

**Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**August 8 and 9, 2007**  
**Homer, Alaska**

**Council members or alternates in attendance:**

William Taylor, Doug Hansen, Jim Range, Betty Huskins, Martin MacDonald, Ken Haddad, John Sprague, Doug Boyd, Jim Anderson, Julie McQuade, Ryck Lydecker, Mike Nussman

**Others in attendance:**

Doug Hobbs (Council Coordinator), Phil Million, Mary Burke, Chris Horton, Mathew Dunn, Mamie Parker, Laura Curlett, Vicki Dixon, Brian Bohnsack, Christopher Estes, Michael Andrews, Jaime Geiger, Doug Beard, Rick Schuldt, Gerry Jackson, Jeff Johnson, Linda Kelsey, Cecilia Lewis, Tom Murray, John DeLapp, Rod Simmons, LaVerne Smith, Frank Peterson, Jim Balsinger, Greg Pratschner, Bob Batky, Mike Stempel, John Cooper, Rowan Gould, Ed Carter, Mark Bagdovitz, Tom Melius, Dan Castleberry, Kelly Hepler, Hannibal Bolton, John Engbreng, Doug Vincent-Lang, Cheryl Amrani, Darren Benjamin, Matt Hogan

**Wednesday, August 8, 2007**

Welcome and Remarks from Tom Melius, Regional Director & Greg Siekaniec, Refuge Manager, Alaska Maritimes National Wildlife Refuge

**Alaska presentations**

***Overview of Alaska Fisheries Issues***

- Doug Vincent-Lang, Alaska Department of Fish and Game: Mr. Lang gave a brief overview of the structure of the Department of Fish and Game and highlighted its role in managing recreational, commercial, subsistence, personal use and tribal fisheries issues. He also described challenges to the health of fisheries resources. They include: competing uses, changing demographics, climate change, invasive species, habitat degradation, urbanization, oil and gas development, water quality and use, and forest development.

- Rod Simmons, U.S Fish and Wildlife Service: Mr. Simmons discussed the organization structure to show how we're positioned to best meet the challenges, as they relate to aquatic resources here in Alaska. And, then I'm going to talk a little bit about our 2004 fisheries strategic plan, and how that's taken us in new directions. And, finally, I'm going to highlight some of our program activities and accomplishments that directly

relate to both our strategic vision for fish and wildlife and the Alaska regional strategic plan.

- John DeLapp, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Mr. DeLapp highlighted habitat issues in Alaska and programs and partnerships that work to address habitat management needs.

### ***Boating and boating Safety Issues in Alaska***

Jeff Johnson, Boating Law Administrator, Alaska Office of Boating Safety, Department of Natural Resources: Mr. Johnson spoke on the issues of boating and boating safety in Alaska. He also highlighted programs aimed at improving boater safety. He highlighted the “Kids Don’t Float” Program and shared video public service announcements created to improve use of personal flotation devices on Alaska waters.

### **Joint session with the National Fish Habitat Board Working Group & USFWS Fisheries Program leadership**

John Cooper, Chair, National Fish Habitat Board of Directors: Mr. Cooper updated the Council on the current status of the NFH Board and briefly described its most recent activities. He also recapped the efforts to staff the board, to solidify the scientific underpinnings of the plan and to get assistance from Federal agencies through the potential signing of a Presidential executive order. Cooper also briefly touched on the NFHAP legislative effort and noted that draft legislation is being worked on by a Board team. Cooper also inquired about the potential for the Council writing a letter to the Interior Secretary expressing support for an NFHAP related executive order.

Christopher Estes, National Fish Habitat Board staff & Alaska Department of Fish and Game: Mr. Estes briefed on draft guidelines to establish fish habitat partnerships. These partnerships are the action arm of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. The partnerships will implement on the ground projects that will fulfill the objectives of the Action Plan.

- Martin MacDonald asked about the process of establishing partnerships and how it relates to a possible national reservoir partnership that Bass Pro Shops has been spearheading and funding.
- Jim Anderson asked if the Board was coordinating the Action Plan with other management efforts; specifically management efforts in the Puget Sound.
- Doug Hansen asked if some potential Action Plan partnerships were too broad and not focusing on fish species that were more closely aligned with providing recreational angling opportunities.

Doug Beard, U.S. Geological Survey: Mr. Beard described the biological programs within the USGS. He also highlighted the role the USGS has played in the NFHAP and the financial and personnel contributions made to the effort. He also briefed the Council

on the activities of the NFHAP Science and Data Team. Mr. Beard indicated that the USGS was providing funding and personnel to the NFHAP effort and that it would assist with completion of an assessment of the status of fish habitats, nationally.

Lunch presentation:

Amy Alderfer, Kachemak Bay National Estuary Research Reserve: Ms. Alderfer briefed the Council on the work of the Research Reserve and recapped the breadth of the natural resources in the greater Kachemak Bay.

