



American Fisheries Society
Fisheries Administration Section
Mid-Year Meeting
90th North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference
March 11, 2025, 3:30 – 5:30 PM (EDT)
The Galt House

Agenda

3:30 - Welcome/Call to Order

Lynn Quattro/George Scholten

- Introduction of AFS and FAS officers/staff, guests
- Determine quorum – no, 9 members and 9 guests present
- Review agenda
- Approve September 2024 meeting minutes
- Financial Update and approval of Treasurers Report

SFR Project Awards

Christian Waters

- 2025 Awards Report
- Christian is looking for volunteers to serve on the 2025 SFR Awards Committee:
 - Michael Stone (via email)

Reports and Updates

Lynn Quattro

- Section Workplan
 - Continue to increase visibility and membership in the Section.
 - Have continued to serve on the AFS Management Committee and attended meetings throughout the year.
 - I continued to serve on the Reservoir Fish Habitat Partnership Steering Committee as a representative from the Fisheries Administration Section attended meetings on this throughout the year. I also serve as President of Friends of Reservoirs Board (401c3 group supporting the partnership). Johnny Morris Fish Habitat Grant funding more than doubled our funding value this year and we hope that it will continue for at least 2 more years.
 - Fish with Gary Klein Sweepstakes: Friends of Reservoirs has teamed up with [Major League Fishing](#) in 2025, bringing you the chance to win a **fishing trip for two** people with Pro Angler Gary Klein. Gary will meet you at your lake of choice in the continental U.S. during 2025. Specific details of time and place will be arranged after the winner is drawn, to accommodate both your schedule and Gary's. Deadline to enter is April 5. Free entry, but there is a box to make a donation to the FOR. Link to enter is <https://www.friendsofreservoirs.org/swepstakes>
 - Have continued working with Jeff Kopaska, Gary Whelan, Julie Carter and others to increase membership. One of our most successful efforts in getting state Fish Chiefs involved was the controversy around Names of Fishes this past year.
 - Please feel free to suggest any ideas for increasing Section Membership.
 - Continue our relationship with the Fisheries Management Section.
 - The FMS and FAS continue to work together on projects. Updates of several of these projects will be provided during this meeting.
 - Continue promoting policy engagement and developing new avenues to coordinate Section responses and activities
 - Defer to upcoming reports.
 - Create a Procedures Manual for the Section with input from the Executive Committee.
 - Work has stalled on this as I simply ran out of time, but it is at the top of my list for next year's activities.
 - Reestablish our relationship with the Institute of Fisheries Management, United Kingdom and Ireland

- We will continue this in the upcoming year.
- Procedures Manual Update Lynn Quattro
 - We currently do not have a procedures manual for FAS, but Julie Carter has shared FMS manual with me and I am in process of making changes to get to the Ex Comm for their review. Because the Ex Comm has the ability to set procedures, the manual will not require approval of membership.
- Strategic Planning Committee Update Christian Waters
 - New plan – started last May, worked off old plan and updated, draft version presented at Annual Meeting in September, response at that meeting suggested we were heading in right direction, continue work with goal of Governing Board review in January, review process delayed but back on track, minor clean up needed, draft plan provided to Society President for his review
- Membership Fees Lynn Quattro
 - Our membership fees are currently set at \$10 annually. Our bylaws require that annual dues be subject to approval of the members voting at the annual meeting. If we would like to increase our dues, we need to take a vote in August in San Antonio, provided we have a quorum (15 members). Is there still an interest in increasing fees and what amount should we increase fees to?
- AFS Update
 - Officer Perspective Gary Whelan
 - Executive Director Perspective Jeff Kopaska
 - **Future Annual Meetings**
 - 2030 – Joint Meeting with TWS in Grand Rapids
 - 2029 – Southern Division
 - 2025 in San Antonio – 75th Anniversary of DJ, FWS asked to withdraw symposium, asked to keep but led by states, Joe Conroy stepped up to help host this symposium. Need states to contribute papers
 - AFS members that lost jobs – don't know how many, know of a dozen or more, providing AFS membership to those that we identify
 - Hosted Employment Insecurity webinar
 - Webpage to record stories from AFS members
 - Issuing joint statements with other scientific groups
 - Attending chapter meetings – WI, IL, MN, and KS; AFWA meeting; ASA Sportfishing Summit, trying to get AFS engaged in industry, Partner with a Payer event in Iowa
 - Planning to attend SEAFWA and WAFWA meetings, probably not MAFWA – only one fish chief at last one
 - Have quarterly calls with Midwest fish chiefs – trying to engage more with agencies, downstream communication, make AFS more relevant to local biologist, hosting webinars
 - FishBook – place for fisheries online discussions
 - Wrote article for *Fisheries*, history of AFS policy work
 - Switched over to Oxford for publications, took a budget hit
 - Lynn's AFS membership perspective
 - Appreciate renewed AFS focus on state memberships
 - Been successful getting memberships paid by Department for staff due to savings for meeting attendance, get staff involved, present papers
- Legislative Update from AFWA Ali Schwaab
- USFWS FAC Update Dave Miko

