



# THE TRIBUTARY

A Newsletter of the

Western Division of the American Fisheries Society

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July 2012

## Inside this issue:

WD Annual Meeting	1
Officers	2
President's Hook	3
Announcements	4—6
Vice President	7
WD Meeting Pictures	8—9
Chapter Meeting Recaps	10—13
A R-eel Fish Story	14

## Western Division Annual Meeting Recap



**2012 AFS**  
WESTERN DIVISION ANNUAL MEETING



The Colorado-Wyoming Chapter of the American Fisheries Society hosted the 2012 Western Division Annual Meeting last March in beautiful Jackson, Wyoming. Although small in comparison to past Division meetings, with only 178 registrants, the meeting was well received, a lot of fun, and very profitable thanks to the efforts of the many committee members who organized this meeting.

The plenary session focused on “Ecosystem management in a Twitter world” where five social scientists and natural resource managers discussed the difficulties and approaches to conducting long-term, ecosystem level management in a society that expects instant results.

Eight-six technical presentations were given in a number of symposia ranging from energy development affects on fisheries to burbot management across the west. Additionally four continuing education courses were offered.

Four student scholarships were awarded. The Eugene Maughan Scholarships were awarded to: Laura Twardochleb (M.S. University of Washington), William Brignon (Ph. D. Oregon State University), and Emily Lescak (Ph. D. University of Alaska, Fairbanks). The Sustainable Fisheries Foundation William Trachtenberg Scholarship was awarded to Daniel Gibson-Reinemer (Ph. D University of Wyoming).

In addition to scholarships, a number of Division level awards were presented. The Award of Merit went to Julie Meka Carter (Arizona Game and Fish). The Conservation Achievement Award went to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. Several Awards of Special Recognition were presented, these went to: Venice Beske, for her dedicated service as Archivist. Kevin Gelwicks, for "stepping up to the plate" as temporary Webmaster; Dave Lentz, for his dedicated service as List Server Coordinator, and Chair of the Time and Place Committee; Travis Neebling, for his dedicated service as Newsletter Editor and Webmaster; and Eric Wagner, for his dedicated service with the Archives, Environmental Concerns Committee, and the Western Native Fishes Database.

Finally, Oregon State University was recognized as Outstanding Student Subunit of the Year, and the Washington-British Columbia Chapter was recognized as Outstanding Chapter of the Year. Pictures from the meeting, as well as details on Chapter awards can be found on the website and on pages 8—9 Of this newsletter.

The 2013 Western Division Annual Meeting will be held next year in Boise, Idaho on **April 15—18, 2013**. We hope you can join us.

## Officers

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## President's Hook

I would like to start this addition of the "Hook" by thanking everyone that helped make the 2012 Western Division meeting in Jackson, Wyoming such a success. That includes all the members of the Colorado-Wyoming Chapter and the Western Division Executive Committee that helped plan and implement the meeting, as well as all the attendees. The meeting was not large compared to some, but because of careful planning it was a success in every way, including financially. We were also honored to have AFS Executive director Gus Rassam and three current members of the AFS ExCom in attendance, including President Bill Fisher. A thorough recap of the meeting is provided elsewhere in this issue, but the meeting team deserves hearty congratulations for a job well done!

I'll focus this column on an update of the actions and direction taken by the Western Division ExCom during its in-person meeting in Jackson. Although we always seem to have more business to discuss than time allotted, the overall mood of this meeting was good, because for the first time in a few years our focus was on what to do with available funds rather than what to do without because we didn't have any available funds. This was due in large part to the financial success of the Seattle meeting, and the expected success of the Jackson meeting. So, what did we decide?

