



American Fisheries Society

Western Division

President Jim Bowker, President-elect Cleve Steward, Vice-president Brian Missildine, Secretary-Treasurer Travis Neebling, Past-president Hilda Sexauer

Meeting Minutes for Executive Committee Mid-Year Meeting on **Saturday, December 5, 2015**
Start Time: 8:00 am, USFWS Bozeman Fish Technology Center

1. Introductions and overview of the Agenda
 - a. Jim Bowker (President), Cleve Steward (President Elect), Brian Missildine (Vice President), Hilda Sexauer (Past-President), Travis Neebling (Secretary-Treasurer), Jane Sullivan (Student Representative), Mary Beth Loewen (AK; via conference call), Jessica Gwinn (AZ-NM), Ramona Swenson (CA-NV), Bobby Compton (CO-WY), Jim Chandler (ID), Dave Moser (MT), Troy Brandt (OR), Cassie Mellon (UT), Alix Blake (WA-BC; Young Professional Mentee).
2. Determination of quorum
 - a. A quorum was established.
3. Secretary-Treasurer report (Travis)
 - a. Approve October minutes (Travis)
 - i. Minor revisions were submitted. Brian moved to approve the Excom minutes as revised, Hilda seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved with no objections.
 - b. Approve November minutes (Travis)
 - i. Minor revisions were submitted. Hilda moved to approve the Excom minutes as revised, Cleve seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved with no objections.
 - c. Finances Update (Travis)
 - i. Travis gave an update on the finances. We are doing well and expect to see income from the Portland meeting soon. The endowment lost money again this month, due to the down-turn in the stock market. Travis presented a brief history of the endowment, which has generally grown over time, but growth per 12 month period has been in decline the past few years.
 - d. Finance Update for AFS2015
 - i. No new information at this time.
 - e. Membership and voting
 - i. Travis presented details on the Division and Chapter membership as reported by AFS. He also presented on the proportion of members voting for officers, the student representative, and important issues. The voting membership is very low, averaging about 5%.

- ii. Jane asked about increasing the viewership of our Facebook group by advertising. She explained that for a small fee, our page can become one of the suggested posts in your content feed. Jane will contact Sharon Lashway to investigate this further.
- iii. Cleve asked about options to donate to the Western Division, particularly estates. Travis responded that currently the only options are to mail him a check directly or to donate via the PayPal link on our website. Cleve also asked about membership retention. Travis and Jim responded that work on retention is currently being done by AFS, but the Division has not investigated this because we are still having issues getting accurate membership numbers from AFS.
- iv. Brian asked about having an automated email response about the membership benefits right after you sign up. Travis responded that he likes this idea because it gives you immediate contact with AFS. The membership chair should lead an effort to develop a brochure and solicit other ideas.

4. Update on AFS Management Committee

- a. Cleve has not been able to attend the Membership Committee calls due to a scheduling conflict. From the minutes, he has seen that Ron Essig is working on defining the new role of the Management Committee, where more of the day-to-day business is handled by the Management Committee instead of the Governing Board. They have spent a lot of time reviewing chapter bylaws, particularly for new student subunits which is very encouraging. They have hired a new policy analyst. Finally, Sarah Gilbert Fox resigned her position, which is a huge loss for the members.

5. Budget

- a. Investment committee/endowment(Troy)
 - i. Troy discussed the status compared to the AFS endowment; ours is smaller, but has been performing as well or better than the AFS endowment. The AFS endowment is professionally managed, ours is not. Year-to-date we have seen about \$80,000 in unrealized gains (increase in market value of assets we still hold versus the cost of acquiring them). Troy briefly brought up the topic of socially responsible investing versus maximum growth; the final decision is up to the investing committee and historically they have focused on maximum growth. Troy will put together a write-up for the Tributary on Henry.
- b. Ramona asked about having a monetary award for the best student paper/poster at the Reno meeting. Travis responded that because each Chapter does things a little differently, the Division has left it up to the hosting Chapter to decide if (and how much) they want to award. Jane indicated that she preferred not having a monetary award. Each Chapter discussed what they do and what their preference is. Final agreement was to award \$200 for the best student oral presentation and \$200 for the best student poster presentation.
- c. Native Fishes Committee – Jim received a request from Luke Schultz for \$5,000 to support the Committee. The primary request was for \$1,000 to support DataBasin, the group that hosts and maintains the Western Native Fishes

