

Fish Habitat Strategy Comments

From: CBP Management Board and Local Government Advisory Committee

DRAFT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY
FISH HABITAT

Estimated Percent Complete: 50%

FACTORS INFLUENCING

Natural system

- Fish passage strategies
- Water quality
- Changes in species assemblages
- Climate change (sea level rise, rainfall, storms, temp, salinity, DO changes)
- Water quality (nutrients, toxics) and water flow

Human system

- Ability to define and characterize habitat areas
- Data availability/analysis
- Comprehensive monitoring
- Jurisdictional coordination
- Land use/impervious surface
- Political will (effective policies for habitat protection)

GAPS

- Multi-agency coordination
- Integrating existing info and understanding what tools we have/need

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

- Identify threats to fish habitat (both manageable and unmanageable). Consider Baywide vs. local/regional threats.
- Compile and identify available data on habitats, habitat vulnerabilities, and fish utilization at different life stages.
 - Does this include habitat lost?
- Prioritize challenges and opportunities for protection/restoration, management, and decision-making. Different priorities depending on species, location, etc.
- Improve awareness of positive/negative impacts of actions and associated tradeoffs on fish habitat among local communities and policy-makers. Connect habitat with a sense of place in communities.

Handwritten notes on sticky notes:

- Need to provide design habitat, & delineate that
- Focus on protection of existing habitat
- Look at history of the high-level scale (assuming planning strategies and land use)
- Factors influencing habitat loss: climate change, sea level rise, storms, etc.
- Factors influencing habitat loss: land use, impervious surface, etc.
- The Management Approach is to identify the threats to fish habitat, and then to develop a plan to address those threats.

Management Board Comments

Asterisks indicate a comment that was brought up multiple times.

- **This strategy should address the stressors on the habitat
 - Link overlapping interests of multiple outcomes
 - How do we address these stressors?
 - Factors influencing should be linked to other management strategies (brook trout, etc.)
- **Go one step further than current approach to determine where the priority areas are that we should focus on

- Rank/prioritize areas? High resolution spatial data
- Develop criteria to identify priority places
- Refine mapping and data tools
- Overlay spatial data for multiple species and map current extents
- Use prioritization scheme from other strategies? (ex: healthy watersheds)
- Look at both healthy and unhealthy watersheds
- **How do we affect local land use planning – need to move in that direction
 - Be more specific in the “Improve awareness” management approach and discuss outreach to land use policymakers
- Already mapped fish habitat in the late 1980s/early 1990s – can we update that effort?
- **Focus on protection of existing habitat
 - How do we integrate fish habitat and land conservation
- Look at working at a high-level scale (i.e. accurately determining available cold-water habitat)
- Explain the relationship between the health of forage fish populations and the capacity of the Bay watershed to assimilate nutrients (DE)
- **Relationship between population health and habitat, especially for forage species
- Note the value of artificial habitats
- **Identify a list of key species – region-specific?
- Connect with Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV)
- Identify other gaps (policy change/support, funding aspects)
- **Communication should be addressed
 - Identify fish habitat success stories
- Identify multiple uses of habitat
- Explore modelling approaches of the physical characteristics of habitat areas (convergence zones)
- Discuss current monitoring efforts and the potential for citizen monitoring programs to support this outcome
- Emphasize the importance of the benthos habitats

Local Government Advisory Committee

FISH HABITAT

Section 3.a (local engagement) needs to be addressed. It appears that there IS a specific role for local governments and others. Suggest that a key role for locals (watershed associations, NGOs, e.g. TU, schools, etc.) could be monitoring (relates to Compile Data in Management Approaches). Local governments need to be made aware of the connection between fish

habitat and land use decisions/impervious surface (relates to these management approaches: Identify threats and improve awareness).

Support needed at the local level may include:

Actions – Identification of new partners (not the usual suspects)

Tools – Monitoring Guidance and Equipment; Report on Economic Benefits of improving fish habitat (local governments may relate better if you can show them how they can benefit economically (recreation/tourism) by improving fish habitat).

Technical Support – Training on monitoring techniques

Suggest engaging LGAC at their March meeting to identify additional actions, tools and technical support.

Links to other Management Strategies:

- UTC (tree cover relates to water temp)
- Water Quality (stormwater runoff)
- Citizen Stewardship (adopt a stream to create habitat)
- Local Leadership (improve awareness – tell them why they should care in terms of things that they can relate to (\$\$). Can addressing fish habitat as part of a stormwater project improve chances of grant funding?)