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DATE: January 9, 2012

## ***Western Division AFS (WDAFS) Mid-Year Report***

### **I. Motion Report**

(A) Recommended Motion:

The WDAFS recommends no motions at this time.

### **II. Activity Report**

The WDAFS and Chapters of the WDAFS offer the following mid-year outcomes and accomplishments related to the AFS Strategic Plan (Section A), as well as recommendations for future consideration by AFS (Section B).

#### ***Section A: Summary of Outcomes and Accomplishments***

##### ***Goal 1: Global Fisheries Leadership***

###### ***Objective 1.1.***

CAL-NEVA Chapter: Chapter annual meeting.

CO-WY Chapter: In 2012, the CO-WY chapter is co-hosting the annual meeting of the Western Division, March 26-29 in Jackson Wyoming. The theme of the meeting is "Fisheries Management in a Twitter World".

Mexican Chapter: Although the Mexican Chapter is young and relatively small, we have more than 100 active participants, and the number is growing. The chapter will not have a meeting in 2012.

Montana Chapter: Montana Chapter meeting held February 6-10 in Helena.

Oregon Chapter: The ORAFS chapter was successful in its bid to host the 2015 annual meeting of AFS in Portland. Many chapter members helped with and learned from the 2011 annual AFS meeting in Seattle. The 2012 chapter meeting will be February 29-March 2 in Eugene.

Utah Chapter: The theme of the 2012 Utah Chapter annual meeting is "Social and Biological Balance". As part of this theme, the Utah Chapter has invited individuals from government agencies, NGOs and industry to participate in the annual meeting.

WA-BC Chapter: The chapter hosted the largest meeting in AFS history in 2011, with attendance from countries throughout the world. The 2012 chapter annual meeting will be in British Columbia.

WDAFS: Continue communications, interactions, and activities with the Mexico Chapter, including assisting the Chapter in their consideration to host the 2014 Annual Division Meeting; Seek and recruit potential members in the Yukon Territories, and U.S. Islands and Trust Territories of the Western Pacific; begin developing communication and networking opportunities with aquatic/fisheries professionals and students in these areas.

###### ***Objective 1.2.***

CAL-NEVA Chapter: Letter to California Regional Water Quality Control Board supporting City of Sacramento NPDES permit renewal requiring tertiary treatment.

CO-WY Chapter: The chapter adopted revised bylaws including a chapter rule on advocacy to improve our ability to put forth thoughtful position statements, etc.

Mexican Chapter: The Mexican Chapter is part of the National Network for the Information and Research of Fisheries and Aquaculture in Mexico, which was created by the Mexican government in order to promote fisheries conservation, as well as to increase fisheries productivity in Mexico. This network is composed by Mexican institutes and universities as well as government policy makers. Through this network, the Mexican Chapter will be able to accomplish with the AFS objectives in Mexico.

Oregon Chapter: The ORAFS has retained a legislative liaison to facilitate interaction with policy makers in the State capitol. The Legislative Affairs and Executive committees continue to track important legislation and offer science-based comments and input as appropriate.

WA-BC Chapter: Many WA-BC chapter members are in government or are private consultants who supply results of research to their agency policy makers to assure science-based fisheries conservation.

WDAFS: Provide technical reviews of documents and professional consultation by Division members as requested.

### ***Objective 1.3.***

CO-WY Chapter: The chapter funded the creation and continues to fund the maintenance of a public website to educate the public on the problems associated with the illegal stocking of aquatic organisms (<http://stopstocking.cowyafs.org/>). The website provides national and international information on this topic.

Mexican Chapter: The Mexican Chapter is promoting fisheries conservation through development and dissemination of public outreach materials, mainly through the electronic journal denominated Pesca y Conservacion (Fisheries and conservation). <http://200.23.161.228/ojs-2.2.2/index.php/pyc/login>

Oregon Chapter: One of our ongoing actions is to have the Education and Outreach Committee update the informational chapter poster that we use at other non-AFS events. We have sent members of the Executive Committee to the bi-Annual Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board meeting as well as providing funding to support the Salmon Trout Enhancement Program. All of these activities provide a way for us to reach people who are not normally part of the Chapter.

Utah Chapter: Members of the Utah Chapter helped draft a resolution requesting collection of scientific data on fisheries and aquatic resources in the Bristol Bay watershed of Alaska.

WA-BC Chapter: The Chapter has updated the Chapter website to better distribute conservation outreach materials; Chapter posts relevant information and articles to Facebook and Twitter sites.

WDAFS: Ensure the Western Native Fishes database is available and accessible to the membership and general public; Update and maintain the accuracy of the database as necessary; Update and improve the Division's website for the membership and the general public to navigate and access information more easily and effectively.

