



American Fisheries Society
Fisheries Administration Section
2023 Spring Meeting
March 20, 2022, 2:00-4:00 PM (CDT)
Majestic H, Conference Center – Upper Level, St. Louis, MO

Minutes

Gary Whelan called the meeting to order a 2:00.

- AFS and FAS officers were introduced
- Only 12 members were present at the start of the meeting so a quorum was not met.
 - Gary Whelan
 - George Scholten
 - Lynn Quattro
 - Dave Miko
 - Jarrad Kosa
 - Lance Hebdon
 - Hiro Hayashi (not a member; DJ Case and Associates)
 - Justine Haaz
 - Craig Bonds
 - Christian Waters
 - Ken Cunningham
 - Doug Austen
 - Jason Olive
 - Tom O’Connel (not a member; USGS)
 - Greg Conover (not a member; USFWS)
 - Vic DiCenzo
 - Todd Plachell (not a member; EA)
 - Benjamin Batten
 - David Lind (not a member; AFWA)
- Whelan asked if anyone wanted to make any changes to agenda. No changes requested.
- Approval of August 2022 meeting minutes was deferred due to lack of a quorum at the start of the meeting.
- Scholten provided a Membership Report – 88 members as of February list from AFS
- Financial Update and approval of Treasurers Report (attached) – no questions, approval deferred due to lack of a quorum
- Upcoming Officer Election – looking for nominations for Incoming President
 - Scholten willing to continue as Secretary-Treasurer

SFR Project Awards (Lynn Quattro)

- 2022 Award Presentations Report
 - 11 submissions last year, up from 6
 - Lynn made the NC WRC presentation and Gary made the NY DEC presentation in person
 - OK presentation is pending
 - Lynn announced winners at Southern Division Meeting
- 2023 Awards Solicitation –
 - Award notice out by end of April and we need judges.
 - Goal is to finish up process by July so we can announce at AFS Meeting
 - If you have not served as a judge, we are looking for new members
 - Justine Haaz, Gary Whelan, and Christian Waters volunteered to serve
 - Sending award announcement out to WSFR Regions and other SFR avenues
 - It was noted that we need more submissions in the R3 area.

Reports and Updates

- Communications – Website (Gary Whelan)
 - Ken has been keeping website up and running with the site recently updated.

- Need to find a backup for Ken and we are looking for volunteers.
- Section Workplan (Gary Whelan)
 - Serve as our voice at AFS Governing Board meetings - Lynn has been handling this as Gary's proxy with Gary as 2nd VP of the Society.
 - Develop a closer working relationship with FMS – This has been working well and we have a strong relationship in place.
 - Working on publications – Gary representing us at AFS Publications Meeting next week in Alexandria. Ensuring that Fisheries continues to provide science based perspectives and thought papers will be emphasized.
 - Chatting with Directors – Gary, Doug Austen, and TWS President will be attending ExCom meeting to discuss membership with Directors
 - Olive – is anyone attending IFM Meeting? Not yet, still trying to fix communication issues post-pandemic.
- Legislative Update from AFWA (David Lind)
 - David reviewed the information in the included “AFWA Legislative and Administrative Summary” and answered questions
- AFS Update
 - Officer's report (Gary Whelan)
 - Meetings
 - Latin America and Caribbean Fisheries Congress – first meeting of its kind; currently have 323 papers submitted into 21 sessions with authors from 29 countries
 - 153rd Annual Meeting in Grand Rapids August 20-23, 2023 in Grand Rapids; 45 symposia, registration opens April 1; Registration \$625, students and retirees \$375.
 - Increase communication efficiency among units – There is a need to do a better job moving information between society, sections, divisions, chapters, and student subunits.
 - Ensure transparency at Society level – We are working to share information among units. April Croxton is inviting unit leadership (all levels) to meetings to provide insights into issues facing Society.
 - Support DEIJA efforts within the Society – We working to do better at diversifying the Society.
 - Diversity and Inclusion Standing Committee focusing on operational issues for society.
 - Equal Opportunity Section focuses more on our members and future members.
 - Remediating flat/declining membership
 - Like most professional societies, AFS is struggling with attracting new members and in keeping existing members.
 - Affiliate memberships
 - A long term discussion point as this member level sometimes is a doorway into society, and sometimes it provides an option that results in people not joining society.
 - Gift Memberships are an option for chapters to get people involved.
 - Finances are stable but flat as a result of dues increases. Inflationary issues are resulting in an annual reduction in buying power.
 - AFS has an annual budget of approximately \$4M per year. The Society has been running in the red the last couple of years but should be balanced this year.
 - This is partially due to flat membership of 6,000-7,000.
 - The Society has had seasonal cash flow issues which cause the use of short-term borrowing.
 - There are current discussions about the Society office space in Bethesda which are owned as part of a coop. Approval was given by Governing Board at the January Meeting to review options for this structure now that staff are working remotely.
 - Currently has 15 FTEs which is down from 22 FTEs in the mid-2010s.
 - Publications

