



TRIBUTARY

Western Division of the American Fisheries Society

Advancing fisheries and aquatic science and professionals in western North America and the Pacific Islands

In this issue: President's Hook, Upcoming WDAFS dates, AFS News, Committee Updates, and more...

President: Tim Copeland

President-Elect: Amber Steed

Vice President: Brittany Jenewein **Past-President:** Julie Carter **Sec.-Treasurer:** Chris Penne

Student

Representative: Regan Doss

Tributary Editor: Timothy D'Amico

PRESIDENT'S HOOK

Tim Copeland

Happy St Patrick's Day, WDAFS Members!

'Tis the season for meetings. Several chapters have already had their annual meetings. The WD officers travel to these meetings to represent the Division locally and to meet our members. Although there are many similarities, each chapter has its own personality and flavor, which you can only see by being there. It is important for us as Division officers to know these things so we may be effective representatives for you. It is also one of the benefits for us, because Western AFS chapters have so much energy. Thank you for being such good hosts!

Planning for the joint ORAFS/WDAFS annual meeting is still proceeding. We have received over 380 abstracts for presentations. Represented in that number are people from 14 tribal agencies, 6 states/provinces, and around 35 universities. Federal agencies, NGOs, consulting firms, and private companies. Study locations stretch across western North America, the Pacific Islands, and beyond. Habitats covered range from the pelagic ocean to alpine meadows to prairie and desert streams. I'm leaving plenty out for reasons of space. The list is impressive. There is much to do yet, but an awesome meeting with a wide-ranging program is shaping up. See the list of [posters](#) and [talks](#). Be sure to check out the latest updates on the [meeting website](#) and in this issue of the *Tributary* as well. Reserve your room [here](#). We look forward to seeing you in Portland this May!

Lastly, I am including some links to short videos featuring our colleagues here in the West from the digital series [Tomorrow's Catch: Securing our Future Fisheries](#). This series was produced by AFS in partnership with Content With Purpose. Although only ones from the West are given below, I encourage you to watch the others. They are 3 to 4 minutes long and well worth the time. These videos showcase some of the breadth of our work and, most importantly, they show why it matters. Several made an impact on me and I hope you enjoy them. To those who lent their time and experiences to this project, thank you.



The Power of Perspective
May 4-7th 2026, Portland OR

2026 CHAPTER MEETING SCHEDULE

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Chapter Website</u>	<u>Meeting Website</u>
AK	March 23-27	Fairbanks, AK	https://afs-alaska.org/	American Fisheries Society • Alaska Chapter – 52nd Annual Meeting • March 23–27, 2026 • Fairbanks, AK
AZ/NM	February 5-7	Sedona, AZ	https://arizona-newmexico.fisheries.org/	2026 JAM in Sedona, AZ – AZ/NM AFS
CA/NV	February 10-13	Chico, CA	https://afs-calneva.org/	2026 Meeting in Chico, CA – Cal-Neva AFS Chapter
CO/WY	March 2-4	Laramie, WY	https://units.fisheries.org/cowyafs/	Annual Meeting – Announcement Colorado / Wyoming Chapter of AFS
ID	March 3-6	Idaho Falls, ID	https://www.idahoafs.org/	Idaho Chapter of the American Fisheries Society
MT	February 10-13	Fairmont Hot Springs, MT	https://units.fisheries.org/montana/	MTAFS 2026 Annual Meeting Montana Chapter
OR/WDAFS	May 4-7	Portland, OR	https://orafs.org/	Annual Meeting – Oregon Chapter of the American Fisheries Society
Pacific Islands	May 20-22	Honolulu, HI	https://pacificislands.fisheries.org/	Meetings – Pacific Islands Chapter
UT	March 2-4	Salt Lake City, UT	https://utah.fisheries.org/	Utah Chapter of AFS - Utah AFS Annual Meeting 2026
WA/BC	April 6-9	Wenatchee, WA	https://wa-bc.fisheries.org/	2026 Joint WA-BC AFS & WA TWS Conference



2026 OREGON CHAPTER & WESTERN DIVISION AFS ANNUAL MEETING

Dates: May 4-7, 2026 Location: [Holiday Inn Columbia Riverfront, Portland, Oregon](#)

The AFS Western Division and the Oregon Chapter are excited to host a joint annual meeting in Portland, Oregon, from May 4 to 7, 2026. The theme of the meeting is “The Power of Perspective.” [Workshops and training sessions](#) will be on Monday. The technical program will be Tuesday-Thursday. Click [this link](#) for a tentative schedule.

[Meeting Website](#)

The theme of the meeting is “**The Power of Perspective.**” *The field of fisheries is a web of connections among humans, fish, and aquatic habitats, and no matter how you participate, you have a point of view. That view is shaped by the species and habitats you study, where you work, who you work with, your career stage, your personal background, and so much more. As we face unprecedented ecological, social, political, and economic stresses on our profession, how do we harness the power of our unique perspectives to move the field forward? What relationships can we learn from, what knowledge can we provide, and what technologies have the potential to be transformative in building resilience, relevance, and respect in fisheries? For their 2026 joint annual meeting, the Oregon Chapter and Western Division AFS invite you to share your work and your perspective, because it matters.*