First, the ExCom agreed that whatever we did, we would be sure to leave at least two years of operating expenses in readily available accounts (our checking account for day to day operations, and our CDs that serve as our "rainy day" fund). We also decided in principle that we should make efforts to grow our grant endowment fund so that we could provide more funding for worthy projects in future years. Now for a few details:

- We approved funding for two of the seven projects that applied for small grants:
  - Fisheries Science in the Schools: Salmon Incubation Project (\$2,070) – submitted by the Kuskokwim Native Association: Fisheries Department
  - Site selection Characteristics of Lentic-spawning *Oncorhynchus mykiss* in Spirit Lake, Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument (\$1,000) – submitted by Oregon State University
- We set aside a student travel fund of \$13,475 to be used to help students attend Western Division meetings from 2012—2015. We hope to continue the fund with profits from co-hosting the national meeting in 2015.
- We set aside \$8,983 for professional travel to the 2014 Western Division meeting in Mazatlan, Mexico. I am encouraging individual chapters, sections, and other divisions to also earmark funds, and will challenge the Parent society to match all the funds set aside by these units. The meeting will not be a success if folks from the U.S. do not attend, and, given the current climate regarding travel, we'll need to help as many people as possible to get there.
- We added \$7,000 to the grant endowment fund, and appointed a committee to recommend options for increasing our annual disbursement from the fund, while still allowing the fund to grow.
- We took care of a few general business items, including approval of our Procedures Manual, which is now posted on the Division website.



All in all, it was a very productive meeting, which helped set the course of the Division over the next few years. I look forward to the remainder of my term, and to helping Tina Swanson take over the reins after the Parent society meeting in August.

— Dave Ward, President

## Announcements

### Voting Now Open for Vice President of the Western Division, 2012-2013

We are fortunate to have an outstanding candidate, Hilda Sexauer, for the incoming Vice President position of the Western Division. Once elected into the Vice President position, the successful candidate rotates to President-Elect, President, and Past President across a four year period. Hilda's candidate statement is provided on page 7 of this newsletter. Please cast your vote using Survey Monkey at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RZFP7DD> Voting will remain open until **July 16, 2012**.

### Update on Recent Governing Board Adoption of Revised Western Division Bylaws

The Western Division Bylaws were revised and approved by the Division membership at the 2011 Annual Business Meeting in Seattle, WA last September. Several minor errors within the Bylaws were noticed by the Western Division ExCom after the Bylaws had been approved at the Annual Business Meeting. The Division ExCom opted (with guidance from the Society's Constitutional Consultant) to make these minor edits without going back to the membership for approval. The revised Bylaws were approved by the Society's Governing Board this past spring, and can be found on your Division website at <http://wdafs.org/about-us/bylaws-procedural-manual/>

### University of Arizona to Host the Western Division Student Colloquium

This years annual Western Division Student Colloquium will be held **November 1—3, 2012** in Tucson, AZ. The meetings is being hosted by the University of Arizona and will include a field trip to Sabino Canyon and the Sonoran Desert Museum Fish Center, student presentations, and networking opportunities. For more information, contact University of Arizona subunit president Cole Talboom at [ctalboom@email.arizona.edu](mailto:ctalboom@email.arizona.edu) A draft itinerary is also available on the Western Division website.

### American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists Annual Meeting

The American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists (ASIH) will be holding their 2012 Annual Meeting from **August 8—14** in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The 2013 Annual Meeting of the ASIH will be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, likely in early to mid July. The ASIH is dedicated to the scientific study of fishes, amphibians and reptiles. The primary emphases of the ASIH are to increase knowledge about these organisms, to disseminate that knowledge through publications, conferences, symposia, and other means, and to encourage and support young scientists who will make future advances in these fields. The programs of the ASIH are part of a global effort to interpret, understand, and conserve the Earth's natural diversity and to contribute to the wise use of natural resources for the long-term benefit of humankind.

### Smith-Root Introduction to Electrofishing Course: September 13—14

This is a two-day class being held at Smith-Root headquarters in Vancouver, Washington. The first day consists of a classroom lecture-based session covering basic electrical theory, electrofishing equipment, operation and safety, and applied electrofishing methods. The second day is a practical field-based session where participants operate electrofishing equipment and apply information learned in the classroom. For more information please see <http://www.smith-root.com/calendar/train/introduction-to-electrofishing-class-september-2012/>

## Announcements

### Help the Division meet its \$10,000 Fundraising Goal

The Division set a goal for \$10,000 in member and Western Division donations in 2012 to grow the Grants Endowment Fund. The Western Division established the Fund in 2002 to provide a funding source for Chapter and Division projects. The Grants Funding and Investment Committee developed procedures for investments and fund management, and criteria and procedures for awarding project grants. Several Chapters also invest through the Grants Endowment Fund.