Introduction and Update from the Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is dedicated to conserving and restoring aquatic species and their habitats for the benefit of the American people. The Fish and Aquatic Conservation (FAC) program carries out this mission by collaborating with States, Tribes, and other partners to support healthy, self-sustaining populations of fish and other aquatic species. We value these ongoing partnerships and aim to be your one-stop resource for all things related to freshwater conservation. FAC operates in an integrated manner, addressing everything from habitat restoration and

aquatic invasive species prevention to captive propagation and population assessment. Our programs are guided by science and built on strong partnerships and shared stewardship.

Thank you to the 150 partners and individuals who have contributed feedback for the next Fish and Aquatic Conservation five-year Strategic Plan. Your input and continued support will help ensure the program meets the needs of States, Tribes, and other stakeholders as we fulfill our mission. We continue to refine the text and look forward to sharing a draft later this year with AFWA and those that provided input.

Dave Miko, Assistant Director, Fish and Aquatic Conservation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can provide a virtual update with committee chairs, or the entire committee, if requested.

Of specific interest to the Fish and Wildlife Health Committee Meeting: Tuesday, March 11

- The Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership National Investigational New Animal Drug (INAD) program continues to provide legal access to 19 different drugs as they go through FDA's approval process. In 2024, the INAD program treated approximately 24 million fish, and 75 different fish species, through 780 studies conducted by States, Tribes, academia, private industry, and federal agencies. Thank you for helping us gather the valuable data needed to obtain FDA approval.
- The USFWS continues to pursue the American Fisheries Society Lab Certification. Two Fish Health Centers recently received Tier 2 certification. Two are in the process of applying for their Tier 2 certification. The final two have begun the certification process.
- In FY25, the USFWS' Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership's research program is actively planning, conducting, and reporting on studies that are used towards gaining drug approvals or label extensions for several drugs including AQUI-S 20E, hydrogen peroxide, Chloramine-T, spawning hormone cGnRH IIa, Aquaflor, and Benzoak.

Of specific interest to the Invasive Species Committee Meeting and the Amphibian and Reptile Committee Meeting: Wednesday, March 12

- To help prevent a deadly fungus from killing native salamanders, the Service has published a new rule (90 FR 2170, January 10, 2025) listing 36 salamander genera as injurious wildlife under 18 USC 42, a provision of the Lacey Act.
- Also on January 10, 2025, the Service published a proposed rule (90 FR 1922) to add two freshwater mussel genera (Golden mussels *Limnoperna* and Asian pond mussels *Sinanodonta*) and one crayfish (*Procambarus virginialis*), totaling 28 species, to the list of injurious wildlife under 18 U.S.C. § 42. All taxa proposed for listing are nonnative and have a history of invasiveness abroad. Given their collectively broad climate adaptability, these freshwater invertebrates could cause widespread economic and environmental harm to domestic aquatic environments and infrastructure if established.
- The Aquatic Invasive Species Program detects and combats harmful species before they take hold in lakes and rivers. In the past two years, the program invested \$4.9 million in early detection and rapid response programs to keep aquatic ecosystems healthy, economies strong, and recreational opportunities abundant.

