



News from the

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Desert Fish Habitat Partnership

June-July 2010

Welcome to the first DFHP Newsletter!!!

## Meetings

### Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA)

The Western Native Trout Initiative hosted a meeting regarding western-based National Fish Habitat Partnerships on 16 July 2010 in Anchorage, AK. This meeting was held in conjunction with the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies annual summer meeting. The meeting allowed an exchange of information between the seven recognized western partnerships and the 3 candidate partnerships. Key items addressed included developing lines of communications and identifying key watersheds for habitat work in the coming years. Kayla Barrett and Kathryn Boyer attended. Kayla Barrett gave a presentation on the Desert Fish Habitat Partnership (DFHP).

### National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) Science Team

There will be a NFHAP Science Team meeting at the American Fisheries Society (AFS) meeting in Pittsburgh, PA on 15 September 2010. Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs) are invited to participate and comment on the National

Fish Habitat Assessment (NFHA) materials that will be presented.

Kathryn Boyer, Daniel Dauwalter, and Matthew Andersen will participate in this meeting. This session may be accessible by webinar for people that are not available to attend.

### NFHAP Symposium

There will be a NFHAP symposium on the NFHA at the AFS meeting in Pittsburgh, PA on 16 September 2010. Matthew Andersen and Kathryn Boyer will participate in the NFHAP symposium. Kathryn Boyer will deliver a presentation co-authored by Matthew Andersen, Daniel Dauwalter, Jodi Whittier, and Jon Sjoberg entitled, "When Bad is Good: Using Best Available Data to Strategically Arrest Declines of Imperiled Desert Fishes and Their Habitats.

### Desert Fish Habitat Partnership

There will be a DFHP meeting on 16 November 2010 in Moab, UT. All DFHP Steering Committee members and Partners are welcome to attend. The DFHP meeting is being held in conjunction with the Three Species and Desert Fishes Council meetings. The host hotel is the Moab Valley Inn in Moab, UT. If you have not RSVP'd,

please contact DFHP Coordinator, Kayla Barrett.

### **Steering Committee**

Michael Saiki, Fisheries Biologist with the Western Fisheries Research Center, Dixon Duty Station, is replacing Robin Schrock on the DFHP Steering Committee.

Stephanie Carman, New Mexico Department of Game & Fish, has moved to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Headquarters in Washington, DC as of September 13th. She will remain on the DFHP Steering Committee and replace John Moore, one of BLM's current representatives. Gary Garrett, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, is the new Rio Grande Region lead for the DFHP Executive Committee, but for simplicities' sake, Stephanie will remain the co-chair until the DFHP meeting in Moab, UT. Stephanie will also be BLM's representative for the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force and their Western Regional Panel.

### **DFHP Coordinator**

Kayla Barrett is the DFHP's new Coordinator. The DFHP would like to thank Heidi Blasius for all of her hard work, leadership and time spent as the DFHP coordinator.

Kayla Barrett is requesting any DFHP partner state to send informational materials to her so she can include these in her informational booths. Such items can include posters, pictures, fish cards, brochures and/or handouts, etc.

Kayla's contact information is listed on the last page.

Kayla Barrett will enter all Arizona DFHP project proposals into US Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) Fisheries Operational Needs System (FONS). Kayla Barrett will be contacting Fish & Wildlife Conservation Offices (FWCO) to enter in DFHP project proposals for respective partner states.

If anyone on the DFHP Steering Committee or Partners at Large has changed their contact information, please contact Kayla Barrett to update it.

### **DFHP 2011 Project Proposals**

The 2011 DFHP Request for Proposal (RFP) has been announced and distributed. The deadline for submission was 1 August 2010.

Kayla Barrett will circulate proposals and their regional rankings to DFHP Steering Committee 1 September 2010. An ad hoc committee will rank the proposals and make recommendations to the DFHP Steering Committee by 1 October 2010. The full DFHP Steering Committee will review by teleconference on 12 October 2010. The DFHP Executive Committee co-chairs will send a letter indicating our prioritized and ranked proposals to the USFWS representative, Jennifer Fowler-Propst. Jennifer will forward the list of proposals to the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) Board.

## DFHP Funding

The NFHAP Board is seeking recommendations for distribution of funds to FHPs. Kathryn Boyer, DFHP Executive Committee co-chair, submitted the DFHP distribution of funding suggestion to the NFHAP Board.

## DFHP Project Updates

### Red Rock Cienega

Habitat restoration efforts were completed in Red Rock Cienega, NM. Now New Mexico Department of Game & Fish (NMDGF) is working with Arizona Game & Fish Department (AZGFD) and USFWS to establish populations of Gila topminnow and Gila Chub. Gila topminnow was delivered to NMDGF in July 2010, and Gila chub will be delivered in September 2010 (courtesy of AZGFD).



Red Rock Cienega will provide habitat for native fishes, waterfowl, neotropical birds, and amphibians. The project will also increase the recreational value of the Wildlife Area.

### Fairbanks & Soda Springs

In 2009 the DFHP assisted in securing funding for restoration efforts at Fairbanks and Soda Springs on Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, Nevada, with the support of the National Fish Passage Program (NFPP) and the USFWS (Region 8). A proposal submitted to the DFHP under the 2010 RFP was used as an application for NFPP funds which were awarded to Ash Meadows and used to complete several key components of the restoration project during winter 2009-2010. Among those was the restoration of two miles of spring outflow following historic flow patterns, which allowed the discharge from Fairbanks Spring to be returned from old agricultural ditches to sinuous natural channel. Additionally, open box culverts were installed in the spring outflow stream to restore fish passage.