Operation and management of the Western Division Grants Endowment Fund are modeled after the successful Parent Society and North Eastern Division endowment funds, and it is managed conservatively for reasonable long-term growth. The Endowment Fund was started with \$50,000 and after periodic cash infusions and investment growth, the Division Fund is now valued at about \$170,000.

Awards from the Grants Endowment Fund have helped support a variety of projects. Examples include the Western Native Fishes Project; a Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout video; a sampling project in the Middle North Fork Cache la Poudre River, CO done by Colorado State University students; stock identification of Hood River, OR winter steelhead from scale patterns; a symposium about the role of science and education in fisheries sustainability; and a Native American project to install aquariums in public schools in Alaska.

We are just \$2,430 from our goal!! So far this year, the Western Division has put \$7,000 in the Grants Endowment Fund after the successful Parent Society meeting in Seattle in 2011. Six of your Division peers donated between \$50 and \$150 each bringing the total to contributions so far in 2012 to \$7,570.

Please consider a donation of \$100, \$50, whatever you can afford. Your contribution will help your peers and our organization succeed. It's easy to donate. Go to the revamped Western Division website at <http://wdafs.org> and click the "Donate" button on the right to contribute through PayPal or with your credit card. You can also mail a check to Western Division AFS c/o Treasurer Mary Buckman at 3248 SW Long Ave, Corvallis, OR 97333. And remember, your donation is eligible for a tax deduction.

For more information, contact Bill Bradshaw at [Bill.Bradshaw@wyo.gov](mailto:Bill.Bradshaw@wyo.gov) or Mary Buckman at [mary.buckman@comcast.net](mailto:mary.buckman@comcast.net) and visit the Western Division website at <http://wdafs.org>.

### International Conference on Engineering & Ecohydrology for Fish Passage

The 2013 International Conference on Engineering & Ecohydrology for Fish Passage (Fish Passage 2013) will be held at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon, on **June 25—27, 2013**. It will follow the successful 2011 and 2012 Fish Passage Conferences held at University of Massachusetts in Amherst in June 2011 and 2012.

The target audience for Fish Passage 2013 will be researchers, educators, practitioners, funders, and regulators who have an interest in advancements in technical fishways, nature-like fishways, stream restoration and stabilization, dam removal, road ecology, and the myriad of funding, safety, climate change, and other social issues surrounding connectivity projects.

This is a three-day conference with concurrent sessions in engineering, biology, and management and social issues. The conference will also feature plenary talks, professional networking opportunities, and a poster session. For more information please see: <http://fishpassage.ecs.umass.edu/Conference2012/>

## Journal of Ichthyology Seeks Submissions

The periodic Russian scientific journal *Voprosy Ikhtiologii* is published under the aegis of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Department of Biological Sciences) in the publishing house "Nauka". More than 50 volumes were published during the nearly 60-year-old history of the journal's existence. Each issue of the *Voprosy Ikhtiologii* is published per 2 months (6 issues annually); the English version *Journal of Ichthyology* has 9 issues per year. Besides, two supplements are published annually in English only. The impact factor of *Voprosy Ikhtiologii* was 0.635 in 2010 under the version of the Russian Index of Scientific Citation.

*Voprosy Ikhtiologii* is a leading domestic scientific journal covering all fields of ichthyology and biological aspects of fisheries since its founding in 1953. The development of scientific knowledge in the second half of the XIX century has shown the value of ichthyology as an independent branch of biological investigations. Extremely valuable results associated with taxonomy, life cycles strategies, population dynamics, behavior, competition, development and evolution of animals were obtained in recent years, in particular, on fishes.

