



### **What is the National Fish Habitat Partnership?**

The mission of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan is to form partnerships to protect, restore, and enhance the nation's fish and aquatic communities. Angler organizations and conservation groups, industry and scientists, state and federal agencies—all have partnered together to forge this National action plan.

### **What is NOAA Fisheries' Involvement?**

NOAA is working with fish habitat partnerships in the state to protect, conserve, and restore important habitat for NOAA's trust resources, and the aquatic species that live there. Through these partnerships NOAA believes we can ensure that thriving fish, healthy habitats, and economically vital communities co-exist. Work in the partnerships allows for NOAA to assist in local voluntary and non-regulatory grassroots efforts to protect and enhance fish habitat.

### **About Fish Habitat Partnerships in Alaska**

In Alaska we have four partnerships based on geographic regions and one partnership based on species. The four geographic partnerships are the Matanuska Susitna Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership, the Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership, the Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership, and the Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership. Our one partnership based on species is the Western Native Trout Initiative.

These partnerships develop regional strategic plans for conserving, restoring, and protecting fish habitat without the need for regulations. With funding through the Alaska Fish Habitat Partnerships, diverse groups can work together to improve habitat for fish. A few of the achievements of Alaska fish habitat Partnerships include the following:

- **Mat-Su Water Reservation Program Flow Data Acquisition:** This project supported water reservation data gathering on Wasilla Creek and the Kashwitna River for one year. This is part of a five-year effort by the Mat-Su Water Reservation Program to obtain water reservations to preserve salmon habitat.
- **Riparian Revegetation and Shoreline Rehabilitation at Montana Creek:** Nearshore salmon habitat and riparian function were rehabilitated along 30 feet of bank on Montana Creek (a system that supports a significant sport fishery for Chinook and coho salmon) with bioengineering and projects identified for future work.
- **Juvenile Salmon Use of Knik Arm Estuaries:** This project documents estuarine habitat and juvenile salmon use. Data on juvenile salmon presence and water quality was collected at the mouths and estuaries of Cottonwood Creek, Wasilla Creek, Palmer Slough, and O'Brien Creek. Also, an annotated bibliography of past work done in the Cook Inlet environment was created. This information will be used to support habitat protection and restoration measures.
- **Protection of more than 100,000 acres of salmon habitat in Southwest Alaska.**
- **A Freshwater and Marine Plan in the Kenai Peninsula a Freshwater and Marine Plan to prioritize work in the area.**
- **Full partnership status granted to the Southeast Alaska Partnership under the National Fish Habitat Partnership.** The Southeast Alaska Partnership completed a strategic Action Plan to identify collaborative projects; to mitigate potential threats to fish and their habitats; to restore connectivity between fish habitats; and to increase knowledge about fish and their use of freshwater and marine habitats. The plan's conservation strategies encourage collaboration among multiple partners to achieve common objectives that would be difficult for any one partner to accomplish alone.

## **The Partnerships**

### **Matanuska Susitna Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership**

**Board recognized October, 2007**

The Matanuska-Susitna Basin, or Mat-Su, covers 24,500 square miles in southcentral Alaska, roughly the combined size of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. The basin supports thriving populations of Chinook, coho, sockeye, pink and chum salmon as well as world-class rainbow trout, char, and grayling, making it one of the country's premier sportfishing and wildlife viewing destinations. Salmon and other fish are at the heart of Alaskan ecosystems, economy, and culture.

<http://www.matsusalmon.org/>

### **Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership**

**Board recognized, 2008**

The Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership is a made up of local communities, Native organizations, subsistence users, anglers, hunters, commercial fishing interests, lodge owners, hunting and fishing guides, tourism interests, non-profit organizations, federal, state, and local agencies and corporations and foundations working cooperatively to conserve fish, wildlife and habitat and perpetuate the uses they support through voluntary habitat conservation in Southwest Alaska.

<http://www.southwestsalmon.org/>

### **Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership**

**Board recognized January, 2010**

Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership is a conservation partnership developing on the Kenai Peninsula, Alaska. This partnership is working with the National Fish Habitat Action Plan to protect, restore, and enhance our area's fish and aquatic communities.

<http://www.kenaifishpartnership.org/>

### **Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership**

**Board recognized March, 2014**

The Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership works to foster cooperative fish habitat conservation in freshwater, estuarine and marine ecosystems across the southern panhandle of Alaska including the dynamic watersheds and waterways that make up the Alexander Archipelago. Covering nearly 17 million acres of this region is the Tongass National Forest, the largest national forest in the United States and a key producer of salmon. The Partnership's mission is to support cooperative fish habitat conservation, restoration, and management across the region with consideration of economic, social, and cultural interests of local communities in its efforts.

<http://www.seakfhp.org/>

### **Western Native Trout Initiative**

**Board recognized February, 2008**

Trout are important as an "indicator species" of a watershed. When a watershed is in trouble, the trout are the first to die. Species like the greenback cutthroat, gila, and westslope cutthroat trout thrived in Western watersheds until their habitats were altered because of roads, dams, agriculture, and logging. Human introduction of non-native trout species, such as rainbow, brown and brook trout put further pressure on native species by out-competing them for food and by eating native fry. Conservation of Western native trout and their habitats is critical in maintaining their cultural, scientific and recreational value.

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