Plenary Session

The central question in the meeting theme is, how do we harness the power of our unique perspectives to move the field forward and build resilience, relevance, and respect in fisheries and our profession? The plenary will be split into three sessions with four speakers to provide their thoughts and experiences. On Tuesday (May 5), Corinne Sams (right) will speak to the collaborative work



that the Columbia River Inter-tribal Fish Commission and its member tribes does throughout the Columbia River basin. She will describe the tribal management perspective and partnership through the formation of the 6 Sovereigns and the creation of the Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative. Next, Amy Bowers Cordalis (left) will explore how Indigenous rights, cultural values, and ecosystem restoration can reshape policy, strengthen democracy, and deliver real climate solutions, based on her experiences with Klamath Basin restoration. Her message is one of



resilience and hope: the water remembers, the fish remember, and together, we can renew the world. On Wednesday, Gary Whelan (right) will address AFS’s perspective on the state of our profession and how to move forward, individually and collectively. On Thursday,



Dr. Mamie Parker (left) will speak about the importance of exploring the outdoors and the value of conservation and the environment from her perspective as the youngest daughter of an Arkansas sharecropper. The four plenary presentations will provide a starting point for conversations at the meeting and beyond.

Community Service Project: Friends of Tryon Creek

Attendees of the 2026 Western Division AFS Meeting in Portland, the WDAFS Recruitment and Retention Committee and Respectful Meetings Work Group invites you to participate in a community service project with Friends of Tryon Creek! Please see a description of the opportunity to participate in this service project below. The community service project will be held on Monday, May 4 from 12:30-5 pm, and will be an off-site event at Tryon Canyon with transportation from the meeting venue provided. This event is not included on the registration website, so if you are interested in participating, please provide your name and contact information in this spreadsheet. You are welcome to indicate if you are planning to participate (“Attending”) or “Interested but Currently Unsure”. However, if you indicate you are interested but unsure at this time, please update to “Attending” or delete your contact information by April 15 so that we can plan for transportation needs. A big thank you to Ryan Branstetter and Gabe Sheships for putting this opportunity together for us. We look forward to seeing you at the community service project in Portland in May!



Friends of Tryon Creek is a community-supported nonprofit started in 1970 by a group of dedicated park neighbors to preserve Tryon Canyon. Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), and marginalized communities have historically faced physical and structural barriers to enjoying natural areas, like Tryon, and have had their communities’ cultural knowledge erased from narratives of the land. Currently, it now is an inclusive community, which is connected to this cherished urban forest which will lay the foundation for future generations. Knowledgeable staff will give a short presentation, followed by a hike, volunteers will learn about this unique urban stream and the Indigenous based ethos that guides this restoration effort. Work will mainly consist of promoting riparian habitat by removing invasive plant species, which will be beneficial for coho, chinook, lamprey, and promoting Indigenous First Foods. We hope you can join us to connect with this beautiful forest in the city, and with the hard-working people to contribute to its restoration.



STUDENT COLLOQUIUM

Announcing the 2026 Western Division AFS Student Colloquium!

When: May 2nd-4th, 2026

Where: Champoeg State Heritage Area, Saint Paul, OR

Who: Undergraduate and Graduate students in the Western Division

What: The student colloquium is an opportunity for academic and professional development, student socialization, and networking with students across all the Western Division chapters. We will have get-to-know-you events, professional development activities, informal research discussions, opportunities for practice talks, and

outdoor activities. Lodging accommodations and food will be provided (early evening May 2nd to late morning May 4th).

The event will take place just prior to the annual Western Division meeting and will be a fantastic opportunity to meet fellow students before the meeting. If you are interested in attending (or cannot attend and would still like to provide feedback) please fill out this [form](#) by the end of March. More event details and the opportunity to provide suggestions for events at the colloquium are in the form. This is not a registration form, just an interest form. A secondary registration form will be sent out later.

2026 WDAFS Student Colloquium

May 2-4, 2026

Champoeg State Heritage Area, Oregon

Join fellow fisheries students from across the Western Division for a weekend of networking, presentation practice, and outdoor fun before the annual WDAFS meeting!

What to Expect:

- Practice your oral or poster presentation in a relaxed setting
- Get feedback from peers and mentors
- Discuss grad school, careers, and conference tips
- Network with other student chapters
- Enjoy group meals, morning hikes, and campfire evenings

Cabins at Champoeg include three beds each, electricity, heating, running water, and picnic areas

Who Should Attend:

Undergraduate and graduate students presenting at or planning to attend the 2026 WDAFS meeting.

Lodging, food, and activities are fully covered!

Contact: Regan Doss, WDAFS Student Representative
studentrepresentative@wdafs.org

Sign up here



<https://forms.gle/gh9XLuP2cgYPRT2X9>



HARDWATER HAVOC: COLLEGIATE ANGLING MEETS CITIZEN SCIENCE

Hardwater Havoc is a collegiate angling and applied citizen science competition connecting recreational fishing with fisheries research and professional development. Conducted January 9–February 19 across the Western and North Central Divisions of the American Fisheries Society (AFS), the 2026 event engaged 193 student anglers from 21 schools who collectively submitted nearly 5,000 catches.



Brigham Young University – Idaho was crowned Western Division Champion with 30 students participating.



Students also had the opportunity to earn an Applied Micro-Certification in Citizen Science for Fisheries Management through weekly “Metric Missions.” Using AFS reference texts and historical angler datasets, participants calculated catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE), interpreted

length-frequency distributions, evaluated sampling bias, and applied fisheries data to management-style scenarios—building practical workforce-ready skills.



The event supported chapter growth and recruitment. Devon Lindsey, of the Oregon Institute of Technology Student Subunit, shared:

“It has been really good for us... we got a lot of new membership through the event and are up to over 100 members just in 4 months.”