All articles published in the journal are peer-reviewed and should contain the original results of scientific research on taxonomy, evolution, molecular biology, morphology, fauna, zoogeography, genetics, physiology, ecology, behavior, reproduction, embryology, invasions, and conservation of fish and fishery biology, as well as on some applied aspects (environmental toxicology, aquaculture, and fisheries management). The journal publishes articles on marine, oceanic, and freshwater fish from all parts of the globe.

In order to strengthen international relationships, the Editorial Board and Editorial Council of the *Voprosy Ikhtiologii* invite ichthyologists from all over the world for their cooperation. Articles submitted by foreign authors (requested in English) received positive reviews and approved by the Editorial Board are published in the English version of the journal. Both versions (English and Russian) are published almost simultaneously in the *Journal of Ichthyology* and *Voprosy Ikhtiologii*, respectively.

Editors of the journal nominate the best paper or series of papers written by the same author to the annual competition conducted by publisher that receive money prize and diploma of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Journal is referenced in Referativny Zhurnal (VINITI), Academic OneFile, ASFA, CAB Abstracts, CSA/Proquest, Google Scholar, Springerlink, and SCOPUS.

The *Voprosy Ikhtiologii* is distributed by the publishing house "Nauka" in hard cover form; the *Journal of Ichthyology* is distributed by the publishing company "Springer" either in hard cover or in electronic form by subscription.

Additional information, including instructions for authors, can be found on *Voprosy Ikhtiologii* and *Journal of Ichthyology* homepage: <http://www.maik.ru/cgiperl/journal.pl?name=ichth&page=main>



## Vice President Candidate for Western Division

Hilda Sexauer—Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Pinedale, WY

### BACKGROUND

I grew up in a small town on the Mississippi River in Missouri and spent most of my spare time fishing, bird watching and generally mucking around in ponds collecting salamanders and frogs. I attended Southwest Missouri State University and received a Bachelor of Science degree (1990) in biology, emphasis in wildlife and fisheries. During my years as an undergraduate I spent my summer breaks travelling to work as a fisheries/wildlife technician in Missouri, Alaska, South Carolina and Michigan conducting fish and wildlife research. A summer spent working in Alaska convinced me to move west for graduate school. In 1994 received my Master's of Science degree in fisheries biology from Central Washington University, Ellensburg, Washington, studying bull trout ecology.

My professional career started as fisheries biologist in the Methow Valley, Washington, first working for the Yakama Nation on a spring chinook salmon restoration project and later as a fisheries biologist with the U.S. Forest Service. For the past 15+ years I have worked as a fisheries biologist/supervisor for Wyoming Game and Fish Department in Pinedale, Wyoming. In the positions I have held since arriving in Pinedale, I have had the privilege to manage surrounding sport fish populations, native nongame and game fish species, amphibians and reptiles, and protecting and enhancing important habitat for these species. I am an avid angler and enjoy the opportunities to manage our sport fish populations and I work towards providing healthy and diverse fishing opportunities in the area. However, my two main passions at this point in my career tend towards education and recruiting future anglers and advocates for aquatic wildlife, and restoration and enhancement of our native western fish populations...

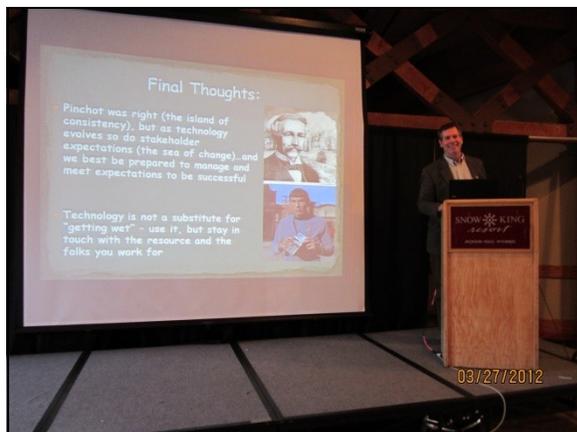
### AFS INVOLVEMENT

I began attending AFS sponsored professional meetings in 1988 and have been an AFS member since 1991. As an undergraduate, I became involved with professors' and graduate students' research projects, which escalated my passion for fisheries biology. These mentors prompted me to become involved in AFS sponsored meetings and stressed the values these meetings may have on my future professional direction, which I still believe to-day. After I joined the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, my involvement with AFS started within two months of my employment as I was "suckered" by a co-worker to serve on the best paper committee in 1997, and I haven't stopped since. I have worked on and served as chair of several committees including the Riparian, Watersheds and Habitat Committee for the Western Division which provided me an excellent opportunity to learn more about issues and projects throughout the west.

