

Desert Fish Habitat Partnership

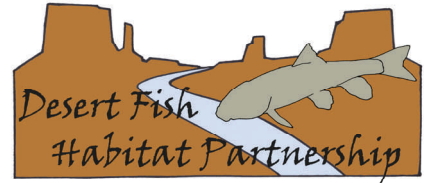
Vol 1 No 3

October-December 2010

Desert Fish Habitat Partnership Annual Meeting was a Great Success!

The Desert Fish Habitat Partnership (DFHP) held their annual meeting in Moab, UT in conjunction with the Desert Fishes Council meeting in November 2010. There were 31 participants representing our state, federal, and non-government partners. The meeting was productive and many decisions were made. Discussion and decision topics included drafting the annual report, finalizing the Operating Structure, drafting bylaws, and updating the Steering and Executive Committees.

At the meeting, Heidi Blasius presented Stephanie Carman, Kathryn Boyer, Jon Sjoberg, and Krissy Wilson with a 2010 Department of Interior (DOI) Partners in Conservation Award, as part of a larger award for those involved in desert fish work in 2010. Jeremy Voeltz was also recognized for his work with the Gila topminnow/desert pupfish restoration project on the South rim of Aravaipa Canyon, Bonita Creek, and Muleshoe in Arizona.



Bringing together people and organizations with a common interest in voluntary conservation of desert fishes and their habitats



DFHP Members at the Annual Meeting in Moab, UT

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Fish passage and channel restoration benefit desert fishes in Muddy Creek, WY

Story provided by Nick Walrath and Dan Dauwalter, Trout Unlimited

Muddy Creek (Little Snake River, Yampa basin) is one of the few remaining watersheds in Wyoming with an intact native fish community that includes Colorado River cutthroat trout, roundtail chub, bluehead sucker, and flannelmouth sucker. For over a decade, Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD), U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and other partners have been working on population restoration, barrier management, non-native species control, and habitat restoration in the watershed.

While the native fish community is intact, there are still habitat issues in Muddy Creek. One persistent problem has been a perched road culvert impassable to fish. A head-cut resulted in stream channel incision for 1,200 ft. downstream and a perched culvert. A new BLM bridge rendered the perched culvert obsolete.

Trout Unlimited received funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) Keystone Initiative program, BLM, and other sources, in part, to remove the culvert and restore the stream channel. This past fall the culvert was removed and more than 2,500 ft. of incised stream channel was reconnected with the

original floodplain. Channel reconstruction included 24 in-stream habitat structures, such as log over-hangs (under-cut banks), log drops, rock weirs, and spawning gravel. Five oxbow wetlands were also created, two of which are connected to the channel and are available as fish habitat. This restored habitat ensures passage and access to spawning and rearing habitat for multiple desert fish species.

While the culvert has been removed, other structures also pose fish passage problems. In the 1980's and 1990's, 13 sheet piling structures were placed in Muddy Creek to arrest channel incision, trap sediment, and raise the water table for riparian restoration. While successful for those purposes, these structures have also resulted in 13 seasonal or complete barriers to native fish passage. WGFD is currently in the midst of a multi-year effort to eradicate non-game fishes. They have now eradicated non-native fishes where most of the sheet piling occurs, and NFWF funds will be used to retrofit these structures to provide fish passage over the coming year. Future work will also entail design of a temporary barrier system to aid in staged chemical treatments for non-native fish eradica-

tion in the lower watershed.



DFHP 2011 Project Proposals

DFHP Regional Representatives solicited, gathered, and regionally ranked projects for the 2011 Request for Proposal (RFP). An Ad hoc committee including Dan Dauwalter, Jeanette Haegele, Jennifer Fowler-Propst, Krissy Wilson, Jeff Sorensen, Jon Sjoberg, and Gary Garrett ranked all submitted proposals. Project rankings were discussed and approved by the DFHP Steering Committee.

Kayla Barrett entered all Arizona DFHP

projects into USFWS Fisheries Operating Needs System (FONS) that were submitted for the 2011 RFP. She also coordinated with Basin and Range and Rio Grande personnel to enter DFHP projects into FONS for respective Region.