Eric Billman, Fisheries Professor at BYU–Idaho, noted:

“The tournament sparked a lot of connection among students through shared experiences and effort.”

Jazmine Cook of BYU–Idaho student subunit added:

“We found students that just loved to fish and didn't know anything about our fisheries program and even had a few switch their majors.”

Hardwater Havoc continues to demonstrate how structured competition and applied learning can strengthen AFS student chapters and engage the next generation of fisheries professionals.

News and Media Coverage

An Oregon university is trailing 1st place in an international ice fishing competition — despite a lack of ice - The Oregonian

<https://www.oregonlive.com/news/2026/02/an-oregon-university-is-trailing-1st-place-in-an-international-ice-fishing-competition-despite-a-lack-of-ice.html>



TRU students competing in collegiate ice fishing competition sitting in third place - *Castanet Kamloops*
<https://www.castanetkamloops.net/news/Kamloops/598674/TRU-students-competing-in-collegiate-ice-fishing-competition-sitting-in-third-place>



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I AFS STUDENT SUBUNIT (PACIFIC ISLANDS CHAPTER)

Since its establishment in 2023, our subunit has fostered a supportive, collaborative environment for undergraduate and graduate students across the Pacific Islands interested in fisheries sciences. As the only subunit in the Pacific Islands, we encourage communication and collaboration with the Pacific Islands Chapter, Western Division, and the broader AFS community. Our goal is to promote fisheries and aquatic research while preparing members for careers in the field in the Pacific.

In February, our subunit hosted our first "AFS Takeover" with Nerd Nite Honolulu, a local science communication

event held at a bar in Honolulu. The night featured fresh, sustainably sourced blue marlin and 'ulu (breadfruit) poke, fish trivia, and five fisheries focused talks from students and faculty, along with a short presentation about AFS. The event had record attendance with more than 160 students, faculty, and professionals from across Hawai'i's fisheries community. Because the audience extended beyond just students, it created a fun, casual environment for networking and connection between students, researchers, and local professionals while sharing fisheries science with a broader community!



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT SUBUNIT (CO-WY CHAPTER)

The Colorado State University Student Subunit of the American Fisheries Society had a highly successful year with strong participation and hands-on learning opportunities. In the fall, the subunit partnered with the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Department to host electrofishing and fish processing workshops, teaching members field sampling, species identification, and fish aging techniques while assisting with Smallmouth Bass processing from the Ridgway Reservoir fishing tournament. The group also hosted its annual Kids Fishing Derby with 30 youth participants. Spring brought record engagement, including a first meeting with 65 attendees, regular meetings of 30–35 members, an ice fishing trip to Barnes Meadow Reservoir, and strong representation at the CO-WYO American Fisheries Society Conference with over 30 undergraduate attendees and eight student

presentations. The subunit now has 59 active members and is preparing for its Adult Fishing Derby on April 18, 2026, while continuing to expand workshops and leadership development ahead of the Western Division Annual Meeting in Portland.



OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT SUBUNIT (OREGON CHAPTER)



The Oregon State University Fisheries and Wildlife Club supports the professional development of students interested in fisheries, wildlife, and conservation through

hands-on learning and networking opportunities. This winter, the club partnered with the 5 Rivers Fly Fishing Club and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to host a fly-fishing workshop on the McKenzie River, where students of all experience levels learned casting techniques, fishing regulations, and career insights from fisheries professional Martyne Reesman. The event gave students the chance to build skills, connect with professionals, and gain real-world conservation experience. Looking ahead, the club plans to support student attendance at the Oregon Chapter of the American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting and the Western Division American Fisheries Society Conference this May to further expand networking and professional development opportunities.

STUDENT HIGHLIGHT

LEVERAGING MACHINE LEARNING AS A FISH CONSERVATION TOOL

MeiLin Precourt, University of Hawai'i AFS Student Subunit

Growing up in the Pacific Northwest, I was lucky to be surrounded by oceans. Although I didn't grow up fishing, I was always fascinated by fish, and the roles they play in aquatic ecosystems. This awe led me to apply for, and receive the American Fisheries Society (AFS) Hutton Fellowship. This experience first introduced me to my love of conservation, and fisheries research. After Hutton, I took two gap years to work in terrestrial invasive species management before starting my bachelor's at the

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, majoring in Natural Resources and Environmental Management. Throughout my undergrad I have several unique research opportunities including a NSF-REU to study bluefin tuna stock mixing in Maine under Dr. Lisa Kerr, and a NSF-IRES to build species distribution models for invasive algae in the Galápagos under Dr. Inti Keith and Dr. James Fumo.

Under Dr. Megan Porter and Dr. McLean Worsham at the University of Hawai'i, my current research focuses on building random forest machine learning models to predict IUCN Red List extinction risk for Not Evaluated ray-finned fishes at both local and global scales. By integrating ecological, life history, and environmental trait data from FishBase, our model predicts that roughly 1,400 unassessed species (~10%) are likely at risk, with disproportionately high risk among freshwater taxa. This

work shows how machine learning can be used as an accurate and cost-effective tool for identifying at-risk species early and supporting proactive, data-driven conservation efforts. I have presented this work at 10 conferences, both regionally and internationally, and we are currently preparing it for publication. I will graduate in May and plan to begin a PhD program in the fall, where I hope to continue bridging data and action!



