

Western Division American Fisheries Society
EXCOM Meeting
17 January 2006

In attendance: Joe Margraf (President), Bob Hughes (President-Elect), Eric Wagner (Vice-President), Lynn Starnes (Past-President), Kate Walker (Montana), Scott Maclean (Alaska), Russ Kiefer (Idaho), Barry McPherson (Oregon), Mary Whalen (Electronic Communication), Cindy Williams (Hutton Scholarship), Bob Gresswell (Maughan & Trachtenberg Scholarships). Quorum Established

Old Business

Minutes from the December 2005 call were corrected, and then approved.

The financial report was received by email from Dave Ward without comment by those in attendance.

New Business

Initial discussion focused on the **WDAFS newsletter**, which lacks an editor with Mark Brouder's resignation last week because of other time commitments. Margraf agreed to contact chapter presidents for suggestions of possible replacement editors, as well as someone to replace Mary Whalen as webmaster later this year. Whalen agreed to deliver an electronic newsletter as soon as possible, and Margraf promised to get the existing materials from Brouder. Other suggestions for newsletter announcements came from Gresswell (Maughan & Trachtenberg Scholarships), Williams (Hutton Scholarship), and Starnes (2006 WDAFS awards). A call for Chapter of the Year award nominations is expected in early March.

Hughes moved, and Wagner seconded, to accept the draft **Fish Passage Center (FPC)** letter as written (see below). Kiefer summarized the work of his ad-hoc committee and stated that the draft was sent to BPA (with Margraf's and Hughes' concurrences), which was meeting on the FPC today. The letter was approved unanimously, and Margraf agreed to write a brief introduction and send the final WDAFS version to BPA as a letter or email. Starnes recommended that copies of the letter be forwarded to other interested parties and the press (as a press

release), and Kiefer agreed that his subcommittee would provide Margraf with other addressees.

The Western Division of the American Fisheries Society strongly recommends that the Bonneville Power Authority:

- 1) Ensure that the transfer of responsibilities moves from the Fish Passage Center to the new entity seamlessly while continuing to meet the data analysis requirements of the Columbia Basin stakeholders and agencies.
- 2) The new entity must continue to meet data collection and analysis functions specified in the current scope of work to ensure regional stakeholders and agencies may remain fully engaged in the region's on-going salmon recovery efforts.
- 3) All of the current responsibilities and functions of the FPC should be transferred to a single independent entity, not divided among several existing entities. Not only will this help create the seamless transition called for in the report language, it is also the only way to provide for maximum efficiency, effectiveness, coherence, and accountability to fishery managers using the services. Further, given the dozens of functions currently performed by the FPC, its successor must be housed within a single entity if these functions are to be preserved as specified by the report language.
- 4) Ensure that the new entity maintains scientific integrity, rigor, and independence. Peer review is an important means of assuring scientific integrity.
- 5) An oversight board for this new entity, representing the broad spectrum of regional interest, should help ensure that operations are conducted with impartiality towards external entities, negotiate regionally acceptable annual scopes of work, and maintain operations consistent with meeting obligations of executed contracts.
- 6) The data and analyses generated and developed by this new entity must be readily available to the public. The public should have the ability to review and obtain the information created by this entity at no cost.
- 7) BPA should provide funding support for the new entity in a manner that results in no loss or interruption of responsibilities, functions, or services.

Walker summarized progress for the **WDAFS meeting in Bozeman, MT, 15-19 May 2006**. The registration site <<https://www2.montana.edu/confservices/afs/>> is up and running. The deadline for abstracts (<<http://water.montana.edu/afs/>>; contributed poster, contributed platform, symposium) was extended to 15 February because of insufficient communication to WDAFS members. Continuing education courses will include statistical study designs, hydroacoustic tagging, and *Didymosphenia* (nuisance alga) The meeting organizers are seeking raffle/auction donations, sponsors, and student volunteers. Eric Wagner suggested visiting the Bonneville Chapter website for reward rates for student volunteers, and remembered needing around 20 to cover registration, AV, presentation loading, and poster set up. McPherson noted that the Oregon Chapter rewards four hours of student work with a free registration. Starnes agreed to donate a framed fish or

wildlife photo, and the Alaska Chapter is sponsoring the meeting with \$500. **It was agreed to have an Executive Committee meeting on Monday 15 May from 1300-1700** and, if possible, a business lunch late in the meeting to allow more time to determine student presentation awards.

Margraf indicated that the WDAFS, CA/NV chapter, and parent society are negotiating an MOU to cover responsibilities and rewards for the **2007 meeting** in San Francisco.

The **next conference call** is scheduled for 21 February at 1230 MST, 1130 PST, and 1030 AST at 800-689-9401, *3272720*.