

Calendar No. 378111TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION**S. 1214****[Report No. 111-190]**

To conserve fish and aquatic communities in the United States through partnerships that foster fish habitat conservation, to improve the quality of life for the people of the United States, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 9, 2009

Mr. LIEBERMAN (for himself, Mr. CASEY, Mr. BOND, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. BINGAMAN, and Mr. BENNET) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works

MAY 17, 2010

Reported by Mrs. BOXER, with an amendment

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italie*]**A BILL**

To conserve fish and aquatic communities in the United States through partnerships that foster fish habitat conservation, to improve the quality of life for the people of the United States, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

2 (a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the
3 “National Fish Habitat Conservation Act”.

4 (b) **TABLE OF CONTENTS.**—The table of contents of
5 this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Findings; purpose.
- Sec. 3. Definitions.
- Sec. 4. National Fish Habitat Board.
- Sec. 5. Fish habitat partnerships.
- Sec. 6. Fish habitat conservation projects.
- Sec. 7. National Fish Habitat Conservation Partnership Office.
- Sec. 8. Technical and scientific assistance.
- Sec. 9. Conservation of aquatic habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms on
Federal land.
- Sec. 10. Coordination with States and Indian tribes.
- Sec. 11. Accountability and reporting.
- Sec. 12. Regulations.
- Sec. 13. Effect of Act.
- Sec. 14. Nonapplicability of Federal Advisory Committee Act.
- Sec. 15. Funding.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.**

7 (a) **FINDINGS.**—Congress finds that—

8 (1) healthy populations of fish and other aquat-
9 ie organisms depend on the conservation, protection,
10 restoration, and enhancement of aquatic habitats in
11 the United States;

12 (2) aquatic habitats (including wetlands,
13 streams, rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal and marine
14 ecosystems, and associated riparian upland habitats
15 that buffer those areas from external factors) per-
16 form numerous valuable environmental functions
17 that sustain environmental, social, and cultural val-
18 ues, including recycling nutrients, purifying water,

1 attenuating floods, augmenting and maintaining
2 stream flows, recharging ground water, acting as
3 primary producers in the food chain, and providing
4 essential and significant habitat for plants, fish,
5 wildlife, and other dependent species;

6 (3) the extensive and diverse aquatic habitat re-
7 sources of the United States are of enormous signifi-
8 cance to the economy of the United States, pro-
9 viding—

10 (A) recreation for 44,000,000 anglers;

11 (B) more than 1,000,000 jobs and approxi-
12 mately \$125,000,000,000 in economic impact
13 each year relating to recreational fishing; and

14 (C) approximately 500,000 jobs and an ad-
15 ditional \$35,000,000,000 in economic impact
16 each year relating to commercial fishing;

17 (4) at least 40 percent of all threatened species
18 and endangered species in the United States are di-
19 rectly dependent on aquatic habitats;

20 (5) certain fish species are considered to be eco-
21 logical indicators of aquatic habitat quality, such
22 that the presence of those species in an aquatic eco-
23 system reflects high-quality habitat for other fish;

24 (6) loss and degradation of aquatic habitat, ri-
25 parian habitat, water quality, and water volume

1 caused by activities such as alteration of water-
2 courses, stream blockages, water withdrawals and di-
3 versions, erosion, pollution, sedimentation, and de-
4 struction or modification of wetlands have—

5 (A) caused significant declines in fish pop-
6 ulations throughout the United States, espe-
7 cially declines in native fish populations; and

8 (B) resulted in economic losses to the
9 United States;

10 (7)(A) providing for the conservation and sus-
11 tainability of fish and other aquatic organisms has
12 not been fully realized, despite federally funded fish
13 and wildlife restoration programs and other activi-
14 ties intended to conserve aquatic resources; and

15 (B) that conservation and sustainability may be
16 significantly advanced through a renewed commit-
17 ment and sustained, cooperative efforts that are
18 complementary to existing fish and wildlife restora-
19 tion programs and clean water programs;

20 (8) the National Fish Habitat Action Plan pro-
21 vides a framework for maintaining and restoring
22 aquatic habitats to ensure perpetuation of popu-
23 lations of fish and other aquatic organisms;

24 (9) the United States can achieve significant
25 progress toward providing aquatic habitats for the

1 conservation and restoration of fish and other aquat-
2 ie organisms through a voluntary, nonregulatory in-
3 centive program that is based on technical and fi-
4 nancial assistance provided by the Federal Govern-
5 ment;

6 (10) the creation of partnerships between local
7 citizens, Indian tribes, Alaska Native organizations,
8 corporations, nongovernmental organizations, and
9 Federal, State, and tribal agencies is critical to the
10 success of activities to restore aquatic habitats and
11 ecosystems;

12 (11) the Federal Government has numerous
13 regulatory and land and water management agencies
14 that are critical to the implementation of the Na-
15 tional Fish Habitat Action Plan, including—

16 (A) the United States Fish and Wildlife
17 Service;

18 (B) the Bureau of Land Management;

19 (C) the National Park Service;

20 (D) the Bureau of Reclamation;

21 (E) the Bureau of Indian Affairs;

22 (F) the National Marine Fisheries Service;

23 (G) the Forest Service;

24 (H) the Natural Resources Conservation
25 Service; and

1 (~~I~~) the Environmental Protection Agency;
2 (~~12~~) the United States Fish and Wildlife Serv-
3 ice, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Manage-
4 ment, and the National Marine Fisheries Service
5 each play a vital role in—

6 (~~A~~) the protection, restoration, and en-
7 hancement of the fish communities and aquatic
8 habitats in the United States; and

9 (~~B~~) the development, operation, and long-
10 term success of fish habitat partnerships and
11 project implementation;

12 (~~13~~) the United States Geological Survey, the
13 United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the
14 National Marine Fisheries Service each play a vital
15 role in scientific evaluation, data collection, and
16 mapping for fishery resources in the United States;
17 and

18 (~~14~~) many of the programs for conservation on
19 private farmland, ranchland, and forestland that are
20 carried out by the Secretary of Agriculture, includ-
21 ing the Natural Resources Conservation Service and
22 the State and Private Forestry programs of the For-
23 est Service, are able to significantly contribute to the
24 implementation of the National Fish Habitat Action
25 Plan through the engagement of private landowners.

1 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to encour-
2 age partnerships among public agencies and other inter-
3 ested parties consistent with the mission and goals of the
4 National Fish Habitat Action Plan—

5 (1) to protect and maintain intact and healthy
6 aquatic habitats;

7 (2) to prevent further degradation of aquatic
8 habitats that have been adversely affected;

9 (3) to reverse declines in the quality and quan-
10 tity of aquatic habitats to improve the overall health
11 of fish and other aquatic organisms;

12 (4) to increase the quality and quantity of
13 aquatic habitats that support a broad natural diver-
14 sity of fish and other aquatic species;

15 (5) to improve fisheries habitat in a manner
16 that leads to improvement of the annual economic
17 output from recreational, subsistence, and commer-
18 cial fishing;

19 (6) to ensure coordination and facilitation of ac-
20 tivities carried out by Federal departments and
21 agencies under the leadership of—

22 (A) the Director of the United States Fish
23 and Wildlife Service;

1 (B) the Assistant Administrator for Fish-
2 eries of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric
3 Administration; and

4 (C) the Director of the United States Geo-
5 logical Survey; and

6 (7) to achieve other purposes in accordance
7 with the mission and goals of the National Fish
8 Habitat Action Plan.

9 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

10 In this Act:

11 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
12 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
13 mittees” means—

14 (A) the Committee on Commerce, Science,
15 and Transportation and the Committee on En-
16 vironment and Public Works of the Senate; and

17 (B) the Committee on Natural Resources
18 of the House of Representatives.

19 (2) AQUATIC HABITAT.—

20 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “aquatic
21 habitat” means any area on which an aquatic
22 organism depends, directly or indirectly, to
23 carry out the life processes of the organism, in-
24 cluding an area used by the organism for

1 spawning, incubation, nursery, rearing, growth
2 to maturity, food supply, or migration.

3 (B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “aquatic
4 habitat” includes an area adjacent to an aquat-
5 ic environment, if the adjacent area—

6 (i) contributes an element, such as the
7 input of detrital material or the promotion
8 of a planktonic or insect population pro-
9 viding food, that makes fish life possible;

10 (ii) protects the quality and quantity
11 of water sources;

12 (iii) provides public access for the use
13 of fishery resources; or

14 (iv) serves as a buffer protecting the
15 aquatic environment.

16 (3) ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR.—The term
17 “Assistant Administrator” means the Assistant Ad-
18 ministrator for Fisheries of the National Oceanic
19 and Atmospheric Administration.

20 (4) BOARD.—The term “Board” means the Na-
21 tional Fish Habitat Board established by section
22 4(a)(1).

23 (5) CONSERVATION; CONSERVE; MANAGE; MAN-
24 AGEMENT.—The terms “conservation”, “conserve”,
25 “manage”, and “management” mean to protect, sus-

1 tain, and, where appropriate, restore and enhance,
 2 using methods and procedures associated with mod-
 3 ern scientific resource programs (including protec-
 4 tion, research, census, law enforcement, habitat
 5 management, propagation, live trapping and trans-
 6 plantation, and regulated taking)—

7 (A) a healthy population of fish, wildlife,
 8 or plant life;

9 (B) a habitat required to sustain fish, wild-
 10 life, or plant life; or

11 (C) a habitat required to sustain fish, wild-
 12 life, or plant life productivity.

13 (6) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means
 14 the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife
 15 Service.

16 (7) FISH.—

17 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “fish” means
 18 any freshwater, diadromous, estuarine, or ma-
 19 rine finfish or shellfish.

20 (B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “fish” in-
 21 cludes the egg, spawn, spat, larval, and other
 22 juvenile stages of an organism described in sub-
 23 paragraph (A).

24 (8) FISH HABITAT CONSERVATION PROJECT.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “fish habitat
2 conservation project” means a project that—

3 (i) is submitted to the Board by a
4 Partnership and approved by the Secretary
5 under section 6; and

6 (ii) provides for the conservation or
7 management of an aquatic habitat.

8 (B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “fish habitat
9 conservation project” includes—

10 (i) the provision of technical assist-
11 ance to a State, Indian tribe, or local com-
12 munity by the National Fish Habitat Con-
13 servation Partnership Office or any other
14 agency to facilitate the development of
15 strategies and priorities for the conserva-
16 tion of aquatic habitats; or

17 (ii) the obtaining of a real property
18 interest in land or water, including water
19 rights, in accordance with terms and condi-
20 tions that ensure that the real property
21 will be administered for the long-term con-
22 servation of—

23 (I) the land or water; and

24 (II) the fish dependent on the
25 land or water.

1 (9) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian tribe”
 2 has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the
 3 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance
 4 Act (25 U.S.C. 450b).

5 (10) NATIONAL FISH HABITAT ACTION PLAN.—
 6 The term “National Fish Habitat Action Plan”
 7 means the National Fish Habitat Action Plan dated
 8 April 24, 2006, and any subsequent revisions or
 9 amendments to that plan.

10 (11) PARTNERSHIP.—The term “Partnership”
 11 means an entity designated by the Board as a Fish
 12 Habitat Conservation Partnership pursuant to sec-
 13 tion 5(a).