CHAPTER UPDATES

Montana Chapter

The Montana Chapter of AFS hosted our annual meeting February 10-13th, 2026. The theme was "Through the Looking Glass," which stimulated some great discussion about why we do things and if change is needed. A few highlights included an excellent raffle and silent auction by our MSU subunit, fish trivia mentor social by our U of M subunit, and a second annual art and poster social. Attendees enjoyed a large number of engaging and thoughtful talks, including a discussion around the oldest

documented Blue Sucker at 131 years old (born shortly after MT became a state!). Award winners included the George Holton Fishery Professional of the Year: Luke Holmquist, Natural Resource Professional of the Year: Ben Bailey, Outstanding Group or Organization: Gallatin River Task Force, Communicator of the Year: Paul Weamer, and Career Achievement Awards for Dr. Alexander Zale, Barry Hansen, Cindy Benson, and Les Evarts.

pacificislands.fisheries.org



Pacific Islands Chapter Annual Meeting

American Fisheries Society

May 20-22, 2026

Honolulu, Hawai'i

Location: Hilton
Hawaiian Village

Come join us for:

- Networking and community-building
- Professional development
- Unique learning opportunity

Growing and connecting a fisheries
community in the Pacific islands

Registration is now open!

Early bird deadline: April 15, 2026

Regular deadline: May 20, 2026

Call for Abstracts: Opens March 1 and closes April 1, 2026



Washington/British Columbia Chapter

A quick summary on the Washington/British Columbia Chapter conference is below:

- It will be a joint meeting with the Washington Chapter of the Wildlife Society held in Wenatchee, WA on April 6-9.
- We have 20 Symposia
- 12 workshops
- 4 field trips
- 46 posters
- 182 abstracts
- Expecting around 350 registrants

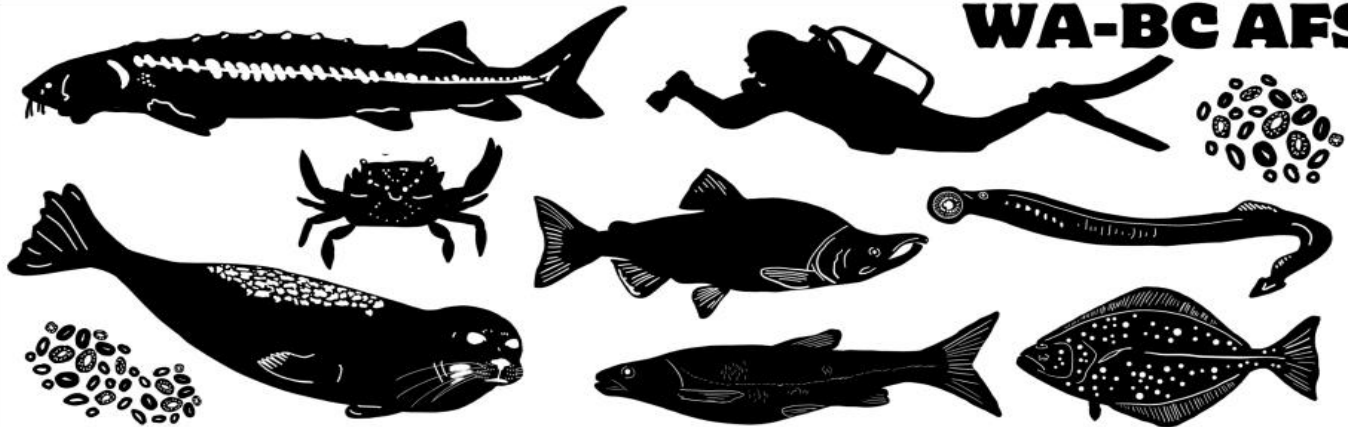


WATWS

SEAS TO SUMMITS

W E N A T C H E E , W A 2 0 2 6

WA-BC AFS



SMALL PROJECT GRANTS APPLICATION PERIOD

WDAFS is currently accepting applications for funding of small fisheries-related projects being conducted in the western United States, US territories, Pacific Islands, and Canadian provinces represented by the WDAFS. These grants are offered as a benefit to dues paying members of the WDAFS. Projects that further the mission and strategic objectives of the American Fisheries Society (Society) and

WDAFS will be prioritized for funding. **Small project grant applications are due by March 27, 2026.** Please visit our website at <https://wdafs.org/awards/small-project-grants/> for more details. **Applications must be submitted using the Google form [here](#).**

SMALL PROJECT GRANTS UPDATES

Using Eye Lens Stable Isotope Analysis (SIA) to Detect Estuary Habitat Use in Endangered Coho Salmon

Danhong Ally Li

Background

Across the Pacific Coast, estuaries and tidal wetlands are increasingly recognized as critical yet understudied rearing habitats for juvenile salmon (Tschaplinski 1988; Koski 2009; Wallace et al. 2015). These habitats can promote rapid growth and influence early marine survival, both of which support the overall resilience of salmon populations (Hoem Neher et al. 2013; Nordholm 2014). Lagunitas Creek, located in Marin County, California, flows into Tomales Bay, a long, narrow estuary connected year-round to the Pacific Ocean. The creek is home to one of the remaining strongholds of the endangered Central California Coast (CCC) Coho Salmon (*Onchorhynchus kisutch*). In recent decades, restoration efforts have re-established tidal flow and marshplain connectivity at the creek's outlet. These efforts were designed in part to improve juvenile salmon habitat, but whether juvenile Coho are using these restored nurseries and whether that use contributes to improved survival, remains unknown.