Of specific interest to the Angler and Boater R3 Committee Meeting: Wednesday, March 12

- **75 Years of Sport Fish Restoration Act Impact** The Sport Fish Restoration Act funding has provided Americans with the best sport fisheries in the world. For 75 years, eligible state, commonwealth and territory agencies have used these funds to foster fisheries conservation and connect people with nature. Funding includes:

- Maintenance and operation of 9,000 public boating and fishing access areas,
- Supporting 320 state fish hatcheries that stock 1 billion fish annually, and
- Provided aquatic education and an introduction to fishing to nearly 850,000 individuals.

The state-industry-federal partnership established through the Sport Fish Restoration Act enables state fish and wildlife agency biologists to manage, study, and monitor more than 200 species of sportfish. This includes such iconic species as Largemouth bass, Striped bass, Rainbow Trout, Tarpon, Walleye, Red drum, Spotted Seatrout, Crappie, Flounder, and hundreds more.

- FAC facilities welcomed nearly 1 million visitors in 2024, connecting the mission of the Service with local communities, providing recreational opportunities, and inspiring new generations of stewards.
 - 190,000 individuals participate in education and recreation programs.
 - Nearly 28,000 youth are involved in aquatic resource education, fostering the next generation of conservation stewards.

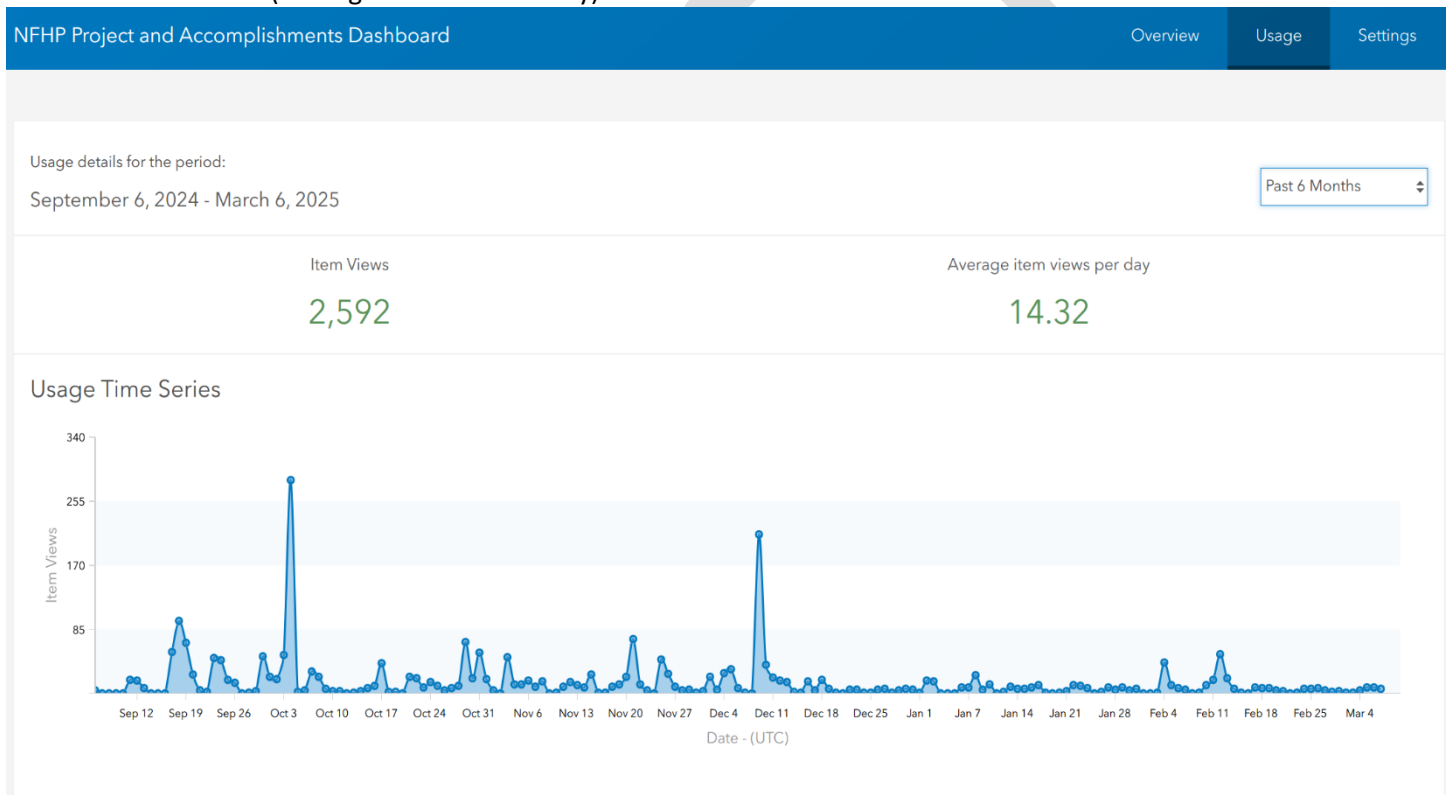
Of specific interest to the Fisheries and Water Resources Policy Committee: Thursday, March 13

