



Western Division American Fisheries Society

President Julie Carter, President-Elect Tim Copeland, Vice-President Amber Steed, Secretary-Treasurer Laura Burckhardt,
Past-President Eric Fetherman, Student Representative Meredith Journey

Advancing fisheries and aquatic science and professionals in western North America

Executive Committee Call: Monday, December 16, 2024

Start Time: 9:00 am HT / 11:00 am AKT / 12:00 pm PT / 1:00 pm MT/ 3:00 pm ET

Meeting Link: meet.google.com/oys-okux-res (or enter through calendar invite)

Phone: 1 812-777-8581 PIN: 369 972 427#

Roll call & Introductions

Participants:

- Julie Carter, WD President
- Eric Fetherman, WD Past President
- Tim Copeland, WD President-Elect
- Amber Steed, WD Vice President
- Laura Burckhardt, WD Secretary/Treasurer
- Meredith Journey, WD Student Representative
- Stev Vigil, CO/WY AFS Chapter President
- Jens Swensen, UT AFS Chapter President
- Sean Simmons, WA/BC AFS Chapter President
- Josh Williams, president elect WA/BC
- Michele Weaver, OR AFS Chapter President
- Tim Grabowski, Pacific Islands AFS President
- Betsy Hedden, President-Elect AZ/NM Chapter
- Andy Seitz, Vice President AK Chapter
- Zack Beard, AZ/NM Chapter President

Determination of quorum (majority of elected officers, 1/3 Chapters)

A quorum was present.

Student activities update (Meredith): Colloquium at YMCA was held in May 2024. The 2025 will be May 9 to 11 at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park. No student travel money will be provided aside from some student transport from the airport. Food will be provided. Will send out invitation email in January. Western Division student planning committee meeting is today.

Nominations Committee (Society level; Eric): Two candidates from Western Division that will be running for Society level. Western Division is looking for nominations for Secretary/Treasurer and Vice President.

Management Committee (briefing from 11/19 meeting; Julie):

- JASM Meeting is likely to be in Honolulu in 2028. A financial report was given and provided in the minutes and **Julie will be forwarding that** – key points: Reviewed profits 2023 vs. 2024. Investment portfolio is doing well. AFS is moving forward with the sale of the building. The 2025 budget is

looking challenging because of the publishing contract. AFS will be doing Committee review of standing committees and programs.

- The Strategic Plan was sent out to the Governing Board meeting and will be approved at the January meeting.
- San Antonio meeting theme, call for sessions is open, having monthly meetings. Black Bass Symposium 2025 is occurring at the same time but in a different hotel. AFS registration include the Black Bass Symposium. Next meeting is this week.
- Jeff K. will be interviewing Chapters in January.
- Profit sharing may be changed for future meetings.

Resource Policy and Environmental Concerns Committee (Eric): Bob Hughes will continue as the chair. Planning a Forest Plan manuscript and a session for the 2025 meeting.

Discussion: How to recruit and engage chapter representatives to serve on WD committees; how WD committees can engage with similar chapter committees?

- WA/BC will have a call to action email to sign up for committees. What is the sign-up process?
- AK will spread the word to the student sub-units
- Can you increase participation by having Chapter Committees automatically part of the WD meetings?
- Julie will email the Chapters to get committee contact information.
 - OR: <https://orafs.org/external-committee/>
 - AK: <https://afs-alaska.org/about-us/committees/>
 - CO/WY: <https://units.fisheries.org/cowyafs/home/committees/>
- Are their committee meetings at the WD AFS meeting? This would help with connections. No, not currently.

Discussion: How can we increase and communicate the relevancy of WDAFS with chapter membership?

- WD presentation at business meetings – Email thoughts to Julie thoughts on important topics that can be discussed at the presentations. Poster was not as successful as hoped so will not be continued.
- WDAFS could have a page in their newsletter with WD news. **Get contact information and deadlines from Chapters.**
 - Maybe produce a summary page of announcements featured in the quarterly Tributary, and send those out once a quarter for the Presidents/chapter newsletters to use.
- WD AFS email message from Chapter Listserve
- Please let us know how we can participate in the chapter meetings in activities.