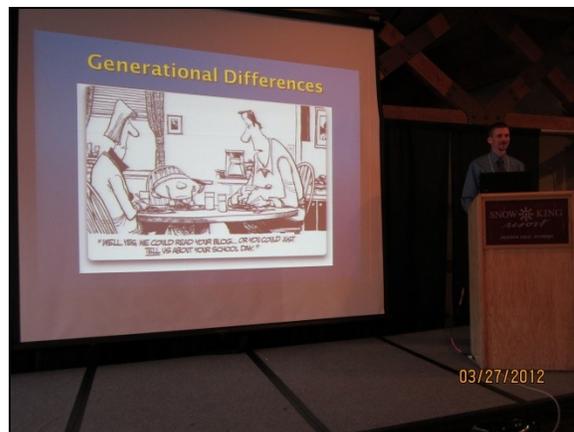
I served as Secretary-Treasurer, Vice President, President and Past President offices. Serving as the Colorado-Wyoming Chapter webmaster has provided me an opportunity to remain involved with current Chapter activities. Throughout my career, my experiences with AFS have been rewarding – both professionally and personally. During my years as a Colorado/Wyoming Chapter of AFS officer I have enjoyed the interaction with students, fisheries professionals and learning more about the mission of the American Fisheries Society. I enjoy facing new challenges and promoting ideas that I firmly believe in; specifically the importance of AFS to all biologists at all professional levels.



# Western Division Meeting Pictures from Jackson, WY



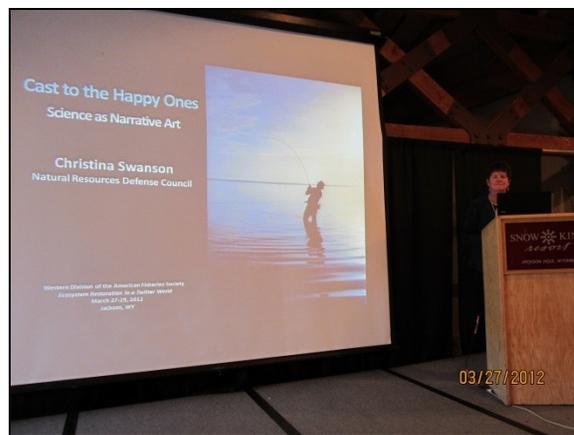
"Chip" Corsi presenting in the plenary session.



Travis Neebling presenting in the plenary session.



Jonathan Gelbard presenting in the plenary session.



Tina Swanson presenting in the plenary session.



Diana Sweet, Chapter Past President (right), presents Ann Widmer with the Chapter's Certificate of Appreciation for her service as Past President.



Erik Hansen of the University of Wyoming Student Subunit (right), presents Steve Gale with an award of Appreciation for his work with the Subunit.

# Western Division Meeting Pictures from Jackson, WY



Dirk Miller (left) presents the CO-WY Chapter Award of Excellence to Mike Stone.



Western Division Award winners and those accepting in their honor.



Mariah Mayfield receiving the Best Student Paper Award from CO-WY Chapter President Diana Sweet.



Phil Gaskill receiving the Best Student Poster Award from CO-WY Chapter President Diana Sweet.



Western Division Excom members Dave Ward, Lori Martin, Mary Buckman, and Tina Swanson.



AFS President Bill Fisher enjoying one of the socials.

