



# 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

### Fisheries Program Evaluation Work Group Makes Headway

Members of the SFBPC's Fisheries Program Evaluation Work Group met from December 1-3, 2005 to get their first look at data received from the Fish and Wildlife Service's Fisheries Program. The SFBPC was asked by FWS Director Steve Williams to complete an independent evaluation of the Fisheries Program as required by the Office of Management and Budget through its Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART). All federal programs are required to undergo the PART evaluation to determine whether they are meeting their program goals and providing a benefit to the taxpaying public. The SFBPC program evaluation is being conducted to satisfy the PART requirement. Workgroup members participating in the meeting included: SFBPC members Jim Anderson and Doug Boyd, James Boyd (Resources for the Future), Noreen Clough (BASS/ESPN), Robin Knox (Colorado Division of Wildlife), Elizabeth Maclin (American Rivers), Christine Moffitt (University of Idaho), Steve Moyer (Trout Unlimited), Gordon Robertson (American Sportfishing Association), Eric Schwaab (IAFWA), and Wendy Smith (World Wildlife Fund). The workgroup was able to review a large quantity of data and information generated at their request and decided to proceed with its evaluation by breaking into smaller groups that will focus on examining a couple of specific evaluation questions in detail and reporting back to the larger workgroup. A final evaluation report is tentatively scheduled for completion in March 2005.

### National Fish Habitat Initiative (NFHI) Moves Forward

The International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) is continuing to build on the groundswell of support for the NFHI evidenced during a series of stakeholder meetings sponsored by the SFBPC. Doug Hansen, Vice Chair of the SFBPC and Chair of the IAFWA Fisheries and Water Resources Committee, asked Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Executive Director Douglas Austen to chair a Work Group that will be tasked with drafting a "fish habitat" plan over the next 18 to 24 months. Executive Director Austen has accepted the invitation. Letters also went out to initial members of the habitat plan work group. That group includes: Ira New Breast, Stan Moberly, Tom Busiahn, Jim Martin, Bill Reeves, Mike Stone, Susan Marie-Stedman, and Christopher Estes. Finally, Doug Austen has sent out a letter to partners and stakeholders in the aquatic resource management community inviting them to participate in a soon to be established partners group. **Austen's letter follows:**

**COPY**

**To: Partners in aquatic resources management.**

**Re: National Fish Habitat Initiative Work Group and Partners Council**

**From: Doug Austen, NFHI Work Group Chair and Executive Director, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission**

**Date: December 8, 2005**

As most of you are aware, a wide variety of organizations have been working for the past year to develop the concept of a National Fish Habitat Initiative (NFHI). Through a series of regional workshops and an AFS science symposia (see <http://www.fishhabitat.org> for summaries), the concept of moving forward with the development of the National Fish Habitat Initiative has been affirmed. I believe that it is fair to say that there is a great deal of excitement about working seriously to address this important effort at the national level. By this correspondence I am asking for you to consider the involvement of you or your organization in this development effort.

There is no doubt that this will be a challenging task and one that will need to draw upon the expertise and talents of many individuals and organizations. As with addressing habitat issues on the ground, the development of a national effort will require a well coordinated, multidisciplinary approach that includes all parties with a stake in fish habitat. Therefore, the structure of this process will include a broad and diverse representation of organizations in the form of a Partnership Council. The main task of developing the actual content will be assigned to a smaller Core NFHI Workgroup. The two levels of involvement and a proposed timeline are as follows:

**Partnership Council:** This broad and diverse group will represent the vast array of stakeholders in the NFHI. The Partnership Council will act as a review body, a reality check, a source of information and expertise, and as a base of support for the NFHI. This group will be asked to be involved in a limited number of key regional or national meetings to help establish overall strategy or affirm progress in the development of the National Fish Habitat Initiative. The members of the group will be expected to act as communication points of contact for their organization and use all appropriate means to ensure that the NFHI messages are broadcast to their constituency or membership. This group will also be asked to advocate for and support the NFHI efforts through legislative, educational or other means as appropriate. We anticipate that the Partnership Council could include over 100 state and federal agencies, conservation organizations, and other partners.

