



# 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, WDAFS 2026 recap, Student Highlight, 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

Things slowed down a bit after the crunch to get the annual meeting arranged and executed. But now the summer is starting to slip by. In the Boise River, the rainbow trout spawned this spring are emerging from the gravel and seeking shelter in the quiet margins. The cottonwoods are producing their cotton and the bird song in the trees is losing some of its earlier urgency. Young rabbits have invaded my vegetable garden. High time for another newsletter.

For my final newsletter column as president, I'll share some information about our joint annual meeting with the Oregon Chapter, May 4-7 on the banks of the Columbia River in Portland. The meeting theme was "The Power of Perspective". To highlight the theme, we had four plenary speakers: Corinne Sams (Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission), Amy Bowers Cordalis (Yurok Tribe), Gary Whelan (AFS President), Mamie Parker (USFWS retired). Over 660 people attended. This total included almost 120 students and 20 retirees, who get a considerable break in the registration fee. The lower student and retiree fee is an example of how sponsorships underwrite important aspects of the meeting. We had 13 vendors in the tradeshow and 26 meeting sponsors- thank you so much for supporting us! AFS officers Gary Whelan, Marlis Douglas, and Brent Nichols joined us, with Gary giving a plenary talk and Marlis leading one of the eleven training sessions. The technical program included 30 symposia with over 300 oral presentations and 50 posters. It was a great occasion to exchange information, attend a training session, meet with collaborators, and make new connections. There was representation from every chapter in the Western Division. Institutional affiliations included 8 federal agencies, 13 state agencies, 16 other kinds of governmental agencies, 19 tribal organizations, 39 academic institutions, and 55 private companies or non-governmental organizations. It was so much fun that CRITFC parked their mobile genetics lab outside the hotel and gave tours (thanks, Lanie and Ben!). A remarkable gathering!

As I reflect over the last nine months, I am grateful for the many people who helped put the annual meeting together and do the Division's work. It has been a real pleasure to interact with the officers of the 10 WDAFS chapters. While we all have much in common, each chapter has its own

personality, and I've enjoyed seeing those differences. The Division's committees do the important things that cut across chapters and the committee chairs and members show great dedication. For example, we've been able to get the word out through the efforts of Andy Treble, Tim D'Amico, and Dan Brauch. Their names don't often get seen but I appreciate their efforts. To pull all these things together takes a team and the core of that team are the Division's officers- Amber Steed, Brittany Jenewein, Regan Doss, Chris Penne, and Julie Carter. Julie charted a good course last year and I've benefitted from her experience and advice. Kim Luke was also a part of the core team because of the Emerging Leader Mentorship Award. Her energy and fresh ideas were inspiring. The last year has not been all sunshine and flowers but the many contacts from you, our members, continually remind me why all this is important. I encourage anyone to serve your colleagues and profession in whatever capacity fits your life. We need you and you get to work with top-notch people. Truly a win-win.

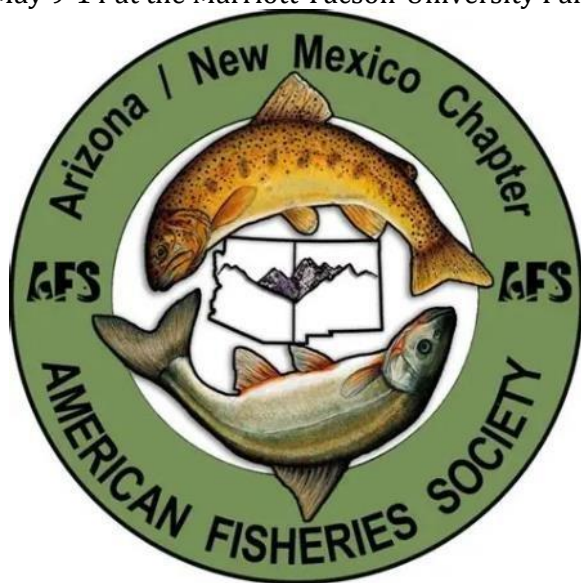
With respect, Tim



WDAFS Officers, from left: Regan Doss, Brittany Jenewein, Tim Copeland, Julie Carter, Chris Penne, Amber Steed.