Jennifer Fowler-Propst submitted listing of ranked project proposals from DFHP for fiscal year 2011 in response to the USFWS Director's request for NFHAP projects.

Based on the DFHP ranking criteria, listed are the four projects that were prioritized for funding by the Partnership. *All projects are contingent upon available funding.*

Phantom Lake Springs Cienega Habitat Restoration, TX– Flow from Phantom Lake Spring has been continually declining since measurements began in the 1940s. Corresponding aquifer levels in Phantom Cave have dropped 2.5 feet in the last 10 years. Five endemic and highly imperiled species of fish and invertebrates occupy the cienega maintained by the spring flow and their populations are threatened by the declining water and unreliable pumping system now in place. This project will modify the existing cienega to make it larger, more natural, and more reliable. This proposal will also establish temporary captive stocks of four of the five species of concern. The implementing agency is USFWS and partnering agencies are U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and DFHP. DFHP species addressed are Comanche Springs pupfish and Pecos gambusia.

Mud Springs Fish Introduction and Habitat Protection, AZ- This project entails the installation of a fence around Mud Springs near Tonto Basin, AZ, to protect it from cattle and unauthorized cross-country vehicular travel. This spring has a pond with submergent and emergent vegetation. Water seeps into a wetland dominated by clover and spikerush. A pipe and trough will be installed to provide water to cattle outside the fence. Two endangered fish species, Desert pupfish and Gila topminnow, will be introduced into the pond and an information kiosk provided nearby to inform the public. The implementing agency is U.S. Forest Service and partnering agencies/organizations are Tonto National Forest, Arizona Game and Fish Department, USFWS, and DFHP.

Mountain View Creek – Nonnative Species Barrier, NV- A population of Wall Canyon sucker, an undescribed catostomid endemic to the Wall Canyon drainage in Washoe County, NV, persists in Mountain View Creek, a tributary to Wall Canyon Creek downstream of Wall Canyon reservoir. This section of Wall Canyon Creek supports limited populations of nonnative brown trout and crayfish, both of which have had severe implications for the Wall Canyon sucker population in Wall Canyon Creek and could invade Mountain View Creek, similarly impacting the sucker in that stream. This project will work toward design and construction of a barrier that prevents or slows the invasion of the nonnatives. After barrier construction, intensive crayfish trapping will be used to eliminate or drastically reduce the population that exists upstream of the proposed barrier locations. The implementing agency is Nevada Department of Wildlife and partnering agencies are USFWS and DFHP.

2011 Projects Selection continued...

Moapa Dace-Apcar Box Culvert, NV- Apcar Spring is one of 25 thermal springs that help create the Muddy River in Clark County, NV, and historically supported Moapa dace – an endangered monotypic genus of thermophilic minnow endemic to the Warm Springs area. The upper Apcar system was recently rehabilitated and now supports a breeding population of Moapa dace, but is effectively cut off from holding habitat downstream by an undersized culvert under Warm Springs Road. This project would replace the culvert with a box culvert, thus removing a velocity barrier and restoring connectivity for this important portion of the Moapa dace's habitat. The implementing agency is USFWS (Nevada Office) and partnering agencies/organizations are Nevada Department of Wildlife, USGS, BLM, Southern Nevada Water Authority and DFHP.

DFHP Project Updates

Restoration of Fairbanks and Soda Springs at Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge-

In 2009 DFHP assisted in securing funding for restoration efforts at Fairbanks and Soda Springs on the Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, NV, with the support of the National Fish Passage Program (NFPP) and USFWS Region 8. A proposal submitted to 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. Although much work remains to be done including native riparian vegetation restoration and 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.

Update provided by Jon Sjoberg, NDOW.

Red Rocks Cienega- In 2009, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, partnering with Arizona Game and Fish Department and USFWS, received a DFHP grant to restore the cienega at Red Rock Wildlife Area. Following completion of the construction, securing of perennial water, and establishment of native vegetation and invertebrates, the agencies stocked Gila topminnow and Gila chub in 2010. The cienega will provide habitat for native waterfowl, neotropical birds, and amphibians, as well as fish. A boardwalk and signage will increase the recreational and educational value of the wildlife area.

