



SFBPC "Currents"



A Publication of the Sport Fishing & Boating Partnership Council

The SFBPC is an advisory committee to the Secretary of the Interior and the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service. The purpose of the SFBPC is to provide advice to the Secretary of the Interior through the Service Director on aquatic resource conservation issues and to enhance partnerships among industry, constituency groups, and government.

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SFBPC Happenings

SFBPC Holds it's Spring Meeting in Washington, D.C.

Secretary Gale Norton on hand to highlight the important partnership between the DOI and the SFBPC

The Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council held its spring meeting in Washington, D.C. on March 10, 2005. Attendees were greeted by Secretary of Interior Gale Norton. In her comments, Secretary Norton lauded the SFBPC for its many years of service in counseling the Department of the Interior and the Fish and Wildlife Service on matters of importance to the angling, boating and aquatic resource conservation communities and added that she looked forward to strengthening this important partnership. Secretary Norton went on to highlight the importance of anglers and boaters as "sentinels" for the health of the nation's aquatic resources and major contributors, not only to resource conservation, but to the health of the nation's economy through economic activity generated by the purchase of fishing and boating equipment.



Secretary Gale Norton with members of the SFBPC – (front row from left to right) SFBPC Chairman William Taylor, Asst. Sec. Craig Manson, Sec. Gale Norton, Ryck Lydecker, Monita Fontaine (back row from left to right) former FWS Director Steve Williams, Jim Range, Ken Haddad, Chris Horton, Martin MacDonald, Carl Wilgus, Doug Hansen, Jim Anderson, Doug Boyd, SFBPC Coordinator Doug Hobbs, and Bill Anderson

(SFBPC holds spring meeting, cont.)

Assistant Secretary Craig Manson and former FWS Director Steve Williams also shared comments about the importance of the work of the SFBPC and the positive contribution it makes to the DOI and the FWS.

The meeting agenda was quite full. Among the many issues discussed were: an update on the various components of the FWS Fisheries Program, a presentation by NOAA Fisheries Director Bill Hogarth highlighting the new NOAA Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan, an update on the National Fish Habitat Initiative, an update on the FWS Fisheries Program Evaluation, and an update on the Boating Infrastructure Tier II Program and a discussion of recent developments related to the Aquatic Resources Trust Fund. For more information on the meeting, contact SFBPC Coordinator Doug Hobbs at doug_hobbs@fws.gov.

SFBPC to lead the National Fish Habitat Initiative “Fish Habitat Partners Coalition”

At its March 10, 2005 meeting, the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council unanimously agreed to convene and lead a coalition of partners in support of the National Fish Habitat Initiative (NFHI). In a February 7, 2005 letter, Douglas Austen, chairman of the NFHI Core Work Group, asked the SFBPC to act as lead in the creation of the coalition. It is envisioned the partners coalition would serve three functions: 1) review the work of the NFHI Core Work Group, 2) communicate with existing partners and other audiences and 3) recruit new partners and advocates that will lend their voice in advocating for the NFHI. This effort will be the key component in raising the level of awareness about the need for a national fish habitat plan and the tools that the NFHI envisions to address the issues of loss and decline of aquatic habitat and aquatic species populations. Ultimately, it will be the Fish Habitat Partners Coalition that will make or break the success of this effort. **YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS A MUST!!!** If you or the organization with which you are affiliated is interested in joining this monumental effort, please contact Doug Hobbs at 703-358-2336, or email at doug_hobbs@fws.gov.

National Fish Habitat Initiative (NFHI) Core Workgroup meets

The National Fish Habitat Initiative Core Work Group is off and running. The members of the work group

have met twice and a third meeting is in the works. Douglas Austen, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Executive Director and Chairman of the updated the members of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council at their March 10, 2005 meeting on the progress to date.

The workgroup will be responsible for drafting a “fish habitat” plan. Members of the Core Workgroup are: Don Bonneau (Iowa DNR), Tom Busiahn (USFWS), Jim Martin (Pure Fishing), Stan Moberly (AFS), Ira New Breast (Native American Fish & Wildlife Society), Bill Reeves (TN Wildlife Resources Agency), Jeff Rester (GSMFC), Larry Riley (AZ Game & Fish Dept.), Gordon Robertson (ASA), Mark Smith (TNC), Susan Marie-Stedman (NOAA Fisheries), Mike Stone (WY Game & Fish Dept.) and Norm Stucky (Bass Pro Shops). Christopher Estes is interim coordinator of the effort. Several core work group committees have been established. Committee and committee chairs include: Doug Beard, Data Committee; Gary Whelan, Science Committee; Laury Parramore, Communications Committee; William Taylor, Partners Coalition; and Tom Busiahn, Federal Agency Coordination Team.