## UPCOMING 2027 WDAFS MEETING

Mark your calendars! The 2027 Western Division annual meeting will be co-hosted by the Arizona/New Mexico Chapter in Tucson, May 9-14 at the Marriott Tucson-University Park. See you there!



### 2026 OREGON CHAPTER & WESTERN DIVISION AFS ANNUAL MEETING STUDENT PRESENTATION AWARDS

**Best of the West:** *(This symposium featured the best student papers from each chapter's meeting)*

Wave Moretto (Oregon State University)- Long-term dynamics of Oregon's kelp forests with an emphasis on nearshore marine fishes

*1st runner up:* Regan Doss (University of Arizona)- Demographic insight of native Desert and Sonora Suckers in the Lower Verde River

*2nd runner up:* MeiLin Precourt (University of Hawai'i)- The Hutton Highway: Advancing Visibility and Representation of Emerging Fisheries Scientists in Hawai'i

*3rd runner up:* Alex Stacy (Idaho State University) - Evaluating approaches to flow ramp-down in the Upper Snake River, Wyoming below Jackson Lake Dam

#### **WDAFS Best Student Oral Presentation:**

Remi Murdoch (University of Montana)- Extending Genetic Baselines: Improving GTseq for Degraded and Historical Samples

*1st runner up:* Rikeem Sholes (Washington State University) - Evaluating the effect of noise on the development, behavior, and return rates in hatchery-reared Chinook Salmon

*2nd runner up:* Oliver Fahrner (University of Arizona) - Genetic evidence of hybridization between Desert and Sonora Suckers

*3rd runner up:* Olivia Boeberitz (Cal Poly Humboldt) - Integrating multi-method monitoring to characterize seasonal dynamics of Green Sturgeon (*Acipenser medirostris*) in Humboldt County, California

#### **WDAFS Best Student Poster Presentation:**

Lucia Combrink (University of British Columbia) - Eco-evolution between predator and prey: do trout evolve adaptations to predate on Threespine Stickleback fish more effectively?

*1st runner up:* Noah Gabay (Cal Poly Humboldt)- Using hook and line sampling in Northern California's Sandy Beach Surfzone to evaluate surfperch populations, inside and outside of MPAs

*2nd runner up:* Olivia Boeberitz (Cal Poly Humboldt) - Aerial monitoring reveals estuarine use and first photographic confirmation of White Sturgeon (*Acipenser transmontanus*) in the Eel River, California

*3rd runner up:* Sarah Veldhuizen (Colorado State University) - Hatch timing of sculpin in regulated and unregulated rivers estimated by otolith microstructure analysis

# 2026 OREGON CHAPTER & WESTERN DIVISION AFS ANNUAL MEETING RECAP



AFS President Gary Whelan addresses the WDAFS business meeting



Amy Bowers Cordalis signs copies of her book, The Water Remembers.

Regan Doss describes the 2026 Student Colloquium



Adult and juvenile lampreys at The Lamprey Lens - Incorporating Lampreys into Restoration and Monitoring Projects.



Meet (And Paint!) Oregon's Marine Habitats and Fishes



A picture of the presidents- Tim Copeland and Cory Sipher.

## 2026 OREGON CHAPTER & WESTERN DIVISION AFS ANNUAL MEETING AWARDS



Outstanding Large Chapter - Alaska. Accepting the award: Andy Seitz, chapter president (left).

Outstanding Subunit - University of Hawai'i. Accepting the award: MeiLin Precourt and Callie Stephenson (right).



Award of Excellence - Kevin Bestgen (Colorado State University, left), Jim DeRito (Trout Unlimited, right).



Award of Merit - Luke Holmquist (Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; left).

Award of Special Recognition - Chad Brown, Founder and President of Soul River Inc. and Love is King. Check out the Soul River web site and you will see why Chad richly deserves this recognition- [Soul River Inc – Leaders For Environmental Justice](#).



Conservation Achievement Award - Brittany Jenewein (Fisheries & Oceans Canada, right) and Tosh Sutherland (Pacific Salmon Commission, below). Brittany accepted the award.



Community Development Award - Gabe Sheoships (2nd from left), receiving the award from Eric Fetherman, Emily Chen, and Tim Copeland. For more information, see Recruitment & Retention Committee report.



President's Award of Special Recognition - WDAFS Resource Policy & Environmental Concerns Committee. Accepting the award are Paul Kusnierz and Leanne Roulson (right).