Future discussion topics for Excom meetings: DEI committee name, conversation with Troy from the Financial Sustainability Committee, membership recruitment and messaging (once received from society level or Membership Committee) **Email Julie other ideas.**

Tributary content due by January 6th.

Julie would like to highlight the Chapter Presidents. Send Julie a photo, affiliation, and term.

- 1:00 Adjourn

Attachments:

1. Membership recruitment and retention action plan

Next meeting January 17th

WDAFS Excom Meeting

Use of Otter pilot AI for meeting notes – Laura will continue to investigate the usefulness of it.

How to support the PI Chapter meeting – Meredith and Amber will discuss attending

Deadlines –

Call for Abstracts: Due Feb 14 notified by Feb 28

Early Registration opens March 3 and ends April 6

Will be advertised in an email (week of January 6), included in the Tributary, and the website.

Small Grant – due March 21

Laura made a form

Travel Grants – due February 14th, award letters sent out Feb 21st. award letter would acceptance by March 3rd.

Awards – due Feb 21

Eric will be making a google form

Eric will ask Jim D. about Riparian Challenge

Eric will ask Emily about DEI

Film Festival – due March 1

Scholarships – Julie will talk to Bob.

Budget update – Approved budget spreadsheet had some errors and the total budget is ~\$20K higher than discussed at the mid-year meeting

WDAFS Officers Meeting Agenda (2:00-3:00 PM MT)

WDAFS Officers to stay on the video conference

- 2025 Meeting
 - Website & Artwork – Stev will ask Dan B. about the website. Artwork can be developed with a contest after the theme is developed. Recommend that the Chapter develops the theme.
 - Symposium – Considering using google forms for symposia submission. Contract has a table that outlines what rooms are available and capacity in each. Could save on costs if you don't have to switch out rooms frequently.
 - AV Support needs to be ironed out
 - Continuing Education workshop – ideas were discussed. Eric agreed to be part of the committee.
- Officer committee assignments – Julie is working on a list
- ScCS reimbursement process – The SCCS reimbursement process was discussed. Julie will be sending out letters to all the committees and Laura will help with language for the Native Fishes committee.
- Nonprofit shipping costs- There is a \$350 fee for nonprofit shipping and WDAFS isn't feeling that there is a true benefit for this because we don't do bulk mailings.
- Travel grants – There is value at the Western Division level. List should be given to the volunteer coordinators so that the coordinators reach out to the travel grant awardees. Consider streamlining the award letter.
 - Is there a real-time volunteer sign up sheet?
- Awards and grants due in February. Symposium due in November
- Chapter meeting visits – Work out details at November meeting



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Phone Numbers

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PIN: 369 972 427#

WDAFS Executive Committee Agenda (12:00 PM-1:00 PM MST)

WDAFS Officers and Representatives from: AK, AZ/NM, CA/NV, CO/WY, ID, MT, OR, PI, UT, WA/BC

- 12:00 Welcome & introductions / determination of quorum (majority of officers, 1/3 of Chapters)
- 12:05 Topics from Mid-Year Meeting we were unable to cover on December 7
 - Student activities update (Meredith)
 - Nominations Committee (Society level; Eric)
 - Management Committee (briefing from 11/19 meeting; Julie)
 - Resource Policy and Environmental Concerns Committee (Eric)
 - Discussion: How to recruit and engage chapter representatives to serve on WD committees; how WD committees can engage with similar chapter committees
 - Discussion: How can we increase and communicate the relevancy of WDAFS with chapter membership?
 - WD presentation at business meetings – participation of officer attending chapter meetings in activities

Future discussion topics for Excom meetings: DEI committee name, conversation with Troy from the Financial Sustainability Committee, membership recruitment and messaging (once received from society level or Membership Committee)

- 1:30 Adjourn

Attachments:

1. Membership recruitment and retention action plan

WDAFS Officers Meeting Agenda (1:30-2:00 PM MT)

WDAFS Officers to stay on the video conference

- Use of Otter pilot AI for meeting notes

American Fisheries Society

Membership Recruitment & Retention Action Plan

Version 9-8-24

Introduction

A survey was conducted in 2022 to identify current perceptions and preferences regarding the value of American Fisheries Society (AFS) membership and its associated benefits, assess the effectiveness of AFS initiatives and communication efforts, provide insight into the role of AFS in career development, and document motivations for membership in other societies. The membership survey included participation from current AFS members as well as non-members with interests in the fisheries profession. The survey received 2,285 responses. Members who served on the Membership Committee in 2021-2023 analyzed this data and presented it to the members of the 2023-2024 Membership Committee. The goal of the analysis was to identify global trends among all respondents as a means to improve the overall experience for society members through value-added membership benefits and initiatives. These results will be shared with all AFS members via an article in Fisheries to be published in late 2024.

