



Coastal Fish Habitat Partnerships

The mission of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan is to protect, restore and enhance the nation's fish and aquatic communities through partnerships that foster fish habitat conservation and improve quality of life.

This mission is achieved by supporting 19 fish habitat partnerships, mobilizing support, setting goals and measuring progress, and conducting outreach on the importance of fish habitats to our economy, natural resources, and quality of life.

Of the 18 fish habitat partnerships in existence in the United States, many are focused on coastal fish habitat issues. These partnerships include:

- [Atlantic Coastal FHP](#)
- [California Fish Passage Forum](#)
- [Hawaii Fish Habitat Partnership](#)
- [Kenai Peninsula FHP](#)
- [Matanuska Susitna Basin FHP](#)
- [Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership](#)
- [Southeast Alaska FHP](#)
- [Southwest Alaska FHP](#)
- [Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership](#)



ShoreZone: A Monumental Effort to Image and Map Alaska's Coastline

by [Darren Stewart](#)

This summer, the ShoreZone team placed a small yet meaningful feather in its cap: the coastline photo inventory and videography of Alaska's remote St. Lawrence Island. Located just south of the Bering Strait and hampered by inclement weather, low-lying fog, and a narrow tide window, the team still managed to image about 930km of the ~1100km of coast on the island. This brings the ShoreZone extent in Alaska to almost 80% imaged, mapped and uploaded to the web and the partnership of government agencies, NGOs and private industry one step closer to the states completion.

The ShoreZone project was originally brought to Alaska in 2001 as a tool for oil spill preparedness and response and as time passed more partners have become involved. Over time with the depth and applications of the database becoming evident, ShoreZone users now include community planning, search and rescue, marine debris clean up, and fisheries habitat management.

The imagery captured may be the face of ShoreZone but the mapped data layers are the depth of the program by providing a geo-referenced spatial framework for coastal habitat assessment on local and regional scales. All imagery is deciphered, coded and classified according to a standardized habitat mapping protocol identifying specific geomorphological and biological attributes. This combination is proving valuable to resource scientists and fisheries habitat managers looking to identify essential fish habitat as shown by recent research applications.

Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership

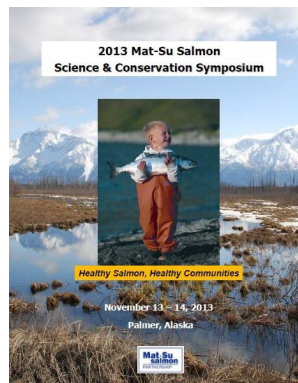
working for thriving fish, healthy habitats, and vibrant communities in the Mat-Su Basin

The 6th Annual Mat-Su Salmon Symposium was a Great Success!

by [Jessica Speed](#)

The 6th annual Matanuska-Susitna (Mat-Su) Basin Salmon Science and Conservation Symposium was held in Palmer, Alaska on November 13 and 14 2013. It was another great success thanks to the dedication, input and perspectives of many people from a broad range of Alaska tribal, local, state, and federal governments, private business, non-profit, private citizen and fishing interest organizations. This year's theme was *healthy salmon, healthy communities* with keynote speaker David Batker, Co-founder, Executive Director and Chief Economist of Earth Economics, who spoke about the importance of valuing the services to society provided by salmon, and salmon habitat in the Mat-Su.

There were over 140 people in attendance over the two days, with more than 25 presenters covering topics including the value and management of salmon, Susitna River studies, salmon habitat conservation and restoration, invasive species, climate change, fish distribution and stream mapping. With a current revision of the Partnership's [Strategic Action Plan](#), Steering Committee members Corinne Smith and Bill Rice also shared a summary of the Salmon Partnership's accomplishments over the last 5 years, as well



as a look to where the Partnership is heading.

This year, perhaps more than ever the Symposium seemed to provide a forum for common ground, where a diversity of views could be shared in healthy dialogue. Many of these conversations were insightful, and spurred many of us to reflect more closely on what the needs for salmon conservation are in the Mat-Su, and what roles the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership can and should be working to successfully fill.

Thanks to the many who funded, planned, volunteered and participated in any way. It was, and is every year, an event that embodies a spirit of cooperation and collaboration. It is only together that we make both this event, and keeping wild abundant salmon in Southcentral Alaska's

Matanuska-Susitna Basin possible.

Please find Symposium presentations, booklet, and recording of the keynote address on our website at <http://www.matsusalmon.org/what-we-do/science-symposium/2013-2/>.



Coastal Restoration Webinar Series Continues in 2014

by [Lindsay Gardner](#)

Whether it's as a key characterization [dataset for estuarine classification](#) in Southeast Alaska or used by National Marine Fisheries Service to [identify critical habitat and establish conservation areas](#) in Puget Sound, WA, ShoreZone use is expanding.

In conjunction with ShoreZone efforts in other parts of the Pacific Northwest (the already completed Washington, Oregon and British Columbia) the total coastline now imaged and mapped using the protocol is over 102,000 km and growing.

With more surveys and mapping planned in 2014, the ShoreZone partnership continues its work towards the goal of a contiguous coastline dataset for all of Alaska.

For more information and recent news/updates visit www.ShoreZone.org.

Or find us at: www.facebook.com/shorezone

National Marine Fisheries Service on-line ShoreZone inventory: www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/shorezone/



ShoreZone survey along St. Lawrence Island located west of Alaska in the Bering Sea. Photo credit: Darren Stewart.