Eugene Maughan Graduate Scholarship recipient - Danielle Bartz (PhD student, University of Hawai'i).



Excellence in Riparian Management Award (non-federal) - Ninemile Creek Placer Mine Reclamation (Montana)- Trout Unlimited. Paul Parson is accepting the award (left).

Future of Fisheries Undergraduate Scholarship - Sarah Veldhuizen (Colorado State University, below).



Excellence in Riparian Management Award (BLM & USFS) - Sheep Creek Stewardship Project (Oregon), which is a joint BLM/USFS project. Receiving the award are Bill Brignon (USFS, middle) and Cory Sipher (BLM, right).



**Small Grant Recipients:** (with project titles)

Liz Allyn - Building Capacity for "Grassroots" Restoration on Lake Ozette (right).



Jonah Sheridan - Phylogeography of the Red Frog Crab (*Ranina ranina*) Among the Hawaiian Islands and Global Populations (not pictured).

Brody Taylor - Flathead Catfish Age and Growth on the Lower Colorado River (not pictured).

Eugene Maughan Graduate Scholarship recipient - Maggie Harings (MS student, University of Alaska Fairbanks).



Jesus Vargas - Chinook Salmon Otolith Composition: A Comparison Across Natal Origins (right).



Tahvo Wilson - Yukon Chinook Behavior Analysis (not pictured).

## Travel Grant Recipients

Katja Berghaus

Olivia Boeberitz

Noel Clark

Erika Dunn

Maggie Harings

Kadie Henle

Muhammad Naeem Khan

MeiLin Precourt

Torrie Nicholas

Tida Rau (not pictured)

Callie Stephenson

Jack Williamson



## OUTGOING WDAFS OFFICERS



Julie Carter (left) will complete her term as WDAFS Past President at the AFS meeting in Columbus this August. She served as an WDAFS officer beginning as Vice President in 2022 finishing as Past President this year. She has been amazing and the Western Division is lucky to have her talents on our Executive Committee. For example, this last June, Julie received a prestigious President's Award from the Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies. See you at the 2027 WDAFS meeting, Julie!

## INCOMING WDAFS OFFICERS

Incoming Vice-President - Paul Kusnierz (right)

Paul is a Fisheries Biologist at Avista Utilities, which serves 4 northwestern states. He earned a bachelors degree in Biology at University of Maine and a masters degree in Biology at Northern Michigan University. Paul is a long-

standing AFS member of the Maine, Montana, and Idaho chapters. He served as President of the Water Quality Section, is the current chair of WDAFS Resource Policy & Environmental Concerns Committee and has served on multiple chapter and Society committees.



## WDAFS EMERGING LEADER MENTORSHIP AWARD (ELMA) RECIPIENT



Matea Djokic will be the WDAFS ELMA starting this fall. Matea is the President-Elect of the California-Nevada Chapter of AFS and a fisheries biologist at FISHBIO, where she works on a variety of projects, including salmonid and green sturgeon monitoring and investigations of predation in California's Central Valley. She has been involved with AFS since joining the Montana State University Student Subunit in 2018 while pursuing her master's degree, during which she investigated non-lethal tools for assessing juvenile pallid sturgeon health. She continued her involvement by founding the Student Subunit of AFS at the University of California, Irvine, during her PhD studies, where she researched the gut microbiomes of fishes living in and around the urban-aquatic interface. She has also been active in the Student and Early Career Professional Subsection, the Introduced and Invasive Species Subsection, and the Western Division. Through ELMA, she is excited to further develop her leadership skills and gain new perspectives to help support the future of AFS.

## STUDENT HIGHLIGHT

### HOW DO WE MEASURE SUCCESS? A 2018 HUTTON ALUMNA'S PERSPECTIVE

MeiLin Precourt, University of Hawai'i AFS Student Subunit

Growing up in the Pacific Northwest, I was lucky to be surrounded by the ocean. Although I didn't grow up fishing, I was always fascinated by fish. I was captivated by the roles they played both in their ecosystems and in the communities that depended on them. Despite that passion, I never saw scientists who looked like me. As someone who was given up for adoption because I was a girl, I struggled to challenge messages I had internalized about the value of women and their place in the world. I loved biology, but it was difficult to see a place for myself within the field.

