

Minutes of Friends of Reservoirs (FOR)

Reservoir Fish Habitat Partnership (RFHP)

Annual Business Meeting – 2025

Location: Athens, TX **Date:** October 18, 2025

Minutes are complemented by having the briefing book in-hand as well as the conference video while reviewing minutes. YouTube link: [Friends of Reservoirs Annual Meeting 2025 Business Meeting](#)

1. Call to Order

The 2025 Annual Business Meeting was called to order at 8:30am. Voting authority was confirmed to reside solely with Steering Committee members. Briefing books were distributed; digital copies were made available online.

2. Opening Announcements/Introductions

2.1 Sponsor & Program Updates

Tom Lang introduced the Moultrie VIP Program, offering 40% discounts to conservation professionals. Doug Nygren and Gene Gilliland gave an overview of Costa's Compete and Conserve Program, which matches tournament winnings with conservation donations. Announcement from Gene Gilliland: The Bass Fishing Hall of Fame will contribute \$5,000 to FOR's Small Grants Program.

2.2 Workshop Recognition

Reed Green was recognized for moderating the previous day's workshop.

3. Approval of 2024 Minutes

Minutes from the 2024 Business Meeting (pages 3–13 of the briefing book) were presented. Motion: Approve minutes as written Vote: Unanimous approval

4. Approval of Financial Statement

Doug Nygren reviewed the highlights of the financial report to include:

4.1 Income

Beginning balance: \$36,000 Federal O&M grant: \$85,000 (58k drawn; 26k remaining) Meeting registration revenue: ~\$4,500 Donations received: \$2,500; additional \$1,400 expected Sponsor donation: \$492 from yakbassanglers.com Bank correction: \$797 (hotel billing adjustment)

4.2 Expenses

Coordinator salary: \$45,000 to date (projected \$60,000) Staff salary (Rebecca): \$8,000 to date (projected \$12,000) Travel expenses increased due to required attendance at national partnership meetings Legal expenses: \$1,792 (one-time 501(c)(3) representation)

4.3 Approval –

There was no discussion prior to the vote. Rich Zweifel moved to approve the report, Lynn Quattro Seconded.

Motion: Approve financial report Vote: Unanimous approval

5. Coordinator Work Plan Review (2024–2025)

Key Accomplishments (workplan can be viewed in the briefing book)

New sponsors secured: Biobased Maps, Solitude Lake Management, OASI

Completed federal and Bass Pro Shop submissions for 2026

Implemented the Small Grant Binder system

Updated the NFHP database for Congressional reporting

Coordinated cross-partnership greenhouse project at Cochiti with the Desert Fish Habitat Partnership

Served as RFHP business manager with oversight from Chairman Mike Homer. Monthly reports are submitted for Mike's review and approval.

Participated in the national coordinator workshop.

6. 2026 Work Plan

Highlights

Federal and Bass Pro Shop RFPs will be separated due to timing changes with Bass Pro submission due in May and federal grant submission now due on November 15th.

FOR is seeking a host location for the 2026 Annual Meeting

7. Proposed Budget for 2026

7.1 Income

Projected starting balance: \$39,900 Federal O&M grant: \$95,000 Total projected income: ~\$115,000

7.2 Expenses

Coordinator salary budgeted at \$70,000 (actual remains \$60,000). The NFHP board provided flexibility to increase O&M project funding to \$125,000 maximum. The expected year-end balance is \$44,000. This will provide temporary financial relief if we have any holds placed on the federal award. Doug Nygren asked if there were any questions and there were none.

7.3 Approval

Reed Green moved to approve the report and Ben Page seconded: Approve 2026 budget Vote: Unanimous approval

8. Current Executive Committee Members and Working Group Members

There was a review of active Steering Committee members present and an explanation of the Charter's calculation of a quorum. The meeting was conducted with a majority of the "active" members or their proxy in attendance.

A review of the current list of Regional Working Group members was provided. There were 19 Working group members on the active list.

Highlights

Twice as many projects were reviewed over the previous year due to increased Bass Pro Shop funding. Reviewer comments remain essential for ranking projects. Members were reminded to evaluate projects against the seven National Conservation Priorities and provide comments along with their scores. Doug Nygren thanked all the members for their efforts.

10. Large Grants Process Discussion

10.1 Federal Grants

Requirements unchanged: They include a 1:1 match, must meet the 5 essential criteria in the ACE Act. Project submission requires the project sponsor to have SAM/ASAP financial system capability. They must be able to use the "Small Grant Binder" submission or have Grants Solution access.

10.2 Bass Pro Shop Outdoor Fund

Discussion focused on increasing the maximum award.

The proposal was to allow for a maximum of a \$75,000 award with a 25% match. A higher match could allow up to a \$100,000 award. It was noted that Beyond the Pond overhead increased from 5% to 10%

Gene Gilliland asked if anyone had asked for an increase and no one has. Tom Lang stated the increase was a positive change for our organization and partners.

Doug Nygren discussed changes in Beyond the Pond. There is a new manager and board members. Our list of projects for Bass Pro will now go to both and NFHP Board and Beyond the Pond. In the past it was just Beyond the Pond.

A motion to increase the maximum grant award to \$100,000 was made by Mike Homer. Discussion then turned to creating a system using a tiered match requirement. Motion was amended by Craig Walker to include a tiered match feature and was seconded. Vote: Approved unanimously

11. Federal Permitting Challenges

Concerns

Craig Walker talked about inconsistent permitting interpretations across federal agencies. There is a need for national standardization.

Gene Gilliland talked about the new interoperational plan that might help with this. Lynn Quattro mentioned that AFWA Fisheries and Water Resources Committee could help with this issue as well.