To understand salmon life history, researchers often look to otoliths, the calcified structure in the inner ear, for water chemistry incorporated into the tissues as the fish grows. Much like tree rings, otoliths form growth increments that record many environmental conditions over time. Specifically, otolith strontium isotopes can reveal broad migration patterns, such as movements between geologically distinct watersheds or between freshwater and marine environments (Campana 1999). However, in highly mixed systems like Tomales Bay, where tidal exchange creates dynamic salinity gradients, it can be challenging to resolve estuarine residence using water chemistry tracers alone. Meanwhile, eye lenses provide a complementary record. Similar to the structure of an onion, eye lenses grow in sequential growth layers (laminae) that preserve a chronological record of the fish's diet across its lifetime (Wallace et al. 2014). By measuring carbon, nitrogen and sulfur isotopes ($\delta^{13}\text{C}$, $\delta^{15}\text{N}$, and $\delta^{34}\text{S}$

or CNS) from sequential laminae, we can reconstruct shifts in food sources and habitat use over time. This project applies this novel technique to reconstruct juvenile habitat use in returning adult Coho Salmon collected in Lagunitas Creek.

Methods

Carbon isotopes can vary across freshwater and estuarine food webs, while nitrogen isotopes provide insight into trophic position (Peterson and Fry 1987). Sulfur isotopes on the other hand can help distinguish freshwater food sources from wetland derived nutrients (Bell-Tilcock et al. 2021), as wetland and marsh habitats often host sulfur reducing bacteria that produce lower $\delta^{34}\text{S}$ baseline values. Together, these tracers create an isotope profile that may allow us to differentiate freshwater rearing from estuarine feeding during early life stages, which in turn can help quantify the importance of these habitats to adult returns. Three eye lenses were analyzed from adult Coho Salmon recovered during 2024-2025 along Lagunitas Creek. Two individuals were collected from the upper reach of the creek, with one recovered from the tributary Devil's Gulch. Each lens was peeled sequentially using forceps under an imaging microscope to isolate individual laminae. Laminae within an approximate diameter range of 1.5mm to 2.5mm, representing general growth prior to ocean entry were selected for stable isotope analysis of CNS to assess potential signals of natal stream exit and estuarine feeding.

Preliminary Observations

Preliminary isotope results reveal clear evidence of transitions in food sources across growth. Nitrogen isotopes increased steadily with lens diameter in all three individuals, reflecting expected trophic enrichment as the fish grew. Carbon values showed mostly increasing trends across individuals, suggesting shifts in underlying food web sources during development. Most notably, sulfur isotope profiles exhibited the most distinct patterns among

the three individuals. Two individuals, collected from different locations, shared a similar trend in which sulfur values declined during earlier growth before rising again at larger diameters. In contrast, the third individual exhibited a delayed sulfur reduction. While this fish also displayed reduced sulfur values, no substantial enrichment was observed within the sampled growth interval.

Preliminary Insights

Although these results are preliminary, differences among individuals suggest variation in dietary inputs which in turn may reflect differences in rearing habitat use and/or in life history strategies. This dip and rebound pattern in sulfur, observed in two individuals (LCWCO25_01, LCWCO25_03), may indicate the duration of access to food sources influenced by wetland and marsh environments. Although the overall pattern is similar between the two fish, differences in the magnitude of sulfur reduction suggest they could have occupied different niche habitats within the estuarine mosaic. In contrast, the third individual (LCWCO25_02), which exhibited a sharp decline in sulfur at larger size with limited rebound, may have accessed different habitats or experienced a different timing of downstream movement relative to the other two. This pilot study demonstrates the potential of eye lens stable isotope analysis as a tool to detect dietary and habitat shifts in Coho Salmon in the Lagunitas Creek watershed. To strengthen interpretation, establishing habitat specific isotope baselines will be necessary. Future

work should include analysis of basal food web components both instream and across estuarine habitat. Additional lens sampling from archival juveniles collected at the Rotary Screw Trap near Point Reyes Station would further refine the freshwater baseline. In addition, by integrating diet-based lens data with movement trajectories mapped by otolith, we can develop a more comprehensive understanding of early life habitat use and migration patterns of this endangered population, ultimately informing restoration priorities and conservation strategies aimed at improving adult returns.

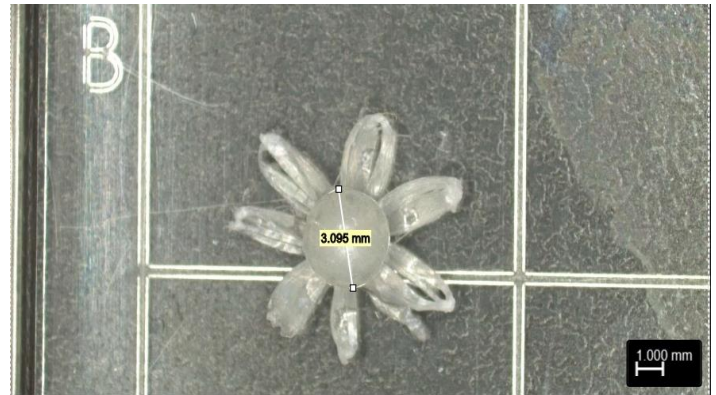


Figure 1. Eye lens from an adult Coho Salmon during the peeling process. Individual laminae are separated and arranged in a petal-like pattern prior to collection for stable isotope analysis.

Eco-evolution between predator and prey: do trout evolve adaptations to predate on threespine stickleback fish more effectively?