Update provided by Stephanie Carman, BLM.



Gila topminnow released in Red Rocks Cienega

DFHP Project Updates continued...

Myton Diversion: Providing Fish Passage on the Duchesne River in Utah: 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 partners will begin to reach out to landowners and water users in the drainage 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, CCAA, NEPA compliance, the state stream alteration permit compliance, and Clean Water Act compliance are finalized, actual construction will begin. *Update provided by Krissy Wilson, UDWR*



Myton Diversion, Duchesne River, UT

Teaching Kids About Desert Fish

DFHP Executive Committee members, Heidi Blasius and Krissy Wilson, assisted Bruce Hucko, an Art Coach in Moab, Utah in working with Sarah Henderson's 3rd Grade class at Helen M. Knight Elementary to create life-sized paper mache replicas of Utah's native fishes. The paper mache replicas were prominently displayed in the lobby outside of the Desert Fishes Council (DFC) conference room and were used as a talking point during the meeting to highlight the importance of outreach and education to the public, especially children. The students were required to write a report on the fish they created so they could learn more about them and hopefully develop an appreciation for desert fishes. *Story and pictures provided by Heidi Blasius, DFC*



DFHP Coordinator

Kayla Barrett coordinated and facilitated the DFHP Annual Meeting and provided all documents and supplies needed.

Kayla Barrett presented a DFHP poster at the Restoring Rivers in the Southwestern U.S. and Northern Mexico meeting in Tucson, AZ.



Kayla Barrett, Kathryn Boyer, and Jon Sjoberg with DFHP poster at River Restoration Meeting in Tucson.

Executive Committee

The New DFHP Executive Committee Members of 2011-2013 are:

- Jeff Sorensen (AGFD)- State Co-Chair
- Stephanie Carman (BLM)-Federal Co-Chair
- Jeremy Voeltz (USFWS)- Lower Colorado River Regional Representative
- Krissy Wilson (UDWR)-Upper Colorado River Regional Representative
- Jon Sjoberg (NDOW)- Basin and Range Regional Representative
- Megan Bean (TPWD)- Rio Grande Regional Representative
- Stewart Jacks (USFWS)- USFWS Region 2 Representative
- Heidi Blasius (DFC)- NGO Representative

Steering Committee

Stephanie Carman, Kayla Barrett, Kathryn Boyer, and Jennifer Fowler-Propst have updated the Operating Structure in the DFHP's Framework for Strategic Conservation of Desert Fishes. If anyone would like an updated copy, please contact the DFHP Coordinator.

Kayla Barrett, Stephanie Carman, and Jeff Sorensen drafted letters to some DFHP partner agencies and organizations asking for continued support of the DFHP and

requesting representation on the Steering Committee. Letters requesting representation have been sent to Native American Fish and Wildlife Society, Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission, New Mexico Game and Fish Department, U.S. Geological Survey, and Washington Game and Fish Department. Letters confirming representation have been sent to Arizona Game and Fish Department and Colorado Division of Wildlife.

Many Steering and Executive Committee members participated in meetings including Desert Fishes Council, Three Species, and Restoring Rivers in the Southwestern U.S. and Northern Mexico in late 2010.

Thank you to all representatives that have supported the DFHP. Because of your dedication and hard work, we hope to have your continued support in the future.

Call for Assistance on Ad Hoc Committees

If any member of either the Steering or Executive committees, or At-Large Council would like to participate on a DFHP Ad hoc committee, please contact the DFHP Coordinator. Listed below are the current Ad hoc committees and members that will welcome more participants.