**Core NFHI workgroup:** This small group of 12-15 people will do the actual development and writing of the National Fish Habitat Initiative. The members of this group will be selected to represent key regional or habitat groups in an effort to ensure that all major aspects of fish habitat are covered. We will be looking for a balance of participants to cover regional, freshwater, and marine habitats. Participants will be expected to actively participate in monthly conference calls, at least three multi-day retreats to develop NFHI program content, prepare for retreats and calls through extensive reading, completion of writing assignments on various components of NFHI, and work with other partners to obtain information, communicate the status of NFHI, and to develop support for the NFHI. It is estimated that Core Workgroup volunteers will be expected to devote 30-45 days over the next 18-24 months. This workgroup will be assisted by various consultants or staff in a manner yet to be determined.

If you or one of your staff are interested in being considered for the Core NFHI Workgroup please respond to me at [dausten@state.pa.us](mailto:dausten@state.pa.us) by December 19, 2004. Participant in the workgroup need to be established in the near future and will be fixed in order to make for a more effective and efficient process. The International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies has already appointed the following members to the Core Workgroup:

Ira New Breast	Native American Fish and Wildlife Society
Stan Moberly	Northwest Marine Technology
Tom Busiahn	U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Jim Martin	Pure Fishing
Bill Reeves	Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
Mike Stone	Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Susan-Marie Stedman	NOAA Fisheries, Office of Habitat Conservation
Christopher Estes	Member / Staff Support, Alaska Dept of Fish & Game
Doug Austen	Workgroup Chair, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

We will be looking for additional members to add diversity and breadth to this excellent initial set of members.

Partnership council membership will be open for new members throughout development of NFHI and we welcome new involvement at any time. If you are interested in being a part of the Partnership Council please respond via return email with your contact information and you will be placed on the Partnership Council.

If you have questions about NFHI, the Workgroups or Partnership council please feel free to contact myself or Eric Schwaab at the following:

Doug Austen  
Executive Director  
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission  
1601 Elmerton Avenue  
Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000  
(717) 705-7801  
[dausten@state.pa.us](mailto:dausten@state.pa.us)

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International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies  
444 North Capitol Street, NW  
P.O. Box 67000  
Suite 725  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 624-7890  
[eschwaab@iafwa.org](mailto:eschwaab@iafwa.org)

## **Eye on the Media**

*From The Washington Post; Thursday, December 9, 2004*

### **Bush Making Final Cabinet Decisions**

*Interior, Labor, HUD and Transportation Secretaries Agree to Stay On; Nicholson to Replace Principi at Veterans Affairs*

By William Branigin; [washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)

President Bush today nominated Jim Nicholson, a decorated Vietnam War veteran who currently serves as U.S. ambassador to the Vatican, to be the next secretary of veterans affairs, succeeding Anthony J. Principi, whose resignation was announced last night.

The choice was made public after the White House announced this morning that four Cabinet secretaries would stay on for Bush's second term, bringing to a close a series of resignations that began shortly after Bush won reelection on Nov. 2.

Including Principi, whose resignation letter was dated Nov. 16 but not released for more than three weeks, nine of the 15 secretaries in Bush's Cabinet have announced they would leave once their successors were confirmed by the Senate.