14 (12) REAL PROPERTY INTEREST.—The term
 15 “real property interest” means an ownership interest
 16 in—

17 (A) land;

18 (B) water (including water rights); or

19 (C) a building or object that is perma-
 20 nently affixed to land.

21 (13) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary”
 22 means the Secretary of the Interior.

23 (14) STATE AGENCY.—The term “State agen-
 24 cy” means—

25 (A) the fish and wildlife agency of a State;

1 (B) any department or division of a de-
 2 partment or agency of a State that manages in
 3 the public trust the inland or marine fishery re-
 4 sources of the State pursuant to State law or
 5 the constitution of the State; or

6 (C) the fish and wildlife agency of the
 7 Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Vir-
 8 gin Islands, or any other territory or possession
 9 of the United States.

10 **SEC. 4. NATIONAL FISH HABITAT BOARD.**

11 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—There is established a board,
 13 to be known as the “National Fish Habitat
 14 Board”—

15 (A) to promote, oversee, and coordinate the
 16 implementation of this Act and the National
 17 Fish Habitat Action Plan;

18 (B) to establish national goals and prior-
 19 ities for aquatic habitat conservation;

20 (C) to designate Partnerships; and

21 (D) to review and make recommendations
 22 regarding fish habitat conservation projects.

23 (2) MEMBERSHIP.—The Board shall be com-
 24 posed of 27 members, of whom—

25 (A) 1 shall be the Director;

1 (B) 1 shall be the Assistant Administrator;

2 (C) 1 shall be the Chief of the Natural Re-
3 sources Conservation Service;

4 (D) 1 shall be the Chief of the Forest
5 Service;

6 (E) 1 shall be the Assistant Administrator
7 for Water of the Environmental Protection
8 Agency;

9 (F) 1 shall be the President of the Associa-
10 tion of Fish and Wildlife Agencies;

11 (G) 1 shall be the Secretary of the Board
12 of Directors of the National Fish and Wildlife
13 Foundation appointed pursuant to section
14 3(g)(2)(B) of the National Fish and Wildlife
15 Foundation Establishment Act (16 U.S.C.
16 3702(g)(2)(B));

17 (H) 4 shall be representatives of State
18 agencies, 1 of whom shall be nominated by a re-
19 gional association of fish and wildlife agencies
20 from each of the Northeast, Southeast, Mid-
21 west, and Western regions of the United States;

22 (I) 1 shall be a representative of the Amer-
23 ican Fisheries Society;

24 (J) 2 shall be representatives of Indian
25 tribes, of whom—

1 (i) 1 shall represent Indian tribes
2 from the State of Alaska; and

3 (ii) 1 shall represent Indian tribes
4 from the other States;

5 (K) 1 shall be a representative of the Re-
6 gional Fishery Management Councils estab-
7 lished under section 302 of the Magnuson-Ste-
8 vens Fishery Conservation and Management
9 Act (~~16 U.S.C. 1852~~);

10 (L) 1 shall be a representative of the Ma-
11 rine Fisheries Commissions, which is composed
12 of—

13 (i) the Atlantic States Marine Fish-
14 eries Commission;

15 (ii) the Gulf States Marine Fisheries
16 Commission; and

17 (iii) the Pacific States Marine Fish-
18 eries Commission;

19 (M) 1 shall be a representative of the
20 Sportfishing and Boating Partnership Council;
21 and

22 (N) 10 shall be representatives selected
23 from each of the following groups:

24 (i) The recreational sportfishing in-
25 dustry.

- 1 (ii) The commercial fishing industry.
- 2 (iii) Marine recreational anglers.
- 3 (iv) Freshwater recreational anglers.
- 4 (v) Terrestrial resource conservation
- 5 organizations.
- 6 (vi) Aquatic resource conservation or-
- 7 ganizations.
- 8 (vii) The livestock and poultry produc-
- 9 tion industry.
- 10 (viii) The land development industry.
- 11 (ix) The row crop industry.
- 12 (x) Natural resource commodity inter-
- 13 ests, such as petroleum or mineral extrac-
- 14 tion.

15 (3) COMPENSATION.—A member of the Board

16 shall serve without compensation.

17 (4) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the

18 Board shall be allowed travel expenses, including per

19 diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for

20 an employee of an agency under subchapter I of

21 chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while

22 away from the home or regular place of business of

23 the member in the performance of the duties of the

24 Board.

25 (b) APPOINTMENT AND TERMS.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise pro-
2 vided in this subsection, a member of the Board de-
3 scribed in any of subparagraphs (H) through (N) of
4 subsection (a)(2) shall serve for a term of 3 years.

5 (2) INITIAL BOARD MEMBERSHIP.—Not later
6 than 180 days after the date of enactment of this
7 Act, the representatives of the board established by
8 the National Fish Habitat Action Plan shall appoint
9 the initial members of the Board described in sub-
10 paragraphs (H) through (N) of subsection (a)(2).

11 (3) TRANSITIONAL TERMS.—Of the members
12 described in subsection (a)(2)(N) initially appointed
13 to the Board—

14 (A) 4 shall be appointed for a term of 1
15 year;

16 (B) 4 shall be appointed for a term of 2
17 years; and

18 (C) 3 shall be appointed for a term of 3
19 years.

20 (4) VACANCIES.—A vacancy of a member of the
21 Board described in any of subparagraphs (H)
22 through (N) of subsection (a)(2) shall be filled by an
23 appointment made by the remaining members of the
24 Board.

1 (5) CONTINUATION OF SERVICE.—An individual
 2 whose term of service as a member of the Board ex-
 3 pires may continue to serve on the Board until a
 4 successor is appointed.

5 (6) REMOVAL.—If a member of the Board de-
 6 scribed in any of subparagraphs (H) through (N) of
 7 subsection (a)(2) misses 3 consecutive regularly
 8 scheduled Board meetings, the members of the
 9 Board may—

10 (A) vote to remove that member; and

11 (B) appoint another individual in accord-
 12 ance with paragraph (4).

13 (c) CHAIRPERSON.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall elect a
 15 member of the Board to serve as Chairperson of the
 16 Board.

17 (2) TERM.—The Chairperson of the Board shall
 18 serve for a term of 3 years.

19 (d) MEETINGS.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall meet—

21 (A) at the call of the Chairperson; but

22 (B) not less frequently than twice each cal-
 23 endar year.

24 (2) PUBLIC ACCESS.—All meetings of the
 25 Board shall be open to the public.

1 (e) PROCEDURES.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall establish
3 procedures to carry out the business of the Board,
4 including—

5 (A) a requirement that a quorum of the
6 members of the Board be present to transact
7 business;

8 (B) a requirement that no recommenda-
9 tions may be adopted by the Board, except by
10 the vote of $\frac{2}{3}$ of all members present and vot-
11 ing;

12 (C) procedures for establishing national
13 goals and priorities for aquatic habitat con-
14 servation for the purposes of this Act;

15 (D) procedures for designating Partner-
16 ships under section 5; and

17 (E) procedures for reviewing, evaluating,
18 and making recommendations regarding fish
19 habitat conservation projects.

20 (2) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of
21 the Board shall constitute a quorum.

22 **SEC. 5. FISH HABITAT PARTNERSHIPS.**

23 (a) AUTHORITY TO DESIGNATE.—The Board may
24 designate Fish Habitat Partnerships in accordance with
25 this section.

1 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of a Partnership shall
2 be—

3 (1) to coordinate the implementation of the Na-
4 tional Fish Habitat Action Plan at a regional level;

5 (2) to identify strategic priorities for fish habi-
6 tat conservation;

7 (3) to recommend to the Board fish habitat
8 conservation projects that address a strategic pri-
9 ority of the Board; and

10 (4) to develop and carry out fish habitat con-
11 servation projects.

12 (c) APPLICATIONS.—An entity seeking to be des-
13 igned as a Partnership shall submit to the Board an
14 application at such time, in such manner, and containing
15 such information as the Board may reasonably require.

16 (d) APPROVAL.—The Board may approve an applica-
17 tion for a Partnership submitted under subsection (c) if
18 the Board determines that the applicant—

19 (1) includes representatives of a diverse group
20 of public and private partners, including Federal,
21 State, or local governments, nonprofit entities, In-
22 dian tribes, and private individuals, that are focused
23 on conservation of aquatic habitats to achieve results
24 across jurisdictional boundaries on public and pri-
25 vate land;

1 (2) is organized to promote the health of impor-
2 tant aquatic habitats and distinct geographical
3 areas, keystone fish species, or system types, includ-
4 ing reservoirs, natural lakes, coastal and marine en-
5 vironments, and estuaries;

6 (3) identifies strategic fish and aquatic habitat
7 priorities for the Partnership area in the form of
8 geographical focus areas or key stressors or impair-
9 ments to facilitate strategic planning and decision-
10 making;

11 (4) is able to address issues and priorities on a
12 nationally significant scale;

13 (5) includes a governance structure that—

14 (A) reflects the range of all partners; and

15 (B) promotes joint strategic planning and
16 decisionmaking by the applicant;

17 (6) demonstrates completion of, or significant
18 progress toward the development of, a strategic plan
19 to address the causes of system decline in fish popu-
20 lations, rather than simply treating symptoms in ac-
21 cordance with the National Fish Habitat Action
22 Plan; and

23 (7) ensures collaboration in developing a stra-
24 tegic vision and implementation program that is sci-
25 entifically sound and achievable.

1 **SEC. 6. FISH HABITAT CONSERVATION PROJECTS.**

2 (a) SUBMISSION TO BOARD.—Not later than March
3 31 of each calendar year, each Partnership shall submit
4 to the Board a list of fish habitat conservation projects
5 recommended by the Partnership for annual funding
6 under this Act.

7 (b) RECOMMENDATIONS BY BOARD.—Not later than
8 July 1 of each calendar year, the Board shall submit to
9 the Secretary a description, including estimated costs, of
10 each fish habitat conservation project that the Board rec-
11 ommends that the Secretary approve and fund under this
12 Act, in order of priority, for the following fiscal year.

13 (c) CONSIDERATIONS.—The Board shall select each
14 fish habitat conservation project to be recommended to the
15 Secretary under subsection (b)—

16 (1) based on a recommendation of the Partner-
17 ship that is, or will be, participating actively in ear-
18 rying out the fish habitat conservation project; and

19 (2) after taking into consideration—

20 (A) the extent to which the fish habitat
21 conservation project fulfills a purpose of this
22 Act or a goal of the National Fish Habitat Ac-
23 tion Plan;

24 (B) the extent to which the fish habitat
25 conservation project addresses the national pri-
26 orities established by the Board;

1 (C) the availability of sufficient non-Fed-
2 eral funds to match Federal contributions for
3 the fish habitat conservation project, as re-
4 quired by subsection (e);

5 (D) the extent to which the fish habitat
6 conservation project—

7 (i) increases fishing opportunities for
8 the public;

9 (ii) will be carried out through a coop-
10 erative agreement among Federal, State,
11 and local governments, Indian tribes, and
12 private entities;

13 (iii) increases public access to land or
14 water;

15 (iv) advances the conservation of fish
16 and wildlife species that are listed, or are
17 candidates to be listed, as threatened spe-
18 cies or endangered species under the En-
19 dangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C.
20 1531 et seq.);

21 (v) where appropriate, advances the
22 conservation of fish and fish habitats
23 under the Magnuson-Stevens Act (16
24 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.) and other relevant

1 Federal law and State wildlife action plans;
2 and

3 (vi) promotes resilience such that de-
4 sired biological communities are able to
5 persist and adapt to environmental
6 stressors such as climate change; and

7 (E) the substantiality of the character and
8 design of the fish habitat conservation project.