In my sophomore year of high school, my biology teacher handed me a printed flyer for the Hutton Junior Fisheries Biology Program. It described a paid internship designed to introduce high school students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds to fisheries science. I assumed applying would be a long shot, but put together an application anyway. Five months later, I found myself wielding a seine net waist-deep in the Pacific Ocean. That summer was the first time I saw a clear path toward the career I wanted. The Hutton Junior Fisheries Biology Program introduced me to my love of fisheries research.

In light of recent unprecedented federal changes, the Hutton Program has been hit particularly hard. This past year they lost funding for 70% of its annual cohort (approximately 27 scholars). Cuts in funding have led some to ask whether it is "successful" enough to justify continuing; whether it provides direct returns to the fisheries profession. These questions prompt a broader conversation: How should success be measured in programs like Hutton? While my experience is just one of many, the following section explores that question using results from the Hutton Alumni Survey alongside data from the U.S. Census<sup>1,2</sup>.

Over the past 25 years, the Hutton Program has supported 828 scholars across 235 host institutions in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Trust Territories, Canada, and Mexico. Data from the past two decades show that 60% of scholars identify as women, and 57% identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). In the United States, women account for just 37.5% of the STEM workforce<sup>2</sup>, yet they make up 60% of Hutton alumni. This underscores the program's success in engaging young women in STEM and fostering a more inclusive pathway for future scientists.

Educational attainment is another important metric. After excluding Hutton alumni who identified as current high school or undergraduate students, 88% of respondents had earned a bachelor's degree or higher. While comparable census data did not account for current student status, using the U.S. population aged 25 and older as a benchmark, only 39% hold a bachelor's degree or higher<sup>2</sup>. Hutton alumni were also substantially more likely to pursue advanced education, being twice as likely to hold a master's degree and 2.5 times as likely to hold a PhD/professional degree compared to the broader U.S. population<sup>2</sup>.

Work history provides another useful measure of success. 69% of alumni are currently employed in STEM fields, compared to just 24% of the U.S. workforce. Furthermore, 91% of alumni reported working in a science-related field at some point after participating in Hutton. Notably, the largest group of alumni (23%) reported experience in fisheries, aquatic, or marine sciences, with many others working in closely related biological or ecological sciences (17%) and environmental or earth sciences (12%) (Figure 1). Additionally, 87% said Hutton improved their understanding of fisheries, and 72% said it influenced their long term career goals, with respondents rating both impacts as "a lot" or "a great deal." Together, these findings suggest that Hutton has a lasting effect on participants, many of whom come from historically underrepresented communities in STEM. Years after completing the program, the vast majority have continued to pursue science through their education, careers, or both.

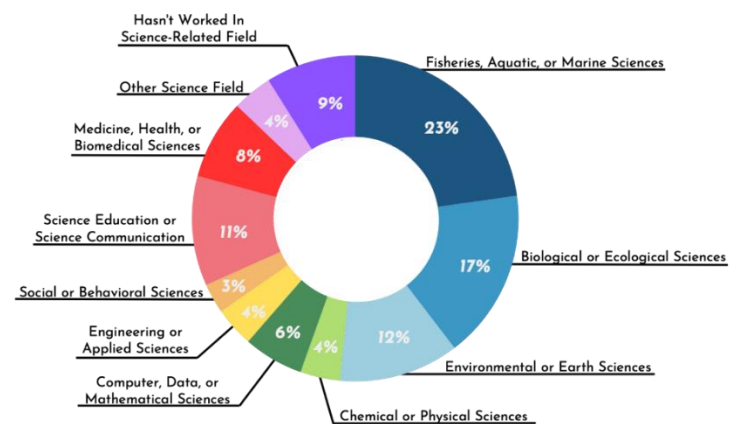


Figure 1: Employment history reported by alumni after participating in the Hutton Program.

The success of a program like Hutton cannot simply be reduced to the number of fisheries scientists it produces.

Its impact is reflected in students who earn degrees they never thought possible, seek opportunities in science, and gain confidence and a sense of belonging in spaces where they once felt out of place. These alumni then bring their unique experiences, perspectives, and interests into their careers, ultimately strengthening the field of fisheries science. Those broader impacts are the true measure of its success.