Those remaining in their posts include Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta, Interior Secretary Gale A. Norton, Housing and Urban Development Secretary Alphonso Jackson and Labor Secretary

Elaine L. Chao, the White House said this morning. Yesterday, the White House announced that Treasury Secretary John W. Snow would stay on, ending speculation that he was on his way out. President Bush also has asked Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld to remain in the Cabinet, providing continuity at the Pentagon at a time when U.S. forces are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. Full story at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A51118-2004Dec9?language=printer>

*From The Washington Post; Thursday, December 9, 2004*

### **EPA May Allow the Discharge of Partially Treated Sewage**

*Guidelines That Are Near Release Would Permit Blended Waste*

By Juliet Eilperin; Page A03

The Environmental Protection Agency is close to issuing new guidelines making it easier for sewage authorities to dump partially treated wastewater during heavy rainfalls, according to documents obtained by The Washington Post.

EPA officials said they had not made a decision, but agency staffers have begun to brief senior political appointees on the plan, which is outlined in a 10-page document titled "Final Policy." The proposal, which was first aired in November 2003, would allow

authorities to release a blend of fully treated and partially treated sewage during peak flows.

Some scientists, environmentalists and state and local officials object to blending because it could foster the spread of disease. But others, including local sewage agencies and some government officials, say the approach strikes a safe middle ground between releasing untreated sewage and spending billions on plant upgrades. Full story at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A49443-2004Dec8?language=printer>

*From The Washington Post; Tuesday, December 7, 2004*

### **Water Rights Case Threatens Species Protection**

By Juliet Eilperin; Page A18

The Bush administration is close to settling a legal dispute with California farmers that could cost the government millions and make it more difficult for federal authorities to protect endangered species, according to legal analysts and some state and federal officials.

Justice Department officials are working to reach an agreement with five San Joaquin Valley water districts that would affirm a federal judge's 2001

decision that federal authorities' efforts to conserve water for two imperiled kinds of local fish violated farmers' private property rights. The ruling, the first of its kind, would set an important precedent and could make it costly for federal officials to take protective actions under the Endangered Species Act.

The negotiations have touched off a controversy both within the administration and in California, with some state and federal officials arguing the government would be better off appealing a federal claims judge's decision that the government owes as much as \$26 million for depriving San Joaquin farmers of their water rights in the early 1990s. Full story at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A41450-2004Dec6?language=printer>

*From The Washington Post; Saturday, December 4, 2004*

### **Conservation Hits Bumpy Waters**

*In Ecosystem-Based Method of Preservation, Fish is Pitted Against Fish*

By Michelle Boorstein; Page B01

The sun had just risen over the Patuxent River when the crew of the Aquarius launched its routine: casting a 30-foot net off the trawler's bow, hauling it in and flinging its contents of writhing fish and crabs onto a wooden slab. Members measured each creature and weighed it, then headed back to the lab to dissect each one and study what it had eaten.

It's a ritual that scientists and anglers have performed for ages in an effort to understand the world beneath the water's surface.

But what happens to the data collected on the Aquarius is totally new, a small part of an ongoing revolution in how humans manage marine life. The new way of thinking comes after the numbers of cod, scallops and oysters have declined precipitously.

"Many people feel fisheries management has generally failed to preserve fish, and they're looking to a new holy grail," said Michael K. Orbach, who teaches marine policy at Duke University and has advised the government on fisheries management and conflicts.

Government regulators had set population targets for each species and type separately, aiming only to maintain certain numbers. But now regulators say they want to manage the nation's fisheries as one big ecosystem, basing their targets on many elements, including the diet of water birds, the quality of the water and whether predator fish have enough prey. Full story at:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A33743-2004Dec3?language=printer>

*From The New York Times; Wednesday, December 1, 2004*

### **U.S. Rules Out Dam Removal to Aid Salmon**

By Felicity Barringer

WASHINGTON, Nov. 30 - The Bush administration on Tuesday ruled out the possibility of removing federal dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers to

protect 11 endangered species of salmon and steelhead, even as a last resort.