Lucia Combrink, University of British Columbia

This project seeks to examine the eco-evolutionary arms race between coastal cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii clarkii*) and one of their natural prey items, the threespine stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*), in small freshwater lakes on the coast of British Columbia. It is well-established that stickleback evolve rapidly in response to predation by trout, often developing distinct defensive morphology (i.e., longer spines) in lakes where they co-occur with trout. In this project we examine whether the evolution of defensive traits in stickleback also drives an evolutionary response in the predator. We ask: do trout also evolve morphological

traits that can increase their predation efficiency on stickleback, even as stickleback evolve to escape predation? We address this question by examining defensive morphology of stickleback in a lake both with and without naturally occurring (i.e., unstocked) cutthroat trout from the Sunshine Coast of British Columbia. This project investigates previously unexplored perspective of the predator at the end of an evolutionary feedback loop, highlighting how evolution could be perceived as a cascade of feedbacks. This project was financially supported by the WDAFS Small Project Grants program.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION COMMITTEE

R&R Committee at WDAFS meeting in Portland

The Committee is involved in organizing and contributing to the annual Western Division and Oregon American Fisheries Society meeting in Portland May 4-7, 2026. Look

out for our booth at the annual meeting! See these events organized with the help of our committee! Schedule times are tentative and subject to change.

Symposia - Tribal Fish Restoration Projects in the West and “Advancements and Perspectives in Tribal Salmon Fisheries Science and Management”. Dates and location to be announced.

First-timer’s Networking Event - Hear an introduction to the meeting from AFS officers and organizers. Meet and mix with fellow first timers. Monday May 4, 2026 5pm-6pm. Location to be announced.

Indigenous Networking Event - Meet and mix with fellow Indigenous colleagues. Tuesday May 5th, 2026 5pm-7pm. Location to be announced.

Service Learning Project at Tryon Creek - Learn about the story and work happening in Tryon Creek from Friends of Tryon Creek. Participate in local habitat restoration. Monday May 4, 2026 12:30-5pm. Sign up and more details to come!

Hutton Program Textbook Silent Auction - Your bid supports the future of the fisheries profession!

Join Our Committee

The Committee is looking for new members to join our committee! Contact recruitmentandretention@wdafs.org to be added to listserv.

Recent Events

Committee Meeting March 11, 2026
WD Respectful Meetings Working Group March 11, 2026
Committee Meeting January 26, 2026

Upcoming Events

Committee Meeting April TBD
ORAFS and WDAFS annual meeting, Portland, May 4-7, 2026

Working Groups

Conference Planning
Recognizing Service
Recruitment and Retention
Chapter Support and Development

RESOURCE, POLICY & ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

The Resource Policy and Environmental Concerns committee had their winter call in late February. The topics of proposed changes to WOTUS, 401 Certification, and water management at federally-owned facilities were discussed. We are waiting on the final count for the “Effects

of roads on aquatic ecosystems and fishes” symposium presenters and are hopeful for a good turnout. Please reach out to [Paul Kusnierz](#) with any questions or comments about the RPECC or the symposium.

WESTERN NATIVE FISHES COMMITTEE

The Western Native Fishes Committee continues to advance its mission of providing a community for people with a passion and/or expertise in the ecology and management of native fishes from Western North America. We will be combining our Western Native Fishes symposium at the annual WDAFS meeting with *Approaches to Native Non-game Fish Management and Conservation in the West* and *Native Fish of the Western United States* to create a native fishes supersymposium of sorts. Additionally, we are helping coordinate between WDAFS

and ScCS for the upcoming 2026 meeting (see below for updates). Finally, we are excited to welcome our new committee co-chair, Zack Hooley-Underwood and say thank you to our outgoing co-chair Luke Schultz for years of dedication to native fishes conservation, education, and management. We expect Luke will remain involved in the native fishes committee, if for nothing else other than comedic relief and hunting stories. If you are interested in getting more involved, please reach out [here](#).

SALVELINUS CONFLUENTUS CURIOSITY SOCIETY

Summer 2026 will see the insatiably curious Bull Trout aficionados gather once more in pursuit of sharing information, building community, and supporting local Bull Trout projects. The annual *Salvelinus confluentus* Curiosity Society meeting will take place along the Bow

River west of Calgary, Alberta on August 18-20 (details [here](#)).

The theme for the 2026 meeting is connection. In a basin fragmented by numerous dams and smaller barriers to

migration and movement, disconnection may seem more the norm in the Bow River watershed. Nine dams divide the river and its tributaries into small sections, and major tributaries like the Kananaskis and Elbow Rivers are cut from the mainstem like limbs pruned off the trunk. Where Bull Trout still persist, their genes tell the story of past connections now almost impossible to imagine.

But the rivers and streams aren't the only connections between Bull Trout populations. The people and peoples who live and work with Bull Trout are a linkage that can transcend culverts, dams, watershed boundaries and international borders. It's a linkage that can bring new vision, ideas, and energy to those who are working on behalf of their local populations. Each year, lovers of the species gather to share information and encourage one another to repair those broken connections and restore Bull Trout across their range.

This year, we look forward to welcoming people from near and far to the Rockies of southern Alberta to share, learn, and build connections. More information and registrations can be found on Eventbrite ([here](#)). We hope to see you soon!



AFS ITEMS

[Instream Flow and Water Level Conservation \(IFWLC\) Training Center](#)

The [Instream Flow Council](#) and the [American Fisheries Society](#) and the [Executive Governing Board](#) (EGB) of the Instream Flow and Water Level Conservation (IFWLC) Training Center have announced that Oregon State University (OSU) will host the [National Center for Ecologically Sustainable Water Conservation and Management](#) (Center). You may recall that the Board endorsed the creation of this center back in 2024. The Board endorsement letter is linked below.