- database. They would like to figure out how much use the database is getting and if it is worth updating the data in the database.
- d. International Travel Grants – Cleve would like to see more effort encouraging international members, particularly travel award winners, to fill committee roles. Travis would like to see more effort in advertising the award; many of the Portland winners also received travel grants to Mazatlan.
 - e. Young Professional Travel Grants – Hilda would like to have a specific travel grant for young professionals instead of having it lumped with professionals. Travis supported this idea. \$4,000 was added to proposed budget for this new category.
 - f. Book projects – Travis will form an ad hoc committee to investigate how AFS, the Education Section, and the Management Committee decide to fund book projects. The committee will provide recommendations to the Excom. He would like to make the process as transparent as possible.
 - g. Hilda would like to see points awarded for travel grant applications based on professional certification.
 - h. Discussion about increasing the amount in the fund to support AFS fisheries professional certification. Suggested increasing amount from \$500 to \$1,000 to support application from at least one Chapter member each year.
 - i. Also proposed establishing a “contingency fund (\$500) and an outreach fund (\$1,000) in the proposed budget.
 - j. Hilda made a motion to approve the 2015-16 budget as presented, Brian seconded the motion, and the budget was approved with no objections. Travis will post the approved budget to the website.

6. Procedures Manual

- a. Jim discussed the Procedures Manual, particularly that it is a living document. The current Excom has revised each of the sections they are responsible for and most have reviewed the whole document. There are a few sections that still need work:
 - i. Jim and Cleve will work on updating the sections on the Management Committee and Governing Board given their new roles.
 - ii. Jim will create a section on the Social Media Committee.
- b. Travis made a motion to approve the Procedures Manual as presented, Cleve seconded the motion, and the Procedures Manual was approved with no objections.

7. Update 2018 WDAFS meeting – AK Chapter (Mary Beth)

- a. The Alaska Chapter proposed hosting the 2018 Western Division meeting in Anchorage in mid-March. They have great conference facilities, in-house catering, and lots of close accommodations. Mid-March lines up with the start of the Iditarod Race and works best for the Chapter around their sampling schedule. This conflicts with other chapter meeting, but this is not a new issue. Chapters are asked to careful to make sure they try not to over-lap as much as possible and the tentative dates will be available soon. The Alaska Chapter is currently working on moving their chapter meeting from the fall to the spring. Officers are in place for the meeting and volunteers are lined up.