The core work group last met on March 18, 2005 as part of the North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference in Arlington, VA. Among the many things discussed in the meeting was the possibility shortening the timeline for completing an “action plan” for the NFHI. The next meeting of the core work group is set for May 24-25, 2005 in Grand Rapids, MI.

For more information on the NFHI visit: <http://fishhabitat.org>

Fisheries Program Evaluation “Buzzes” Toward Completion

Like a well cast buzzbait retrieved by a clump of lily pads that you know will yield a lunker bass, the SFBPC’s Fisheries Program Evaluation Work Group continues to make steady progress in its effort to assess the Fish and Wildlife Service’s Fisheries Program. The ultimate goal: a healthy and sustainable Fisheries Program. The SFBPC was asked by former FWS Director Steve Williams to complete an independent evaluation of the Fisheries Program. This process is required of all federal programs by the Office of Management and Budget to determine whether they are meeting their program goals and providing a benefit to the taxpaying public. Workgroup members include: Jim Anderson (Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission), Doug Boyd (Coastal Conservation Association), James Boyd (Resources for the Future), Noreen Clough (BASS/ESPN), Jonathan Higgins (The Nature Conservancy), Robin Knox (Colorado Division of Wildlife), Elizabeth Maclin (American Rivers), Christine Moffitt (University of Idaho), Steve Moyer (Trout Unlimited), Gordon Robertson (American Sportfishing Association), Tom Sadler (Izaak Walton League of America), Eric Schwaab (International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies), Wendy Smith (World Wildlife Fund) and Jim Zorn (Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission). The members of the SFBPC were updated on the project by John Rogers, project co-manager (Whitney Tilt is the other project co-manager), at their March 10, 2005 meeting. Work group members are currently making field visits to FWS regional offices to verify data submitted for

review as part of the evaluation process. A draft report is in the works; with a final evaluation report is tentatively scheduled for completion in April 2005.

Eye on the Media

From The Oregonian; Friday, April 1, 2005

Judge sees ballast water as threat

Ship discharges often hold harmful species and can no longer be exempt from EPA regulation, a ruling says
By Joe Rojas-Burke

In a decision that could prove costly to the shipping and fishing industries, a federal judge Thursday said the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency can no longer exempt ballast water dumping from clean water regulation.

Ballast water from cargo ships and other vessels is a concern because it can carry exotic species from distant waters. Such invaders pose a serious threat to natural resources in Oregon and across the nation. View the full story at:

<http://www.oregonlive.com/printer/printer.ssf?/base/news/1112353017199981.xml>

From The Washington Post; Sunday, March 13, 2005

Dam's Demise Lures Fish to Their Rappahannock Roots

By Michelle Boorstein; Page C05

When the shad arrive each March in the Rappahannock River, after their long voyage north from the Chesapeake Bay, it's viewed around Fredericksburg as the most natural sign of spring, the annual appearance of the bony fish early Virginians smoked and ate to survive.

But the Rappahannock likely hasn't seemed natural to the shad -- until now.

For 151 years, two dams in Fredericksburg blocked shad and other migratory fish from reaching their ancestors' spawning grounds far north of the city, where they are genetically programmed to want to go, too.

But 13 months ago, Army divers packed the 770-foot-wide Embrey Dam with explosives and set them off before a cheering crowd, beginning the process of returning the Rappahannock to its natural state. Workers also removed a wooden crib dam built in 1854

that had been submerged since Embrey was built in 1910. Full story at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A30403-2005Mar12?language=printer>

GSI to Run Fletcher's Boathouse

By Angus Phillips; Page E03

The National Park Service is on the verge of signing a contract with GSI, the big government concessionaire, to run Fletcher's Boathouse, and expects to have fishing boats ready and the bait and tackle shop open when the fish get here later this month.

"A lot is changing and a lot is happening," said Bill Line, the NPS communications officer for the Capital Region, "but what the general public has come to know for 145 years at Fletcher's will be maintained, kept and restored under a new operator."