Board endorsement letter:
https://fishhabitat.org/images/files/2024-12-17-NFHP-IFWLC-Endorsement-Letter-signed-241218_054617.pdf

[Resource Policy Committee](#)

The Fish Health Section with support from Drue Winters, AFS Policy Lead, put together a support letter for the MARA- Marine Aquaculture Research for America Act of 2025. The letter expressed support for the use of current science in developing the Act and working to expand offshore (federal waters- outside of state waters) aquaculture for future fisheries research and to help NOAA develop a set of regulatory standards to guide the future expansion of open ocean aquaculture in the U.S. Importantly, the bill maintains existing environmental safeguards and incorporates best practices that AFS has long supported as a means to achieve responsible aquaculture expansion. This is a great example of how AFS can engage on legislation by using our extensive network

of scientists to evaluate and weigh in on fisheries issues that affect the country.

[Recent AFS Webinars](#)

[Open Table Webinar: Forward-Facing Sonar - American Fisheries Society](#)

[Mapping and Prioritizing Aquatic Barriers for Restoration in Canada - American Fisheries Society](#)

[Upcoming AFS Webinars](#)

[Webinar: Utilizing Anonymous Location Data to Assess Use and Travel Behavior - American Fisheries Society](#)

[Webinar: The Peer Review Process - Why and How You Should Get Involved - American Fisheries Society](#)

[Webinar: Verbal Judo - A Method to Improve Your Ability to Talk to Those Hostile to Conservation - American Fisheries Society](#)

[Tomorrow's Catch: Securing our Future Fisheries](#)

Here is a selection of AFS videos featuring locations in the West and WDAFS members. See some of the amazing work happening in the Western Division and hear important words from your colleagues! Given in rough north-south order.

[Alaska Blue Economy Center - Tomorrow's Catch](#) Alaska's Next Wave: Growing the Blue Economy Through Education, Empowering a Homegrown Workforce for Ocean Resilience

[SSRAA - Tomorrow's Catch](#) Sustainable Salmon Enhancement in Alaska: Community, Conservation, and Catch, A Model for Responsible Salmon Management

[Restoring Chinook Salmon in the Yukon River Through Strategic Partnerships](#) This story follows a community-led vision to bring Chinook salmon back to one of the world's longest migration routes.

[Reviving Traditional Fishing Weirs and Reestablishing Sovereignty](#) Bringing Indigenous Knowledge and Modern Science Together for Responsible Management of Salmon

[Breathing Life Into Logan Lake](#) How Innovative Aeration is Reviving a Community's Waters

[Reviving Salmon Runs Through Tribal Hatchery Leadership](#) Inside the Skookum Creek Hatchery and a Model for Tribal-Led Recovery

[Spokane Tribal Hatchery - Tomorrow's Catch](#) Reviving River Traditions Through Tribal-Led Conservation, A Mission Rooted in Culture, Led by Community

[Reconnecting a River, Reviving a Legacy](#) The Coeur d'Alene Tribe's Journey to Restore Salmon to Hangman Creek

[Jay Hesse - Tomorrow's Catch](#) Snake River Salmon Restoration: A Lifesource Worth Saving, Why Restoring Salmon Runs Is About Culture, Treaty Rights, and Survival

[Science and Sovereignty: Restoring Salmon, Culture, and the Columbia River](#) Tribal-Led Science Is Restoring the Columbia River

[Casting For Recovery - Tomorrow's Catch](#) Fly Fishing Retreats for Breast Cancer Survivors: Healing in Nature, Finding Strength, Stillness, and Support in the Water

[Henry's Fork Foundation - Tomorrow's Catch](#) Restoring the Henry's Fork: Science, Stewardship, and a Path Forward, Tackling Turbidity and Rising Temperatures

[Joe Snapp - Tomorrow's Catch](#) Tribal-Led Habitat Restoration: Reviving Rivers and Cultural Connection, Restoring the Salmon River: A Legacy of Healing

[Restoring the Klamath River - Tomorrow's Catch](#) The World's Biggest Dam Removal and River Restoration on the Klamath River, Dam Removals are Returning the Klamath River to its Natural State

[Julie Claussen - Tomorrow's Catch](#) Science Communication in Fisheries: Making Research Matter, Making Fisheries Science Accessible to the Public

[Yuba Water Agency - Tomorrow's Catch](#) Reviving the Yuba River: Habitat, Heritage, and Hope, Reconnecting Fish, People, and Ecosystems in Northern California

[Christina Parker - Tomorrow's Catch](#) Climate Resilience and Native Fish Conservation in California, Building a Climate-Resilient Future for California's Aquatic Life

[MeiLin Precourt - Tomorrow's Catch](#) Inspiring the Next Generation in Fisheries, Why Representation and Access Matter in Fisheries Science

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES CONFERENCE – COMING IN OCTOBER!

The Planning Committee for the [2026 Emerging Technologies Information Sessions \(ETIS\) Event](#) invites the submittal of abstracts on research and activities related to emerging technologies for ecological monitoring and data management.

This year's theme, *Insight Below the Surface: Advancing Ecological Monitoring Through Innovative Tools and Data Driven Decisions*, will bring together monitoring professionals, project managers, data collectors, and data consumers from across the globe to showcase the latest tech and tools in monitoring. Additionally, this event will provide the opportunity to network and build collaborations with other monitoring professionals.

