



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

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Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | G. Warren Elliott, Vice Chairman
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

May 14, 2019

ATTN: Dr. Lisa Havel
Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership
1050 N. Highland St.
Suite 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP) Memorandum of Understanding for Partners

Dear Lisa:

Please accept this letter from the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) expressing its desire to become an ACFHP Partner and join as a signatory on the ACFHP Memorandum of Understanding. We submit the following responses for your consideration at the May 22-23, 2019 ACFHP Steering Committee Meeting.

(1) In what region(s) or watershed(s) does your organization work?

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional councils responsible for the conservation and management of fishery resources within U.S. federal waters. The Council manages fisheries from 3 to 200 miles off the coasts of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina (NC is also represented on the South Atlantic Council). The Council manages more than 64 species with seven fishery management plans (FMPs). Fourteen species are directly managed with specific FMPs. The Council coordinates its management activities closely with several other management bodies to ensure that fisheries are managed effectively across jurisdictional boundaries.

(2) Why do you want to be an ACFHP Partner (or, how do you perceive that ACFHP will benefit you?)

Sustainable recreational and commercial fisheries are dependent upon healthy fish habitat. As an ACFHP partner, the Council would benefit from an improved understanding of the threats to healthy fish habitat. This will require making the connection between headwater and continental shelf habitats and strengthening the relationships with those partners and management bodies along that continuum. In addition, the Council can contribute by helping to prioritize actions and policies that protect, restore, or maintain resilient habitats that optimize ecosystem functions and services to the benefit of both fish and wildlife.

(3) Do the goals or objectives of your organization align with those of the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership, and can you assist implementing them? Please describe and provide your organization's guiding document(s) (eg. Strategic Plan, Conservation Plan, etc.).

The Council's Vision and Mission, as set forth in its 2014-2018 Strategic Plan, highlights the strong organization commitment to fisheries and their associated fish habitats (https://MAFMC2014-2018_StrategicPlan.pdf). As a fisheries management organization, the Council can be most effective in helping support policies and objectives that are related to habitat conservation.

Vision: Healthy and productive marine ecosystems supporting thriving, sustainable marine fisheries that provide the greatest overall benefit to stakeholders.

Mission: The Council manages marine fisheries in federal waters of the Mid-Atlantic region for their long-term sustainability and productivity consistent with the National Standards of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The Council is committed to the effective stewardship of these fisheries and associated habitats by incorporating scientific information and informed public input in transparent processes that produce fishery management plans and programs.

(4) Please describe how you will meet the commitments of the MOU parties, which are as follows:

1. To carry out their mutual intent to design and implement an ACFHP plan that will address on-the-ground coastal, estuarine-dependent, and diadromous fish habitat resource needs throughout the Atlantic states.

The Council can contribute to the development of an ACFHP plan that considers the importance of nearshore fish habitat resource needs to offshore fish and ecosystem productivity.

2. To work together to facilitate current and future mutually agreed upon joint coastal, estuarine-dependent, and diadromous fish habitat resource activities for the benefit of Atlantic fish habitat resources.

The Council can contribute by helping ACFHP and its partners prioritize regional habitat needs as well as prioritizing fish habitat conservation, protection, and restoration activities.

3. To use the resources of their agencies and organizations in a manner consistent with their mission and the mission of ACFHP, that avoids duplication and that mutually supports the efforts of other parties involved.

The Council will continue to pursue management measures and policies that are consistent with its commitment to the effective stewardship of its fisheries and associated habitats. The Council will also pursue opportunities to mutually support ACFHP and its efforts where they align.

4. To collectively pursue funding initiatives to support the ACFHP through private, corporate, state, and federal government, and any other means that may be available.

The Council will support ACFHP efforts to pursue funding opportunities and will provide the weight of its support for its habitat activities as appropriate.

5. To collectively pursue interagency/organization agreements, cooperative agreements, grants, and/or contracts to fund approved projects.

The Council will work with ACFHP partners as they to pursue opportunities to fund approved projects.

6. To encourage and support the participation of other appropriate agencies and organizations by mutual agreement of the partners.

As a partner, the Council will help identify opportunities to bring in other groups and partners where it may be of benefit to ACFHP.

Thank you for your consideration of these responses. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc: J. Coakley, M. Luisi, W. Elliot