These structures are designed with replaceable baffles that allow the emergency placement of drop barriers to protect restored habitats if nonnative fishes are found in the lower spring outflow in the future. Much work remains to be done including native riparian vegetation restoration and

## DFHP Project Updates

removal of nonnative fishes in parts of the outflow system. Ash Meadows speckled dace were released into the restored upper Fairbanks Spring outflow in April 2010 and appear to be successfully re-establishing in the system for the first time in 50 years with evidence of recruitment observed this summer.

### Myton Diversion

The Duchesne River is a major tributary to the Green River in northeastern Utah with a history of significant water diversions. Major infrastructure was built in this drainage to transfer water from the stream to fields and stock tanks. These physical structures (i.e., dams and diversions) inhibit movement of migratory species by blocking access to habitats and also decreasing instream flows. Upstream fish migration is currently limited by the Myton Diversion, located approximately 43 river miles upstream from the Green River. Members of the Lower Duchesne Workgroup have initiated this project, partially funded with a grant from DFHP, to provide fish passage around the diversion structure to restore access to additional habitats above the Myton Diversion.



Members of the project group, which consists of representatives from USFWS, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, and the Ute Tribe, have identified the best fish passage design for the system. Much of the focus thus far has been on gathering information on habitat and fish from the area. In the very near future they will begin to reach out to landowners and water users in the drainage as they foresee the need for both a Safe Harbor Agreement (SHA) for Colorado pikeminnow and a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) for state sensitive species. Once the SHA and CCAA are in place, they can move forward with NEPA compliance, the state stream alteration permit compliance, and Clean Water Act compliance, and finally the actual construction.

## DFHP Framework

The Executive Committee members have initiated a formal review of the DFHP Operating Structure set forth in the Framework for Strategic Conservation of Desert Fishes. A copy of the Operating Structure has been circulated and all DFHP members should review and propose changes. Everyone must have their proposed edits/modifications for the DFHP Operating Structure submitted to Kayla Barrett by 14 September 2010. A draft that includes edits/modifications will be circulated to DFHP members before the 16 November 2010 DFHP meeting in

## DFHP Framework

Moab, UT. The DFHP Steering Committee will discuss and finalize on DFHP Operating Structure revisions at the DFHP meeting.

Revisions to the Strategic Framework are taking place. We are adding paragraphs to the appendix that describe Trout Unlimited and the Desert Fishes Council.

## National Fish Habitat Assessment

The first NFHA, to be completed in 2010, will characterize the condition of inland and coastal/nearshore habitats in the lower forty-eight contiguous United States. The assessment is being conducted within a geospatial framework constructed using watershed, water body, and ecosystem boundaries. Each geospatial unit is assigned a "score" that corresponds to the level of "disturbance" of the habitats in that unit. A first draft of the NFHA report was available 9 August 2010.

The DFHP ad hoc Science and Data Committee is led by Matthew Andersen and includes Gary Garrett, Stephanie Carman, Jon Sjoberg, Daniel Dauwalter, Paul Scheerer, and Kathryn Boyer. This committee reviewed and provided comments to the initial draft of the NFHA report. The DFHP expressed concern about the applicability to desert fish habitats due to some of the metrics used by the national assessment team

to measure disturbance and the designation of only one geospatial unit for the western US. Subsequent to receiving DFHP's comments to the report, Kathryn Boyer worked with Robin Knox and the writing team to devise a suitable breakout of the western states to provide more accurate assessment of desert fish habitats. Webinars on the NFHA for the FHP representatives will be available in late September 2010 (dates to be determined). One webinar will be focused on the eastern forty eight states, and the other webinar will be focused on the western forty eight states. The second draft of the NFHA will be distributed to FHPs 1 October 2010. The deadline for comments on the second draft is 15 October 2010. Please contact Kayla Barrett if you have any input, concerns, or comments on the NFHA report.

## Fun News

Tom Mendenhall said, "Stephanie Carman's interest, experience, and attitude will be a welcome addition to the Bureau's fish program!"

The DFHP would like to welcome Kayla Barrett aboard as the new Coordinator!

Kayla Barrett married Dominic Barrett on 5 June 2010 in Greer, Arizona.

## Upcoming Events:

### American Fisheries Society Meeting, Pittsburgh, PA

12-16 September 2010

### NFHAP Science Team Meeting, Pittsburg, PA

15 September 2010 (in conjunction with AFS meeting)

(FHPs are invited to participate on National Fish Habitat Assessment materials)

### NFHAP Symposium on National Fish Habitat Assessment, Pittsburg, PA

16 September 2010 (in conjunction with AFS meeting)

### DFHP Conference Call

21 September 2010, 8 AM (Arizona Time)

### DFHP Meeting in Moab, UT

16 November 2010

Host hotel is Moab Valley Inn

### Three Species Meeting, Moab, UT

17 November 2010

### Desert Fishes Council Meeting, Moab, UT

18-21 November 2010

## For more information:

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[www.nature.nps.gov/water/DFH\\_partnership.cfm](http://www.nature.nps.gov/water/DFH_partnership.cfm)

To learn more about the Desert Fish Habitat Partnership, please visit our website.

[www.fishhabitat.org](http://www.fishhabitat.org)

To learn more about Fish Habitat Partnerships, please visit the National Fish Habitat Action Plan website.

*DFHP Purpose: To conserve aquatic habitat in the arid West for desert fishes and the American people by protecting, restoring and enhancing these unique habitats in cooperation with and in support of, state fish and wildlife agencies, federal agencies, Native American tribes, conservation organizations, and individuals.*