of those board seats are filled by the National Association of Lake Managers (NALMS) and the American Fisheries Society (AFS), representing conservation NGOs, and the American Sport Fishing Association (ASA)/Bass Pro Shops and BASS ESPN, representing the outdoor recreation and fishing industries. The Executive Committee plans to fill at least three of the five vacant seats in 2010. By unanimous vote, the Executive Committee selected Mike Armstrong, Deputy Director of Arkansas Game and Fish Commission as the Executive Committee Chair.

Sitting members of the Executive Committee include:

Mike Armstrong, representing the Southeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Robert Curry, representing AFS Administrators Section

E. Dwight Fielder, representing BLM

Chris Horton, representing BASS ESPN

Mark Hoyer, representing NALMS

Stuart Leon, representing FWS

Jeff Lucero, representing BOR

Martin MacDonald, representing ASA and Bass Pro Shops

Neil Manji, representing the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Gary Martel, representing the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Doug Nygren, representing the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Tim Toplisek, representing ACOE

All Executive Committee members sit at the pleasure of the organizations they represent. Officers of the Executive Committee, the chair and vice-chair, serve 2 year terms. The Chair is selected from the state regional associations; the Vice Chair (to be selected) is chosen from among the non-state members.

Highlights of the January 26 Big Cedar Executive Committee Meeting

The first meeting of the RFHP Executive Committee kicked-off the start of the partnership's new standing as a recognized Fish Habitat Partnership of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. Focusing on the need to address key operational needs, the Executive Committee tackled critical issues facing the partnership. Complete notes of the meeting and its action items will be available soon on the RFHP website: www.reservoirpartnership.org. Action highlights from the meeting include:

- Adoption of the RFHP Charter – a finalized version to be posted on the partnership website by early March
- Addition of a Tribal member to the Executive Committee in 2010
- Addition of a Hydropower representative to the Executive Committee
- Actively reach out to other Federal agencies, including USDA-NRCS, USDA-FS, BPA, TVA, and EPA in 2010
- Continue money management agreement with VA Tech's Conservation Management Institute
- Establish a 501 (c)(3) Foundation in 2010 to accept donations and grants for the partnership
- Develop a logo for the partnership (with associated stationary, etc) – Bass Pro Shops to take the lead
- Hire a full-time coordinator for the RFHP by the end of 2010 (Executive Committee will develop a job description)
- Pursue Memorandums of Understanding with the 18 States currently lacking MOUs with the partnership
- Formally established a Science and Data Committee, a Communication and Outreach Committee (with immediate press release to announce the partnership nationally), a Project Ranking and Selection Committee (including an immediate list of "shovel-read" reservoir projects), a Finance Committee (focused initially on securing a 2011 Multistate Grant), and a Website Committee (look for major changes to the website in 2010)
- Move forward in 2010 to implement the Friends of Reservoirs concept as set forth in the Strategic Plan (and consider a name change)
- Activate the Regional Work Groups in 2010

Upcoming Science and Data Committee Meeting, Asheville, NC

The Science and Data Committee will convene on Friday, February 26, 2010, in conjunction with the spring meeting of the Southern Division of the American Fisheries Society in Asheville, NC. The Committee will meet in the Eagle Room of the Marriott Renaissance Hotel. The morning session will highlight presentations by Jeff Boxrucker, Gary Whelan, John Taylor, Reed Green, and Steve Miranda, with emphasis on the RFHP reservoir assessment, and the work now being performed by Green and Miranda to extend and complete that

assessment. The afternoon session will be devoted to general discussion and planning for 2010 by all members of the Committee. RFHP members desiring to join the meeting and discussion, but unable to attend physically, can call in starting at 8:30 am and continuing at 1:30 pm, after a 12:00 noon to 1:30pm lunch break. To join the meeting by teleconference, please call 312-470-7172. The passcode for the call is 12267. Everyone is welcome.

RFHP Session at November 2010 NALMS Conference

The National Association of Lake Managers has invited the RFHP to host two consecutive sessions at its annual meeting in Oklahoma City in November, 2010. One session will focus on the partnership, its history, and its goals and objectives. Session two will address Science and Data issues.

Last Word

The partnership got its official legs last October upon designation as a Fish Habitat Partnership of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. That was enormously satisfying for the many individuals who worked so hard to make that happen. But now the real work begins: putting projects on the ground. An essential first step happened on January 26: our permanent governance structure was established and with it the infrastructure we will need to pursue our mission. The enthusiasm of the new Executive Committee for the RFHP and its future was high and motivating. The members and staff came out of that meeting with a fervent conviction to make the partnership all it can be. Over the next several months the final pieces of the partnership will be put in place and our mission will begin its journey toward healthy reservoir systems. In the next few weeks there will be word forthcoming on the next national meeting of the partnership. We should look forward to that watershed event. The RFHP is reality; it is up and running and support for it is growing every day. The future looks good. We must all coalesce behind Mike Armstrong and support him as he moves our partnership to the critical next steps. Thanks to all of you for making this happen.

Contact Information:

For additional information regarding RFHP and its activities, please contact: Mike Armstrong (mlarmstrong@agfc.state.ar.us), Karl Hess (Karl_Hess@fws.gov), or Cecilia Lewis (Cecilia_Lewis@fws.gov). Please share this newsletter with anyone who might be interested in the partnership.