## Idaho Chapter Meeting Recap

The Idaho Chapter of the American Fisheries Society held its annual meeting in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho during March 6-9, 2012. The Chapter began the meeting by holding a record attended workshop titled "Fish Without Borders" which focused on factors affecting survival of populations of anadromous fish after they leave Idaho. This year's plenary session was organized by the Chapter's President Elect – Dmitri Vidergar under the theme of: "Non-native species: managing the uncertainties", and featured speakers from Arizona, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. About 240 fisheries professionals from 44 different entities and a record setting 52 students from 5 schools attended this meeting. The ever growing student attendance represented largely by Idaho Chapter's two student subunits, the Palouse Unit associated with the University of Idaho, and the Portneuf Unit associated with Idaho State University, indicates that Idaho Chapter AFS will be in good hands for years to come.

As a special bookmark registration gift for this meeting were built by students in 11 elementary schools from around the state. These bookmarks displayed fish drawings and words of wisdom from each of the students. Kudos to Lauri Monnot and the Education Committee for making this happen.

During this meeting, there were 59 presentations, 23 posters, and a committee breakout session where eight different committees discussed and planned ways to meet the mission of the Chapter. The Chapter also recognized Christine Kozfkay and Matt Campbell as Outstanding Fisheries Professionals, Christine Moffitt and Ned Horner with Lifetime Achievement awards; and many others for their contributions to fisheries.

The Idaho Chapter boasts an amazing banquet that culminates in an extraordinary fundraising effort. This fundraising event annually brings in over \$15,000 and this year was no exception. This money will provide support for the Chapter's many projects.

The Chapter's Executive Committee welcomes its newest members Tom Curet, Vice President; Craig Rabe, Secretary/Treasurer; and Brett Bowersox, Nominations Chair.

Next year, Idaho will be hosting the Western Division meeting in Boise, Idaho on April 15—18, 2013. This meeting will also mark Idaho Chapter's 50-year anniversary, so come join us for the enlightening talks and poster session, socializing with other fisheries students and professionals, and joining in on the fun and festivities. It is shaping up to be an event not to forget.



Ernest Keeley, Chapter Past President, and Luba Cajas de Gliniewicz, chapter member, present Christine Moffitt with the Chapter's Lifetime Achievement Award.



Ernest Keeley, Chapter Past President, and Jim Fredericks, chapter member, present Ned Horner with the Chapter's Lifetime Achievement Award.

## Idaho Chapter Meeting Recap, continued



Cathy Gidley, Native Fish Committee Co-Chair, presents Russ Throw with the Richard L. Wallace Native Fish Conservationist of the Year Award. This award is one of several awards sponsored and presented by the Chapter's committees.



Steve Elle, Mentoring Committee Chair, presents Virgil Moore with the Outstanding Mentor Award. This award is one of several awards sponsored and presented by the Chapter's committees.



Ernest Keeley, Chapter Past President, presents Matthew Campbell and Christine Kozfkay with the Chapter's Outstanding Fish Professional Award.



Ernest Keeley, Chapter Past President, presents Jason Vogel with the Chapter's Annual Merit Award for his service as Chapter President.

## Oregon Chapter Meeting Recap

The Oregon Chapter's Annual Meeting drew over 460 people, including more than 50 students to Eugene this past February 28th to March 2nd. The meeting theme, entitled "Weaving Fish into Our Social Fabric", emphasized the connections our fishery resources have with broader needs of society.

Over 90 members attended the three workshops that preceded the meeting program. The Introduction to R for Fisheries Professionals workshop, organized by Kris Homel (ODFW) and Kevin McDonnell (Oregon State University [OSU]), provided an introduction to the budget-friendly R platform with fisheries-specific examples. The ESA permitting workshop, organized by Shivonne Nesbit (ODFW/USFWS), discussed the intricacies, complexities, and challenges surrounding research permits for ESA-listed species. The PIT-tagging workshop, organized by Chris Jordan (NOAA), provided practical advice about the design, construction, and maintenance of PIT tag sites.

The plenary session kicked off the technical program with three presentations that addressed our meeting theme from several unique perspectives, including: impacts of climate change on marine and freshwater ecosystems, fisheries restoration in a first foods context, and successful ecological restoration that considers the human context in which restoration occurs. The technical program that followed included more than 160 oral presentations and 36 posters over three days. The nineteen technical sessions both complimented the meetings theme and also focused on current resource management and research challenges.