In an opinion issued by the fisheries division of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, the government declared that the eight large dams on the lower stretch of the two rivers are an immutable part of the salmon's environment. Full story at (opens in web browser): [http://www.tu.org/pdf/home/NYTimes\\_salmonhabitat\\_120104.pdf](http://www.tu.org/pdf/home/NYTimes_salmonhabitat_120104.pdf)

*From The Decatur Daily Online; Sunday, November 28, 2004*

### **Fishing, boating programs in schools can haul in bucks**

By Paul Stackhouse

Fishing and boating are not normally part of the everyday curriculum at North Alabama schools. But with a little work, that could change.

Physical education classes in grades K-12 can pick up as much as \$5,000 if they incorporate quality fishing and boating programs.

The Future Fisherman Foundation, Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, American Association for Leisure and Recreation, and the National Association for Sport and Physical Education have announced the availability of up to \$200,000 for this nationwide program. Full story at: <http://www.decaturdaily.com/decaturdaily/sports/04128/stackout.shtml>

*\*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.*

### **On the Hill**

*From The Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation; Tracking the Capitol; Volume 3, Number 26; November 22, 2004*

### **Congress Passes Omnibus Spending Bill**

Over the weekend the Congress approved a \$388.4 billion omnibus discretionary spending package for the FY '05 appropriations bills that were not finalized prior to the election. The passage of the bill provides

the necessary funding for federal government agencies and programs for 2005.

The omnibus includes about \$19.5 billion for the Interior Department, Forest Service and related agencies which provides funding for many important conservation programs. Overall, the omnibus provides \$466 million for Land and Water Conservation Fund programs, including \$167 million for land acquisition programs operated by the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service and National Park Service. The land acquisition total is still far short of the administration's request for \$220 million, but well above the House-approved figure of \$50 million. In addition to the land acquisition dollars, the omnibus includes \$58 million for the Forest Legacy Program and \$230 million for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes program, \$4 million over the administration's request and \$5 million over the total for FY '04.

Overall, the Forest Service will receive \$4.27 billion, \$107 million above non-emergency FY '04 funding (almost all of the increase is in fire programs) and \$60 million above the request. The BLM would receive \$1.776 billion, \$61 million above non-emergency FY '04 funding and \$3 million below the request, while the FWS would receive \$1.3 billion, \$3 million above FY '04. The State Wildlife Grant program was funded at \$70 million, the same level as last year.

The FY '05 Agriculture bill was also finalized in the omnibus bill and includes \$17 billion total, a \$123 million increase over FY '04. The Agriculture spending measure does include over \$2 billion overall for farmland conservation programs, a higher amount than in years prior but still short of the levels set by the 2002 Farm Bill

The most significant funding boost came for the Conservation Security Program, a new "green payments" program that began in 2002. The omnibus allots \$202 million for the program -- which offers incentives for farmers to reach certain environmental targets -- more than quadrupling its FY '04 appropriation of \$41 million. The agriculture appropriations bill also includes \$1.02 billion for the Environmental Quality Incentives program, keeping in line with the President's budget request and increasing the program \$25 million above FY '04. The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program saw cuts from the \$60 million set forth in the administration's budget request and the House and Senate bills --

coming in at \$47 million in the omnibus, which is also \$38 million lower than levels set forth in the Farm Bill.

**For more information on the Fiscal Year 2005 Appropriations bills, visit THOMAS**  
<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/approp/app05.html>

## **FWS/DOI News**

### **Service Publishes Regulations Governing Revocation Of Incidental Take Permits**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today published in the Federal Register new regulations covering incidental take permits issued under the Endangered Species Act. The regulations describe circumstances in which the Service may revoke these permits.