9 (d) LIMITATIONS.—

10 (1) REQUIREMENTS FOR EVALUATION.—No
11 fish habitat conservation project may be rec-
12 ommended by the Board under subsection (b) or
13 provided financial assistance under this Act unless
14 the fish habitat conservation project includes an
15 evaluation plan designed—

16 (A) to appropriately assess the biological,
17 ecological, or other results of the habitat protec-
18 tion, restoration, or enhancement activities ear-
19 ried out using the assistance;

20 (B) to reflect appropriate changes to the
21 fish habitat conservation project if the assess-
22 ment substantiates that the fish habitat con-
23 servation project objectives are not being met;
24 and

1 (C) to require the submission to the Board
2 of a report describing the findings of the assess-
3 ment.

4 (2) ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY INTER-
5 ESTS.—

6 (A) IN GENERAL.—No fish habitat con-
7 servation project that will result in the acquisi-
8 tion by the Secretary, in whole or in part, of
9 any real property interest may be recommended
10 by the Board under subsection (b) or provided
11 financial assistance under this Act unless the
12 project meets the requirements of subparagraph
13 (B).

14 (B) REQUIREMENTS.—

15 (i) IN GENERAL.—A real property in-
16 terest acquired by the Secretary pursuant
17 to a fish habitat conservation project may
18 not be conveyed to a State, public agency,
19 or other entity unless—

20 (I) the Secretary determines that
21 the State, agency, or other entity is
22 obligated to undertake the manage-
23 ment of the property being conveyed
24 in accordance with the purposes of
25 this Act; and

1 (II) the deed or other instrument
2 of transfer contains provisions for the
3 reversion to the United States of title
4 to the property if the State, agency,
5 or other entity fails to manage the
6 property in accordance with the pur-
7 poses of this Act.

8 (ii) ~~ADDITIONAL CONVEYANCE CONDI-~~
9 ~~TIONS.—~~Any real property interest ac-
10 quired by the Secretary pursuant to a fish
11 habitat conservation project that is con-
12 veyed under clause (i) shall be subject to
13 terms and conditions that ensure that the
14 interest will be administered for the long-
15 term conservation and management of the
16 aquatic ecosystem and the fish and wildlife
17 dependent on that ecosystem.

18 (c) ~~NON-FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS.—~~

19 (1) ~~IN GENERAL.—~~Except as provided in para-
20 graph (2), no fish habitat conservation project may
21 be recommended by the Board under subsection (b)
22 or provided financial assistance under this Act un-
23 less at least 50 percent of the cost of the fish habi-
24 tat conservation project will be funded with non-
25 Federal funds.

1 (2) ~~PROJECTS ON FEDERAL LAND OR WATER.—~~

2 Notwithstanding paragraph (1), Federal funds may
3 be used for payment of 100 percent of the costs of
4 a fish habitat conservation project located on Fed-
5 eral land or water, including the acquisition of
6 inholdings within such land or water.

7 (3) ~~NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—~~The non-Federal
8 share of the cost of a fish habitat conservation
9 project—

10 (A) may not be derived from a Federal
11 grant program; but

12 (B) may include in-kind contributions and
13 cash.

14 (4) ~~SPECIAL RULE FOR INDIAN TRIBES.—~~Not-
15 withstanding paragraph (1) or any other provision of
16 law, any funds made available to an Indian tribe
17 pursuant to this Act may be considered to be non-
18 Federal funds for the purpose of paragraph (1).

19 (f) ~~CONSIDERATION BY SECRETARY.—~~

20 (1) ~~IN GENERAL.—~~Not later than 180 days
21 after the date of receipt of the recommendations of
22 the Board for fish habitat conservation projects
23 under subsection (b), the Secretary shall approve,
24 reject, or reorder the priority of each such rec-

1 ommendation based on, to the maximum extent
2 practicable, the criteria described in subsection (c).

3 (2) FUNDING.—If the Secretary approves a fish
4 habitat conservation project under paragraph (1),
5 the Secretary shall use amounts made available to
6 carry out this Act to provide funds to carry out the
7 fish habitat conservation project.

8 (3) NOTIFICATION BY SECRETARY.—If the Sec-
9 retary rejects or reorders the priority of any fish
10 habitat conservation project recommended by the
11 Board under subsection (b), the Secretary shall pro-
12 vide to the Board and the appropriate Partnership
13 a written statement of the reasons that the Sec-
14 retary rejected or modified the priority of the fish
15 habitat conservation project.

16 **SEC. 7. NATIONAL FISH HABITAT CONSERVATION PART-**
17 **NERSHIP OFFICE.**

18 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 1 year after
19 the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall estab-
20 lish an office, to be known as the “National Fish Habitat
21 Conservation Partnership Office”, within the United
22 States Fish and Wildlife Service.

23 (b) FUNCTIONS.—The National Fish Habitat Con-
24 servation Partnership Office shall—

1 (1) provide funding for the operational needs of
2 the Partnerships, including funding for activities
3 such as planning, project development and imple-
4 mentation, coordination, monitoring, evaluation,
5 communication, and outreach;

6 (2) provide funding to support the detail of
7 State and tribal fish and wildlife staff to the Office;

8 (3) facilitate the cooperative development and
9 approval of Partnerships;

10 (4) assist the Secretary and the Board in ear-
11 rying out this Act;

12 (5) assist the Secretary in carrying out the re-
13 quirements of sections 8 and 10;

14 (6) facilitate communication, cohesiveness, and
15 efficient operations for the benefit of Partnerships
16 and the Board;

17 (7) facilitate, with assistance from the Director,
18 the Assistant Administrator, and the President of
19 the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the
20 consideration of fish habitat conservation projects by
21 the Board;

22 (8) provide support to the Director regarding
23 the development and implementation of the inter-
24 agency operational plan under subsection (c);

1 (9) coordinate technical and scientific reporting
2 as required by section 11;

3 (10) facilitate the efficient use of resources and
4 activities of Federal departments and agencies to
5 carry out this Act in an efficient manner; and

6 (11) provide support to the Board for national
7 communication and outreach efforts that promote
8 public awareness of fish habitat conservation.

9 (c) INTERAGENCY OPERATIONAL PLAN.—Not later
10 than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, and
11 every 5 years thereafter, the Director, in cooperation with
12 the Assistant Administrator and the heads of other appro-
13 priate Federal departments and agencies, shall develop an
14 interagency operational plan for the National Fish Habi-
15 tat Conservation Partnership Office that describes—

16 (1) the functional, operational, technical, sci-
17 entific, and general staff, administrative, and mate-
18 rial needs of the Office; and

19 (2) any interagency agreements between or
20 among Federal departments and agencies to address
21 those needs.

22 (d) STAFF AND SUPPORT.—

23 (1) DEPARTMENTS OF INTERIOR AND COM-
24 MERCE.—The Director and the Assistant Adminis-
25 trator shall each provide appropriate staff to support

1 the National Fish Habitat Conservation Partnership
2 Office, subject to the availability of funds under sec-
3 tion 15.

4 (2) STATES AND INDIAN TRIBES.—Each State
5 and Indian tribe is encouraged to provide staff to
6 support the National Fish Habitat Conservation
7 Partnership Office.

8 (3) DETAILEES AND CONTRACTORS.—The Na-
9 tional Fish Habitat Conservation Partnership Office
10 may accept staff or other administrative support
11 from other entities—

12 (A) through interagency details; or

13 (B) as contractors.

14 (4) QUALIFICATIONS.—The staff of the Na-
15 tional Fish Habitat Conservation Partnership Office
16 shall include members with education and experience
17 relating to the principles of fish, wildlife, and aquat-
18 ie habitat conservation.

19 (5) WAIVER OF REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary
20 may waive all or part of the non-Federal contribu-
21 tion requirement under section 6(e)(1) if the Sec-
22 retary determines that—

23 (A) no reasonable means are available
24 through which the affected applicant can meet
25 the requirement; and

1 (B) the probable benefit of the relevant
2 fish habitat conservation project outweighs the
3 public interest in meeting the requirement.

4 (e) REPORTS.—Not less frequently than once each
5 year, the Director shall provide to the Board a report de-
6 scribing the activities of the National Fish Habitat Con-
7 servation Partnership Office.

8 **SEC. 8. TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ASSISTANCE.**

9 The Director, the Assistant Administrator, and the
10 Director of the United States Geological Survey, in coordi-
11 nation with the Forest Service and other appropriate Fed-
12 eral departments and agencies, shall provide scientific and
13 technical assistance to the Partnerships, participants in
14 fish habitat conservation projects, and the Board, includ-
15 ing by—

16 (1) providing technical and scientific assistance
17 to States, Indian tribes, regions, local communities,
18 and nongovernmental organizations in the develop-
19 ment and implementation of Partnerships;

20 (2) providing technical and scientific assistance
21 to Partnerships for habitat assessment, strategic
22 planning, and prioritization;

23 (3) supporting the development and implemen-
24 tation of fish habitat conservation projects that are

1 identified as high priorities by Partnerships and the
2 Board;

3 (4) supporting and providing recommendations
4 regarding the development of science-based moni-
5 toring and assessment approaches for implementa-
6 tion through Partnerships;

7 (5) supporting and providing recommendations
8 for a national fish habitat assessment; and

9 (6) ensuring the availability of experts to con-
10 duct scientifically based evaluation and reporting of
11 the results of fish habitat conservation projects.

12 **SEC. 9. CONSERVATION OF AQUATIC HABITAT FOR FISH**
13 **AND OTHER AQUATIC ORGANISMS ON FED-**
14 **ERAL LAND.**

15 To the extent consistent with the mission and author-
16 ity of the applicable department or agency, the head of
17 each Federal department and agency responsible for ac-
18 quiring, managing, or disposing of Federal land or water
19 shall cooperate with the Assistant Administrator and the
20 Director to conserve the aquatic habitats for fish and
21 other aquatic organisms within the land and water of the
22 department or agency.

23 **SEC. 10. COORDINATION WITH STATES AND INDIAN TRIBES.**

24 The Secretary shall provide a notice to, and coordi-
25 nate with, the appropriate State agency or tribal agency,

1 as applicable, of each State and Indian tribe within the
2 boundaries of which an activity is planned to be carried
3 out pursuant to this Act by not later than 30 days before
4 the date on which the activity is implemented.

5 **SEC. 11. ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING.**

6 (a) **IMPLEMENTATION REPORTS.—**

7 (1) **IN GENERAL.—**Not later than 2 years after
8 the date of enactment of this Act, and every 2 years
9 thereafter, the Board shall submit to the appropriate
10 congressional committees a report describing the im-
11 plementation of—

12 (A) this Act; and

13 (B) the National Fish Habitat Action
14 Plan.

