



NATIONAL
FISH HABITAT
ACTION PLAN

The Voice of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
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Fact Sheet: National Fish Habitat Action Plan

The National Fish Habitat Action Plan is an unprecedented attempt to address an unseen crisis for fish nationwide: loss and degradation of their watery homes.

The plan was born in 2001 when a steering committee began to pursue the notion of developing a partnership effort for fish on the scale of what was done for waterfowl in the 1980s through the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The waterfowl plan has worked wonders during the past two decades to boost waterfowl populations by forming strong local and regional partnerships to protect key habitats.

The need for a nationally focused fisheries conservation effort was validated by fisheries experts attending a series of regional meetings held by the Council - they were nearly unanimous in their support for the plan. In 2004 the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, which represents all state wildlife agencies, voted to lead the plan. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries are principal Federal partners.

In addition, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (www.morefish.org) is mounting a "More Fish" campaign to raise funds to support the effort. A National Fish Habitat Action Plan (www.fishhabitat.org) was approved by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies for implementation on March 24, 2006 and was publicly launched on April 24, 2006. A number of partnerships, including the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture, the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership, and the Western Trout Initiative have emerged as models of the kind of grassroots action envisioned in the action plan.

The plan has already been unbelievably successful in bringing together fisheries professionals and an unprecedented number of partners with a shared interest in protecting, restoring and enhancing our waterways and fisheries. The strength of this partnership – a unique blend of industry, government, tribal, academic, and conservation groups and individuals – is its diversity and its determination to focus national attention and resources on restoring fish habitats.

The National Fish Habitat Action Plan is:

- Non-regulatory and voluntary; Locally and regionally based, and driven by grassroots partners;
- Focused and targeted toward fisheries protection, restoration and enhancement in key watersheds;
- Based on a consolidation of the best scientific expertise on fisheries and habitat management;
- Linked nationally, to facilitate comprehensive coordination and evaluation of progress; and
- Sustainable and accountable, recognizing the need for long-term investments and demonstrable results.

The Plan will be implemented through the following four strategies:

Together, these approaches will lead to actions that are strategically employed and results that can be measured against protection, restoration and enhancement goals.

- Support existing fish habitat partnerships and foster new efforts.
- Mobilize and focus national and local support for achieving fish habitat conservation goals.
- Measure and communicate the status and needs of aquatic habitats.
- Provide national leadership and coordination to conserve fish habitats.

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ASSOCIATION OF FISH & WILDLIFE AGENCIES

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