The Service grants incidental take permits to landowners who have voluntarily agreed to develop Habitat Conservation Plans, or HCPs. These plans provide a framework for landowners to conserve threatened and endangered species on their property. In return, the permits give landowners authorization for incidental take of listed species resulting from otherwise lawful development or land use activities. Full news release at:

<http://news.fws.gov/NewsReleases/R9/BDD8C4F1-EBD9-FCDF-DFC748877C864EEE.html>

### **Secretary Norton Praises Leadership of Deputy Secretary J. Steven Griles**

WASHINGTON-Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton today received with regret the resignation letter to the President from J. Steven Griles, the Department's deputy secretary. The Deputy Secretary is the number two position at the Department of the Interior. Full news release at:  
<http://www.doi.gov/news/041207a>

### **Secretary Norton Lauds Bennett Raley for Work on Western Water Issues**

WASHINGTON -- Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton today accepted with regret the resignation of Bennett Raley, the department's assistant secretary for Water and Science. Raley, who oversaw Interior initiatives on a number of critical water challenges facing the West, submitted his letter of resignation today, saying he wished to return to the practice of

law and to have more time to spend with his family. His resignation will be effective Dec.3, 2004. Full news release at: <http://www.doi.gov/news/041202>

### **Interior Department on Front Lines of Coral Reef Conservation**

The Department of Interior is playing a key role in a science-based, community-level campaign to protect coral reefs and is working with a variety of state, territorial and international partners to increase understanding of the problems plaguing these sensitive ecosystems around the globe, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Craig Manson said today. Full news release at:  
<http://www.doi.gov/news/041202b>

### **SCALING UP --- FACT ON FISHERIES**

It's almost cliché in expressing conservation problems. Habitat loss. Habitat degradation. It's a universal problem, and the Fisheries Program is facing it head on. The Fisheries Program is the lead Federal partner in developing the National Fish Habitat Initiative (NFHI). It's a national strategy to improve aquatic habitats, harnessing existing partnerships among State and Federal agencies, and conservation organizations. The NFHI will be focused geographically, like the Joint Venture concept. In relation, the Fisheries Program is spearheading an Eastern Brook Trout Initiative that may serve as a prototype Joint Venture and as an example of what can be accomplished under the NFHI. See [www.fishhabitat.org](http://www.fishhabitat.org) to learn more about the NFHI.

### **SCALING UP --- FACT ON FISHERIES**

Did you ever think that you might be transporting and spreading invasive species in the process of doing your resource conservation work? In natural resource work, equipment and organisms are often moved from one location to another, creating a risk that we may spread hitchhiking invasive species while we strive to achieve our conservation goals. The Fisheries Program has adapted a proven quality control methodology, HACCP - Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points, for resource conservation activities. This process can be used to manage pathway contamination risks and prevent the spread of unintended species. NCTC offers training in HACCP methodology. Learn more about HACCP at <http://haccp-nrm.org/>. In the future, HACCP and its underlying pathway management concepts will become commonplace in natural resource management.

## **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/opensdocs.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/>

## **Calendar / Upcoming Meetings**

December 12-15, 2004  
Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
<http://www.in.gov/dnr/midwest2004/>

January 11, 2004  
Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation Board Meeting  
San Diego, California

Feb 3-4, 2005  
National Council for Science and the Environment—  
5th National Conference on Science, Policy and the Environment: Forecasting Environmental Changes  
Washington D.C.  
See [www.NCSEonline.org](http://www.NCSEonline.org)  
Contact Conference2005@NCSEonline.org.

Feb 3-4, 2005  
11th Annual Whirling Disease Symposium  
Denver, CO  
Contact Wanda McCarthy, [whirling@mcn.net](mailto:whirling@mcn.net),  
406/585-0860.

March 13-16, 2005  
2005 International Boating & Water Safety Summit  
Newport Beach, California  
<http://www.safeboatingcouncil.org/summit/summitmain.htm>

March 16-20, 2005  
70th North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference  
Crystal Gateway Marriott  
Arlington, Virginia  
<http://www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org/pages/confinfoONLINE.html>

Mar 24-26, 2005  
Second National Fisheries Management Conference:  
Managing Our Nation's Fisheries II—Past, Present,  
and Future  
Washington, D.C.  
<http://www.managingfisheries.org>  
Contact 707/923-7501

**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](mailto:doug_hobbs@fws.gov)**

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