The main task of the 2023-2024 Membership Committee has been to translate the analyzed survey results into recommendations for action. The Committee has been meeting monthly and inviting AFS Committees and Sections to review and discuss the results that most pertain to their work. Detailed input has been received from International Fisheries, Equal Opportunities, Fisheries Administration, and Fisheries Management Sections, the Communications Committee, and the Strategic Positioning Committee. Requests were also made to past members of the Membership Committee and the Governing Board to review the results and comment on what actions should be taken. Co-Chairs Abigail Archer & Lian Guo and AFS staff member Membership Coordinator Kelly Kotche assembled this input into a draft document called the Membership Recruitment & Retention Action Plan. The plan has four sections with recommendations for action for 1) The whole society 2) Membership Categories, 3) Employment Sectors and Geographic Regions, and 4) Organizational Units. At the 2024 Mid Year Governing Board meeting in March 2024, Co-Chair Lian Guo led the members and staff through an exercise to place the major recommendations from these four sections into an Effort vs Impact Grid. The results of this activity were then reviewed and refined by the Membership Committee members and used to create the prioritized order of specific tasks within the major sections.

Note: Numbered items are in order of priority

Section I: Society Wide Recommendations

A. Assess the technical, logistical & financial feasibility of revamping the membership joining and renewal processes

1. Assess changing membership from a fixed 12 month calendar to lasting 365 days from the join date.
2. Create an auto renewal option for increments of time such as 2 or 5 years or beyond years.
3. Streamline the registration process for new members. Initial membership purchase should be quick and intuitive with a mobile-first design. Users can be asked to fill out demographic information or select potential Section memberships at a later time.
4. Develop joint society membership opportunities with, and/or offer discounted rates to, other related professional organizations (e.g., Consortium of Aquatic Science Societies, Native American Fish & Wildlife Society, National Military Fish & Wildlife Association).

5. If continuing with calendar year membership, consider reduced cost membership for those joining later in the year.

B. Assess the technical, logistical & financial feasibility of implementing more targeted and effective membership recruitment and retention practices

1. Use email technology that would allow AFS to send personalized emails at set intervals prior to and/or following expiration (For example, "Hi Eric, Did you know that your membership in AFS expired last month? If not, be sure to renew today to . . ."). This is especially important if AFS moves towards membership plans that last 365 days from the purchase date.
2. Develop SMS distribution lists and the capacity to deliver push notifications to better interface with mobile users.
3. Assess and adaptively manage outreach materials by using Urchin Tracking Modules (UTM) in conjunction with Google Analytics on the AFS website to assess the effectiveness of various approaches.
4. Conduct research on membership recruitment & retention initiatives at other professional societies to guide AFS efforts and identify opportunities to partner.
5. Coordinate renewal campaigns in conjunction with partnering professional organizations if joint membership opportunities are offered.

C. Refine, improve and create messaging and messaging products

High impact, low effort:

1. Networking with other members was rated 'high' as a reason for joining AFS. Highlight networking opportunities in all membership messaging.
2. Highlight the AFS membership benefits of continuing education opportunities, webinars, travel grants, networking opportunities more than the membership benefit of free journal access. Many institutions already provide free access to AFS journals.
3. Emphasize the role of subject-matter Sections and how they can be used to 'find a home' within AFS.
4. Clarify and make plain, through a graphic and through talking points for AFS unit leaders, the relationships among the student subunits, and the Chapters, Divisions, and the parent society.
5. Develop clear messaging on how AFS is different from other fish and wildlife societies.

High impact, medium effort

6. Better communicate the value generated by paying dues.
7. Create different messaging to the different membership groups to clearly show how AFS can meet their particular needs at the student, early career, regular, and retired membership levels.
8. Create digital content that features personal stories from current members on how membership has helped their careers.