15 (2) **CONTENTS.—**Each report submitted under
16 paragraph (1) shall include—

17 (A) an estimate of the number of acres,
18 stream miles, or acre-feet (or other suitable
19 measure) of aquatic habitat that was protected,
20 restored, or enhanced under the National Fish
21 Habitat Action Plan by Federal, State, or local
22 governments, Indian tribes, or other entities in
23 the United States during the 2-year period end-
24 ing on the date of submission of the report;

1 (B) a description of the public access to
2 aquatic habitats protected, restored, or estab-
3 lished under the National Fish Habitat Action
4 Plan during that 2-year period;

5 (C) a description of the opportunities for
6 public fishing established under the National
7 Fish Habitat Action Plan during that period;
8 and

9 (D) an assessment of the status of fish
10 habitat conservation projects carried out with
11 funds provided under this Act during that pe-
12 riod, disaggregated by year, including—

13 (i) a description of the fish habitat
14 conservation projects recommended by the
15 Board under section 6(b);

16 (ii) a description of each fish habitat
17 conservation project approved by the Sec-
18 retary under section 6(f), in order of pri-
19 ority for funding;

20 (iii) a justification for—

21 (I) the approval of each fish
22 habitat conservation project; and

23 (II) the order of priority for
24 funding of each fish habitat conserva-
25 tion project;

1 (iv) a justification for any rejection or
2 reordering of the priority of each fish habi-
3 tat conservation project recommended by
4 the Board under section 6(b) that was
5 based on a factor other than the criteria
6 described in section 6(e); and

7 (v) an accounting of expenditures by
8 Federal, State, or local governments, In-
9 dian tribes, or other entities to carry out
10 fish habitat conservation projects.

11 (b) STATUS AND TRENDS REPORT.—Not later than
12 December 31, 2010, and every 5 years thereafter, the
13 Board shall submit to the appropriate congressional com-
14 mittees a report describing the status of aquatic habitats
15 in the United States.

16 (c) REVISIONS.—Not later than December 31, 2011,
17 and every 5 years thereafter, the Board shall revise the
18 goals and other elements of the National Fish Habitat Ac-
19 tion Plan, after consideration of each report required by
20 subsection (b).

21 **SEC. 12. REGULATIONS.**

22 The Secretary may promulgate such regulations as
23 the Secretary determines to be necessary to carry out this
24 Act.

1 **SEC. 13. EFFECT OF ACT.**

2 (a) **WATER RIGHTS.**—

3 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—Nothing in this Act—

4 (A) establishes any express or implied re-
5 served water right in the United States for any
6 purpose;

7 (B) affects any water right in existence on
8 the date of enactment of this Act; or

9 (C) affects any Federal or State law in ex-
10 istence on the date of enactment of the Act re-
11 garding water quality or water quantity.

12 (2) **AUTHORITY TO ACQUIRE WATER RIGHTS.**—

13 The Secretary may acquire, under State law, such
14 water rights as the Secretary determines to be nec-
15 essary to carry out this Act.

16 (b) **STATE AUTHORITY.**—Nothing in this Act—

17 (1) affects the authority, jurisdiction, or respon-
18 sibility of a State to manage, control, or regulate
19 fish and wildlife under the laws and regulations of
20 the State; or

21 (2) authorizes the Secretary to control or regu-
22 late within a State the fishing or hunting of fish and
23 wildlife.

24 (c) **EFFECT ON INDIAN TRIBES.**—Nothing in this
25 Act abrogates, abridges, affects, modifies, supersedes, or

1 alters any right of an Indian tribe recognized by treaty
 2 or any other means, including—

3 (1) an agreement between the Indian tribe and
 4 the United States;

5 (2) Federal law (including regulations);

6 (3) an Executive order; or

7 (4) a judicial decree.

8 (d) ADJUDICATION OF WATER RIGHTS.—Nothing in
 9 this Act diminishes or affects the ability of the Secretary
 10 to join an adjudication of rights to the use of water pursu-
 11 ant to subsection (a), (b), or (c) of section 208 of the De-
 12 partment of Justice Appropriation Act, 1953 (43 U.S.C.
 13 666).

14 (e) EFFECT ON OTHER AUTHORITIES.—

15 (1) ACQUISITION OF LAND AND WATER.—Noth-
 16 ing in this Act alters or otherwise affects the au-
 17 thorities, responsibilities, obligations, or powers of
 18 the Secretary to acquire land, water, or an interest
 19 in land or water under any other provision of law.

20 (2) PRIVATE PROPERTY PROTECTION.—Nothing
 21 in this Act permits the use of funds made available
 22 to carry out this Act to acquire real property or a
 23 real property interest without the written consent of
 24 each owner of the real property or real property in-
 25 terest.

1 (3) MITIGATION.—Nothing in this Act permits
2 the use of funds made available to carry out this Act
3 for fish and wildlife mitigation purposes under—

4 (A) the Federal Water Pollution Control
5 Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.);

6 (B) the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act
7 (16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.);

8 (C) the Water Resources Development Act
9 of 1986 (Public Law 99–662; 100 Stat. 4082);

10 or

11 (D) any other Federal law or court settle-
12 ment.

13 **SEC. 14. NONAPPLICABILITY OF FEDERAL ADVISORY COM-**
14 **MITTEE ACT.**

15 The Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.)
16 shall not apply to—

17 (1) the Board; or

18 (2) any Partnership.

19 **SEC. 15. FUNDING.**

20 (a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

21 (1) FISH HABITAT CONSERVATION PROJECTS.—

22 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-
23 retary \$75,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2010
24 through 2014 to provide funds for fish habitat con-
25 servation projects approved under section 6(f), of

1 which 5 percent shall be made available for each fis-
2 cal year for projects carried out by Indian tribes.

3 ~~(2) NATIONAL FISH HABITAT CONSERVATION~~
4 ~~PARTNERSHIP OFFICE.—~~

5 (A) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to
6 be appropriated to the Secretary for each of fis-
7 cal years 2010 through 2014 for the National
8 Fish Habitat Conservation Partnership Office,
9 and to carry out section 11, an amount equal
10 to the greater of—

11 (i) \$3,000,000; and

12 (ii) 25 percent of the amount appro-
13 priated for the applicable fiscal year pursu-
14 ant to paragraph (1).

15 (B) REQUIRED TRANSFERS.—The Sec-
16 retary shall transfer such percentage of the
17 amounts made available pursuant to subpara-
18 graph (A) as is required under section 7 to sup-
19 port participation by other Federal departments
20 and agencies in the National Fish Habitat Con-
21 servation Partnership Office.

22 ~~(3) TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ASSISTANCE.—~~

23 There are authorized to be appropriated for each of
24 fiscal years 2010 through 2014 to carry out, and

1 provide technical and scientific assistance under, sec-
2 tion 8—

3 (A) \$10,000,000 to the Secretary for use
4 by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service;

5 (B) \$10,000,000 to the Assistant Adminis-
6 trator for use by the National Oceanic and At-
7 mospheric Administration; and

8 (C) \$10,000,000 to the Secretary for use
9 by the United States Geological Survey.

10 (4) PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATIVE EX-
11 PENSES.—There is authorized to be appropriated to
12 the Secretary for each of fiscal years 2010 through
13 2014 for use by the Board, the Director, and the
14 Assistant Administrator for planning and adminis-
15 trative expenses an amount equal to the greater of—

16 (A) \$300,000; and

17 (B) 4 percent of the amount appropriated
18 for the applicable fiscal year pursuant to para-
19 graph (1).

20 (5) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Funds made
21 available under this subsection shall remain available
22 until expended.

23 (b) AGREEMENTS AND GRANTS.—The Secretary
24 may—

1 (1) on the recommendation of the Board, and
2 notwithstanding sections 6304 and 6305 of title 31,
3 United States Code, and the Federal Financial As-
4 sistance Management Improvement Act of 1999 (31
5 U.S.C. 6101 note; Public Law 106–107), enter into
6 a grant agreement, cooperative agreement, or con-
7 tract with a Partnership or other entity for a fish
8 habitat conservation project or restoration or en-
9 hancement project;

10 (2) apply for, accept, and use a grant from any
11 individual or entity to carry out the purposes of this
12 Act; and

13 (3) make funds available to any Federal depart-
14 ment or agency for use by that department or agen-
15 cy to provide grants for any fish habitat protection
16 project, restoration project, or enhancement project
17 that the Secretary determines to be consistent with
18 this Act.

19 (c) DONATIONS.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may—

21 (A) enter into an agreement with any orga-
22 nization described in section 501(c)(3) of the
23 Internal Revenue Code of 1986 that is exempt
24 from taxation under section 501(a) of that

1 Code to solicit private donations to carry out
2 the purposes of this Act; and

3 ~~(B) accept donations of funds, property,~~
4 ~~and services to carry out the purposes of this~~
5 ~~Act.~~

6 ~~(2) TREATMENT.—A donation accepted under~~
7 ~~this section—~~

8 ~~(A) shall be considered to be a gift or be-~~
9 ~~quest to, or otherwise for the use of, the United~~
10 ~~States; and~~

11 ~~(B) may be—~~

12 ~~(i) used directly by the Secretary; or~~

13 ~~(ii) provided to another Federal de-~~
14 ~~partment or agency through an inter-~~
15 ~~agency agreement.~~

16 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

17 *(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Na-*
18 *tional Fish Habitat Conservation Act”.*

19 *(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this*
20 *Act is as follows:*

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Findings; purpose.

Sec. 3. Definitions.

Sec. 4. National Fish Habitat Board.

Sec. 5. Fish habitat partnerships.

Sec. 6. Fish habitat conservation projects.

Sec. 7. National Fish Habitat Conservation Partnership Office.

Sec. 8. Technical and scientific assistance.

*Sec. 9. Conservation of aquatic habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms on
Federal land.*

Sec. 10. Coordination with States and Indian tribes.

Sec. 11. Accountability and reporting.

Sec. 12. Regulations.

Sec. 13. Effect of Act.