- The National Fish Passage Program removes barriers and restores rivers, streams and aquatic habitats for fish and other species as well as reduces risk of flooding and other benefits to people. Over the past 25 years, the program has helped remove 3,500 barriers and reopened 64,000 miles of upstream habitat, including 118 barriers reconnecting 2,200 miles of aquatic habitat in 2023.
- The National Fish Hatchery System distributed (released or transferred) 138 million fish and other aquatic species in 2024 to directly support healthy and abundant fisheries, bolster recreational economies, and to honor our Tribal trust responsibilities.
 - 58 million fish supporting state-managed recreational fisheries
 - 28 million for species restoration and recovery efforts
 - 39 million to support fisheries mitigation
 - 9 million to support Tribal Trust and Subsistence
- A planning team has been formed for an Aquaculture Summit that will provide a new avenue for the aquaculture community to strategize collaboration and innovation. This multidisciplinary planning team includes state partners from Missouri and Pennsylvania, members from the Columbia River Basin tribal community, USFWS members, and other industry partners. The team is identifying a location and the potential timing for the Aquaculture Summit to take place, which will be shared as soon as possible, as well as possible topic tracks.
- The Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership National Investigational New Animal Drug (INAD) program continues to provide legal access to 19 different drugs as they go through FDA's approval process. In 2024 the INAD program treated approximately 24 million fish, and 75 different fish species, through 780 studies conducted by States, Tribes, academia, private industry, and federal agencies.
- In FY25, the USFWS' Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership's research program is actively planning, conducting, and reporting on studies that are used towards gaining drug approvals or label extensions for several drugs including Aqual-S 20E, hydrogen peroxide, Chloramine-T, spawning hormone cGnRH IIa, Aquaflor, and Benzoak.
- The 31st Annual Aquaculture Drug Approval Coordination Workshop will be combined with the Western Fish Disease Workshop and the American Fisheries Society Fish Health Section Annual meeting, held in-person in Bozeman, MT from June 23-27, 2025. The Annual Aquaculture Drug Approval Coordination Workshop will be hosted on June 24, with related presentations integrated throughout the rest of the meeting. Presentations and discussion topics include aquaculture drug research (antimicrobials, parasiticides, anesthetics, spawning aids,

and marking agents), indexing, disease models, and/or new, up-and-coming drugs. Please let us know if you are interested in presenting at this workshop, contact shane_ramee@fws.gov.