High impact, high effort

9. Early career and regular members can be employed by a broad range of entities. Craft membership messaging and initiatives that appeal specifically to employees of academic institutions, state agencies, federal agencies, Tribal natural resources departments, extension/communications/outreach professionals, consulting companies, and vendors.

Low impact, medium effort

10. Focus communications by member type and consistently demonstrate value to each segment, offering access to professional resources when members need them. For example, when you visit [fisheries.org](https://www.fisheries.org), it's tough to find member resources by type and community.

D. Strengthen Policy Advocacy

1. Communicate policy updates and relevant decisions effectively to both our members and to the public so they know what AFS means and stands for.
2. Assist Chapters and Divisions with trainings and written materials on how to be effective in policy advocacy.
3. Engage members in advocacy activities and assist them through training opportunities to be effective advocates for aquatic resources.
4. Communicate that federal policy advocacy is a valuable service for members and how.

E. Continue and expand the current Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility efforts at Society, Division, and Chapter levels

1. Membership Committee should interact regularly with Equal Opportunities Section (EOS) & with Diversity Equity & Inclusion Committees at the Division level. Empower the latter to interact with their Chapters.
2. Work with EOS to inventory existing DEI efforts at the Chapter and Division levels so members are aware of activities, opportunities, and progress towards goals.
3. Set expectations/protocols for local and international leadership on sharing and enforcing the Code of Conduct (COC). Be transparent about and amplify the COC, how past incidences have been handled, and how to anonymously report incidences (e.g. asking people to sign, reading the COC, etc).
4. Regularly survey membership to ask about inclusion and experiences at local or national events.
5. Broaden recruitment and outreach to more communities such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities and community colleges. This includes Divisions collaborating to set up new collaborations or student subunits.
6. Increase recruitment of underrepresented groups through an expanded and targeted outreach effort; for example leveraging conference attendees for programs across host cities' institutions and public schools.
7. Create and maintain affinity groups for identifying support and/or networking within underrepresented groups. This can also translate into online support groups through Facebook, Slack, or email listservs (e.g., Women in Fisheries).
8. Host/develop annual trainings for members (e.g., Unconscious Bias), as well as opportunities for ally education.
9. Create fellowship/grant/internship opportunities specific to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and other marginalized groups. This could also include partial travel awards (e.g. housing during conference).
10. Design social events at meetings to reduce cliques and help everyone meet new people. Encourage increased non-alcohol centric socials as well as enforce appropriate behavior when alcohol is involved.
11. Select conference locations which will be safe for all attendees and send out guidelines and precautions at meetings. Devise ways for members to report misconduct, let others know about problems areas, ask for help, etc.

F. Other Suggestions (Unranked)

- Focus on targeted public outreach efforts. In particular, target the highest levels of management of agencies and companies, the angling public, related NGOs, and fishing related industries. Our secondary target should be the general public with an emphasis on what our science means in plain and non-technical language.
- Increase the profile of publications and continuing education.
- AFS has a lot of content (meeting recordings, decades of journals articles, gray literature data) and may benefit from an instructional designer to help turn these resources into alternate member content. AFS Chapters and Divisions and Sections offer sessions and continuing education that often is not shared outside of that particular unit. Determine how to track and catalog this content that allows better access for AFS members and for outside entities that could benefit from this education to enact policy changes.
- Evaluate discontinuing the job board; funds could be used for other membership benefits elsewhere that may be more important to folks. Look to the program review on this topic.

