**Mat-Su Salmon Habitat Partnership Steering Committee Meeting**

***MINUTES***

**Tuesday November 13, 2012 1:30 - 4pm**

**ADF&G Conference Room, Palmer**

 **Attendance:** Sue Rodman, Bill Rice, Brian Winnestaffer (in Jessica Winnestaffer’s stead), Jeff Davis, Kim Sollien, Corinne Smith, Jessica Speed, Eric Rothwell, Chris Love, Holly(guest – looking for work), Sam Ivey (latter part of meeting).

**Facilitator:** Corinne Smith, **Note taker:** Jessica Speed

**Partnership Business**

***Symposium debrief and feedback***

**Keynote**:

* Did achieve objective of generating some controversy
* Didn’t send a positive message
* Compromise doesn’t help. Salmon protection is about societal decisions
* Did create a hatchery spin-off discussion which was interesting and seemed to clarify to the committee the need for education on this subject. Don Dyer (Mat-Su Economic Development Director) spoke about hatcheries at the symposium and seemed to suggest them as a quick fix, which the committee did not agree with. Lackey’s talk clarified this fallacy and that education is needed. The Partnership could have a statement about hatcheries – what they do and don’t do. It could for one go up on our website.
* Bill suggested the Partnership create an economic development sub-committee that could work with Don Dyer, as a resource providing recommendations on some of the challenging issues he faces. The Steering Committee agreed and created a new economic development committee composed of: Bill, Corinne, Kim, Frankie, Sue.
* Bill and the committee will follow- up with Don Dyer for further discussion on hatcheries (an educational opportunity) and to provide assistance with Borough economic strategies in relation to salmon.
* Symposium was a good opportunity for people to ask simple questions - that do not have simple answers!

**Some ideas for future**

* Social – have opportunity for beer tasting of salmon centric beer; the Grape Tap has some sound issues – too loud. Could get catering from Turkey Red and if host the event at the Palmer Depot there could be food and alcohol, with everything kept on the symposium site.
* More Q and A for the keynote talk (note: Bob Lackey did go over his time limit by 1/2hr – there was 15 minutes allotted)
* More complete summaries on topics of current interest or are foundational to salmon conservation (not just snapshots that people happen to be working on ie beaver effects on salmon, hatcheries, dams, temperature and fish, sharing of new techniques. These summaries could alternately be done as part of a brown bag lunch series. White papers on the talks could go on the partnership website. This will get run by the partnership committee.
* Keep the symposium to 2 days, but could probably make each day a bit longer ie to 5pm.
* The groundwater workshop following the symposium was a good way to provide a form of extension to the symposium . The ground water workshop was good – pretty technical with 15 to 20 people in attendance.
* Thank you letters to welcome speakers Warren Keogh and Theo Garcia - done.

***Mat-Su Salmon Habitat Partnership Website (www.matsusalmon.org)***

Katrina Mueller and Jessica S. have been working on the new website. It’s still under construction. We’re asking however that Steering Committee members still have a look at the site and give feedback by Friday, December 7th. Please note specifically the tabs and drop down menus that appear on the home page. These are indicative of the content we plan to have. If you don’t see something listed that you would like on the site in either of these locations then at least for now it’s probably not planned, so please let us know.

Committee members indicated some search problems with the site – specifically if the web address is placed in a search engine line (rather than in the site address location at the top of the screen) – a site in Japanese appears instead of ours. So.. Jessica and Katrina will work on this problem.

Other ideas for the website:

* Project products on line (ie for NFHP funded projects)
* Past years booklets
* This year’s presentations

***Revised Project Ranking***

The project ranking was revised to include Chickaloon’s score for the USGS project with rainbow trout, but the overall project ranking did not change. Those that have volunteered to work on making changes to the scoring criteria and ranking process for next year are: Kim, Sue, Bill, Cecil and Eric. Next year projects will first be discussed together as a group before ranking them.

Regarding this year’s Rainbow Trout USGS/Fairbanks project, Sue told USGS about the WNTI funding and there could be an option to co-fund that project.

***Steering Committee At-Large Seats***

There are 3 at large seats currently held by GLT, USSWCD, and ARRI. In general an organization can re-apply for an at-large seat they already hold. All interested organizations write a letter about why they’re interested. The Steering Committee decides at the January meeting.

ARRI is the only organization whose term is coming to a close and they would like to renew their term once more.