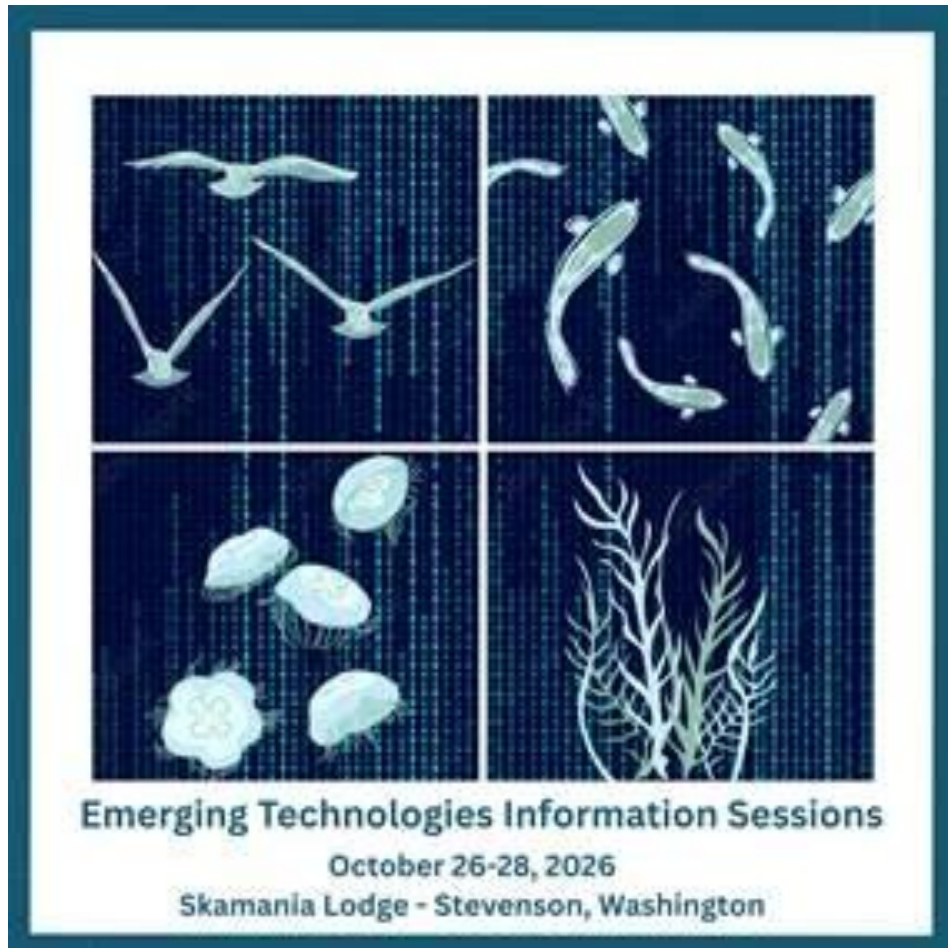
Topics being considered include:

- **Artificial Intelligence / Machine Learning**

- **Data Management** (QA/QC, digital reporting, visualizations, etc.)
- **Genetics** (eDNA, PBT, etc.)
- **Predictive Modeling** (informing habitat restoration; informing decision making)
- **Remote Sensing / Electronic Monitoring** (UASs, ROVs, Satellites, etc.)
- **Tagging and Trapping Tech**
- And any other emerging technology or innovative technique you might be employing for ecological monitoring
-

For more details and to submit your abstract go [here](#); abstract deadline is **May 31, 2026**.

--ETIS Planning Committee



MEET YOUR WDAFS OFFICERS

President: Tim Copeland

Hometown: Boise, ID
Education: Ph.D, Virginia Tech University
Employer: Idaho Department of Fish & Game
Interests: Fishin', snorkelin', mountain bikin', and other excuses to go see things outside.



Vice-President: Brittany Jenewein

Hometown: Abbotsford, BC, Canada
Education: B.Sc. and MSc, Thompson Rivers University
Employer: Fisheries & Oceans Canada
Interests: I enjoy outdoor activities like hiking, backpacking, and kayaking, but I can also be found indoors devouring fantasy books and video games. I also play flute in a community wind ensemble and am learning how to compose music.



Secretary-Treasurer: Chris Penne

Hometown: Newton, IA
Education: B.S and M.S., Iowa State University
Employer: Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
Interests: Fishing, aquariums, gardening, and traveling and hiking with my wife, daughter and our dogs.



President-Elect: Amber Steed

Hometown: Kalispell, MT
Education: B.S., Biology, University of Wisconsin; M.S., Fish and Wildlife Management, Montana State University
Employer: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Interests: I love being outdoors, usually doing something active. I get most

excited about mountain biking, skiing, hiking, recreating on water, spending time with family and friends, and traveling.

Past-President: Julie Carter



Hometown: Phoenix, AZ
Education: B.S., Biology Northern Arizona University; M.S., University of Alaska Fairbanks
Employer: Arizona Game and Fish Department
Interests: I love spending time hiking in the mountains, trips to the beach, seeing live music with my family, and fishing for native and wild trout

across the western U.S.

Student Representative: Regan Doss



Hometown: Dallas, Texas
Education: B.S., University of Texas at San Antonio, Master's Student at University of Arizona
Employer: University of Arizona
Interests: During my time away from catching suckers in the field, I enjoy camping, herping, playing volleyball, and am currently relearning the piano. My lazy days consist

of painting or reading at any new coffeeshop