Sec. 14. Nonapplicability of Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Sec. 15. Funding.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.**

2 (a) *FINDINGS.*—Congress finds that—

3 (1) *healthy populations of fish and other aquatic*
4 *organisms depend on the conservation, protection, res-*
5 *toration, and enhancement of aquatic habitats in the*
6 *United States;*

7 (2) *aquatic habitats (including wetlands,*
8 *streams, rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal and marine*
9 *ecosystems, and associated riparian upland habitats*
10 *that buffer those areas from external factors) perform*
11 *numerous valuable environmental functions that sus-*
12 *tain environmental, social, and cultural values, in-*
13 *cluding recycling nutrients, purifying water, attenu-*
14 *ating floods, augmenting and maintaining stream*
15 *flows, recharging ground water, acting as primary*
16 *producers in the food chain, and providing essential*
17 *and significant habitat for plants, fish, wildlife, and*
18 *other dependent species;*

19 (3) *the extensive and diverse aquatic habitat re-*
20 *sources of the United States are of enormous signifi-*
21 *cance to the economy of the United States, pro-*
22 *viding—*

23 (A) *recreation for 44,000,000 anglers;*

1 (B) more than 1,000,000 jobs and approxi-
2 mately \$125,000,000,000 in economic impact
3 each year relating to recreational fishing; and

4 (C) approximately 500,000 jobs and an ad-
5 ditional \$35,000,000,000 in economic impact
6 each year relating to commercial fishing;

7 (4) at least 40 percent of all threatened species
8 and endangered species in the United States are di-
9 rectly dependent on aquatic habitats;

10 (5) certain fish species are considered to be eco-
11 logical indicators of aquatic habitat quality, such that
12 the presence of those species in an aquatic ecosystem
13 reflects high-quality habitat for other fish;

14 (6) loss and degradation of aquatic habitat, ri-
15 parian habitat, water quality, and water volume
16 caused by activities such as alteration of water-
17 courses, stream blockages, water withdrawals and di-
18 versions, erosion, pollution, sedimentation, and de-
19 struction or modification of wetlands have—

20 (A) caused significant declines in fish popu-
21 lations throughout the United States, especially
22 declines in native fish populations; and

23 (B) resulted in economic losses to the
24 United States;

1 (7)(A) *providing for the conservation and sus-*
2 *tainability of fish and other aquatic organisms has*
3 *not been fully realized, despite federally funded fish*
4 *and wildlife restoration programs and other activities*
5 *intended to conserve aquatic resources; and*

6 (B) *that conservation and sustainability may be*
7 *significantly advanced through a renewed commit-*
8 *ment and sustained, cooperative efforts that are com-*
9 *plementary to existing fish and wildlife restoration*
10 *programs and clean water programs;*

11 (8) *the National Fish Habitat Action Plan pro-*
12 *vides a framework for maintaining and restoring*
13 *aquatic habitats to ensure perpetuation of popu-*
14 *lations of fish and other aquatic organisms;*

15 (9) *the United States can achieve significant*
16 *progress toward providing aquatic habitats for the*
17 *conservation and restoration of fish and other aquatic*
18 *organisms through a voluntary, nonregulatory incen-*
19 *tive program that is based on technical and financial*
20 *assistance provided by the Federal Government;*

21 (10) *the creation of partnerships between local*
22 *citizens, Indian tribes, Alaska Native organizations,*
23 *corporations, nongovernmental organizations, and*
24 *Federal, State, and tribal agencies is critical to the*

1 *success of activities to restore aquatic habitats and*
2 *ecosystems;*

3 *(11) the Federal Government has numerous regu-*
4 *latory and land and water management agencies that*
5 *are critical to the implementation of the National*
6 *Fish Habitat Action Plan, including—*

7 *(A) the United States Fish and Wildlife*
8 *Service;*

9 *(B) the Bureau of Land Management;*

10 *(C) the National Park Service;*

11 *(D) the Bureau of Reclamation;*

12 *(E) the Bureau of Indian Affairs;*

13 *(F) the National Marine Fisheries Service;*

14 *(G) the Forest Service;*

15 *(H) the Natural Resources Conservation*
16 *Service; and*

17 *(I) the Environmental Protection Agency;*

18 *(12) the United States Fish and Wildlife Service,*
19 *the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management,*
20 *and the National Marine Fisheries Service each play*
21 *a vital role in—*

22 *(A) the protection, restoration, and enhance-*
23 *ment of the fish communities and aquatic habi-*
24 *tats in the United States; and*

1 (B) the development, operation, and long-
2 term success of fish habitat partnerships and
3 project implementation;

4 (13) the United States Geological Survey, the
5 United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Na-
6 tional Marine Fisheries Service each play a vital role
7 in scientific evaluation, data collection, and mapping
8 for fishery resources in the United States; and

9 (14) many of the programs for conservation on
10 private farmland, ranchland, and forestland that are
11 carried out by the Secretary of Agriculture, including
12 the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the
13 State and Private Forestry programs of the Forest
14 Service, are able to significantly contribute to the im-
15 plementation of the National Fish Habitat Action
16 Plan through the engagement of private landowners.

17 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to encourage
18 partnerships among public agencies and other interested
19 parties consistent with the mission and goals of the Na-
20 tional Fish Habitat Action Plan—

21 (1) to protect and maintain intact and healthy
22 aquatic habitats;

23 (2) to prevent further degradation of aquatic
24 habitats that have been adversely affected;

1 (3) to reverse declines in the quality and quan-
2 tity of aquatic habitats to improve the overall health
3 of fish and other aquatic organisms;

4 (4) to increase the quality and quantity of
5 aquatic habitats that support a broad natural diver-
6 sity of fish and other aquatic species;

7 (5) to improve fisheries habitat in a manner that
8 leads to improvement of the annual economic output
9 from recreational, subsistence, and commercial fish-
10 ing;

11 (6) to ensure coordination and facilitation of ac-
12 tivities carried out by Federal departments and agen-
13 cies under the leadership of—

14 (A) the Director of the United States Fish
15 and Wildlife Service;

16 (B) the Assistant Administrator for Fish-
17 eries of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric
18 Administration; and

19 (C) the Director of the United States Geo-
20 logical Survey; and

21 (7) to achieve other purposes in accordance with
22 the mission and goals of the National Fish Habitat
23 Action Plan.

24 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

25 *In this Act:*

1 (1) *APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-*
2 *TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional commit-*
3 *tees” means—*

4 (A) *the Committee on Commerce, Science,*
5 *and Transportation and the Committee on Envi-*
6 *ronment and Public Works of the Senate; and*

7 (B) *the Committee on Natural Resources of*
8 *the House of Representatives.*

9 (2) *AQUATIC HABITAT.—*

10 (A) *IN GENERAL.—The term “aquatic habi-*
11 *tat” means any area on which an aquatic orga-*
12 *nism depends, directly or indirectly, to carry out*
13 *the life processes of the organism, including an*
14 *area used by the organism for spawning, incuba-*
15 *tion, nursery, rearing, growth to maturity, food*
16 *supply, or migration.*

17 (B) *INCLUSIONS.—The term “aquatic habi-*
18 *tat” includes an area adjacent to an aquatic en-*
19 *vironment, if the adjacent area—*

20 (i) *contributes an element, such as the*
21 *input of detrital material or the promotion*
22 *of a planktonic or insect population pro-*
23 *viding food, that makes fish life possible;*

24 (ii) *protects the quality and quantity*
25 *of water sources;*

1 (iii) provides public access for the use
2 of fishery resources; or

3 (iv) serves as a buffer protecting the
4 aquatic environment.

5 (3) ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “As-
6 sistant Administrator” means the Assistant Adminis-
7 trator for Fisheries of the National Oceanic and At-
8 mospheric Administration.

9 (4) BOARD.—The term “Board” means the Na-
10 tional Fish Habitat Board established by section
11 4(a)(1).

12 (5) CONSERVATION; CONSERVE; MANAGE; MAN-
13 AGEMENT.—The terms “conservation”, “conserve”,
14 “manage”, and “management” mean to protect, sus-
15 tain, and, where appropriate, restore and enhance,
16 using methods and procedures associated with modern
17 scientific resource programs (including protection, re-
18 search, census, law enforcement, habitat management,
19 propagation, live trapping and transplantation, and
20 regulated taking)—

21 (A) a healthy population of fish, wildlife, or
22 plant life;

23 (B) a habitat required to sustain fish, wild-
24 life, or plant life; or

1 (C) a habitat required to sustain fish, wild-
2 life, or plant life productivity.

3 (6) *DIRECTOR.*—The term “Director” means the
4 Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Serv-
5 ice.

6 (7) *FISH.*—

7 (A) *IN GENERAL.*—The term “fish” means
8 any freshwater, diadromous, estuarine, or ma-
9 rine finfish or shellfish.

10 (B) *INCLUSIONS.*—The term “fish” includes
11 the egg, spawn, spat, larval, and other juvenile
12 stages of an organism described in subparagraph
13 (A).

14 (8) *FISH HABITAT CONSERVATION PROJECT.*—

15 (A) *IN GENERAL.*—The term “fish habitat
16 conservation project” means a project that—

17 (i) is submitted to the Board by a
18 Partnership and approved by the Secretary
19 under section 6; and

20 (ii) provides for the conservation or
21 management of an aquatic habitat.

22 (B) *INCLUSIONS.*—The term “fish habitat
23 conservation project” includes—

24 (i) the provision of technical assistance
25 to a State, Indian tribe, or local community

1 by the National Fish Habitat Conservation
 2 Partnership Office or any other agency to
 3 facilitate the development of strategies and
 4 priorities for the conservation of aquatic
 5 habitats; or

6 (ii) the obtaining of a real property
 7 interest in land or water, including water
 8 rights, in accordance with terms and condi-
 9 tions that ensure that the real property will
 10 be administered for the long-term conserva-
 11 tion of—

12 (I) the land or water; and

13 (II) the fish dependent on the land
 14 or water.

15 (9) *INDIAN TRIBE*.—The term “Indian tribe” has
 16 the meaning given the term in section 4 of the Indian
 17 Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25
 18 U.S.C. 450b).

19 (10) *NATIONAL FISH HABITAT ACTION PLAN*.—
 20 The term “National Fish Habitat Action Plan”
 21 means the National Fish Habitat Action Plan dated
 22 April 24, 2006, and any subsequent revisions or
 23 amendments to that plan.

24 (11) *PARTNERSHIP*.—The term “Partnership”
 25 means an entity designated by the Board as a Fish

1 *Habitat Conservation Partnership pursuant to section*
2 5(a).

3 (12) *REAL PROPERTY INTEREST.*—*The term*
4 “*real property interest*” *means an ownership interest*
5 *in—*

6 (A) *land;*

7 (B) *water (including water rights); or*

8 (C) *a building or object that is permanently*
9 *affixed to land.*

10 (13) *SECRETARY.*—*The term “Secretary” means*
11 *the Secretary of the Interior.*

12 (14) *STATE AGENCY.*—*The term “State agency”*
13 *means—*

14 (A) *the fish and wildlife agency of a State;*

15 (B) *any department or division of a depart-*
16 *ment or agency of a State that manages in the*
17 *public trust the inland or marine fishery re-*
18 *sources or the habitat for those fishery resources*
19 *of the State pursuant to State law or the con-*
20 *stitution of the State; or*

21 (C) *the fish and wildlife agency of the Com-*
22 *monwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Is-*
23 *lands, or any other territory or possession of the*
24 *United States.*

1 **SEC. 4. NATIONAL FISH HABITAT BOARD.**

2 (a) *ESTABLISHMENT.*—

3 (1) *IN GENERAL.*—*There is established a board,*
4 *to be known as the “National Fish Habitat Board”—*

5 (A) *to promote, oversee, and coordinate the*
6 *implementation of this Act and the National*
7 *Fish Habitat Action Plan;*

8 (B) *to establish national goals and prior-*
9 *ities for aquatic habitat conservation;*

10 (C) *to designate Partnerships; and*

11 (D) *to review and make recommendations*
12 *regarding fish habitat conservation projects.*

13 (2) *MEMBERSHIP.*—*The Board shall be composed*
14 *of 27 members, of whom—*

15 (A) *1 shall be the Director;*

16 (B) *1 shall be the Assistant Administrator;*

17 (C) *1 shall be the Chief of the Natural Re-*
18 *sources Conservation Service;*

19 (D) *1 shall be the Chief of the Forest Serv-*
20 *ice;*

21 (E) *1 shall be the Assistant Administrator*
22 *for Water of the Environmental Protection Agen-*
23 *cy;*

24 (F) *1 shall be the President of the Associa-*
25 *tion of Fish and Wildlife Agencies;*

1 (G) 1 shall be the Secretary of the Board of
2 Directors of the National Fish and Wildlife
3 Foundation appointed pursuant to section
4 3(g)(2)(B) of the National Fish and Wildlife
5 Foundation Establishment Act (16 U.S.C.
6 3702(g)(2)(B));

7 (H) 4 shall be representatives of State agen-
8 cies, 1 of whom shall be nominated by a regional
9 association of fish and wildlife agencies from
10 each of the Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, and
11 Western regions of the United States;

12 (I) 1 shall be a representative of the Amer-
13 ican Fisheries Society;

14 (J) 2 shall be representatives of Indian
15 tribes, of whom—

16 (i) 1 shall represent Indian tribes from
17 the State of Alaska; and

18 (ii) 1 shall represent Indian tribes
19 from the other States;

20 (K) 1 shall be a representative of the Re-
21 gional Fishery Management Councils established
22 under section 302 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fish-
23 ery Conservation and Management Act (16
24 U.S.C. 1852);

1 (L) 1 shall be a representative of the Marine
2 Fisheries Commissions, which is composed of—

3 (i) the Atlantic States Marine Fish-
4 eries Commission;

5 (ii) the Gulf States Marine Fisheries
6 Commission; and

7 (iii) the Pacific States Marine Fish-
8 eries Commission;

9 (M) 1 shall be a representative of the
10 Sportfishing and Boating Partnership Council;
11 and

12 (N) 10 shall be representatives selected from
13 each of the following groups:

14 (i) The recreational sportfishing indus-
15 try.