Action Items

Doug will raise the issue with the National Fish Habitat Board Policy Committee, with AFWA's F&WRC Water Subcommittee (Julie Carter, Chair), and additional collaboration with other habitat partnerships

12. National Conservation Priorities Review

The priorities haven't changed since last year. When projects are entered into the NFHP database, Doug tries to list the priorities that are met by each project. It is desired that all applicants identify the priorities they feel they are addressing. All FOR projects meet Priority #7 (enhancing recreational fishing) Applicants should clearly identify which priorities their projects address. This will make our package score higher in the NFHP review and helps us maintain our current standing as a "top tier" partnership with maximum federal funding each year.

Doug shared the history of our federal projects with a \$5.2 million investment from NFHP funds, \$8.1 million in federal leverage funds, and 30.5 million in non-federal match. There was a graph presented showing the distribution of the number of projects for each conservation priority. Priorities 1, 3, 5, and 7 are the most addressed priorities by the RFHP.

13. Official Federal Designation

FOR was officially recognized by Congress as one of the 20 National Fish Habitat Partnerships.

14. Project Updates and Small Grants

There was a review and status update of all projects awarded since 2021 and a listing of proposed projects for 2026. Doug mentioned the tremendous contribution Bass Pro Shops and Cabelas have made to this list of projects. Doug reminded everyone of the efforts early in the RFHP to partner with Johnny Morris. As a result, Johnny was a founding member of the partnership and hosted our first official meeting at his Big Cedar Lodge Resort. Gene Gilliland confirmed the role Bass Pro Shops played and stated that they continue to indicate further support going forward.

All but one of the 2022 and 2023 projects are complete. None of the 2025 projects are complete. 2026 list of Bass Pro and federal was submitted and awards for Bass Pro will go out soon. Federal projects will not be awarded until next spring.

There were three small grant applications submitted. Doug recommended funding all three. Awardees will utilize the Mossback and Reef Ball Foundation product grants to bolster their effort on the ground.

Mike Homer moved to fund all three. Gene Gilliland seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous.

15. Science and Data

Doug mentioned the need to increase participation in the committee and to find a new Chair. Rebecca then took over the topic.

There was a menti.com link provided to conduct a survey style presentation.

Plastics Standards:

Steven Bardin handled the subject of professional use of artificial habitat. Using a “pesticide approval” type process for use of plastic was recommended. Best management practice document provides a solid framework for use by our partners. The document titled “Responsible Manufacturing, Construction, and Deployment of Plastic Habitat” was reviewed.

Vote to adopt the best practices and how would we use it.

Motion from Lynn Quattro and seconded by Gene Gilliland. Discussion was concerned about the finality of the document, and it was stated that it is intended to be a living document potential changes over time. To fully understand the discussion, please view the YouTube video.

Vote was 57% Yes, 0% No, and 43% abstained. Document was adopted.

Microplastics Research discussion:

Current efforts for AFWA Multi-state Conservation Grant research project funding have been unsuccessful. Could try again next year.

The question “should we support/get involved in microplastics research, and if so, how?” was posed. In general, comments were in support of pursuing research with concerns about minimizing impacts on traditional project funding.

Do we want to make sure projects we fund follow the newly adopted best practices standards? A decision needs to be made on how we move forward.

Science Update – Issues needing attention

Updating regional prioritization for habitat impairments important fish species

Updating the strategic Plan and grant scoring form

Needed input on the items below and Rebecca used the menti.com allow collection of responses.

Development of more quantitative regional fish habitat impairment indexes

Data from contributor states on habitat water quality, fish and watershed metrics.

Dedicated (e.g. from a graduate student).

Question posed as to what the S&D Committee can focus on in 2026? Seven comments were received and documented.

Volunteers were requested and seven indicated a willingness to join the committee.

Doug wrapped the S&D discussion by thanking those who were willing to join in the effort. The NFHP staff and committees do expect each partnership to have strong science and data

programs. There was a discussion about our S&D committee meeting with the Midwest Glacial Lakes S&D committee as both have similar interests and challenges.

FRIENDS OF RESERVOIRS BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Meeting was called to order

FOR membership Update

Doug reviewed new memberships for 2025. Three new Friends of Reservoir Chapters were formed in 2025. They were:

Friends of Lake Ray Roberts, Dallas, TX

Greers Ferry Walleye Club, Edgemont, AR

Crawford County Conservation District, PA

Communications Committee

Rebecca reviewed her role as the coordinator to include website maintenance, project dashboard, priorities dashboard, “Who to contact Map”, email newsletters and lists, and social media.

Thanks to Gary Klein and MLF for the sweepstakes for a fishing trip with Gary. The winner was Steve Pilkington from Tennessee, and they fished at Kentucky Lake. We added 344 new contacts to our newsletter from this promotion.

RFHP continues to grow sponsorships, and the meeting included new sponsors Biobase, Oase, Solitude Lake Management, and C4. Sponsorship levels were discussed with Green, Gold, Silver, and Bronze levels. New logos for each level were displayed.

The question was asked, “how could we better showcase our sponsors?”.

Menti.com survey showed comments on producing videos, signage at projects, more social media cross sharing, speaking points with media during on the ground projects, developing new outlets for project highlighting partners, pictures with their branding at the project site, and thank you letters, certificates, appreciation plaques.

Status of the FOR 501(c)(3) – Lynn Quattro, President and Mike Homer Treasurer

CT Corporation, our registered agent, worked with FOR to update our status in the District of Columbia. There was considerable work to be done to comply with reporting requirements, managing business licenses, and handling entity management. We are in good standing and will need to file a new mandatory report in 2027 to maintain our non-profit status.

16. Adjournment

The meeting ended with all major agenda items completed.