- b. Cleve made a motion to have the Alaska Chapter host the 2018 Western Division meeting in Anchorage, Hilda seconded the motion, and the motion was approved with no objections.
- 8. Small Grant projects (Hilda)
 - a. There were 11 applicants for small grants funding. Each was ranked by Excom members based on criteria provided. After much discussion Travis made a motion to approve funding to five winners for a total of \$10,000, as presented, Ramona seconded the motion, and funding was approved with no objections.
 - b. The winners were: Nuetzel: \$1,000.00; Walker: \$1,500.00; Waterhouse: \$2,500.00; Collicutt: \$1,500.00; and Lusardi \$3,500.00. Hilda will send out winner and non-winner letters.
- 9. Committee Updates
 - a. Website (Travis)
 - i. Travis was working with Sarah Gilbert Fox to convert our existing website over to the new AFS unit template which allows for better integration between the (soon to be released) AFS website and other unit websites. However, due to the fact that we have an extensive archive of documents on the website, this process was drawn out. A file storage system had to be decided upon that would work for not only us, but all other units, then each file would have to be re-uploaded to the new website. Now that Sarah is no longer with AFS, Travis is not sure of the schedule for the new Division website. Travis has not made updates to the website since Portland, other than to update the front page, because he was anticipating a new website. As such, Jim, Cleve, and Travis will review the website and identify pages that need updating.
 - b. Time and Place (Dave Lentz)
 - i. Travis explained that both AFS and the North Central Division have a standardized rotation for the hosting chapter. This reduces confusion, competition, and makes it easier to recruit officers. Travis presented an example rotation. Comments were mixed. Jim will speak with Chapters individually to get their opinion.
 - c. Social Media (Jim for Sharon Lashway)
 - i. Sharon has sent out second calls for symposia to Facebook and Chapter Presidents. She is working on getting on all the Chapter Facebook pages/groups.
 - d. Archiving (Jim for Eric Wagner)
 - i. Eric is still maintaining paper archives in addition to the electronic copies Travis is putting on the website. Mary Buckman investigated the possibility of getting a volunteer or work-study student at Oregon State University to scan all our old paper documents, but she didn't have any luck. Having a company scan the documents is likely cost-prohibitive.
 - e. RPECC (Resource Policy and Environmental Concerns Committee; Hilda/Jim for Lori Martin and Dave Weedman)
 - i. No other Chapters are on board yet, but Lori is hoping that will start happening soon. She wants to keep it small enough to stay nimble, but allow for Chapter input. Lori is working on details for a website that includes archives, committee reports, and procedures.

- f. Riparian Challenge and Newsletter (Jim for Tracy Wendt)
 - i. January 15 is the application deadline for the Riparian Challenge, but she has received no applications as of yet.
 - ii. Tracy is striving to publish a new edition of The Tributary every three months. Deadlines will be December, March, June, and September.
- g. AFS Membership (Hilda/Brian)
 - i. Hilda discussed the conference call occurred last week. AFS presented a number of options to increase membership and decrease associate membership. Ideas included an increase in chapter dues rebates, likely \$2.40 per member, a one-time bonus, basing membership dues on salary, increasing membership opportunities, particularly soft-skills.
 - 1. Hilda would like the Chapters to share their membership list with Excom so that we can compare it to the membership list from AFS (identify true-levels of associate membership).
 - 2. Jessica indicated that AFS involvement seemed to be agency driven in her chapter; most members are from the state agencies and federal employees don't feel welcome. Hilda commented that Doug is supposed to be selling AFS membership to AFWA and WAFWA.
 - ii. Hilda also discussed the committee discussions on Continuing Education courses. Ideas include providing rebates based on developing courses. Brian indicated that WA/BC members have very little interest in Continuing Education courses.
 - 1. Travis would like to see the funds used to develop better on-line Continuing Education courses as not everyone can attend a meeting to attend a course.
 - 2. Cleve would like the Division to start developing high-grade Continuing Education courses.

10. Student Representative update (Jane Sullivan)

- a. Jane presented the applications and winners of the Fishy Foto contest. She asked about funding for framing. Travis suggested using the un-used 2014-15 Student Development and Outreach funds to pay for framing. Hilda made a motion to that effect, Travis seconded the motion, and the motion was approved without objection.
- b. Jim will print the non-winning photographs as 8x10 prints for displaying at the Reno meeting.
- c. The 2016 Student Colloquium will be held in April and be hosted by the University of Wyoming.
- d. Jane has begun recruiting for the next Student Representative. She will put together a write-up for The Tributary discussing her experience in the position.

11. Update 2017 WDAFS/MT meeting in Missoula (Dave Moser/Cleve Steward)

- a. Cleve reminded everyone that the meeting will be May 21–26. Planning is well ahead of schedule. Their first conference call will be before Christmas. They are planning to start advertising at the Reno meeting. They have started to fill committee chairs with Montana Chapter members, but still need Division support. They are hoping to reach out to Canada to get their members down to the meeting.