- Books – AFS is largest publisher of Fisheries professional books, but sales have been in a decline for some time. Unclear what effects of library accounts are to our sales. We need new books and you can help here – think about new book ideas that you and your staff can contribute.
 - Standard Sampling Book Update? Probably later this year – pandemic slowed process down for that book.
- Journals – Starting negotiations with Wiley this fall. There is a clear push for all journals to be open access as also noted by sister societies. Submissions are down so please consider publishing your and your agency’s work in AFS journals.
 - Reviewers are always needed
 - Current rejection rate for getting reviewers is 50% which slows down the publication rate.
 - Please consider you or your staff reviewing at least two papers per year. It is a great way to be engaged in our science.
 - Publication Summit scheduled for next week
 - Open access journals are taking over publications. AFS is trying to figure out how this will affect financial model and we don’t want to compromise integrity of our journals
- AFS Elections are now open with two outstanding candidates. Please vote and ask staff to vote. Voting in the past was only 20% of the membership.
- Ideas for the future
 - DEI – both traditional and workplace
 - LGBTQIA+
 - Diversify where membership works
 - Other society relationship building (e.g., Society of Canadian Aquatic Sciences, Native American Fish and Wildlife Society)
 - Member outreach will need to increase and improve.
 - Broad engagement of all members, particularly those in Canada
 - Retiree Corps
 - Many talented professionals are retiring with thousands of years of experience.
 - We should seek to keep those engaged that wish to be to help all professionals do their jobs better.
 - Implementing the publication contract
 - New Executive Director process will be starting next year as Doug Austen is planning to retire in 2024.
 - Budget oversight with an eye to improve our fiscal position and services to our members.
 - Restore policy position will be a key item here.
- Executive Director’s report (Doug Austen)
 - Fisheries community in Latin America doesn’t have a lot of structure. Looking at options to provide that under AFS as a chapter or maybe even a Division.
 - Working on getting book access for your staff.
 - Material is getting uploaded to gray literature database. Over 12K papers for far. Free to use. Need more state agencies to take advantage of that and please consider doing so.
 - Hutton Program – We have 530 applications for 45 positions.
 - Each position has 6-8 weeks with a mentor and then report out at Summit.
 - Best Paper at Southern Division AFS meeting was awarded to a Hutton member.
 - Fish-wildlife conflicts involving beavers is an emerging issue.
 - A AFS and TWS discussion group will be formed to identify solutions.
 - Multi-year grant was received to develop a database of known age calcified structures and work will be starting on this effort.