- Drafting DFHP Annual Report (Kayla Barrett, Jeff Sorensen, Melissa Trammell, and Stephanie Carman)
- Science and Data (Dan Dauwalter-Chair, John Wullschleger, Gary Garrett, Jeanette Haegele, and Jon Sjoberg)
- Review of 2011 RFP Process (Jeff Sorensen, Jeanette Haegele, Jennifer Fowler-Propst and Kayla Barrett)
- Development of New DFHP Website (Kayla Barrett and Jodi Whittier)
- Outreach and Education (Kayla Barrett, Heidi Blasius, and Megan Bean)
- NFHAP Funding Allocation Framework and FHPs Performance Measures draft document (Jeff Sorensen, Stephanie Carman, and Heidi Blasius)

Call for At-Large Council Members

DFHP invites anyone who is not on the DFHP Steering or Executive Committee to participate on the At-Large Council. This allows you to participate on the DFHP teleconferences, attend the annual meeting, and participate on Ad hoc committees. The only activity that you cannot participate in, as an At-Large Council member, is voting. If you are interested, please contact the DFHP Coordinator.

NFHAP NEWS



The DFHP Steering Committee provided comments on the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) Fish Habitat Assessment Report several times in late 2010. The final draft document is completed and you can access it through NFHAP's website, fishhabitat.org. The official roll out of the document will be during the Casting Call Event in Washington, DC, April 2011.

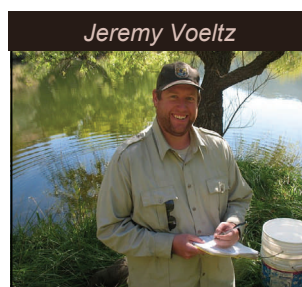
FUN NEWS

The Desert Fish Habitat Partnership has a Facebook page! If you are not one of the 500 million users on Facebook, you should be. The DFHP Facebook page is just starting, but it will have public friendly information posted, pictures, DFHP Newsletters, RFPs, and much more. So check us out because I know it is something that everyone will “like.”

DFHP welcomes Stewart Jacks, Jeremy Voeltz, and Megan Bean to the Executive Committee! Stewart Jacks has been working for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Fisheries Program for 22 years. He has worked in multiple field stations including three in Arizona and one in Texas. Prior to coming to USFWS, Stewart completed a M.S. Degree in Fisheries Ecology from Oklahoma State University. He enjoys spending time with his wife and two sons and being outdoors.

Jeremy Voeltz is a fishery biologist/project coordinator with the USFWS's Arizona Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office. Jeremy works with the Tribes, state, and federal land management agencies on a variety of fisheries management projects, including fish passage projects, habitat restoration, monitoring, and evaluation. Jeremy has worked closely with the Western Native Trout Initiative (WNTI) and has served as project officer for five projects funded through WNTI in Arizona. Prior to joining the Service, Jeremy was a native fish biologist for the Arizona Game and Fish Department where he worked with Gila topminnow, desert pupfish, and roundtail chub. Jeremy was involved in the development of both the Three Species (roundtail chub, bluehead sucker, and flannelmouth sucker) Conservation Agreement and the Arizona State Wildlife Action Plan; both documents that are now used in prioritizing native fish management actions funded through the Desert Fishes Habitat Partnership. Jeremy's hobbies include brewing beer, fishing, hunting, hiking, camping, and golfing.

Megan is a Fish Conservation Ecologist for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. She received her M.S. in Biology with an emphasis in Aquatic Ecology from Texas State University. Her research in the Rio Grande basin began as an undergraduate and she has worked on projects in the basin ever since. Her research interests include watershed conservation and restoration, native and imperiled species ecology and conservation, as well as examining the interactions of biotic and abiotic factors regulating fish assemblages. She also enjoys kayaking, photography, gardening, eating cupcakes, and making cards for Operation Write Home.



Upcoming Events

AFS-TWS Joint Annual Meeting

3-5 February 2011, Pinetop, AZ

Hon-dah Resort Casino and Conference Center

NFHAP Board Meeting

12-13 April 2011, Arlington, VA

NFHAP National Casting Call Event

14 April 2011, Washington, DC

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Meeting

15-20 July 2011, Big Sky, MT

American Fisheries Society Meeting

4-8 September 2011, Seattle, WA

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Megan Bean, Rio Grande Regional Representative

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

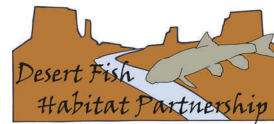
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www.nature.nps.gov/water/DFH_partnership.cfm

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

www.facebook.com



To view DFHP photos, download documents, and learn more, visit the DFHP Facebook page.

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.