

2019 marked the 10-year anniversary of the Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership (RFHP) being recognized as a member of the National Fish Habitat Partnership's (NFHP) www.fishhabitat.org "family" of professional resource managers, conservation organizations, corporate sponsors and conservation-minded citizens. Looking back, RFHP owes a debt of gratitude to its founding fathers who recognized that restoring aquatic habitat in reservoir systems was an undertaking that far exceeded the capacity of government agencies. Thanks to the sponsorship of Bass Pro Shops (<https://community.basspro.com/>), Friends of Reservoirs (FOR), a 501 (c) (3) corporation was formed to provide a mechanism to engage the public in reservoir fish habitat restoration efforts.

FOR membership reached 125 Chapter and Group members in 30 states in 2019. The spike in membership was complemented by 23 municipalities that are partnered with Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism through their Community Fisheries Assistance Program (CFAP). One of the main goals of RFHP/FOR is to bring a diverse array of reservoir user-groups together to partner with reservoir management agencies to address local reservoir fisheries habitat issues. The CFAP partnership with FOR indicates the importance of local reservoirs to these small, mostly rural, communities.

The purpose of FOR is to partner reservoir-user groups with reservoir management agencies to work to correct habitat impairments on local reservoir systems. The benefits of these partnerships go beyond habitat restoration efforts but also help build trust among managers and the public that they serve. We encourage anyone interested in getting involved with Friends of Reservoirs go to our website www.friendsofreservoirs.com/members.



The Science and Data Committee, in partnership with Mississippi State University, developed a national assessment of reservoir habitat impairments. The assessment serves to aid our partners in determining how to be strategic in their approach to habitat restoration efforts. Assessment data are summarized at the national, state and reservoir scale. We also felt that it would be valuable to assemble select reservoir metrics into a single database to be shared with our partners. Partnering with USGS, we assembled a

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Reservoir Morphology Data Series (RMD) which combined physical, chemical and biological attributes from several existing data sets into a single database. The assessment and the RMD are hosted on our website <https://www.friendsofreservoirs.com/science/>.

We once again partnered with Mississippi State University to produce a Best Management Practices (BMP) text entitled "Reservoir Habitat Management". The BMP manual is intended to be used as a teaching aid to as a source of the best science available for use in reservoir habitat restoration efforts. A chapter on climate change effects on reservoir habitat and management and strategies to deal with those changes was recently added. The BMP manual is also hosted on the "Science" page of our website.

RFHP and FOR's primary purpose is to facilitate "on-the-ground" reservoir habitat restoration projects. NFHP, through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, provides annual project funding to all 20 Fish Habitat Partnerships. RFHP has received just over \$800,000 in project funding through NFHP. Those funds were used to partially fund 42 projects in 19 states. Partners provide over \$6.25 million toward those projects which amounted to over \$7 in partner funds for every \$1 in NFHP funds.



The majority of RFHP-funded projects fall into three main categories: 1) adding woody or artificial habitat; 2) native vegetation restoration; and 3) shoreline stabilization. We have been encouraging our partners to tackle some of the larger, watershed-based projects like sediment removal and reducing nutrient inputs. We have funded one such project in Illinois on Evergreen Lake and are taking advantage of whole-lake restoration efforts in Pennsylvania in conjunction with high hazard dam renovations.

FOR has instituted a Small Grants Program to encourage conservation-minded groups to become Friends of Reservoirs members. Three to five \$1000 cash grants have been awarded annually to FOR members. These grants are intended to engage groups in small restoration efforts and encourage participation in larger, more comprehensive restoration efforts in the future. To date, FOR has funded 17 Small Grant projects (\$17,000) which have been matched 10-fold with partner funds.

Mossback (www.mossbackfishhabitat.com) has been a longtime sponsor of Friends of Reservoirs. Mossback is sponsoring a product grant program exclusive to FOR members. We have awarded 10 of these grants to date and are looking forward to more in the future.



INSTALLATION OF MOSSBACK STRUCTURES AT A FLORIDA LAKE