- National Fish Habitat Partnership Update Gary Whelan
 - **NFHP Legislation**
 - ACE Act reauthorized until 2030 on December 23, 2024
 - Key Revisions
 - Board – 2 added seats
 - Fisheries Commissions and Councils
 - BLM
 - Match is 1:1 for entire program - match requirement at national level – not project level
 - FHP operational funds have no match
 - No change in funding
 - Reduced timeline for fund availability
 - Reduced reporting
 - NFHP Updates
 - New Board Chair – Tim Schaeffer (PA FBC)
 - FHP Packages for Congressional designation submitted in early February
 - FHPs entering new project proposals and Board review upcoming
 - 2025 National Fish Habitat Assessment
 - ACE Act requires an updated Assessment
 - Fill gaps in 2016 Assessment
 - Board Direction
 - Update existing data layers with new information
 - Add in hydrology, forest harvest, grazing intensity and socioeconomics
 - Data layer updates funding in place since June 2024; 2025 assessment funding is in place with full completion in 2026.
 - Lower 48 Progress to Date
 - Updated datasets in hand
 - Analytical methodology in hand
 - New datasets to fill gaps
 - Hydrology – IHA and Monthly Q
 - Starting with Regional analysis of Q and fish
 - Projected future flows and fish
 - Grazing and forest harvest data
 - Threshold analysis is in progress
 - Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico Progress
 - Environmental and fish data updates for AK and HI
 - Evaluating interactions between inland and coastal factors with HI reefs
 - Examining dataset options for PR
 - Other Progress
 - Environmental data for lakes > 1 ha in hand from MGLP
 - Evaluating forest fire, USDA cropland datasets, satellite estimated irrigation, drainage, and Ag BMP datasets
 - Examining TNC resilience index for freshwaters
 - Examining USGS Creelcat data for inland waters along with other socioeconomics information
 - National Fish Habitat Partnership Projects and Accomplishments Dashboard
 - In September 2024, the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) launched a new, publicly accessible Projects and Accomplishments Dashboard highlighting fish habitat projects funded and supported by NFHP partners.

- The Dashboard allows users to explore project locations via an interactive map. Users can view details about individual projects and summaries of NFHP accomplishments using various filters such as project year, location (e.g., state, congressional district), and focus (e.g., species or habitats). Project types include on-the-ground habitat restoration, habitat and species assessments, and partner coordination - highlighting the array of efforts NFHP employs to protect, restore, and enhance fish habitats. The Dashboard also highlights the transformational landscape-scale accomplishments of NFHP and its partners, including conserving over 8,500 miles of river and coastal habitat, and nearly 95,000 acres of habitat while collaborating with over 1,600 organizations across the United States. Since 2006, NFHP conservation projects have generated over \$380 million in leveraged funding for a total of \$61 million in support of fish habitat conservation.
- Over several years, MSG funds have contributed \$60K to the NFHP data system related to updating historical data and maintenance of the data system (2017, 2019, 2020). This accounts for 17% of all funding. All of the historical data from the old data system were transferred into the new system, so the MSG funds helped us ensure that we have historical information in the Dashboard.
- Since September 2024 the Project and Accomplishments Dashboard has been viewed 2,592 Times (Average of 14 Views a day).



- Gary provided an overview of dashboard to Committee. Dashboard available here: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/40834439a924402b915d64e08697114d/>
- Working on Accountability report – due 10/30/25
- Board is updating Fish Habitat Action Plan
- Reauthorization did not increase funding – \$7.2M – BLM was not added to list of agencies that can request funding for technical support
- Names of Fishes Committee Discussions Julie Carter/Lynn Quattro
 - Lynn, Julie and Gary updated the group on the discussions that have occurred since our last meeting in September 2024. The Names of Fishes Committee Chairs both indicate that the book is a suggestion of names and no entity (government, agency, etc.) is required to use it. Our committees continue to argue that we need to have a standard. When the suggestion was made that we set up another committee to

create that standard, Names of Fishes was concerned about that as well. We have made some progress in moving forward with a procedure for challenging a naming decision. We will continue to work together and with the Names of Fishes Committee to find some resolution. In the meantime, Gary has drafted a letter to come from AFS providing some guidance to States on names to be used until we have resolved this issue.