Note: The banner photo in this issue of the newsletter is of the St. Lawrence Island shoreline.



Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership

Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Year in Review

by [Emily Greene](#)

Thanks to the hard work and cooperation amongst our Federal, state, conservation organizations, and local partners it has been an exciting and productive year in the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP)! We have made great strides in building our project funding and endorsement programs, strengthening our partnerships, and growing our science and data initiatives with the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives. For more on ACFHP's 2013 initiatives please visit: <http://www.atlanticfishhabitat.org/atlantic-coastal-fish-habitat-partnership-year-in-review/>



*Ecodisc Breakwater Installation, Pensacola Bay, Florida.
Photo Credit: Heather Reed.*

In the New Year, SARP will facilitate webinars in conjunction with its four-part coastal restoration series focused on the work of the SARP/NOAA Community-based Restoration Program (CRP) partnership. The goal of the webinars is to share lessons learned with project partners and other members of the aquatic restoration community and to provide project managers of coastal habitat restoration projects with opportunities to learn from one another's restoration project management experiences by providing insights into how to improve upon/enhance activities, including the design, planning and execution of future projects. On January 14, 2014, the webinar "Addressing Coastal Restoration Project Timeline Challenges" will encourage discussion about permitting, on-the-ground conditions associated with weather, tides, disasters, and other human factors. Guest presenters include Tom Ries of Ecosphere Restoration Institute, Inc., who will talk about the Ulele Springs Restoration Project in Tampa, Florida and Heather Reed, Ecological Consulting Services, Inc., who will discuss the Deadman's Island project in Gulf Breeze, Florida. The final webinar in the series, "Fostering Community Involvement in Coastal Restoration Projects" is tentatively scheduled for April.

The first webinar in the series, titled, "Lessons Learned Webinar on Living Shoreline Restoration/Techniques" was held on Tuesday, March 26th, 2013 and involved the participation of more than 20 coastal restoration practitioners from around the southeast region. It featured informative presentations by Dr. Lexia Weaver and Erin Fleckenstein of the North Carolina Coastal Federation about work at Jockey's Ridge and at Beacon Island, North Carolina. Thomas Bliss of the University of Georgia's Marine Extension Service (MAREX) presented about work on St. Simon's Island. In Summer 2013, coastal restoration practitioners in the Southeast came together to discuss the benefits, techniques, challenges and some innovative technologies associated with coastal restoration monitoring and the communication of project outcomes. Presenters Peter Kingsley-Smith Associate Marine Scientist with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) Marine Resources Research Institute and Laura Thorne General Manager, Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough County, Florida (EPC) shared valuable information about the successful outcomes and monitoring strategies of their "Creating Oyster Niche Structures Through Restoration Using Crab Traps" and "Prop Scar Monitoring and Restoration in Cockroach Bay Aquatic Preserve" projects, respectively.

Click on the links to listen and view recordings of [Webinar #1](#) and [Webinar #2](#).

SARP is pleased by the quality of work and successful ecological outcomes that are being achieved through the NOAA Community-based Restoration Program and other funding sources and looks forward to highlighting additional case studies that are demonstrative of this success. To learn more about the SARP/NOAA CRP Coastal Restoration Techniques webinar series and how to participate, please contact Lindsay Gardner, SARP's NOAA CRP Administrator at lindsayg@southeastaquatics.net.



PMEP to host West Coast Estuary Summit to Advance Three West Coast Fish Habitat Assessments

by [Lisa DeBruyckere](#)

The Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership (PMEP) is hosting a summit with estuary science experts January 14-15, 2014 in Seattle, Washington. The goals of the summit are to:

- Achieve consensus on the selection of estuarine-dependent fish and shellfish species for the three West Coast fish habitat assessments, and compile information and data sources regarding their nursery requirements, timing of their use of estuaries, biophysical factors, key threats, and presence/abundance information.
 - Identify key data and research gaps relative to these West Coast estuarine-dependent fish and shellfish species.
- Identify and achieve consensus on how best to assimilate existing fish data and habitat assessments on West Coast juvenile fish species.
- Discuss:
 - Existing geospatial data for estuarine nursery habitats, including data on conditions and alterations.
 - How the results of the West Coast fish habitat assessments may inform management decisions.
 - Key management needs.
- Inform how the results of the West Coast fish habitat assessments may influence policy or management decisions and how these results affect management of stocks (e.g., restoration activities, fisheries management, mitigation banking).

Individuals involved in NFHP East Coast and Gulf Coast assessment work are involved in the PMEP summit.

In preparation for the summit discussions, PMEP has posted [background information](#) and a [PREZI](#) on the assessments on its website.

NFHP Encourages Recognition of Role of Coastal FHPs in Achieving National Ocean Policy Goals

by [Lisa DeBruyckere](#)

In December 2013, NFHP Chair Kelly Hepler sent a [letter](#) to the co-chairs of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, informing them of the coastal fish habitat partnerships (FHPs) and offering the support of those partnerships in implementing the recommendations in a recent report, [Charting the Course: Securing the Future of America's Oceans](#).

Chair Hepler noted opportunities exist for the coastal FHPs to "enhance the resilience of coastal communities and ocean ecosystems . . ."

and to "support state and regional ocean and coastal priorities." Chair Hepler then provided examples from several of the FHPs as each conducts activities that align with *Charting the Course*.

The letter ends with Chair Hepler recommending that the coastal FHPs be considered partners in implementing several recommendations in the document, and offered to meet with the co-chairs to further discuss the role of NFHP and the coastal FHPs.