***Next Steps in Strategic Planning***

Revisions to the draft scoping document have all been sent to Corinne. Frankie and Corinne made a list of threats that were used for the open space discussion groups at the symposium that seemed to generate great discussion. For next steps, upon adding comments to the scoping document it will be done. Discussions from the symposium will be typed up and added to the new website. Corinne will look at forming working groups in December. In January, there will be a training on the planning approach and goals of the plan.

The Kenai Partnership is currently developing their strategic plan. Bill suggested reviewing Kenai’s objectives for invasive species since it will likely be strong and will be an increasing issue in the Mat-Su.

DNR is tasked with managing invasive plant work for the state – Brianne Blackburn is working on an invasives plan. Sue brought up the point of whether the AK Fish Habitat Partnerships could help in some way(i.e. outreach, trying to coordinate funding requests from the state to leverage efforts).

**NOAA Opportunities**

Eric informed the group about a pending funding opportunity. The restoration and community based funding model has morphed into one. Focus is now more on NMFS mandates of essential fish habitat and ESA. Projects don’t have to be a restoration project anymore, and if a link is shown between habitat( i.e. a stream supporting fish species that in turn are important to Beluga diets), this could strengthen applications.

Application period is from November 27 to February 19. Eric is not clear on total funding available, nor project amounts for individual projects, but will keep us posted with the opening announcement when it comes out. Send questions to Eric or Erika Ammann.

**Statewide AK FHP’s**

***Alaska FHPs Meeting Summary***

See attached meeting minutes

Next meeting is tentatively scheduled for February after the Fish Habitat Excellence workshop.

***Other upcoming AK Fish Partnership Symposiums:***

* Kenai April 17 and 18 in Homer at Islands and Oceans Center
* Juneau – still figuring out dates as want to share a keynote speaker with Kenai
* Southwest – possibly December

**National FHP Update**

***Minimum Benchmarks for NFHP Funding (see forwarded NFHP memo)***

The National team wanted to see that NFHP funds had a minimum standard and adherence to some core tenants of the NFH Action Plan when regional partnerships were doing their ranking for projects applying for funding. They created a list of 8 criteria that the steering committee discussed. There was some lack of clarity with point #2 regarding project alignment/compatibility with other management plans in the area that needs to be brought up at the next national FHP meeting on November 29th.

***Fish Habitat Partnership Excellence Program (see forwarded email)***

The National board has received funding to help individual partnerships with individual organizational support and capacity building ( i.e. effective committee work, financial management, creating a strategic plan, etc.). River Network has been hired to help with this effort.

They are looking to get an idea where each partnership is at in terms of programmatics, staff and volunteers as well as a sense of internal needs and challenges. They want this information from a variety of perspectives and are sending out a survey. The coordinator will fill it out (Corinne and Jessica filled it out together) and are asking as many steering committee members as possible do as well. Corinne will keep you posted with next steps.

Overall responses to the surveys will guide the creation of a curriculum for a national meeting tentatively scheduled January 29th and 30th in Portland. NFHP will pay travel costs for 2 Partnership members to attend. Are Sue and Cecil already planning to attend? This would still leave 2 seats. Corinne would like Jessica to attend as a good learning opportunity for a new coordinator. Would be good to have another member from the Steering Committee.

**Upcoming Events**

* Next NFHP teleconference call, Thursday November 29th, 10-noon AST (Sue can attend)
* **Thursday, November 15, 6pm Menard Center Wasilla**, ADF&G 2012 Season Update with legislators, public is invited
* **Thursday November 29, 2012 6-8pm** **Animal Care Shelter, 9470 E Chanylut Circle, Palmer**: Fish and Wildlife Commission, regular business meeting
* **Thursday, December 6,** **Legislative Information Office, Wasilla 6-8pm?):** FWC Legislator Training about Upper Cook Inlet Fisheries Management Issues provided by Fish and Wildlife Commissioners.

Sam Ivey of ADF&G joined the meeting. Lots of information on UCI King Salmon on King symposium at the ADF&G website. They posted presentations and the last set of presentations focuses on Kings and should hold lots of information.

**Next Meeting:**  January 8th

**Note taker:** Sue

**Facilitator:** Bill

**Action Items/Homework:**

* Follow up with Don Dyer re: hatcheries and economic planning(Bill and economic devel sub-committee)
* Follow up with outreach committee re: topic summaries (Jessica S.)
* Thank you letters to welcome speakers Warren Keogh and Theo Garcia - done (Jessica S.)
* Website search issue (Jessica S./Katrina Mueller)
* Send NOAA funding announcement to committee when it comes out (Eric)