- Lots of changes in last update – at least three that have caused major issues
 - Chubs in Arizona
 - Black Bass
 - Cutthroat Trout
- Trying to come to some sort of solution. States use book in statutes/administrative rules that cannot be updated quickly.
- Julie Carter did a lot of this work. Started asking questions regarding how decisions were made, why one publication can change things
- Lots of meetings and discussions on this. Julie spearheaded a letter to Exec Director of AFS regarding our concerns with process
- Names of Fishes Committee – wanted to convey that we can contest these decisions, but they do not have a process to do so. They had no idea that we used that book as a standard, or that it was used in legislation. They wanted us to add a statement that said the names in this book were just suggestions. We have concerns about that due to the need for a standard.
- Gary has drafted a letter to states to propose a strategy – recommend follow 7th edition until we can work through this process or hold contentious changes to 8th until they can be resolved.
- Black Bass 2025 Funding Request Lynn Quattro/George Scholten
 - According to our by-laws, the Executive Committee can authorize up to \$500 in expenditures without requiring membership approval. Therefore, the Ex Com determined that a contribution of \$500 will be made on behalf of FAS to the Black Bass 2025 Symposium. George will send the money to them via the website they have provided.
 - Request from organizers for funding support
 - Executive Committee approved a \$500 donation
- IFC/AFS Instream Flow & Water Level Conservation Christopher Estes (via email)
 - **[National Center for Ecologically Sustainable Water Conservation and Management](#)**
 - Updates are posted online monthly: <https://www.instreamflowcouncil.org/training-center/>
<https://www.instreamflowcouncil.org/training-center-rfiq/>
 - Center endorsements were received from: [AFS, AFWA and other Center Endorsements have been provided](#) – others anticipated. FC/AFS IFWLC Steering Committee (SC) appreciates all the time and effort expended by AFS, AFWA, and others that contributed to these endorsements
 - Project extended to December 31, 2025
 - Center Host and Affiliates RFIQ and RFP Selection Processes
 - Request was made to AFWA to establish formal IFWLC Center Updates at fall September 2025 annual meeting committees (SOW, FWRPC, Legal, & Executive Committee (similar to presentations at the March 2025 North American)
 - 9 entities have expressed interest- 6 to be Host, 3 to be affiliate. There can only be 1 Host. All 6 Host Candidates are currently deemed to be potentially qualified to Host the Center subject to the outcomes of the RFP onsite interview processes
 - Webinar with applicants scheduled, stages 2 & 3 RFP
 - RFP deadline April 15
 - Short-List Qualified applicants notified June 11, 2025
 - Interviews with short-listed applicants next 90-120 days
 - AFS Center article to be published in Fisheries by June 2025 – AFS Cosponsor
 - Proof received
 - Executive Governing Board of the IFWLC Project Steering Committee (SC) established in November 2024.
 - Comprised of an IFC/AFS subset of the project Steering Committee.

- Christopher Estes chairs both the 10 member SC and 5 member Executive Governing Boards (Tom Annear, Andy Drummond, Doug Austen, Dudley Reiser, Don Orth, Clair Stalneaker, Tom Hardy, Allen Locke, Darren C.).
- AFS is formally represented on the full SC and the EGB by Doug Austen and Dudley Reiser
- Business Plan deliverable will be completed by December
- Other business-related legal instruments required to establish the Center are being developed, including governance of the Center by a combination of the IFC/AFS/the Host (and possibly AFWA representation in the future).
- Grant cannot be used for seeking funding.
- Stakeholders broad from private to NGO to governmental types

New Business

- IFM Partnership Discussion All
 - Paul Coulson, IFM Chief Executive, contacted Lynn expressing interest in reinstating Officer and Young Professional exchange program
 - In the past, we have alternated our exchange with the Fish Management Section – they sent Young Professional one year, we would send an officer the next year
 - Need to figure out funding and timing with FMS
 - Gary may have funding available to contribute due to a trip he did not take as an AFS officer
 - Executive Committees of FAS and FMS to discuss and develop a plan
 - Host organization responsible for expenses once they get here, other organization responsible for getting their person there
- Patrick Cooney from Data and Technology Section contacted Lynn regarding research needs related to forward facing sonar. Their section is interested in partnering to address these needs. More to follow
 - Gary: Black Bass Symposium will likely address some of these needs
- Election Year – looking for candidates for President Elect and Secretary-Treasurer

Adjourn