The awards luncheon recognized the accomplishments of professionals, students, and others that contribute to chapter goals and objectives. Awards of Merit went to Denise Hoffert-Hay and Tara Davis (Calapooia Watershed Council) for work leading to the removal dams on the Calapooia River, Jennie Logsdon-Martin for her efforts to create and grow ifish.net, and Jim Grano for watershed stewardship education in the Siuslaw School District. The Fishery Team of the Year award was awarded to the Bandon Dunes National Wildlife Refuge Ni-les-tun Restoration team for restoring over 400 acres of pasture land to tidal salt marsh and mudflat habitat. The Past President's award was presented to Demian Ebert (AECOM) for his leadership and service to the Chapter. Finally, the Broken Oar Award went to Adam Storch and the Lower Columbia River Team (ODFW) for demonstrating how not to anchor boats in shallow water, during wind driven seiches, at high-tide.

The Chapter awarded three student scholarships this year: Amber Wimsatt (A.A, Mount Hood Community College), April Smith (M.S., OSU), Matt Sloat (Ph.D, OSU). The prestigious Carl Bond scholarship went to Amy Jo Linsley (M.S., OSU) in support of her work on the recruitment of juvenile rockfishes in Oregon estuaries. Best student paper awards went to Allison Evans and Susan Benda (runner-up) both of OSU. Best student poster awards were presented to Briita Orwick (Portland State University) and Christy Fellas (runner-up; OSU).

President Colleen Fagan called the business meeting to order after the awards luncheon. The first order of business was celebrating that the Oregon Chapter's 2011 Chapter of the Year award for both Western Division and the Parent Society. President Fagan also announced that the Oregon Chapter will host the 2015 Parent Society meeting in Portland. Megan McKim and Michelle Scanlan (both of OSU) reported on the ORAFS student subunit activities, including the great news that they received the 2012 WDAFS best student subunit award. The business meeting wrapped up with Executive Committee elections, where we welcomed Todd Buchholtz (USFS) as President-Elect, Garth Wyatt (PGE) as Secretary/Treasurer, and Michele Weaver (ODFW) to the Internal Director position.

Thanks for everyone's participation and the Oregon chapter looks forward to reconvening in Bend in February of 2013!



The 2011-2012 Oregon Chapter Executive Committee. Clockwise from top left: Jason Kent, Demian Ebert, Jeff Yanke, Bill Brignon, Colleen Fagan, Michele Weaver, and Shivonne Nesbit.

## Oregon Chapter Meeting Recap, continued



Plenary speakers Ken Bierly (back left), Bill Bradbury (front left), and Eric Quaepts (front right) chat with Oregon Chapter President Jeff Yanke (back right) after the plenary session in Eugene.



Christy Fellas, Susan Benda, and Allison Evans (from left to right) accept their best student paper and poster awards. Not pictured: Briita Orwick.



The 2012 Oregon Chapter student scholarship winners! From left: Amber Wimsatt (A.A., Mt Hood Community College), April Smith (M.S., Oregon State University), Matt Sloat (Ph.D., Oregon State University), and Amy Jo Linsley (Carl Bond Award; M.S., Oregon State University).



Congratulations to the Bandon Dunes National Wildlife Refuge Ni-les-tun Restoration Team for their Fishery Team of the Year Award. Accepting the award on behalf of the team are (from left): Stan Van de Wetering, Laura Brophy, Chris Claire, David Kennedy, and Roy Lowe.



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# A R-eel Fish Story

Two weeks ago a group of four men, Steve Hoyland Jr. with friends Bruce, Ken and Erik, set off on an overnight offshore fishing trip. They left at noon on a Tuesday and went about 120 miles out into the Gulf.

They were having a great night of fishing, catching big snapper, grouper, ling and kings. About 3 am, two of them went down below to catch some sleep. The two remaining on deck were catching fish and drinking beer, enjoying the warm tropical night air.