## ***Goal 2: Education/Continuing Education***

### ***Objective 2.1.***

CAL-NEVA Chapter: Financial and administrative support of 3 student subunits.

CO-WY Chapter: Many students present at the annual meeting. This gives members an opportunity to provide students and professors feedback on the direction of current research and the applicability to current management challenges.

Oregon Chapter: We continue to provide an annual meeting that is extremely affordable for students to attend. Not only is the registration fee very low, but there are volunteer opportunities that provide access to free lodging. The goal is to increase participation at the annual meeting and introduce students to the professional society and its benefits. We also continue to support our student subunit and are actively working to not only strengthen its position, but to recruit students from other institutions; ORAFS has a very strong relationship with the Oregon State University where our subunit is based. Many of the faculty there are active members of our chapter and encourage participation by their students, both undergraduate and graduate levels.

Utah Chapter: The Utah Chapter continues to support the student subunits at Brigham Young University and Utah State University with financial donations and provides them with opportunities to be involved in the annual meeting and continuing education events.

WA-BC Chapter: The Chapter has established a new voting member on the Executive Committee: Student Sub-Unit Representative; the Chapter has strengthened support from the University of Washington via an established student sub-unit, and established a new student sub-unit at Western Washington University.

WDAFS: Investigate the interest in, and development, financial implications, and implementation of a Division "Hutton-like" summer mentoring program for pre-college students (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders) interested in pursuing careers in the aquatic/fisheries sciences.

### ***Objective 2.2.***

CO-WY Chapter: The chapter is not involved in the professional certification process, although several members have received their certification in recent years. The chapter is encouraging one or two members to apply for certification in 2012 with financial support from Western Division.

Oregon Chapter: The ORAFS has had no substantial input into the certification program.

WA/BC Chapter: The Chapter offers a workshop on the scope and benefits of AFS certification at its AGMs; the Chapter President prepared an article in the W. Div. newsletter regarding benefits of the certification program.

WDAFS: Challenge each Division Chapter to encourage a minimum of one Chapter member to seek their professional certification. The Division will provide application funding for the first 10 successful applicants, with each Chapter provided the opportunity for a minimum of one free application.

***Objective 2.3.***

CAL-NEVA Chapter: Electrofishing and river restoration continuing education classes to be offered at annual mtg.

CO-WY Chapter: The Chapter annually holds a continuing education course on a topic selected by Chapter membership

Montana Chapter: Continuing Education opportunity provided prior to annual meeting in February.

Oregon Chapter: Workshops are an important part of our annual meeting. We are also providing financial support to members who are working towards professional certification; we have formalized a process to provide reduced registration fees at the annual meeting through a waiver process. This has allowed several people who wouldn't have otherwise been able to afford to attend the annual meeting to do so.

Utah Chapter: The Utah Chapter is collaborating with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources to offer workshops at its 2012 annual meeting.

WA-BC Chapter: Continuing educational opportunities are advertised via Chapter newsletters and its website.

***Goal 3: Value of Membership***

***Objective 3.1.***

CO-WY Chapter: The chapter conducts surveys of the membership 1-2 times annually to determine their needs and opinions. Recent surveys include one to identify continuing education topics of interest and another to characterize fundraising and fund disbursement objectives for the chapter.

Oregon Chapter: All of the Executive Committee contact information is posted on the Chapter website. Concerns and comments submitted by membership are taken very seriously and discussed amongst the Executive Committee to determine the most appropriate response or change.

WA-BC Chapter: The Chapter has a comment/request submission form on its website. Responses are quickly prepared by Chapter officers to the requesters; Members are invited to provide feedback on issues before the AFS via the newsletter and ListServe.

WDAFS: Conduct a survey of Division members to determine members' needs and opinions, and how the Division may be better able to accommodate those needs, if not doing so already

***Objective 3.2.***

CO-WY Chapter: Students (undergraduate and graduate) are actively encouraged to participate in and present at the annual chapter meeting. The student subunits also collaborate to host a student mentoring social that brings professionals and students together in an informal environment. The chapter's membership committee also provides a job board at the annual meeting which advertises temporary job opportunities that may provide students with professional experience.

Mexican Chapter: Through the organization of our annual meetings, we are encouraging the professional development of our members as well as recognize their accomplishments. We have established awards that are given during the meetings; For our 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting we have established a way to promote our meeting as well as the chapter activities to the students using social networks such as Facebook. We are hoping to have a large student presence in our meeting.

WA-BC Chapter: The Chapter has established a Student Sub-Unit Representative on the Executive Committee that is implementing a plan to reach out to all universities in the Chapter geographic area; the Chapter actively supports the University of Washington student sub-unit; the Chapter established a new student sub-unit at Western Washington University; the Chapter maintains and updates a Facebook and Twitter site to disseminate information to students and professionals.