Section II: Membership Categories

A. Enhance Student Engagement

1. Develop a process to keep an up-to-date, real time, comprehensive list of student units and faculty/staff advisors.
2. Explore an alternate/additional way to join or renew without logging in or registering for an account first. This would help students attending meetings to be able to sign up quickly via a QR code. They could receive an email later with a request to create their profile.
3. Empower Chapter leadership to reach out to new student members using a template email and additional methods. This is low effort, low to medium impact, but one piece of the toolkit - if we personalized more, would increase effort.
4. Increase networking opportunities beyond just the annual meeting. One way of doing this may be to establish a mentorship program for students beyond annual meetings. A society wide mentorship program could be more centrally organized.
5. Continue to fundraise for and support awards and travel opportunities for students.
6. Plan Chapter level activities for students to receive professional resume/cover letter reviews. These could include: events at all Chapter meetings, a volunteer team with open office hours for mock interviews and resume review. Chapters who have done this work could share framework and any templates already developed.
7. Broaden the "adopt a student" program. This could be simplified and included as a part of membership renewal (Would you like to adopt a student and fund their membership for the year?). This could or could not include a membership component. AFS could get a list of students from the subunits that would like to be sponsored. This would help with early recruitment that would hopefully be retained over time, and also give students a sense of belonging (someone "adopted" me!). This would hopefully create a feedback loop where they would adopt a student later on in their career.
8. Help Chapters develop a sustainable relationship with the student subunits in their area. Facilitate conversations among Chapters and Divisions to compare their efforts, successes, and failures and develop ideas to try. Consider starting with a webinar between state Chapters and student subunits

that are already doing a good job of this (share other items on this list). Compile a best practices document based on experiences across the Divisions and Chapters.

9. Explore ways to reach the students that are at smaller schools/programs that don't have a student sub-unit. For example Iowa has started a non-affiliated student sub-unit with members from multiple schools beyond Iowa State. Consider pairing student subunit officers with state Chapter leadership.
10. Provide examples and encourage Chapter leadership to recruit students to get involved in Chapter governance.
11. Make it possible for students to join their sub unit and Chapter via the parent society website which will also allow them to be AFS members. Perhaps make it easier to join the Society (not just a student subunit for \$10) by working with the student subunits to have a way to submit the required membership info electronically and allow them to collect the \$30 and submit at a later time as one lump for all students that joined that year.
12. Explore development of a society-level student internship program where undergraduate and graduate students can be placed in locations across the country with AFS designated mentors from all career stages (early, mid, late, retired, and DEIJA/EOS representation) to learn new experiences. This could be considered an expansion of the Hutton program.
13. Add a note to the membership web pathway about using a personal gmail instead of a .edu institutional address for when you graduate.
14. Develop a one-page flyer/Facebook/Instagram post with instructions for AFS students members about how to stay involved with AFS after graduating and moving to a new state or country.

B. Support Early Career Members

1. Evaluate the current timeline and consider extending it for early career membership.
2. Develop a Task Force of Early Career Members that provide specific measures to assist early career members and review AFS programs and products from an early career perspective.
3. Provide registration discounts or in-kind support for early career members volunteering at annual meetings.
4. Increase networking opportunities beyond just the annual meeting.
5. Fundraise for and support awards and travel opportunities for early career professionals such as the Western Division Early Career Travel award. Develop awards categories that recognize short term achievements. Encourage Sections specifically to develop an early career travel award as a way to build Section level membership.
6. Continue the climate ambassador program and develop similar programs.

C. Retain Regular Members

Membership Benefits & Process

1. Revamp the membership renewal process including renewal timelines. Explore allowing 2 and 5 year membership renewal categories in addition to annual. Make auto-renewals of membership an option to all members. Make it easier to join Chapters and Sections (High Effort-High Impact)
2. Improve communication on the value of membership through publications and events (High Effort - Medium Impact)
3. Regular members value access to applied science and management information in journals-encourage members to publish and bring forward something from their agency to the table.
4. Recognize years of membership in Fisheries publication, or small gifts (pin, sticker, hat, etc) (High Impact – Low Effort)

5. Explore a referral incentive program (Low Impact – Low Effort)

Continuing Education (High Impact and Medium Effort)

6. Strengthen public outreach, mentoring, and continuing education.
7. Increase networking opportunities outside of in person meetings.
8. Determine desired Continuing Education courses.
9. Based on the above, continue and/or expand continuing education and workshop offerings at annual meetings, and Division and Chapter meetings; develop a webinar series for continuing education.

Certification (High Impact and High Effort)

10. Review the certification program (revamp or eliminate?)
11. Show value to employers to make certification mandatory and/or an asset and to incentivize members to become certified.
12. Improve the process for becoming certified.