16 (ii) The commercial fishing industry.

17 (iii) Marine recreational anglers.

18 (iv) Freshwater recreational anglers.

19 (v) Terrestrial resource conservation
20 organizations.

21 (vi) Aquatic resource conservation or-
22 ganizations.

23 (vii) The livestock and poultry produc-
24 tion industry.

25 (viii) The land development industry.

1 *(ix) The row crop industry.*

2 *(x) Natural resource commodity inter-*
3 *ests, such as petroleum or mineral extrac-*
4 *tion.*

5 (3) *COMPENSATION.*—*A member of the Board*
6 *shall serve without compensation.*

7 (4) *TRAVEL EXPENSES.*—*A member of the Board*
8 *shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem*
9 *in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for an em-*
10 *ployee of an agency under subchapter I of chapter 57*
11 *of title 5, United States Code, while away from the*
12 *home or regular place of business of the member in*
13 *the performance of the duties of the Board.*

14 (b) *APPOINTMENT AND TERMS.*—

15 (1) *IN GENERAL.*—*Except as otherwise provided*
16 *in this subsection, a member of the Board described*
17 *in any of subparagraphs (H) through (N) of sub-*
18 *section (a)(2) shall serve for a term of 3 years.*

19 (2) *INITIAL BOARD MEMBERSHIP.*—

20 (A) *IN GENERAL.*—*Not later than 180 days*
21 *after the date of enactment of this Act, the rep-*
22 *resentatives of the board established by the Na-*
23 *tional Fish Habitat Action Plan shall appoint*
24 *the initial members of the Board described in*

1 subparagraphs (H) through (I) and (K) through
2 (N) of subsection (a)(2).

3 (B) *TRIBAL REPRESENTATIVES.*—Not later
4 than 180 days after the enactment of this Act,
5 the Secretary shall provide to the board estab-
6 lished by the National Fish Habitat Action Plan
7 a recommendation of not less than 4 tribal rep-
8 resentatives, from which that board shall appoint
9 2 representatives pursuant to subparagraph (J)
10 of subsection (a)(2).

11 (3) *TRANSITIONAL TERMS.*—Of the members de-
12 scribed in subsection (a)(2)(N) initially appointed to
13 the Board—

14 (A) 4 shall be appointed for a term of 1
15 year;

16 (B) 4 shall be appointed for a term of 2
17 years; and

18 (C) 3 shall be appointed for a term of 3
19 years.

20 (4) *VACANCIES.*—

21 (A) *IN GENERAL.*—A vacancy of a member
22 of the Board described in any of subparagraphs
23 (H) through (I) or (K) through (N) of subsection
24 (a)(2) shall be filled by an appointment made by
25 the remaining members of the Board.

1 (B) *TRIBAL REPRESENTATIVES.*—*Following*
2 *a vacancy of a member of the Board described in*
3 *subparagraph (J) of subsection (a)(2), the Sec-*
4 *retary shall recommend to the Board not less*
5 *than 4 tribal representatives, from which the re-*
6 *maining members of the Board shall appoint a*
7 *representative to fill the vacancy.*

8 (5) *CONTINUATION OF SERVICE.*—*An individual*
9 *whose term of service as a member of the Board ex-*
10 *pires may continue to serve on the Board until a suc-*
11 *cessor is appointed.*

12 (6) *REMOVAL.*—*If a member of the Board de-*
13 *scribed in any of subparagraphs (H) through (N) of*
14 *subsection (a)(2) misses 3 consecutive regularly sched-*
15 *uled Board meetings, the members of the Board*
16 *may—*

17 (A) *vote to remove that member; and*

18 (B) *appoint another individual in accord-*
19 *ance with paragraph (4).*

20 (c) *CHAIRPERSON.*—

21 (1) *IN GENERAL.*—*The Board shall elect a mem-*
22 *ber of the Board to serve as Chairperson of the Board.*

23 (2) *TERM.*—*The Chairperson of the Board shall*
24 *serve for a term of 3 years.*

25 (d) *MEETINGS.*—

1 (1) *IN GENERAL.*—*The Board shall meet—*

2 (A) *at the call of the Chairperson; but*

3 (B) *not less frequently than twice each cal-*
4 *endar year.*

5 (2) *PUBLIC ACCESS.*—*All meetings of the Board*
6 *shall be open to the public.*

7 (e) *PROCEDURES.*—

8 (1) *IN GENERAL.*—*The Board shall establish pro-*
9 *cedures to carry out the business of the Board, includ-*
10 *ing—*

11 (A) *a requirement that a quorum of the*
12 *members of the Board be present to transact*
13 *business;*

14 (B) *a requirement that no recommendations*
15 *may be adopted by the Board, except by the vote*
16 *of $\frac{2}{3}$ of all members present and voting;*

17 (C) *procedures for establishing national*
18 *goals and priorities for aquatic habitat conserva-*
19 *tion for the purposes of this Act;*

20 (D) *procedures for designating Partnerships*
21 *under section 5; and*

22 (E) *procedures for reviewing, evaluating,*
23 *and making recommendations regarding fish*
24 *habitat conservation projects.*

1 (2) *QUORUM.*—A majority of the members of the
2 Board shall constitute a quorum.

3 **SEC. 5. FISH HABITAT PARTNERSHIPS.**

4 (a) *AUTHORITY TO DESIGNATE.*—The Board may des-
5 ignate Fish Habitat Partnerships in accordance with this
6 section.

7 (b) *PURPOSES.*—The purposes of a Partnership shall
8 be—

9 (1) to coordinate the implementation of the Na-
10 tional Fish Habitat Action Plan at a regional level;

11 (2) to identify strategic priorities for fish habitat
12 conservation;

13 (3) to recommend to the Board fish habitat con-
14 servation projects that address a strategic priority of
15 the Board; and

16 (4) to develop and carry out fish habitat con-
17 servation projects.

18 (c) *APPLICATIONS.*—An entity seeking to be designated
19 as a Partnership shall submit to the Board an application
20 at such time, in such manner, and containing such infor-
21 mation as the Board may reasonably require.

22 (d) *APPROVAL.*—The Board may approve an applica-
23 tion for a Partnership submitted under subsection (c) if the
24 Board determines that the applicant—

1 (1) includes representatives of a diverse group of
2 public and private partners, including Federal, State,
3 or local governments, nonprofit entities, Indian tribes,
4 and private individuals, that are focused on conserva-
5 tion of aquatic habitats to achieve results across jurisdic-
6 tional boundaries on public and private land;

7 (2) is organized to promote the health of impor-
8 tant aquatic habitats and distinct geographical areas,
9 keystone fish species, or system types, including res-
10 ervoirs, natural lakes, coastal and marine environ-
11 ments, and estuaries;

12 (3) identifies strategic fish and aquatic habitat
13 priorities for the Partnership area in the form of geo-
14 graphical focus areas or key stressors or impairments
15 to facilitate strategic planning and decisionmaking;

16 (4) is able to address issues and priorities on a
17 nationally significant scale;

18 (5) includes a governance structure that—

19 (A) reflects the range of all partners; and

20 (B) promotes joint strategic planning and
21 decisionmaking by the applicant;

22 (6) demonstrates completion of, or significant
23 progress toward the development of, a strategic plan
24 to address the causes of system decline in fish popu-
25 lations, rather than simply treating symptoms in ac-

1 *cordance with the National Fish Habitat Action*
 2 *Plan; and*

3 *(7) ensures collaboration in developing a stra-*
 4 *tegic vision and implementation program that is sci-*
 5 *entifically sound and achievable.*

6 **SEC. 6. FISH HABITAT CONSERVATION PROJECTS.**

7 *(a) SUBMISSION TO BOARD.—Not later than March 31*
 8 *of each calendar year, each Partnership shall submit to the*
 9 *Board a list of fish habitat conservation projects rec-*
 10 *ommended by the Partnership for annual funding under*
 11 *this Act.*

12 *(b) RECOMMENDATIONS BY BOARD.—Not later than*
 13 *July 1 of each calendar year, the Board shall submit to*
 14 *the Secretary a description, including estimated costs, of*
 15 *each fish habitat conservation project that the Board rec-*
 16 *ommends that the Secretary approve and fund under this*
 17 *Act, in order of priority, for the following fiscal year.*

18 *(c) CONSIDERATIONS.—The Board shall select each fish*
 19 *habitat conservation project to be recommended to the Sec-*
 20 *retary under subsection (b)—*

21 *(1) based on a recommendation of the Partner-*
 22 *ship that is, or will be, participating actively in car-*
 23 *rying out the fish habitat conservation project; and*

24 *(2) after taking into consideration—*

1 (A) *the extent to which the fish habitat con-*
2 *servaion project fulfills a purpose of this Act or*
3 *a goal of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan;*

4 (B) *the extent to which the fish habitat con-*
5 *servaion project addresses the national priorities*
6 *established by the Board;*

7 (C) *the availability of sufficient non-Fed-*
8 *eral funds to match Federal contributions for the*
9 *fish habitat conservaion project, as required by*
10 *subsection (e);*

11 (D) *the extent to which the fish habitat con-*
12 *servaion project—*

13 (i) *increases fishing opportunities for*
14 *the public;*

15 (ii) *will be carried out through a coop-*
16 *erative agreement among Federal, State,*
17 *and local governments, Indian tribes, and*
18 *private entities;*

19 (iii) *increases public access to land or*
20 *water;*

21 (iv) *advances the conservaion of fish*
22 *and wildlife species that are listed, or are*
23 *candidates to be listed, as threatened species*
24 *or endangered species under the Endangered*

1 *Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et*
2 *seq.);*

3 *(v) where appropriate, advances the*
4 *conservation of fish and fish habitats under*
5 *the Magnuson-Stevens Act (16 U.S.C. 1801*
6 *et seq.) and other relevant Federal law and*
7 *State wildlife action plans; and*

8 *(vi) promotes resilience such that de-*
9 *sired biological communities are able to per-*
10 *sist and adapt to environmental stressors*
11 *such as climate change; and*

12 *(E) the substantiality of the character and*
13 *design of the fish habitat conservation project.*

14 *(d) LIMITATIONS.—*

15 *(1) REQUIREMENTS FOR EVALUATION.—No fish*
16 *habitat conservation project may be recommended by*
17 *the Board under subsection (b) or provided financial*
18 *assistance under this Act unless the fish habitat con-*
19 *servation project includes an evaluation plan de-*
20 *signed—*

21 *(A) to appropriately assess the biological,*
22 *ecological, or other results of the habitat protec-*
23 *tion, restoration, or enhancement activities car-*
24 *ried out using the assistance;*

1 (B) to reflect appropriate changes to the fish
2 habitat conservation project if the assessment
3 substantiates that the fish habitat conservation
4 project objectives are not being met; and

5 (C) to require the submission to the Board
6 of a report describing the findings of the assess-
7 ment.

