



Bylaws of the Desert Fish Habitat Partnership

April 2011

INTRODUCTION and NATURE OF ORGANIZATION

This document contains the bylaws for the Desert Fish Habitat Partnership. The Desert Fish Habitat Partnership was originally founded in 2005 and subsequently approved by the National Fish Habitat Board as a Fish Habitat Partnership in 2009 under the auspices of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. The Desert Fish Habitat Partnership is a cross jurisdictional organization concerned with desert fish conservation and recovery in 11 western states across the Chihuahuan, Great Basin, Mojave, and Sonoran deserts.

Bylaws of the Desert Fish Habitat Partnership

Article 1 – Name, Mission, and Objectives

1.1 The name of this organization shall be the Desert Fish Habitat Partnership, herein referred to as the DFHP.

1.2 The mission of the DFHP shall be to improve the quality of life for the American people by conserving native desert fishes through protection of unique aquatic ecosystems. The DFHP will support state and tribal fish and wildlife agencies, federal agencies, research institutions, and private organizations in protecting, restoring, and enhancing aquatic habitats.

1.3 To attain the mission, the DFHP will

1.3.a Promote partner collaboration and speak with a unified voice on the conservation and value of native desert fishes.

1.3.b Work cooperatively across geographic and jurisdictional boundaries to maximize conservation benefits for aquatic habitats and desert fishes through an ecosystem approach.

1.3.c Increase and leverage funding and resources by building local and regional partnerships to accomplish strategic actions that conserve native fishes and aquatic habitats identified in partner states' State Wildlife Action Plans.

1.3.d Support and encourage the development and implementation of educational and outreach programs to increase public awareness of desert aquatic habitats, their fishes, and threats to their continued existence.

Article 2 – Membership

2.1 The DFHP is a collaborative partnership composed of states, federal agencies, tribes, and other government and private conservation partners with a collective interest in the conservation of native desert fish species and associated aquatic habitats within the partnership area.

2.2 The DFHP is comprised of 11 western states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming; seven Federal agencies: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and National Park Service; three non-governmental organizations: The Nature Conservancy, Desert

Fishes Council, and Trout Unlimited; and two tribal representatives: Southwestern Tribal Fishery Commission and the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society.

Article 3 – Meetings

3.1 The DFHP shall hold an annual meeting at a time and place designated by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee shall also have bi-monthly teleconferences to carry out the work of the DFHP.

Article 4 – Organization

4.1 To facilitate the implementation of the DFHP *Framework for Strategic Conservation of Desert Fishes* (2008), and in recognition of the merit of collaboration and cooperation, the DFHP is organized into a Steering Committee and an Executive Committee. The Steering Committee is comprised of DFHP representatives, is the decision-making body of the DFHP, and has oversight responsibility for all DFHP business and activities. The Executive Committee is comprised of a subset of members from the Steering Committee and At-Large Council and serves as the daily governing arm of the DFHP. The At-Large Council will be comprised of interested parties who are not part of the Steering Committee.

4.2 The DFHP shall have a Coordinator who will serve full or part-time as resources are available.

Article 5 - Roles and Responsibilities

Steering Committee

5.1 The Steering Committee shall not exceed 23 members and will include representatives from the 11 states, seven Federal agencies, two tribal organizations, and three non-governmental organizations (*See Article 2, Membership*). There is no term limit on representative participation on the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will:

5.1.a Promote, oversee, and facilitate the actions of the DFHP

5.1.b Each Steering Committee member shall designate an alternate if they are not available to participate in DFHP business.

Executive Committee

5.2 The Executive Committee will total nine representatives and consist of two co-chairpersons (one from a Federal agency and a second from a State Agency), a representative from Region 2 of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, one representative from each of the four DFHP ecological regions (Basin and Range, Upper Colorado, Lower Colorado, and Rio Grande), and one representative each from a non-governmental and Tribal organization.

Representatives to the Executive Committee will be drawn from the Steering Committee or At-Large Committee and will be subject to approval every two years by the Steering Committee. The Executive Committee will:

- 5.2.a Be responsive to issues raised by the Steering Committee
- 5.2.b Oversee responsibilities of the Coordinator. In the absence of resources, fill the role of the Coordinator
- 5.2.c Oversee development of the DFHP prioritization criteria
- 5.2.d Oversee and manage completion of the DFHP development and operation tasks
- 5.2.e Serve as the liaison body to the National Fish Habitat Board
- 5.2.f Participate in National Fish Habitat Action Plan meetings and teleconferences
- 5.2.g Conduct other tasks relative to the operation and management of DFHP as directed by the Steering Committee

Coordinator

5.3 Coordinator

5.3.a The Coordinator will provide primary staff support to the DFHP Steering and Executive committees including, but not limited to record keeping, disseminating information, recording of meeting and teleconference minutes, meeting facilitation, coordinating and facilitating implementation of actions and projects, conducting outreach activities, developing annual reports, and pursuing funding and grant opportunities

Article 6 – Committees and Working Groups

6.1 The Steering Committee shall appoint and utilize committees and/or working groups to address specific issues to accomplish the mission of the DFHP.

Article 7 – Voting

7.1 Decisions regarding the direction of the DFHP will be made by a vote of the Steering Committee. Voting may be conducted at the annual meeting of the Steering Committee by those in physical attendance or members participating via teleconference. Decisions of the DFHP shall be by a simple majority, meaning more than 50%, of those

members voting, except for changes to the bylaws or resolutions, which shall be by a two-thirds (2/3) majority.

7.2 Unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws, business of the DFHP shall be conducted according to the latest edition of Roberts's Rules of Order.

Article 8 – Bylaws, Rules and Procedures

8.1 The bylaws are the defining document for the DFHP and take precedence over all other rules and procedures of the DFHP. The bylaws can only be changed through a vote of the Steering Committee. This will be done in the following manner:

8.1.a A designated subcommittee appointed by the Steering Committee will draft the proposed change. The proposed change will then be reviewed by the full Steering Committee and any appropriate revisions will be made.

8.1.b The Steering Committee will then vote on the proposed change. The proposed change must pass the Steering Committee with a 2/3 majority before approval.

8.2 Rules are the next highest level of documentation of DFHP operations. They are generally established to facilitate the conduct of DFHP business, and to describe duties and responsibilities of officers and committees. They may be suspended or amended as follows:

8.2.a Rules may be suspended by the Steering Committee by a 2/3 majority vote.

8.2.b Rules may be changed with a simple majority, meaning more than 50% of the Steering Committee members choosing to vote.

8.3 Procedures are the lowest level of documentation of DFHP operations. They are generally established to provide continuity in the conduct of DFHP business. The procedures may be suspended or amended by a simple majority, meaning more than 50% of those voting, of the Steering Committee.

Article 9 – Resolutions

9.1 The DFHP may put forth such resolutions considered prudent and necessary to further the mission of the DFHP. Resolutions shall represent the best science available and represent the views of the DFHP. Such resolutions shall be drafted and provided to the Steering Committee from a designated subcommittee, members of which are appointed by the Steering Committee. The process for drafting and passing resolutions is as follows:

9.1.a A proposed draft resolution is provided to the Steering Committee a minimum of 60 days prior to consideration for a vote. The proposed draft resolution

must pass the Steering Committee with a 2/3 majority. Proposed resolutions without a unanimous approval of the Steering Committee may contain a minority report that is prepared by those Steering Committee members opposing the resolution.