D. Convince Chapter-Only Participants to become AFS Members

1. Require all Chapters to use the Society website for signing up for membership.
2. Offer agency bulk memberships at some discount.
3. Change how we label conference fee categories to camouflage including annual membership dues to make it easier for people to become members and be reimbursed by their employer.
4. Communicate the value of membership through personal stories - perhaps through short videos.
5. Strengthen networking and mentoring, and continuing education beyond AFS in-person meetings.
6. Support Divisions and Chapters to survey their affiliate members to determine what their interests and needs are.
7. Provide talking points and materials for Chapters and Divisions to convey the benefits of membership.
8. Ensure that AFS officers and staff participate in Chapter and Division meetings along with selected other professional meetings to provide Society updates and to staff AFS booths that provide direct opportunities for member and non-member engagement.
9. Consider lower initial rates for non-AFS members with gradual increases.
10. Offer discounted membership rates bundled with parent society annual meeting registration.

E. Increase Retired Member Participation

1. Build a community for retired members where they feel welcome and can easily interact with other retirees both professionally and socially along with other AFS members.
2. Establish formal mentorship programs for retired professionals to connect with early career professionals.
3. Offer reduced prices for continuing education.
4. Organize opportunities for retirees to teach continuing education classes or webinars, maybe offering reduced fees in return depending on the amount of time required.
5. Organize networking opportunities for retired members.
6. Provide travel assistance for retired members.
7. Engage with retirees through meet-ups and webinars.
8. Explore a travel program – AFS sponsored trips to different areas of the country or international locations to learn about and participate in local fisheries.

9. Explore Ecologists without Borders as a mechanism to assist fisheries workers in geographic areas that are requesting assistance to improve their resources and knowledge.
10. Encourage Chapters, Sub-Units, and Divisions to find ways for retirees to serve as mentors/resources along with providing resources to facilitate this opportunity.
11. Many retirees have extensive fisheries and aquatic science libraries, photos and other artifacts that they struggle to find space for. Provide a mechanism to allow retirees to give or sell these often important pieces of science to other members, maybe through a members only Facebook marketplace location.

Section III: Employment sectors and Geographic regions

A. International Members

1. Continue to host some AFS meetings in locations outside of the United States. Recognize that these will likely not be money makers for the Society and the key to good attendance may be to partner with other professional societies, similar to JASM model. The ICES/PICES Early Career Science Symposium held in Labrador is an example.
2. Convene a workgroup to examine revamping the abstract submittal process for international attendees since the timeline for obtaining visas and other travel approval is very long and different among countries.
3. Develop a workgroup of international members to provide appropriate mechanisms for AFS to engage in policy development and how to facilitate policy updates for non-U.S. countries with specific subgroups for Canada and Mexico.
4. Carve out a spot in Fisheries for non-US fisheries stories/member profiles, perhaps on a quarterly basis.
5. Increase the focus on broad international fisheries issues within AFS journals – for example special publications on regions/international issues.
6. AFS needs to develop an international membership strategy as many geographic areas have an existing country- based Fisheries society.
7. Engage with the Canadian Aquatic Resources Section directly to determine how to improve membership satisfaction, how better to serve Canadian members, and how to increase membership in Canada.
8. AFS lacks the local nonprofit and government connections, as evidenced by the Latin Congress challenges. Assess how to build stronger connections starting with just a few countries and then slowly add more over time.
9. Work with the International Fisheries Section to try out ways to reduce barriers for meeting attendance.
10. Organize webinars or programs that focus on marine or other fisheries outside the US borders. The Yangtze River collaboration is a great example.
11. Explore developing a fifth "Division" that incorporates international locations so they get automatically placed in that Division and receive information that Division members receive automatically, have an officer structure and an opportunity to participate in AFS governance (outside of the International Section).
12. Explore income-based membership costs or membership fees based on countries' economy.
13. Work with IFS to develop relevant and viable geographical units within IFS. Similar to Student Subsections within the Education Section.

14. Build better virtual meeting opportunities because travel to in person meetings is difficult and expensive. But virtual events and programs must be developed carefully and intentionally to really foster interaction, not just passive listening to a speaker.