8 (2) ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY INTER-
9 ESTS.—

10 (A) IN GENERAL.—No fish habitat conserva-
11 tion project that will result in the acquisition by
12 the State, local government, or other non-Federal
13 entity, in whole or in part, of any real property
14 interest may be recommended by the Board
15 under subsection (b) or provided financial assist-
16 ance under this Act unless the project meets the
17 requirements of subparagraph (B).

18 (B) REQUIREMENTS.—

19 (i) IN GENERAL.—A real property in-
20 terest may not be acquired pursuant to a
21 fish habitat conservation project by a State,
22 public agency, or other non-Federal entity
23 unless the State, agency, or other non-Fed-
24 eral entity is obligated to undertake the

1 *management of the property being acquired*
2 *in accordance with the purposes of this Act.*

3 *(ii) ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS.—Any*
4 *real property interest acquired by a State,*
5 *local government, or other non-Federal enti-*
6 *ty pursuant to a fish habitat conservation*
7 *project shall be subject to terms and condi-*
8 *tions that ensure that the interest will be*
9 *administered for the long-term conservation*
10 *and management of the aquatic ecosystem*
11 *and the fish and wildlife dependent on that*
12 *ecosystem.*

13 *(e) NON-FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS.—*

14 *(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-*
15 *graph (2), no fish habitat conservation project may be*
16 *recommended by the Board under subsection (b) or*
17 *provided financial assistance under this Act unless at*
18 *least 50 percent of the cost of the fish habitat con-*
19 *servation project will be funded with non-Federal*
20 *funds.*

21 *(2) PROJECTS ON FEDERAL LAND OR WATER.—*
22 *Notwithstanding paragraph (1), Federal funds may*
23 *be used for payment of 100 percent of the costs of a*
24 *fish habitat conservation project located on Federal*

1 *land or water, including the acquisition of inholdings*
2 *within such land or water.*

3 (3) *NON-FEDERAL SHARE.*—*The non-Federal*
4 *share of the cost of a fish habitat conservation*
5 *project—*

6 (A) *may not be derived from a Federal*
7 *grant program; but*

8 (B) *may include in-kind contributions and*
9 *cash.*

10 (4) *SPECIAL RULE FOR INDIAN TRIBES.*—*Not-*
11 *withstanding paragraph (1) or any other provision of*
12 *law, any funds made available to an Indian tribe*
13 *pursuant to this Act may be considered to be non-*
14 *Federal funds for the purpose of paragraph (1).*

15 (f) *APPROVAL.*—

16 (1) *IN GENERAL.*—*Not later than 180 days after*
17 *the date of receipt of the recommendations of the*
18 *Board for fish habitat conservation projects under*
19 *subsection (b), and based, to the maximum extent*
20 *practicable, on the criteria described in subsection*
21 *(c)—*

22 (A) *the Secretary shall approve, reject, or*
23 *reorder the priority of any fish habitat conserva-*
24 *tion project recommended by the Board that is*
25 *not within a marine or estuarine habitat; and*

1 (B) the Secretary and the Secretary of Com-
2 merce shall jointly approve, reject, or reorder the
3 priority of any fish habitat conservation project
4 recommended by the Board that is within a ma-
5 rine or estuarine habitat.

6 (2) *FUNDING.*—If the Secretary, or the Secretary
7 and the Secretary of Commerce jointly, approves a
8 fish habitat conservation project under paragraph (1),
9 the Secretary, or the Secretary and the Secretary of
10 Commerce jointly, shall use amounts made available
11 to carry out this Act to provide funds to carry out
12 the fish habitat conservation project.

13 (3) *NOTIFICATION.*—If the Secretary, or the Sec-
14 retary and the Secretary of Commerce jointly, rejects
15 or reorders the priority of any fish habitat conserva-
16 tion project recommended by the Board under sub-
17 section (b), the Secretary, or the Secretary and the
18 Secretary of Commerce jointly, shall provide to the
19 Board and the appropriate Partnership a written
20 statement of the reasons that the Secretary, or the
21 Secretary and the Secretary of Commerce jointly, re-
22 jected or modified the priority of the fish habitat con-
23 servation project.

24 (4) *LIMITATION.*—If the Secretary, or the Sec-
25 retary and the Secretary of Commerce jointly, has not

1 *approved, rejected, or reordered the priority of the rec-*
2 *ommendations of the Board for fish habitat conserva-*
3 *tion projects by the date that is 180 days after the*
4 *date of receipt of the recommendations, the rec-*
5 *ommendations shall be considered to be approved.*

6 **SEC. 7. NATIONAL FISH HABITAT CONSERVATION PART-**
7 **nership Office.**

8 *(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 1 year after the*
9 *date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall establish*
10 *an office, to be known as the “National Fish Habitat Con-*
11 *servation Partnership Office”, within the United States*
12 *Fish and Wildlife Service.*

13 *(b) FUNCTIONS.—The National Fish Habitat Con-*
14 *servation Partnership Office shall—*

15 *(1) provide funding for the operational needs of*
16 *the Partnerships, including funding for activities*
17 *such as planning, project development and implemen-*
18 *tation, coordination, monitoring, evaluation, commu-*
19 *nication, and outreach;*

20 *(2) provide funding to support the detail of State*
21 *and tribal fish and wildlife staff to the Office;*

22 *(3) facilitate the cooperative development and*
23 *approval of Partnerships;*

24 *(4) assist the Secretary and the Board in car-*
25 *rying out this Act;*

1 (5) *assist the Secretary in carrying out the re-*
2 *quirements of sections 8 and 10;*

3 (6) *facilitate communication, cohesiveness, and*
4 *efficient operations for the benefit of Partnerships and*
5 *the Board;*

6 (7) *facilitate, with assistance from the Director,*
7 *the Assistant Administrator, and the President of the*
8 *Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the consid-*
9 *eration of fish habitat conservation projects by the*
10 *Board;*

11 (8) *provide support to the Director regarding the*
12 *development and implementation of the interagency*
13 *operational plan under subsection (c);*

14 (9) *coordinate technical and scientific reporting*
15 *as required by section 11;*

16 (10) *facilitate the efficient use of resources and*
17 *activities of Federal departments and agencies to*
18 *carry out this Act in an efficient manner; and*

19 (11) *provide support to the Board for national*
20 *communication and outreach efforts that promote*
21 *public awareness of fish habitat conservation.*

22 (c) *INTERAGENCY OPERATIONAL PLAN.—Not later*
23 *than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, and*
24 *every 5 years thereafter, the Director, in cooperation with*
25 *the Assistant Administrator and the heads of other appro-*

1 *priate Federal departments and agencies, shall develop an*
2 *interagency operational plan for the National Fish Habitat*
3 *Conservation Partnership Office that describes—*

4 (1) *the functional, operational, technical, sci-*
5 *entific, and general staff, administrative, and mate-*
6 *rial needs of the Office; and*

7 (2) *any interagency agreements between or*
8 *among Federal departments and agencies to address*
9 *those needs.*

10 *(d) STAFF AND SUPPORT.—*

11 (1) *DEPARTMENTS OF INTERIOR AND COM-*
12 *MERCE.—The Director and the Assistant Adminis-*
13 *trator shall each provide appropriate staff to support*
14 *the National Fish Habitat Conservation Partnership*
15 *Office, subject to the availability of funds under sec-*
16 *tion 15.*

17 (2) *STATES AND INDIAN TRIBES.—Each State*
18 *and Indian tribe is encouraged to provide staff to*
19 *support the National Fish Habitat Conservation*
20 *Partnership Office.*

21 (3) *DETAILEES AND CONTRACTORS.—The Na-*
22 *tional Fish Habitat Conservation Partnership Office*
23 *may accept staff or other administrative support from*
24 *other entities—*

25 (A) *through interagency details; or*

1 (B) as contractors.

2 (4) *QUALIFICATIONS.*—*The staff of the National*
3 *Fish Habitat Conservation Partnership Office shall*
4 *include members with education and experience relat-*
5 *ing to the principles of fish, wildlife, and aquatic*
6 *habitat conservation.*

7 (5) *WAIVER OF REQUIREMENT.*—*The Secretary*
8 *may waive all or part of the non-Federal contribution*
9 *requirement under section 6(e)(1) if the Secretary de-*
10 *termines that—*

11 (A) *no reasonable means are available*
12 *through which the affected applicant can meet*
13 *the requirement; and*

14 (B) *the probable benefit of the relevant fish*
15 *habitat conservation project outweighs the public*
16 *interest in meeting the requirement.*

17 (e) *REPORTS.*—*Not less frequently than once each*
18 *year, the Director shall provide to the Board a report de-*
19 *scribing the activities of the National Fish Habitat Con-*
20 *servation Partnership Office.*

21 **SEC. 8. TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ASSISTANCE.**

22 (a) *IN GENERAL.*—*The Director, the Assistant Admin-*
23 *istrator, and the Director of the United States Geological*
24 *Survey, in coordination with the Forest Service and other*
25 *appropriate Federal departments and agencies, shall pro-*

1 *vide scientific and technical assistance to the Partnerships,*
2 *participants in fish habitat conservation projects, and the*
3 *Board.*

4 (b) *INCLUSIONS.—Scientific and technical assistance*
5 *provided pursuant to subsection (a) may include—*

6 (1) *providing technical and scientific assistance*
7 *to States, Indian tribes, regions, local communities,*
8 *and nongovernmental organizations in the develop-*
9 *ment and implementation of Partnerships;*

10 (2) *providing technical and scientific assistance*
11 *to Partnerships for habitat assessment, strategic plan-*
12 *ning, and prioritization;*

13 (3) *supporting the development and implementa-*
14 *tion of fish habitat conservation projects that are*
15 *identified as high priorities by Partnerships and the*
16 *Board;*

17 (4) *supporting and providing recommendations*
18 *regarding the development of science-based monitoring*
19 *and assessment approaches for implementation*
20 *through Partnerships;*

21 (5) *supporting and providing recommendations*
22 *for a national fish habitat assessment; and*

23 (6) *ensuring the availability of experts to con-*
24 *duct scientifically based evaluation and reporting of*
25 *the results of fish habitat conservation projects.*