Line said Friday that he expects a contract to be signed early this week, with Fletcher's up and running a few days later. Full story at:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A29731-2005Mar12?language=printer>

**Opinions expressed in news stories are those of the writers and media outlets from which the stories originated, not those of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council.*

Boating/Angling Industry News

RBFF changes brand to "take me fishing"

Target audience expanded to include women

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (March 9, 2005) — The Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation announces a new branding direction and expanded target audience to enhance its ongoing marketing initiative to grow fishing and boating participation nationwide.

The non-profit organization's Water Works Wonders™ brand has been changed to "take me fishing." The RBFF board of directors made the decision in response to findings from a 2004 advertising awareness study and other campaign evaluation considerations. View the full news release at: http://www.rbff.org/pressroom/RBFF_PR.cfm

NOAA Rolls Out Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan

February 17, 2005 - With input from recreational fishing constituents, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has developed a plan defining a common vision for the future of recreational fisheries and a strategy to achieve that vision. NOAA and recreational fishing leaders announced the plan this week at the Miami Boat Show, the site of a pledge last year by government officials to develop the strategy. "The Recreational Fishing Strategic Plan sets goals that both government and recreational fishermen agree on and lays out a game plan for making that happen," said Bill Hogarth, director of NOAA Fisheries Service. The plan is part of NOAA's continuing efforts to protect, restore, and manage the use of coastal and ocean resources

through an ecosystem approach to management. View the full news release at:

http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/docs/05-R104_RecFishing_Plan_Final.pdf

On the Hill

From The Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation; Tracking the Capitol, March 4, 2005

Bill Introduced to Expand Funding for Anglers and Boaters

On Wednesday, Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus member and avid fisherman Congressman Clay Shaw (R-FL), along with the full leadership of the House Sportsmen's Caucus, introduced legislation that will significantly improve funding for fishing and boating in America. Currently, only 13.5 cents of the 18.3 cents per gallon for motorboat fuel is targeted towards the Sport Fish Restoration Act's Aquatic Resources Trust Fund. The funding is used for state based boating safety, fisheries conservation and boating access programs as well as to support coastal wetlands and marine sanitation device facilities. Representative Shaw's bill, the Sportfishing and Boating Equity Act of 2005 (HR 1063), would direct the additional 4.8 cents per gallon towards fishing and boating adding approximately \$110 million a year to the Trust Fund. The Senate version of the bill, S. 422, was introduced by Senator Trent Lott on February 17. Go to <http://www.sportsmenslink.org/issues/legislation/archives/109th/ShawLottSBEA.asp> to read more about the bills.

From The Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation; Tracking the Capitol, February 25, 2005

Sportfish Authorization bills introduced in the Senate

Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus member, Senator Trent Lott (R-MS), introduced two bills last week to authorize key programs relating to sport fishing and boating safety. S. 421 would restructure the Aquatic Resources Trust Fund (also known as Wallop-Breaux after the fund's authors) which provides nearly \$500 million in federal funds to state fish and wildlife agencies for boating and fishing programs. The bill would consolidate the fund's receipts and distribute

them according to a simpler and more equitable formula supported by the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation and a coalition of 33 other fishing and boating organizations. The second bill, S. 422, would recover the full 18.3 cents per gallon excise tax that is collected on motorboat fuel and dedicate the funds collected to the Aquatic Resources Trust Fund (ARTF) for critical state fisheries conservation, boat safety, boating access and other programs. Under current law, only 13.5 cents per gallon is sent to the ARTF which means that anglers and boaters are losing out on approximately \$110 million per year on this user tax. Similar legislation is expected to be introduced in the House of Representatives next week.

FWS/DOI News

Secretary Gale Norton Praises Accomplishments of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Steve Williams

March 11, 2005 - Secretary of the Interior Gale A. Norton today announced the resignation of Steve Williams as Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Williams will become President of the Wildlife Management Institute, a nonprofit organization dedicated to scientific wildlife management, effective March 20, 2005. View the full news release at:

<http://news.fws.gov/NewsReleases/showNews.cfm?newsId=93155038-1143-3066-40E199FA74137053>

Norton Names Matt Hogan Acting Director of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

March 16, 2005 - Interior Secretary Gale Norton today named Matthew J. Hogan to be acting director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service until a new director is nominated by President Bush and confirmed by the U.S. Senate.