- Looking for ways to use grant programs to address collective needs of profession and ideas are always welcome.
 - Fisheries community needs to have a stronger voice for Farm Bill Programs.
 - Federal Fisheries Summit – cooperation and communication between federal fisheries agencies
 - Contact database and report will be primary outcomes
- National Fish Habitat Partnership (Gary Whelan)
 - 2024 National Conservation Priorities
 - Conserve intact healthy waters
 - Conserve hydrologic conditions for fish
 - Conserve physical and living habitats for fish
 - Reconnect fragmented fish habitats
 - Conserve water quality for fish
 - Maintain and improve structure and function of FHPs to conserve habitat
 - Enhance recreational, commercial, subsistence and traditional fishing opportunities
 - Board Update
 - Leadership
 - Ed Schriever retired
 - Robert Boyles (SC) new chair
 - Re-elected
 - Gene Gilliland (BASS) – Freshwater Recreational Anglers
 - Mike Leonard (ASA) – Recreational Sportfishing Industry
 - Bryan Moore (TU) – Habitat Conservation Organization
 - Elected
 - Amy Singler (AR/TNC) - Habitat Conservation Organization
 - Update of NFHP Action Plan – to be crafted by this board
 - Committee Updates
 - Policy Committee
 - FHP applications to Congress
 - ACE Act reauthorization
 - ACE Act language interpretation
 - Governance Committee
 - Bylaws redevelopment
 - Business practices
 - Vice Chair – This is not specified in the ACE Act but something that is needed.
 - Science and Data Committee
 - 2025 National Fish Habitat Assessment
 - ACE Act requires it
 - Likely limited funding availability
 - Audience will be informed and interested in NFHP
 - Assessment needs to provide information at multiple scales
 - Similar to 2015 report
 - SDC Selected Options for Further Evaluation
 - 2015 approach with updated data layers and current coastal assessments to include filling known gaps in hydrology, grazing intensity, timber harvest, and socioeconomics
 - Similar to approach above and will include lakes, impoundments, reservoirs, and coastal areas not addressed before.
 - Similar approach to the first option with incorporation of a climate change/resiliency component
 - NFHP Project Tracking System
 - ESRI Survey123

- Connect data entry form
 - Each FHP has their own dashboard for entering and updating project information
 - Draft internal dashboard for summarizing and querying NFHP accomplishments
 - Excellent system with room for FWS to use for things like identifying priority areas for fish passage projects
 - Communications Committee
 - Updating social media
 - Many press releases coming out on a range of NFHP activities
 - New infographic
- FY2023 Projects announced this week
 - \$39.2 million
 - USFS - \$5.8 million
 - Matching - \$33.3 million (5.7:1 match)
 - 95 projects in 24 states
 - Improved approach and process will be used for the FY2024 projects
- Bonds: Where is NFHP on being able to use funds for coordination? Whelan: Each FHP puts in for a coordination project but issue is matching funds. Grant management is a lot of work for FHP. Need to increase funding to retain coordinators and attract veteran staff that know grant systems.
- USFWS Update (Dave Miko)
 - National Wild Fish Health Survey GIS Mapper
 - The GIS mapper has been officially rolled out.
 - The mapper is being presented at national meetings throughout the coming months. Here is the [LINK](#).
 - The Title 50 Program (BADER) authorized 13 shipments for approximately 3.4 million fish and eggs (1 total species, 2 countries) since August 2022. Six individuals have applied to be a signing official on certificates during this period.
 - Title 50 improved website. (BADER) Please visit our newly updated and improved website that clearly outlines the necessary steps to import salmon and trout under the Title 50 Program.
 - The FWS Aquatic Animal Health Plan (AAHP) (BADER) has been updated and signed by the Director and is available [on our website](#).
 - Priority Propagation synthesis (LIPSCOMB): Programmatic reviews of 20 priority propagation programs for recovery and restoration were conducted by service experts. A synthesis of these reports is in progress and will include metanalysis techniques to evaluate broad themes and common data deficiencies among the species programs.
 - NFPP BIL
 - The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, signed in November 2021, is providing tens of billions of dollars to federal agencies to restore our natural systems and ultimately, improve our nation's resilience to a rapidly changing climate.
 - Several federal agencies received funding through the BIL with the specific purpose of reconnecting our waterways via removal of in-stream barriers for the benefit of aquatic species, public safety, and climate resiliency.
 - At the US Fish and Wildlife Service has been working to facilitate an effort to coordinate the delivery of roughly \$2 billion through the BIL for the restoration of fish passage and aquatic connectivity nationwide. These conversations were kick-started at a workshop last July at NCTC.
 - These conversations have spurred new partnerships across the federal family between resource conservation agencies like FWS and NOAA, and agencies that haven't historically focused on the restoration of natural systems like FHWA and FEMA. This funding has also spurred new, while strengthening existing, partnerships between the federal government and non-federal partners including States and Tribes.
 - The USFWS, in collaboration with our federal and non-federal partners, is committed to implementing these funds in a transformational manner – ensuring our most vulnerable