12. Expenditure of WDAFS Contingency funds – reimburse application fee for Fisheries Professional Certification

- a. There was much discussion on this topic. Historically there has been little interest in applying for these funds, as such, a procedure had not been developed for awarding these funds. After much discussion it was decided that all applications for reimbursement for Professional Certification from the previous 12 months must be submitted by September 1. \$100 per chapter is currently allocated. Up to three winners per chapter will be selected by Western Division Officers. Funds from any chapter with no applications will be allocated to other chapters. The minimum individual award is \$33.33 and the maximum individual award is \$100. Travis made a motion to that effect, Hilda seconded the motion, and the motion was approved without objection. This information will be put in the Procedures Manual.
- b. Cleve challenged all Western Division Officers to apply for Professional Certification in the next 12 months.

13. Expenditure of WDAFS Contingency funds – Other

- a. As above, there is no procedure in place to award “contingency funds for other” (\$1,000 in the 2015-16 budget). After some discussion it was decided that written requests for one-time, short-deadline funding should be sent to the Division President. The President will then forward the request to Division Excom, to discuss and vote on it at the next conference call or in-person meeting. Once the budgeted funds have been awarded for the year, no further funds will be available until the next budget. Travis made a motion to that effect, Ramona seconded the motion, and the motion was approved without objection. This information will be put in the Procedures Manual.

14. Update 2016 WDAFS/Cal Neva meeting in Reno (Ramona/Joe Merz/Jim/Jane)

- a. The symposium submission deadline has been extended beyond the original November 30 deadline. Letters will be sent out by Cleve to all accepted symposia. Abstract submission will open soon. Thanks to Jesse Trushenski, the meeting website is up and running. Committee calls are occurring about every two weeks. Four Continuing Education and four field trips have been organized, hopefully with more soon. There will be an art show highlighting the Fishy Foto winners and paying vendors. There will be a live band at the banquet; voting to increase the meeting budget will occur soon. They are refining the details for paid-student volunteers. The plenary session will focus on scientific methodology and communication. The student social will be a catered event at the Auto Museum; it will be free for students and invited guests, \$38 for others. There will be a student symposium to make voting consistent for the best student presentation.
- b. Hilda made a request that each chapter to donate a fishing/hiking trip or similar for silent auction. She challenged everyone in the room to donate a raffle item.
- c. Travis reminded everyone that there will be a Western Division Excom meeting on Sunday, March 20, at 10 am.
- d. Advertising letters have been sent out to agencies offering meeting rooms for agencies and break-out groups.

15. President’s Plan of Work

- a. Jim briefly explained that his plan of work is in the meeting email and asked everyone to take a look at it.

16. Chapter Roundtable

- a. This item was excluded for time savings.

17. New or other business

- a. None

18. Next Meeting – January 21, 2016. The meeting adjourned at 16:59 MT.

Action Items:

Jane – Work with Sharon Lashway to investigate Facebook advertising options.

Brian (membership chair) – Lead an effort to develop a brochure and solicit other ideas.

Troy – Put together a write-up for the Tributary on Henry and the endowment.

Travis – Form an ad hoc committee to investigate how AFS, the Education Section, and the Management Committee decide to fund book projects. The committee will provide recommendations to the Excom.

Travis – Post the approved budget to the website.

Hilda – Send out winner and non-winner letters for small grants.

Jim, Cleve, and Travis – Review the website and identify pages that need updating.

Jim – Contact Chapters individually to get their opinion on a standardized meeting rotation.

Chapter presidents – Please send your membership lists to Hilda so that we can compare it to the membership list from AFS and identify true-levels of associate membership.

Jim – Print the non-winning Fishy Foto photographs as 8x10 prints for displaying at the Reno meeting.

Jane – Put together a write-up for The Tributary discussing her experience as the Student Representative.

Jim – Update the Procedures Manual regarding Professional Certification reimbursement and contingency funds for other.