All at once, Bruce got a big run on his line. This thing went all around the boat and took more than twenty minutes to bring up to the surface. When they got it up to the surface, they could not tell what it was. It looked prehistoric.

Steve Jr. put a gaff in it and the two men dragged it aboard the 33 foot boat. As soon the big creature hit the deck, it went crazy, attacking them. It was an eel over 6 feet long, weighing close to 100 pounds. It had a mouth full of sharp teeth and was extremely pissed off.

The eel was later estimated to be sixty years old. Bruce said it came at him and Steve, Jr. like an anaconda, rearing it's head up and striking at them like a rattlesnake. It was highly agitated and quite energetic.

In the midst of thrashing around, the creature fell down below onto the floor between the two sleeping men, Erik and Ken. When they heard the thud and turned on the light, the eel raised it's head right above Ken's face. Erik rolled over and grabbed his 9 mm pistol. Steve Jr. started yelling. "Don't shoot the gun in the boat! We're 120 miles from land!" Next thing you know, all four fishermen were on the deck and the gigantic eel had sole possession of the bottom of the boat.

The four needed to work up a plan of action, so they drank beer while considering a strategy. It was determined that Steve Jr. would distract the eel because he had drank the most alcohol and believed he was bulletproof. He opened up the sliding door down below to see what the "monster" was doing. As the door opened, the eel came up the two steps biting at anything along the way. The four brave men then ran to the wheel house like women and slammed the door shut. They never did identify which one of them screamed like a girl.

Inside the wheelhouse, they started calming down and decided they would drink a couple more beers. Then they hatched a new battle plan. Steve Jr. went out on the deck to get the beast's attention. The eel attacked and Steve Jr. climbed up on top of the captain's chair. Ken threw a blanket on top of the giant eel while Erik and Bruce beat the hell out of it with a steel gaff and a large ice chest lid. After the creature was finally subdued, they put it into a large ice chest, and closed the lid on it.

The four brave sailors all got themselves a beer and were laughing at the situation when the lid of the ice chest was suddenly knocked off and the eel sprang out onto the deck and resumed his attack. Bruce stated that the eel was clearly out for vengeance. The four men each picked up something and the fight was on. After beating the creature with gaffs, ice chest lids and fire extinguishers again, they once more subdued the massive carnivore and put it back into the ice chest. This time, they tied the lid down and put another ice chest on top of that one.

Eighteen hours later they returned to the dock and started unloading the boat. None of them was anxious to open the lid to the ice chest, in fact, they did "rock, paper, scissors" to determine who would pop the lid!

Above is a picture of Bruce Gordy with the eel that he caught and bravely fought in that epic and desperate battle for control on the high seas. (Steve Hoyland, Sr.)



Tentatively identified as an American Conger eel, these guys have been known to viciously attack divers and swimmers. They are nocturnal hunters, and have rows upon rows of very sharp teeth. The one in this picture terrorized a group of brave fishermen in the Gulf Of Mexico one night last month.



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## About the Tributary

The Tributary is the newsletter of the Western Division of the American Fisheries Society published four times per year.

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## About the American Fisheries Society

The mission of the American Fisheries Society is to improve the conservation and sustainability of fishery resources and aquatic ecosystems by advancing fisheries and aquatic science and promoting the development of fisheries professionals.

<http://www.fisheries.org>

## About the Western Division of the American Fisheries Society

Established as the first Division of the [American Fisheries Society](#) in 1948, the Western Division now includes [Chapters](#) from twelve western states, British Columbia, Yukon Territories, and Mexico. Our members represent a tremendous array of fisheries workers involved in all aspects of the fisheries profession. The collective diversity and expertise of Western Division members is the basis of an intimate and unparalleled familiarity with fisheries resources and issues within our geographic region. Division objectives are to provide a forum for exchanging technical and policy information, promote understanding by regional, Federal, and state policy-makers of the nature and extent of fishery matters of concern to the membership, facilitate timely exchange of information to chapters and the general membership, and provide a vehicle for the active participation of individual members in Society business and professional activities.

<http://www.wdafs.org>