Today, I am a fisheries PhD student at the University of Hawai'i. Looking back, I can't imagine getting here without the Hutton Program. I now have the privilege of supporting the next generation of Hutton scholars as a steering committee member, application reviewer, and the 2026 Western Division American Fisheries Society (WDAFS) Recruitment and Retention Community Development Fellow. This past year I led outreach, recruitment, and fundraising efforts that secured \$10,000 to support two 2026 Hutton placements in Hawai'i. Giving back to a program that shaped the trajectory of my life has been deeply fulfilling.

To learn more about the Hutton Junior Fisheries Biology Program, visit their website: <https://hutton.fisheries.org/>. If you feel called to support the program as a mentor, application reviewer, or funding partner, please contact Program Coordinator Ashley Berniche at [aberniche@fisheries.org](mailto:aberniche@fisheries.org).

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The views represent those of the author, and are not an official position of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Census Citations:

1: U.S. Census Bureau. (2025). *Educational attainment of the population 25 years and over: 2024*. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2024/demo/educational-attainment/cps-detailed-tables.html>

2: U.S. National Science Foundation, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES). (2025). *The STEM labor force: Scientists, engineers, and skilled technical workers*. <https://nces.nsf.gov/pubs/nsb20245/u-s-stem-workforce-size-growth-and-employment>

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## CHAPTER UPDATES

### WASHINGTON/BRITISH COLUMBIA CHAPTER

The Wenatchee Conference, held from April 6-9, 2026, at the Wenatchee Conference Center, was a distinguished event featuring insightful presentations, engaging workshops and symposia, and vibrant social gatherings. The meeting was organized and held in conjunction with the Washington Wildlife Society Chapter. There were more than 450 attendees at the meeting and 290 AFS members. Below is an overview of the key highlights from the conference.

#### Plenary Speakers

We extend our gratitude to our esteemed plenary speakers for their enlightening presentations:

Dr. Cindy E. Elliser - is a marine mammalogist with over 25 years of research experience.

Dr. Barry Berejikian - serves as Fisheries Enhancement and Conservation Program Manager and Station Chief at NOAA Fisheries' Manchester Research Station in Washington.

David Moskowitz - works in the fields of photography, wildlife biology and education.

Donella Miller - is the Fishery Science Department Manager for the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) in Portland, Oregon.

Darnell Sam - Darnell has worked for his tribal government for 33+ years in multiple capacities from forestry and fisheries jobs

Jeremy Takala - is a member of the Yakama Nation Tribal Council, serving his second term.



#### Workshops

The conference featured a series of comprehensive workshops covering a wide range of topics. These sessions provided participants with hands-on experience and practical knowledge, fostering skill development and professional growth

- The Lamprey Lens – Incorporating lampreys into Restoration and Monitoring Projects
- Introduction to Programming and Data Analysis in R
- Introduction to Structured Decision Making

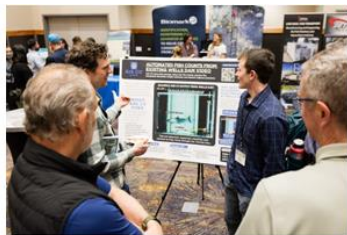
- Beyond the Bumpboard: Innovations for Low-stress Fish Handling and Measurement
- Telemetry for Fish and Wildlife Research
- Bull Trout Biology, Ecology, and Migration Habitats
- Open Science Tools for Reproducible Ecology: Intro to Data Management, Git and GitHub

### Symposia

The symposia sessions were diverse and rich in content. Each symposium session offered in-depth discussions and presentations, contributing to a broader understanding of various aspects of fisheries science and management.

- Advancing Hatchery Evaluation and Success
- Artificial Intelligence in Fisheries
- Habitat Connectivity in the PNW
- PIT Tags
- Habitat Connectivity for Fish and Wildlife in the PNW
- Pinniped Interactions
- Sockeye Salmon in a Changing World
- Aquatic and Terrestrial Invasive Species
- Coop Research
- Salmon at Sea
- Native Char Conservation
- Who Saw It Coming? The 2025 Salmon Prize and the Fraser River Sockeye
- Hydropower, Fish, and Wildlife
- Monitoring, Methods, and Decision Support Tools
- Enabling Conservation
- Hanford Reach
- eDNA

The trade show featured exhibits from sponsors showcasing cutting-edge innovations and industry leaders, providing an excellent platform for attendees to explore the latest advancements in fisheries technology and products. The poster sessions were a key highlight, allowing researchers to share their groundbreaking work and engage with peers in vibrant discussions. These sessions were instrumental in spreading new ideas and fostering collaborations.