Hogan has served as the Service's deputy director for the past three years. He will assume the duties of FWS Director Steve Williams, who announced his resignation last week to become president of the Wildlife Management Institute. View the full news release at: <http://news.fws.gov/NewsReleases/showNews.cfm?newsId=AD2691F1-1143-3066-406E199B14D08F0B>

Current FWS Federal Register Notices

To review current FWS notices and/or proposed rules open for comment, visit the FWS Office of Policy and Directives Management Federal Register web page:

<http://policy.fws.gov/frsystem/opendocs.cfm>

Boating & Fishing Web Links of Interest

For information about the **National Fish Habitat Initiative:**

<http://fishhabitat.org/>

U.S. Forest Service *FishTales*, a weekly publication regarding fisheries and aquatic ecology:
<http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/resources/pubs/fish/fishtales/>

Political and regulatory news and information from the **National Marine Manufacturers Association, *The Washington Wave***:
<http://www.nmma.org/government/news/wavearchive.asp>

Information on **Trout Unlimited's** campaign to protect brook trout and the watersheds they inhabit, ***Back the Brookie***: <http://www.brookie.org/>

For more information about the **Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation**: <http://www.rbff.org/>

For information about current issues being considered by the U.S. Congress that affect sportsmen and women, visit the **Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, *Tracking the Capitol***:
<http://www.sportsmenslink.org/issues/tracking/currentedition.asp>

For more information about **NOAA Fisheries**:
<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/>

Calendar / Upcoming Meetings

April 13-14, 2005
NOAA Fisheries Saltwater Recreational Fisheries
Constituent Meeting
St. Petersburg, FL
Contact: Forbes Darby, National Recreational Fisheries
Coordinator, (727) 572-7800

April 17-20, 2005
Northeastern Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies
Annual Conference
Virginia Beach, VA
<http://www.conted.vt.edu/nefishwild/index.html>

April 30 – May 4, 2005
Southern States Boating Law Administrators
Association Annual Conference
Little Rock, AR
http://www.nasbla.org/ssblaa_conference_2005.htm

May 1-3, 2005
The American Boating Congress
Washington, D.C.
<http://www.nmma.org/abc/>
Contact (202) 737-9759

May 22-25, 2005

Western States Boating Administrators Association Conference
Helena, MT
<http://www.nasbla.org/wsbaa.htm>

June 4-12, 2005
National Boating and Fishing Week
<http://www.nationalfishingandboatingweek.org/>

June 11-15, 2005
Northern Association of Boating Administrators Conference
Wichita, KS
http://www.nasbla.org/naba_conference_2005.htm

June 14, 2005
Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation Board Meeting
Alexandria, VA
<http://www.rbff.org/>

June 18-21, 2005
Outdoor Writers Association of America Annual Conference
Madison, WI
<http://www.owaa.org/Madison/index.htm>

July 10-13, 2005
Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Meeting
Sandusky, OH

July 20-22, 2005
American Sportfishing Association
International Convention of Allied Sportfishing Trades (ICAST)
Las Vegas, NV
http://www.asafishing.org/asa/shows_events/icast/index.html

July 29-31, 2005
Bassmaster Classic
Pittsburgh, PA
http://espn.go.com/outdoors/bassmaster/s/b_news_030930_05_classic_announce.html

September 11-15, 2005
American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting
Anchorage, AK
<http://www.wdafs.org/Anchorage2005/index.htm>

September 11-17, 2005
International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual
Meeting
Nashville, TN
http://www.iafwa.org/upcoming_events.htm

September 17-21, 2005
National Association of State Boating Law Administrators Annual
Conference
Portland, OR
<http://www.nasbla.org/>

October 5-7, 2005
American Sportfishing Association Sportfishing
Summit
Ocean Reef Club, Key Largo, Florida
http://www.asafishing.org/asa/shows_events/index.htm
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October 8-12, 2005
States Organization for Boating Access Annual
Conference
Springfield, IL
<http://www.sobaus.org/conference/>

**For more information of the Sport Fishing
and Boating Partnership Council or for a
web version of this newsletter, visit the
SFBPC homepage at <http://sfbpc.fws.gov>**

or

**contact SFBPC Coordinator Doug Hobbs
at doug_hobbs@fws.gov**

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