



**Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership Steering Committee
January Meeting - Draft Agenda**

January 12, 2024, 1:00pm to 3:00pm

In-person: Donald E. Gilam River Center, Soldotna

Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/92064166870?pwd=UDNHaVRyWGswWmR0cmxETWtjVnVPZz09>

Attendance:

Steering Committee Members: Samantha Lopez, Jess Johnson, Ben Meyer, Katherine Schake, Maura Schumaker, Emily Mailman, Alexa Millward

Quorum Present? Yes

Partners: Lauren Sutton (KBNERR), Bonnie Bernard (KWF), Brandon Drzazgowski (KWF), Mary Inovejas (DEC), Jason Olive (USFWS)

Agenda:

1. Introductions

2. Partnership Business:

Melissa – I hosted an RFP webinar in December. Recommended using the next two steering committee meetings (Feb and Mar) to discuss project proposals. We will need to meet in February after the deadline on the 9th to begin reviewing. We will invite applicants to speak briefly about their proposal and answer any questions from steering committee members.

KPFHP's Draft Application for Congressional Recognition was submitted to the NFHP Board in December. Thank you to everyone who contributed to editing and content. We should have comments back from the NFHP Board by the end of March.

As a reminder, I will be stepping down as the coordinator at the end of April. After that time, I will be available as needed to wrap up any projects.

Registration is live for the Annual Membership Meeting – 2/9/24 in Homer. Registration includes updating the Partnership Directory.

3. NFHP Updates, Jason Olive, USFWS

Jason gave an overview of NFHP and the ACE Act. The 1:1 nonfederal match requirement for NFHP funded projects applies to the individual project and not the FHP as a whole. Coordination funding is increasing to \$125K. Any increase in coordination funding is taken away from project funding. The Board intends to request that coordination be exempt from the 1:1 match requirement. The Board is currently soliciting three new members. Letters of interest are due by the end of business on 1/16. Board members were allowed to pick what FHP they wanted to pair with under the new Buddy System. Alaska did not receive a lot of interest. Board staff is working on filling the gaps.

4. KBNERR's nearshore fish / intertidal research, Lauren Sutton

Lauren discussed the information gap that exists in baseline knowledge of nearshore ecology, including fish and fish ecology. I am currently finishing up a 4 year project looking at environmental drivers of nearshore communities. Temperature is a major driver. These are important nursery grounds, yet we have little understanding of them. The Marine Conservation Action Plan hasn't been updated since 2011, and need to be updated to reflect range expansion, and anthropogenic threats, such as temperature increase. European green crab is an emerging threat as well.

The group discussed the status of the Marine and Freshwater Conservation Action Plans. The Marine CAP could be discuss/updated at the upcoming K Bay Marine Science Conference and possibly the joint Mat-Su/Kenai FHP Symposium in 2025.

5. KWF FY24 USFWS National Fish Passage Program application, Ben Meyer

Ben - KWF is apply for funding with NFPP to address fish passage at three locations in the lower Kenai area including a tributary of Soldotna Creek, No Name Creek near North Kenai Beach, and Cemetery Creek. Project cost is estimated at \$0.5 to 2 million. Providing a letter of support is not committing the Partnership to any work. KWF will be responsible for keeping the Partnership informed on project updates.

At 1:30pm the Steering Committee voted unanimously to support the KWF's proposal by providing a letter of support. Ben and Maura recused themselves from voting.

6. Partner updates

Katherine – Is requesting a letter of support from the Steering Committee for NOAA Climate Regional Resilience Proposal. KBNERR has partnered with Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, Cook inletkeeper, University of South Florida, and the Conservation Fund on this project. The proposal is for \$30 million for the acquisition of land across the Kenai Peninsula, including wetlands and areas with a high flooding risk.

Samantha – The KPB adopted the new gravel pit ordinances which will be incorporated in October. We are seeking ways to include ground water research into future gravel pit permitting. We also have new Kenai River flood plain maps coming out soon. The appeals process for the maps is almost done and we don't expect any changes to be

made. The maps are accurate. The new Kenai River inundation mapping is live on NOAA's website:

Skilak Lake: <https://water.weather.gov/ahps2/inundation/index.php?gage=skla2>

Soldotna: <https://water.weather.gov/ahps2/inundation/index.php?gage=sxra2>

7. Upcoming events:

- a. Feb 5 – Annual Membership Meeting, Homer
- b. Feb 9 – FY25 RFP applications due

8. Next meeting: TBD February 2024.

- a. Review project proposals

KPFHP Steering Committee Members:

NOAA – Emily Mailman

USFWS – Maura Schumacher

ADFG - Jess Johnson

KPB River Center – Samantha Lopez

USFS – Adam Cross

KWF – Benjamin Meyer

KBNERR – Katherine Schake

Trout Unlimited – Alexa Millward

Headwaters to Ocean – Coowe Walker

Advisors:

Kenai Peninsula Borough – Peter Micciche

USFWS - Mike Daigneault

Next Meeting:

TBD, February 2024

Prepared by:

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