### Awards

Awards were given during business meetings, recognizing outstanding contributions and achievements in the field of fisheries science.

Worthy Coelacanth Award: Dr. Jeff Fryer was honored with this award for long-standing, progressive advancements in fisheries science at the genetic level.

Volunteer Organization Award: The Puget Sound Anglers received this award for exemplary contributions to fisheries conservation, education, and science.

Certificate of Appreciation Award: Sabrina Haney was recognized for repackaging DEI(B) issues into the non-partisan Access & Education Outreach Committee, to make the coming WA/BC AFS/WA TWS mtg. in Wenatchee a better, fun-filled, more-welcoming one.

Conservation Organization of the Year: Cascadia Conservation District & Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group awarded for an organization that has significantly contributed to a program or activity for conservation of fishery resources or habitats.

Best Student Poster: James Green

Best Student Paper/Best of the West: Sabrina Haney

Cederholm Scholarships: Graduate Students – Virginie Chalifoux, John Proefrock; undergraduate – Alexia Garcia-Olvera

Unique Perspectives in Fisheries: Bob Vadas Jr.

Innovation Award: Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Pacific Salmon Commission to recognize innovative work and cutting-edge technology from organizations implementing salmon, fisheries, and/or aquatic habitat work.

### Working Group Awards:

Hatchery Evaluations (Leads: Brian Beckman, Katy Shelby, Hayley Nuetzel, and Phil Sandstrom)

Fish Passage Lead: Adam Crispin

Retired Jersey: Past president Sean Simmons was creatively recognized for his service and dedication!



## COMMITTEE UPDATES

### RECRUITMENT & RETENTION COMMITTEE

R&R Committee at WDAFS meeting in Portland!  
The Recruitment and Retention Committee was involved in organizing multiple activities and coordinating Respectful Meetings Working Group initiatives at the annual Western Division and Oregon American Fisheries Society meeting in Portland in May. We had a high turnout of committee members attending and contributing to this year's meeting.

*Salmon Fisheries Science and Management*" which focused on highlighting Tribal perspectives, science, and restoration. The symposia were followed by an Indigenous Networking Event featuring catering from a local Indigenous-run restaurant, Javelina.

The Respectful Meetings Working Group with support from NOAA and Friends of Tryon Creek also organized a Service Learning Project at Tryon Creek. Participants that attended the event had the opportunity to learn about a local watershed in Portland and give back to the local region by pulling non-native plants and planting trees.



We hope you came and visited our booth to learn about our committee and picked up a Fisheries for All sticker or button made by



Volunteers from WDAFS Annual Meeting at Tryon Creek

### [Fruitsbythefish](#)

The goal of the Respectful Meetings Working Group is to give respect to the local history and Indigenous peoples, support local businesses, and give back to the local community. The Committee collaborated with the Oregon AFS Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee and professionals at the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, Muckleshoot Tribe, and Nez Perce Tribe to organize two symposia titled "*Tribal Fish Restoration Projects in the West*", and "*Advancements and Perspectives in Tribal*



Service Learning Project on Tryon Creek



Service Learning Project on Tryon Creek (Photo: Alexis Barton Castro)



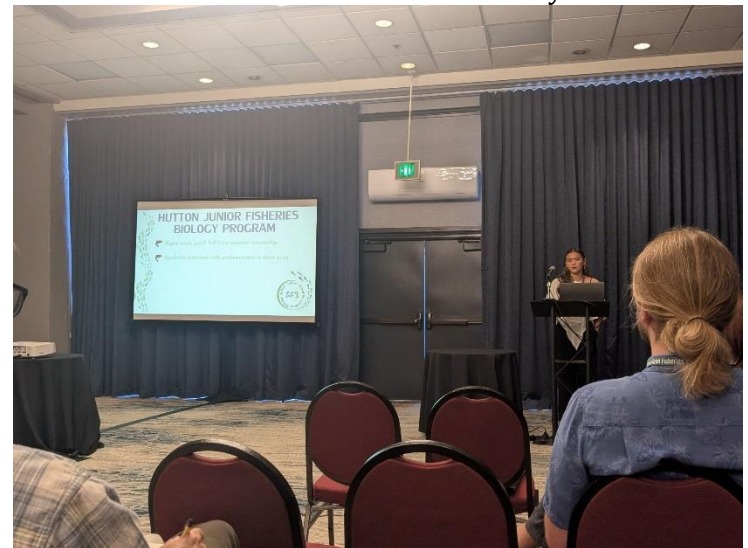
Service Learning Project on Tryon Creek (Photo: Kadie Heinle)

