

American Fisheries Society

WESTERN DIVISION



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT
WESTERN DIVISION
AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY
JULY 23, 1979
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

At the San Diego meeting (1978) President Kirk Beiningen suggested five points contributing to the strength of the Division. Those ideals were:

- 1) Establish definitive goals and objectives.
- 2) Develop a sound financial program to improve services to members and chapters.
- 3) Encourage development of chapters.
- 4) Emphasize the regional nature of fishery resource issues.
- 5) Encourage development of responsible and objective approaches to resource issues.

John Skinner launched the Division into the 1978-1979 year with programs addressing the ideals. During the short time that John led the Division his dynamic approach and enthusiasm affected all of us.

Committees staffed during the year considered time, place, and organization, membership desires, marine resources, riparian habitat, completed revision of bylaws and involved as many members as possible.

The important issues before the Division and Society are largely similar to those noted by Presidents Beiningen and Skinner. Beyond these issues the Division must contribute more to its constituency -- chapters and individuals. The Western is the largest division and, at the same time, the least financially sound. The largest share (nearly a king's ransom) of each year's budget is devoted to travel of division officers. This problem is compounded since two from the Division must attend the Society's executive committee meetings. In addition, officers, most importantly the president, should visit as many chapter meetings as possible; no small problem.

During the 1979-1980 year I would like the Division to address the following issues;

- 1) Initiate and coordinate development of regional symposia or workshops with appropriate proceedings.
- 2) Resolve how best to deal with the varied interests in the Division.
- 3) Research and provide input to the Society's publications process. Is there a need for a management publication?

- 4) Continue the search for the keystone of member involvement.
- 5) Develop and provide timely, objective and professional response to resource issues, in-short, an involved and responsive organization.
- 6) Continue the effort begun in working with marine fisheries interests.

There are undoubtedly more salient issues within the Division but addressing this half-dozen should do much toward charting a good course.

The key to the success or failure of the Division is with the members. It has been indicated that the Western Division owes its soul to about a dozen people willing to work through the last decade or so. The fortunes must rest with membership actively involved in pursuing resource issues. Involvement can lead to success or failure; non-involvement can lead only to failure.

During 1979-1980 the Executive Committee must expect to be involved in issues affecting the resource. The Executive Committee acts for the membership between meetings. This gives the Division license to be active all year -- not just during the annual meeting.

To support and make a successful, active Division will require dedication. The job cannot be done by setting back as the seasons change. There will be a time commitment from each person serving on the Executive Committee, each committee chairman and all committeemen. There is no substitute route if an active and strong organization is to result. Every membership survey shows that people want an active body involved in fishery matters.

Much time over the last several years has been devoted to addressing an apparent identity crisis in our relationship with the Western Association. Each organization is serving the other well, these days.

Where are we going? The Western Division can, within the framework of the Society, largely guide and determine its own destiny. Without dedicated service and unselfish donation of time the Division will undoubtedly remain a passive, low-profile organization. Buy a ticket, attend the show and become involved!

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ROBERT W. WILSON
 ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
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