WDAFS: Continue working with students to improve and maintain student involvement within the Division; consider and evaluate the logistics for including a student representative as part of the Executive Committee.

### ***Objective 3.3.***

CO-WY Chapter: Our chapter continues to be strongly supportive of women in leadership roles. The chapter is encouraging the active participation of a wider range of age groups in chapter committees.

Mexican Chapter: We are expecting to discuss, with colleagues from Central American countries, the possibility of forming a new chapter of these countries, or a subsection within our Chapter. This discussion will take part during our meeting in May.

WA-BC Chapter: Diversity is actively promoted through activities of the student sub-units; The Chapter is developing a diversity program, focusing initially on increasing participation by Native American biologists.

WDAFS: Encourage Division members to "show and tell" with students and other interest groups (Scouts, 4-H Clubs, etc.) their career experiences and relationships to the Society.

### ***Objective 3.4.***

CAL-NEVA Chapter: Chapter website upgrade.

Oregon Chapter: The most cost effective method for the dissemination of information is through our listserv which is not limited to Oregon Chapter members as well as our website. We rely on both avenues of communication to get information to our members and others in the fisheries science. We also have an ORAFS Twitter account that we use to with some regularity.

Utah Chapter: The chapter publishes a newsletter "The Lateral Line" on our website and sends electronic copies to members. The newsletter provides information on chapter activities, funding opportunities, and aquatic resource projects that can affect Utah and other Western states.

WA-BC Chapter: The Chapter is in the process of evaluating its website to improve dissemination of fisheries science and management information to its members, which will also be available to web users everywhere; The Chapter maintains and updates a Facebook and Twitter site to disseminate information to students and professionals; The Chapter uses a listserve to disseminate information to AFS members.

WDAFS: Investigate the possibility for future web-based meetings and online educational courses for the Division's membership that are cost-effective and user-friendly; continue to disseminate information to the WDAFS membership via the WDAFS list server.

### ***Objective 3.5.***

CAL-NEVA Chapter: Regular monthly executive committee meetings.

CO-WY Chapter: The chapter held annual officer elections. The chapter has 18 active committees and associated committee chairs. The chapter holds EXCOM conference calls as needed.

Mexican Chapter: The chapter held monthly EXCOM conference calls; We have updated our bylaws, and different committees have been included.

Oregon Chapter: The ORAFS chapter maintains an open set of books that are available to membership whenever they may want to see them. All meeting minutes and agendas are posted on the website after they are approved. We are in the process of updating our bylaws to standardize the process for removing a member of the Executive Committee or any other committee as well as adjusting Executive Committee terms and allowing electronic voting.

Utah Chapter: The chapter will elect new officers as part of its annual meeting.

WA-BC Chapter: The Chapter Executive Committee has established checking and savings accounts accessible by the Chapter Treasurer and President; There is an established Chapter accounting system and informal audit by the ExComm every year; A budget is prepared and approved by the ExComm every year, and income and expenditures are reviewed monthly during regular ExComm conference calls; The ExComm held a fall retreat to review chapter organization, plans and management.

WDAFS: Continue and complete the Division's first Procedural Manual; begin the process to revise Division Bylaws as necessary based upon the new Procedural Manual and other actions of the Division ExCom; Work with the Grants Funding and Investment Committee to solicit Division members interested in finances and the future financial security of the Division to volunteer their time on the Investment, Grant Spending, and Fundraising subcommittees; these subcommittees are focusing on financial planning (see Society's Procedures for Finances) by developing and implementing plans and associated criteria for: investing Division dollars, soliciting and selecting grant applications, and determining fundraising opportunities.

**Section B: Recommendations or Suggestions for Future AFS Consideration**

- 1) We all have problems recruiting people to serve on the committees and in leadership roles within the chapters. At times it is a challenge to fill all the committee chair positions, let alone find a candidate for the executive committee. We need to find a way to increase the apparent value of service to membership.
- 2) The value of professional certification is not apparent to membership. Until organizations that are hiring fisheries professionals require certified fisheries professionals, members will not bother with the paperwork. We would like to see AFS focus on increasing the value of the certification.
- 3) Increase the communication frequency between AFS Staff in charge of membership and leadership within the Chapter Executive Committees. We should routinely get updates to the chapter membership lists without asking.
- 4) Make it easy (or automatic) for members in a chapter's area, Oregon in this case, to become part of the local chapter. This would increase our membership dramatically. Currently there are over 400 people in Oregon who are AFS members but NOT members of the Oregon Chapter. If we could write letters to policy makers saying that ORAFS represents 800 fisheries professionals in the state, we have much more clout.
- 5) The WA-BC Chapter and WDAFS recommend the AFS work with international units to resolve the insurance issue so that these units will not have to pay more than US chapters for insurance for chapter activities.