1 **SEC. 9. CONSERVATION OF AQUATIC HABITAT FOR FISH**
2 **AND OTHER AQUATIC ORGANISMS ON FED-**
3 **ERAL LAND.**

4 *To the extent consistent with the mission and author-*
5 *ity of the applicable department or agency, the head of each*
6 *Federal department and agency responsible for acquiring,*
7 *managing, or disposing of Federal land or water shall co-*
8 *operate with the Assistant Administrator and the Director*
9 *to conserve the aquatic habitats for fish and other aquatic*
10 *organisms within the land and water of the department or*
11 *agency.*

12 **SEC. 10. COORDINATION WITH STATES AND INDIAN TRIBES.**

13 *The Secretary shall provide a notice to, and coordinate*
14 *with, the appropriate State agency or tribal agency, as ap-*
15 *plicable, of each State and Indian tribe within the bound-*
16 *aries of which an activity is planned to be carried out pur-*
17 *suant to this Act by not later than 30 days before the date*
18 *on which the activity is implemented.*

19 **SEC. 11. ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING.**

20 *(a) IMPLEMENTATION REPORTS.—*

21 *(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after*
22 *the date of enactment of this Act, and every 2 years*
23 *thereafter, the Board shall submit to the appropriate*
24 *congressional committees a report describing the im-*
25 *plementation of—*

26 *(A) this Act; and*

1 (B) *the National Fish Habitat Action Plan.*

2 (2) *CONTENTS.—Each report submitted under*
3 *paragraph (1) shall include—*

4 (A) *an estimate of the number of acres,*
5 *stream miles, or acre-feet (or other suitable meas-*
6 *ure) of aquatic habitat that was protected, re-*
7 *stored, or enhanced under the National Fish*
8 *Habitat Action Plan by Federal, State, or local*
9 *governments, Indian tribes, or other entities in*
10 *the United States during the 2-year period end-*
11 *ing on the date of submission of the report;*

12 (B) *a description of the public access to*
13 *aquatic habitats protected, restored, or estab-*
14 *lished under the National Fish Habitat Action*
15 *Plan during that 2-year period;*

16 (C) *a description of the opportunities for*
17 *public fishing established under the National*
18 *Fish Habitat Action Plan during that period;*
19 *and*

20 (D) *an assessment of the status of fish habi-*
21 *tat conservation projects carried out with funds*
22 *provided under this Act during that period,*
23 *disaggregated by year, including—*

1 (i) a description of the fish habitat
2 conservation projects recommended by the
3 Board under section 6(b);

4 (ii) a description of each fish habitat
5 conservation project approved by the Sec-
6 retary under section 6(f), in order of pri-
7 ority for funding;

8 (iii) a justification for—

9 (I) the approval of each fish habi-
10 tat conservation project; and

11 (II) the order of priority for fund-
12 ing of each fish habitat conservation
13 project;

14 (iv) a justification for any rejection or
15 reordering of the priority of each fish habi-
16 tat conservation project recommended by the
17 Board under section 6(b) that was based on
18 a factor other than the criteria described in
19 section 6(c); and

20 (v) an accounting of expenditures by
21 Federal, State, or local governments, Indian
22 tribes, or other entities to carry out fish
23 habitat conservation projects.

24 (b) *STATUS AND TRENDS REPORT.*—Not later than
25 December 31, 2010, and every 5 years thereafter, the Board

1 *shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a*
2 *report describing the status of aquatic habitats in the*
3 *United States.*

4 *(c) REVISIONS.—Not later than December 31, 2011,*
5 *and every 5 years thereafter, the Board shall revise the goals*
6 *and other elements of the National Fish Habitat Action*
7 *Plan, after consideration of each report required by sub-*
8 *section (b).*

9 **SEC. 12. REGULATIONS.**

10 *The Secretary may promulgate such regulations as the*
11 *Secretary determines to be necessary to carry out this Act.*

12 **SEC. 13. EFFECT OF ACT.**

13 *(a) WATER RIGHTS.—Nothing in this Act—*

14 *(1) establishes any express or implied reserved*
15 *water right in the United States for any purpose;*

16 *(2) affects any water right in existence on the*
17 *date of enactment of this Act; or*

18 *(3) affects any Federal or State law in existence*
19 *on the date of enactment of the Act regarding water*
20 *quality or water quantity.*

21 *(b) STATE AUTHORITY.—Nothing in this Act—*

22 *(1) affects the authority, jurisdiction, or respon-*
23 *sibility of a State to manage, control, or regulate fish*
24 *and wildlife under the laws and regulations of the*
25 *State; or*

1 (2) *authorizes the Secretary to control or regu-*
2 *late within a State the fishing or hunting of fish and*
3 *wildlife.*

4 (c) *EFFECT ON INDIAN TRIBES.—Nothing in this Act*
5 *abrogates, abridges, affects, modifies, supersedes, or alters*
6 *any right of an Indian tribe recognized by treaty or any*
7 *other means, including—*

8 (1) *an agreement between the Indian tribe and*
9 *the United States;*

10 (2) *Federal law (including regulations);*

11 (3) *an Executive order; or*

12 (4) *a judicial decree.*

13 (d) *ADJUDICATION OF WATER RIGHTS.—Nothing in*
14 *this Act diminishes or affects the ability of the Secretary*
15 *to join an adjudication of rights to the use of water pursu-*
16 *ant to subsection (a), (b), or (c) of section 208 of the Depart-*
17 *ment of Justice Appropriation Act, 1953 (43 U.S.C. 666).*

18 (e) *EFFECT ON OTHER AUTHORITIES.—*

19 (1) *ACQUISITION OF LAND AND WATER.—Nothing*
20 *in this Act alters or otherwise affects the authorities,*
21 *responsibilities, obligations, or powers of the Sec-*
22 *retary to acquire land, water, or an interest in land*
23 *or water under any other provision of law.*

24 (2) *PRIVATE PROPERTY PROTECTION.—Nothing*
25 *in this Act permits the use of funds made available*

1 to carry out this Act to acquire real property or a
 2 real property interest without the written consent of
 3 each owner of the real property or real property in-
 4 terest.

5 (3) *MITIGATION.*—Nothing in this Act permits
 6 the use of funds made available to carry out this Act
 7 for fish and wildlife mitigation purposes under—

8 (A) *the Federal Water Pollution Control Act*
 9 (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.);

10 (B) *the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act*
 11 (16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.);

12 (C) *the Water Resources Development Act of*
 13 1986 (Public Law 99–662; 100 Stat. 4082); or

14 (D) *any other Federal law or court settle-*
 15 *ment.*

16 **SEC. 14. NONAPPLICABILITY OF FEDERAL ADVISORY COM-**
 17 **MITTEE ACT.**

18 *The Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.)*
 19 *shall not apply to—*

20 (1) *the Board; or*

21 (2) *any Partnership.*

22 **SEC. 15. FUNDING.**

23 (a) *AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.*—

24 (1) *FISH HABITAT CONSERVATION PROJECTS.*—

25 *There is authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-*

1 *retary \$75,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2010*
2 *through 2014 to provide funds for fish habitat con-*
3 *servation projects approved under section 6(f), of*
4 *which 5 percent shall be made available for each fiscal*
5 *year for projects carried out by Indian tribes.*

6 (2) *NATIONAL FISH HABITAT CONSERVATION*
7 *PARTNERSHIP OFFICE.—*

8 (A) *IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be*
9 *appropriated to the Secretary for each of fiscal*
10 *years 2010 through 2014 for the National Fish*
11 *Habitat Conservation Partnership Office, and to*
12 *carry out section 11, an amount equal to the*
13 *greater of—*

14 (i) *\$3,000,000; and*

15 (ii) *25 percent of the amount appro-*
16 *priated for the applicable fiscal year pursu-*
17 *ant to paragraph (1).*

18 (B) *REQUIRED TRANSFERS.—The Secretary*
19 *shall annually transfer to other Federal depart-*
20 *ments and agencies such percentage of the*
21 *amounts made available pursuant to subpara-*
22 *graph (A) as is required to support participa-*
23 *tion by those departments and agencies in the*
24 *National Fish Habitat Conservation Partnership*

1 *Office pursuant to the interagency operational*
2 *plan under section 7(c).*

3 (3) *TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ASSISTANCE.—*

4 *There are authorized to be appropriated for each of*
5 *fiscal years 2010 through 2014 to carry out, and pro-*
6 *vide technical and scientific assistance under, section*
7 *8—*

8 (A) *\$10,000,000 to the Secretary for use by*
9 *the United States Fish and Wildlife Service;*

10 (B) *\$10,000,000 to the Assistant Adminis-*
11 *trator for use by the National Oceanic and At-*
12 *mospheric Administration; and*

13 (C) *\$10,000,000 to the Secretary for use by*
14 *the United States Geological Survey.*

15 (4) *PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATIVE EX-*
16 *PENSES.—There is authorized to be appropriated to*
17 *the Secretary for each of fiscal years 2010 through*
18 *2014 for use by the Board, the Director, and the As-*
19 *stant Administrator for planning and administra-*
20 *tive expenses an amount equal to the greater of—*

21 (A) *\$300,000; and*

22 (B) *4 percent of the amount appropriated*
23 *for the applicable fiscal year pursuant to para-*
24 *graph (1).*

1 (b) *AGREEMENTS AND GRANTS.*—*The Secretary*
2 *may—*

3 (1) *on the recommendation of the Board, and*
4 *notwithstanding sections 6304 and 6305 of title 31,*
5 *United States Code, and the Federal Financial Assist-*
6 *ance Management Improvement Act of 1999 (31*
7 *U.S.C. 6101 note; Public Law 106–107), enter into a*
8 *grant agreement, cooperative agreement, or contract*
9 *with a Partnership or other entity for a fish habitat*
10 *conservation project or restoration or enhancement*
11 *project;*

12 (2) *apply for, accept, and use a grant from any*
13 *individual or entity to carry out the purposes of this*
14 *Act; and*

15 (3) *make funds available to any Federal depart-*
16 *ment or agency for use by that department or agency*
17 *to provide grants for any fish habitat protection*
18 *project, restoration project, or enhancement project*
19 *that the Secretary determines to be consistent with*
20 *this Act.*

21 (c) *DONATIONS.*—

22 (1) *IN GENERAL.*—*The Secretary may—*

23 (A) *enter into an agreement with any orga-*
24 *nization described in section 501(c)(3) of the In-*
25 *ternal Revenue Code of 1986 that is exempt from*

1 *taxation under section 501(a) of that Code to so-*
2 *licit private donations to carry out the purposes*
3 *of this Act; and*

4 *(B) accept donations of funds, property,*
5 *and services to carry out the purposes of this*
6 *Act.*

7 (2) *TREATMENT.*—*A donation accepted under*
8 *this section—*

9 *(A) shall be considered to be a gift or be-*
10 *quest to, or otherwise for the use of, the United*
11 *States; and*

12 *(B) may be—*

13 *(i) used directly by the Secretary; or*

14 *(ii) provided to another Federal de-*
15 *partment or agency through an interagency*
16 *agreement.*

Calendar No. 378

111TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. 1214

[Report No. 111-190]

A BILL

To conserve fish and aquatic communities in the United States through partnerships that foster fish habitat conservation, to improve the quality of life for the people of the United States, and for other purposes.

MAY 17, 2010

Reported with an amendment