The R&R Committee also coordinated the First Timer's Social at the start of the meeting, featuring leadership from across AFS, get-to-know-you BINGO, and sweet raffle prizes!



First Timer's Social at WDAFS Portland meeting

MeiLin Precourt presented her work on advancing the Hutton Program in Hawai'i as part of her R&R Community Development Fellowship. MeiLin has been successful in acquiring over \$10,000 of funding for the Hutton Program in Hawaii and secured two spots for students in Hawai'i for 2026. Hear about her work in this Tributary issue!



MeiLin Precourt presenting her work and key information on the success of the Hutton program in recruiting underrepresented groups to fisheries and the STEM fields overall.

Congratulations to our 2026 Community Development Service Awardee!

Gabe Sheoships was awarded the 2026 Community Development Service Award. The WDAFS R&R Committee



presents this award to an AFS Western Division Member who has exhibited service and commitment to recruitment and retention initiatives within the fisheries profession. The purpose of the award is to celebrate everyday, unsung heroes who dedicate their time and passion to recruitment and retention efforts.

Gabe was the first chair of the Oregon DEI Committee and has initiated multiple symposia and workshops across the years to discuss DEI issues and teach skills to professionals

on addressing inequalities in the field. Gabe has helped foster partnerships across Tribes, universities, non-profits, and cultural organizations, and spearheaded scholarships for students from diverse backgrounds. At Portland State and Oregon State universities, Gabe has been a go-to mentor for faculty and students, a cultural guide, and excellent counselor for Indigenous students and other underrepresented groups. Thank you for your service and congratulations to Gabe!

**Join Our Committee**

The Committee is looking for new members to join our committee! Contact [recruitmentandretention@wdafs.org](mailto:recruitmentandretention@wdafs.org) to be added to listserv.

**Recent Events**

Committee Meeting June 10, 2026

ORAFS and WDAFS annual meeting, Portland, May 4-7, 2026

**Upcoming Events**

Committee Meeting July 2026 TBD

**Working Groups**

Conference Planning

Recognizing Service

Recruitment and Retention

Chapter Support and Development

**RESOURCE, POLICY & ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE**

The RPECC received the President’s Award of Special Recognition for their work guiding comments from the Division on matters of importance such as the rule changes for the Waters of the US. The committee is currently tracking other issues such as revisions to the Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance, the roadless rule, the Tongass National Forest Plan, the Cascade Renewable Transmission Project, and tidal power development.



**EARLY CAREER PROFESSIONALS COMMITTEE**

**WDAFS Portland Recap: A Huge Success!**

We had a fantastic time connecting with everyone in Portland at the annual Western Division AFS conference! The ECP committee hosted two major events, and the turnout was incredible:

**Resume Workshop:** We hosted 20 eager attendees for an interactive resume review session. A huge thank you to the various seasoned professionals who stopped by to share invaluable advice on crafting standout resumes, CVs, and cover letters.

**ECP Luncheon:** Talk about a packed house! We had 40 people join us for our annual luncheon to network, swap stories, and learn about the amazing work early career professionals are doing across the division. Thank you to everyone who came out to make it such a fun event!

**We are Growing - Join Our Committee!**

As our ECP community continues to expand, so does our need for passionate individuals to help shape our future. We are actively looking for new committee members to

help us plan and host events and support the next generation of fisheries professionals. If you're looking to get more involved behind the scenes, we want you!

### **Year-Round Resume & Cover Letter Reviews**

Did you miss our workshop in Portland? Don't worry! Our Resume/Cover Letter Review Service is open year-round. No matter where you are in your career journey, you can submit your materials via the [WDAFS ECP website](#) to get constructive, personalized feedback from experienced professionals in the field.