B. Tribal Natural Resources Managers

1. Explore developing an effort to specifically reach out to Tribal Natural Resources Departments in each AFS Division and begin dialog on how AFS may be able to assist with issues they are working on.
2. Designate a liaison and a process by which the Society will engage with Tribal Natural Resources/Fisheries so as not to overwhelm them with requests.
3. Reactivate/reinvigorate the Native Peoples Fisheries Section.
4. Fundraise to offer travel funding opportunities for Tribal Department staff to attend regional and annual AFS meetings.
5. Develop internship opportunities for tribal technicians/interns.
6. Engage with the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society on joint membership opportunities and other opportunities for working together.

C. State Agency Staff

1. Have AFS officers and Executive Director attend all Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and regional association meetings to include staffing a booth to make state agency leadership aware of AFS and the benefits that staff generate from AFS.
2. Develop messaging that makes clear that AFWA members will benefit from also being AFS members and that AFS is not just focused on supporting academics.
3. Have AFS members and leadership engage in state in-service training sessions.
4. Create an auto renewal option for increments of time such as 2 or 5 years or beyond years.
5. Offer more online training sessions to increase participation from state agency staff who do not have access to funding to travel to annual meetings.
6. Provide talking points and written materials to state agency department heads to help explain the professional development opportunities offered through membership and participation in AFS.
7. Talking points can include the opportunity to serve in leadership roles at the Section and Chapter level which can help develop skills that are useful for leadership roles within the agency.
8. Explore developing weekly or monthly emails at the Chapter level that include links to relevant articles.
9. Explore bundling meeting registration with annual membership.
10. Work with Sections to develop membership recruitment activities for state agency staff who work on those specific topics relevant to the Sections.
11. Help Sections to be in contact with their members more frequently through emails and webinars and trainings and other virtual and in person activities.
12. Some employee unions will offer funds for continuing education and membership in professional societies. Encourage state agency staff to communicate with their union representative to determine if that is offered. Encourage staff in leadership positions to communicate any opportunities to their staff.
13. Increase communication with state fisheries agency leadership to determine how AFS certification is currently useful or not useful, and if it can be changed to be a useful tool for state agency hiring.

D. Federal Agency Staff

1. AFS officers and the Executive Director meet with federal agency fisheries leadership to make federal agency leadership aware of AFS and the benefits that staff generate from AFS.
2. Have AFS members and leadership engage in federal in-service training sessions.

E. Non-Profit Organization Staff

1. Convene a group of current members who work for non-profit entities and listen to their experiences with AFS and recommendations they have.
2. Ask Divisions and Chapters to compile a list of relevant organizations in their area and reach out to them. Ask those non-profit staff members to present at meetings, contribute to newsletters, be keynote speakers, and become members of the American Fisheries Society community.

F. Academic Staff (Professors, Administrators)

1. Convene a group of current members who work for universities and 4 and 2 year colleges and listen to their experiences with AFS and any recommendations they have.

Section IV: Organizational Units

A. Student -Unit Level

1. Encourage Chapters to maintain and enhance their working relationships with their student sub units.
2. Determine best practices among the Chapters for creating and maintaining relationships with student sub units, and compile and disseminate this information across the network.
3. Create webinars specifically focused on student sub units and create opportunities for student sub units to interact with each other across the country via virtual means. For example, North Central Division is looking into starting a student conclave this summer and Southern Division has done this. Create opportunities to bring students from multiple universities together virtually or in-person.
4. Maintain and update annually the list of student sub units and faculty sponsors that was developed by the Student & Early Career Subsection in 2022.
5. Develop a communication strategy for AFS staff to send quarterly messages to the student sub units – in addition to any communication that they receive through their Chapter.

B. Chapter Level

1. Work with each Division to implement a membership toolkit for Chapters with materials (posters, postcards, powerpoint slides, swag) that promotes and makes it easy for Chapter meeting attendees to sign up for and renew membership.
2. Develop a best practices guide for Chapters on how to recruit each of the membership types to join (students, early career, regular, retiree).
3. Identify a Membership Lead or Membership Committee within each Chapter to facilitate recruitment.
4. Develop a 'student subunit engagement guide' for Chapters.

C. Division Level

1. Develop talking points for Division leaders to deliver at in-person meetings to include messages from the AFS President and Executive Director.

D. Section Level

1. Promote Sections and Section activities in AFS level newsletters and social media.
2. Ask Section leadership to send and communicate membership renewal notices.