Greg Siekaniec, Refuge Manager, Alaska Maritimes National Wildlife Refuge: Mr. Siekaniec presented the film, "Journey of the Tiglax." The film chronicles the work of the FWS Research Vessel Tiglax as it travels the refuge to accomplish its work.

**Continuation of the Joint session with the National Fish Habitat Board Working Group & USFWS Fisheries Program leadership**

Hannibal Bolton and Linda Kelsey highlighted some the FWS budget activities associated with the NFHAP.

Doug Hobbs recapped the Council's efforts to lead the creation of a Fish Habitat Partners Coalition and also its efforts to lead the NFHAP communications effort. Hobbs touched on both the successes of these efforts. John Cooper used this summary of activities to raise the issue of whether the Council would continue to lead the partner and communications effort.

***- Members agreed that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies should take the lead on the Partner Coalition and the communications effort.***

Jim Range led a discussion on the status of efforts to draft legislation to codify the NFHAP. He stated that the effort was modeled on the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. He also spoke about potential legislative vehicles for moving a NFHAP bill through the Congress. Aside from a stand alone bill, Range mentioned that potential vehicles include climate change legislation and organic legislation for the Service's Fisheries Program. There was a long discussion about a strategy. It was unclear which of these approaches would be used to move forward with NFHAP legislation. Council members agreed that they wanted to provide feedback on the legislative strategy.

**Fisheries Issues Committee - Ken Haddad, Chair**

Doug Hansen briefed council members on the Aquatic Nuisance Species workshop held at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference held in March 2007. The Council was a supporter of the workshop. Hansen noted the recommendations that resulted from the workshop that would be acted on by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

Mamie Parker, Assistant Director, Fisheries & Habitat Conservation, U.S Fish and Wildlife Service led a recap of the activities of the Fisheries Program in addressing the recommendations the Council has made over the years. Regional FWS Fisheries Program Chiefs also provided similar information. Presenters included: Gerry Jackson, Mike Stemple, Jamie Geiger, John Engbreng, Greg Pratschner, and Mark Bagdovitz.

- Bill Taylor inquired about the status of mitigation hatcheries within the FWS. Reimbursement for the activities of these hatcheries has been a concern for the Council for many years.

- Jim Anderson pointed out that the program needs to continue to emphasize communications, and actively reach out to partners and stakeholders.

Mamie Parker raised the issue of the Fisheries Program strategic plan and the need to revise and update it in the near future.

- Ken Haddad suggested that this would be an issue that the Council Fisheries Issues Committee could help with.

- John Sprague asked about

### **Boating Issues Committee – Ryck Lydecker, Chair**

#### Summary and outcomes of “Working Waterfronts: A National Water Access Symposium”

- *Ryck Lydecker*
- *Thomas Murray, Virginia Sea Grant College Program*

#### Report on FWS implementation of Boating Infrastructure Grant Program Review recommendations

- *Ryck Lydecker, BoatU.S. & SFBPC member*
- *Brian Bohnsack, USFWS*

#### Clean Vessel Act Grant Program Review Team: Progress Report

- *John Sprague, Florida Marine Industries Association & SFBPC Member*

#### Fishing and Boating Access

- Update on activities of the Fishing and Boating Access Subcommittee / Discussion of possible future inland fishing and boating access conference
  - *Chris Horton, National Conservation Director, B.A.S.S.*
  - *Julie McQuade, States Organization for Boating Access*

Update on EPA discharge regulation

- *Mathew Dunn, National Marine Manufacturers Association*

**Communications Committee – Betty Huskins, Chair**

- Discuss possible Secretarial commendation recognizing “Legacy Leaders” who have done great things to promote angling, boating and aquatic resource conservation.

- Discussion of the new FishSmart Program. The program is an initiative being driven by the organizations and businesses of the recreational fishing industry to advance conservation and stewardship of fisheries resources nationwide. It is an effort to enhance the sustainability of fishery resources as pressure on those resources increases.

- *William Taylor, SFBPC Chair*

- *Mike Nussman, Council member*

**Federal Assistance Programs**

- Program / budget update

- Federal Assistance Strategic Planning process update

- Briefing on preliminary results from the National Survey on Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Related Recreation / Discussion of ways to address participation trends

- Discussion of issues related to Sport Fish Restoration Fund reauthorization

- *Rowan Gould, Assistant Director, Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs, FWS*

- *other Federal Assistance staff*

**National Communications and Outreach Program update**

Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation report

- *Frank Peterson, President, Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation*

Update on creating joint measures for the conduct of future Council RBFF assessments

- *Doug Boyd, Coastal Conservation Association & SFBPC Member*

- *Doug Hobbs, SFBPC Coordinator*

***Identification of Future Strategic Issues***

Adjourn

Jim Anderson motion

Mike Nussman secong