### **Step Into a Leadership Role**

Are you ready to make a bigger impact? We are looking for motivated individuals interested in stepping up into an ECP leadership role within WDAFS. It's an excellent way to build your skills, expand your network, and give back to the fisheries community.

If you are interested in joining the committee, exploring a leadership role, or just have questions about the ECP

committee, please contact Tawni Firestone (tawni.firestone@state.co.us) or Kristina Morben (kristina.morben@state.co.us) today!

Look at all the people who came for the ECP luncheon!



### **WESTERN NATIVE FISHES COMMITTEE**

The WDAFS Western Native Fishes committee coordinated with Oregon AFS Native Fishes committee as well as native fishes enthusiasts from across the west to host another successful native fishes symposium. Fourteen presentations, including contributions from Oregon, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, and Washington covered a range of taxa, including native suckers, eulachon, lamprey, and more. We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all those who submitted presentations for their contributions to another successful native fishes

symposium and furthering native fish management and conservation in the west.

As per usual, the WNFC will be taking a hiatus on committee meetings during the summer field season. Stay tuned for updates on future committee meetings. In the meantime, please see below for information regarding the upcoming *Salvelinus confluentus* Curiosity Society meeting, August 18 – 20 in Exshaw, Alberta.

### **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!

## **2026 PACIFIC ISLAND CHAPTER MEETING & PLANNING FOR JASM 2028**

Brittany Jenewein, Vice President, Western Division AFS

In my first year on the Western Division Executive Committee, I had the privilege to attend the Pacific Islands Chapter meeting in Honolulu, Hawai'i. This was only the Chapter's second meeting, but it's already running like a well-oiled machine. Because attendance is a bit smaller than other chapter meetings, there were no concurrent sessions. That was a welcome change from the chaos of dashing back and forth between rooms to catch the session you want to see! The Chapter is excited to expand their offerings in future years to include continuing education workshops and continue to grow their membership. I learned so much about reef and pelagic fish that are often found in and around the waters of Hawai'i, and gained new ideas around sustainable financing for fisheries management and stewardship, electronic monitoring, and successful collaboration with local communities and Indigenous peoples. If you've ever enjoyed a poke bowl, I recommend checking out this free documentary about its origins in Hawai'i: <https://hawaiiivideo.com/the-story-of-poke/>. Attending the conference increased my appreciation for all the beautiful fish and environments I enjoyed during my time on O'ahu.

Part of the reason I attended the conference this year was to begin building relationships with the Pacific Islands Chapter leadership and members in preparation for the upcoming Joint Aquatic Sciences Meeting (JASM) that will be held in Honolulu from May 14-19, 2028. JASM is a collaboration of 10 scientific societies that are members of the Consortium of Aquatic Science Societies (CASS) - <https://aquaticsocieties.org/>. The most recent JASM in 2022 brought together over 3,000 scientists, students, practitioners, resource agency staff, and industry representatives.

Because AFS is the lead society for this meeting, it will include both the Western Division and Society annual meetings. This means that AFS at all levels is responsible for coordinating, organizing, and administrating all aspects of conference planning and logistics in conjunction with

CASS leadership and the JASM Executive Committee. That also means we'll need your help! Planning is well underway already, and Society and Western Division leadership will be reaching out to individuals in the coming months to help guide the process. In the meantime, please mark your calendars and spread the word! This meeting doesn't happen often, so you won't want to miss this opportunity to network and learn from members representing a broad range of aquatic sciences. More information will be shared on the Society and Western Division websites as it becomes available. Feel free to reach out to me with any questions!



This was my second time enjoying world-class snorkelling at Hanauma Bay. They focus on sustainability through mandatory educational videos and weekly closures to provide rest for the environment.



I was lucky to get to observe endangered Monk seals in the wild, including a new pup! They had barriers set up to ensure the public did not disturb the seals while they rested.



How many species can you count? The Waikiki Aquarium has been around for over 120 years and educates the public about many of the aquatic species found around the Pacific Islands. It's worth a visit to support this local organization focused on sustainability, education, and conservation!



Outline of a successful co-management process that has been used in Hawai'i. Check out [trywait.info](http://trywait.info) for an incredible example of a community-based management plan that incorporates a 10-year period of no nearshore fishing to increase abundance of native fish species so they can sustain traditional fishing and subsistence practices in perpetuity.

## 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