

**Western Division American Fisheries Society**  
**EXCOM Meeting**  
**September 11, 2005**

In attendance: Tom McMahon, Lynn Starnes, Joe Margraf, Bob Hughes, Dave Ward, Clint Muhlfeld (Montana), Keith Underwood (NPIC), Jeff Thomas (NPIC), Scott Bryan (AZ-NM), Tina Swanson (CA-NV), Barry McPherson (Oregon), Hilda Sexauer (CO-WY), Mauricio Ramirez Rodriguez (Mexico), Mark Brouder, Jim Tilmant, Jennifer Nielsen (AFS 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President), Chris Kohler (AFS President-Elect), Barbara Knuth (AFS President), Gus Rassam (AFS Executive Director).

**Quorum Established**

The meeting began with a lengthy discussion regarding concern about political interference in scientific determinations. This had been a topic of discussion at the Montana Chapter meeting, as was the need to bring this matter to the attention of the Parent Society. The Montana and Cal-Neva chapters were especially interested in what the Parent Society could do to help. Examples of political interference brought up included changes to the administrative record and inappropriate positions by agencies regarding ESA listings and biological opinions. Parent Society officers suggested that the Society can facilitate dialogue with federal and state agencies, but could not act as an “enforcer”. It was suggested that the AFS Best Science Committee be the vehicle for Parent Society input/position. Chapter and Division officers urged the Parent Society to take a stronger stance than facilitating discussion. A potential action discussed was asking for an independent investigation by the Inspector General’s office. AFS officers suggested polling chapters on their experience and opinions and noted that AFS involvement should be limited to large, general (beyond local) concerns. Chapter officers expressed concerns about this approach because chapter members work for the agencies in question, and because chapters have less influence than the Parent Society. It was finally agreed that the best approach would be “multi-pronged”. The Best Science Committee will develop a “white paper”, which will serve as a position statement regarding political interference. Two members from each division will review the white paper. Western Division representatives will be Clint Muhlfeld and Tina Swanson. In addition, a web-based survey for members will be designed, with a goal of publishing survey results in *Fisheries*. A press release will be prepared when survey results are published. Finally, it was agreed that members should be provided the tools to deal with this problem as part of their work environment.

Lynn discussed the National Fish Habitat Initiative and sought direction from AFS to the Western Division. Barbara Knuth responded that Stan Moberly was on point for AFS, and is preparing a “vision” document. The Western Division should contact Doug Austin or Eric Schwab for advice on how to help.

Bob Hughes discussed non-member registration at Division meetings. After much discussion a motion was made and seconded to charge non-members a minimum of member registration, plus 1.5 times the cost of AFS membership. Recruitment materials (membership information, etc) would be included in meeting packets to facilitate non-members becoming members. The motion passed unanimously.

Bob Hughes then led a discussion on non-conforming (non-active) chapters. The Portland Chapter is an example of a nonconforming chapter. It was noted that proper procedures must be followed to officially disband a chapter. Eric Wagner, incoming Vice-President, will take the lead in disbanding nonconforming chapters.

Mark Brouder led a discussion on converting the newsletter from paper to electronic. A motion was made and seconded to put a notice in the next newsletter that subsequent newsletters would be electronic because of expense and environmental concerns. The motion passed unanimously.

Western Native Fishes – the symposium and publication of proceedings are going well. Most information for the database has been collected and entered. A remaining problem is with data from Mexico. A motion was made and seconded to amend the contract (add approximately \$6,000) with Garcia and Associates to develop a HUC system for the three northern states of Mexico. The motion passed unanimously.

A discussion on attendance by Western Division officers at chapter meetings was deferred, except it was decided that President Joe Margraf will attend the NPIC meeting this October in Victoria, BC.

Joe Margraf presented and discussed the proposed Western Division budget for FY2006. A motion was made and seconded to approve the budget. The motion passed unanimously.

We discussed general financial condition of the Division, chapters, and the Parent Society. The Division may be able to provide financial guidance to chapters. Profit sharing requirements of the Parent Society regarding annual meetings may no longer be appropriate, because the Parent Society is currently financially secure, and no longer relies on the annual meeting to generate most income. Current profit sharing requirements provide insufficient incentive for divisions and chapters to bid for the Parent Society's annual meeting.

We discussed potential support for the NPIC annual meeting in October, primarily because the meeting will include a number of international issues including climate change. The chapter is also trying to emerge from years of relative inactivity and asked the Division for support in this effort. A motion was made and seconded to provide NPIC with \$1,000 to support the annual meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Joe Margraf distributed and discussed his Program of Work for FY2006. Joe will consider forming a Student Affairs Committee, and will appoint at least one student to all committees.

We had a lengthy discussion on fund raising, primarily on avoiding the confusion and overlap among the Parent Society, divisions, and chapters. Bob Hughes would like to see each chapter provide funds or auction items for the Western Division 2006 meeting. Another plan is to bring in "big names" to go on exclusive outings (for which they are charged) to raise funds. Outings would include sessions to discuss AFS and ask for additional fund raising ideas. Future discussions should include a potential By Laws change to have the Past President and President-Elect co-chair a standing committee to raise funds.

Chapter representatives gave brief updates on the 2006 (Montana), 2007 (Cal-Neva), and 2008 (Oregon) Western Division annual meetings. We need to learn, understand, and amend where necessary the Division and Chapter commitments and profit-sharing regarding the 2007 meeting in San Francisco.

We discussed grant application requirements. Montana AFS has a good example of grant application requirements on its web site. An announcement for grants totaling \$5,000 will be placed in the newsletter.