ecosystems AND our most vulnerable communities are thriving and protected from climate uncertainty in the future.

- USFWS will be reaching out soon to work with non-federal partners including states on next steps regarding the fish passage coordination efforts. This will occur after all of the federal agencies are comfortable with where we are at before we get there. Patience has been most appreciated with this effort.

○ **BIL Coordination-----**

- The National Fish Passage Program, one of the five USFWS programs that received BIL funds, has already directed \$38 million (FY22 funding) of its available \$200 million to 40 projects across 23 states and Puerto Rico.
- Projects will remove 100 barriers to fish passage, reopen over 3,700 miles of stream and river habitat, reestablishing species' access to historic habitats that have been inaccessible for decades, if not centuries.
- For FY23, the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) was released in November and Letters of Intent for potential projects were due to Service regions in December.
- Since that time, USFWS Regions worked with project proponents and partners in the regions to prep their project lists for submission to HQ for national level review. Each region was asked to submit \$10M in projects for funding consideration; will need to trim that down to under \$40M.
- The national project list is currently with Department of Interior leadership for consideration and funding decisions should be done by the end of April.

○ **FRIMA**

- There is a new (or revitalized) line of funding in the FAC budget in FY23. This is the Fisheries Restoration and Irrigation Mitigation Act or FRIMA.
- Funding for FRIMA was around in the early 2000s, but then had a hiatus; it was funded in FY23 omnibus at \$5M which was earmarked from the Fish Passage Program.
- The focus of this funding is fish screens for irrigation diversions, initially targeting watersheds which drain into the Pacific Ocean in the states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. In FY2023 the coverage area for FRIMA has been expanded from the original four states to include California.
- Judy Gordon, USFWS ARD in Region 1, sent a note out to state and tribal partners in late January on this topic.
- Early stages of working to stand this program up and USFWS anticipates releasing a Notice of Funding Opportunity in the coming months.
 - Any questions, please reach out to Judy or any of the USFWS Fish Passage Program contacts.

○ **Gap Analysis**

- *Background.* USFWS FAC is conducting analyses of its species restoration efforts with a focus on activities by its 51 Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices (field offices).
- *Purpose.* FAC plans to use the results of these analyses for two main purposes:
 - to evaluate and improve program implementation, and
 - to clarify and better communicate FWCO roles, contributions, and needs.
- *How.* FAC is examining its conservation efforts for the highest-investment species within a region as a group. Draft reports have been prepared for ten regional species groupings.
- *Synthesis.* FAC will synthesize the results of these evaluations to better understand patterns at a national scale.
- *Preliminary findings.* Draft recommendations suggest a need for improvements in: setting and communicating priorities, conservation planning, and investment in technical and evaluation capacities.
- *Partner Feedback and Next Steps.* FAC will be seeking partner feedback on several gap analyses, including those conducted for the Lower Great lakes, Lower Mississippi, Lahontan, and Rio Grande.

- National Fish Health Summary Highlights (Gary Whelan)

- Report included
- New Business
 - Need to update bylaws to allow for joint committees with Fish Management Section (e.g., Angler Survey Committee)
 - Potential temporary or permanent solution is to use an informal working group that is populated by members from both sections
 - Need to develop a procedure manual to help provide guidance during transitions which Lynn Quattro and Julie Carter are starting work on.

Meeting adjourned at: 4:16 pm