American Fisheries Society

Fisheries Administration Section

Kansas City, Kansas

Spring Meeting

May 16, 2013

Meeting called to order 9:15 AM Central Time

Quorum Called: 10 members present – no quorum

Doug Nygren made presentation on Kansas fisheries resources and their management of those resources.

Some interesting facts Doug presented:

* Have about 1 surface acre of water for every angler in the state
* Over 6,000 permitted dams that back up >50 acre/feet
* Farming is a significant impact on the KS landscape
* Do have area of state where native prairie has never been disturbed -- used for reference streams in this region.
* State’s population is becoming more urbanized
* Largemouth bass, crappie, channel catfish and walleye are state’s most sought after species
* Goals of KS Fisheries Program:
  + Conserve Kansas fishes
  + Increase fishing opportunity
  + Increase fishing success
  + Market fisheries programs
  + Fully support, mentor, and reward dedicated staff
* Four fish hatcheries
* 40’ mobile aquarium
* Irrigation system fish barrier installed to protect sportfish recruitment. Pre and post entrainment study part of assessment.
* Fish passage structure installed. Allows for canoe and kayak use. Some conflict between anglers and paddlers is occurring. Documented fish movement upstream of structure. Project cost $7 million.
* Research
  + Blue catfish movement
  + Early spawn largemouth bass and stocking

Jessica Howell – Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism, Aquatic Nuisance Species Coordinator

Program Overview:

* Assessed ANS introduction vectors – boats and baits determined to be primary vectors
* Passed law requiring mandatory vessel compartment draining
* Cannot leave water body with live fish
* Law Enforcement patrols and conducts boat inspections to enforce new laws
* Added new bait rules as they had commercial and wild caught bait being sold in the state
  + Diseased and non-native bait was being sold
  + New law restricts species that can be sold and require bait to be disease free
  + Wild caught bait cannot be moved between waters or past a barrier (i.e., dam)
* Education and Outreach – developed a kit to educate public about dangers of releasing bait fish into water bodies, how to identify zebra mussels and to clean boat and drain compartments

Scott Stuewe – HaMAR

Jesse Trushenski and Don McKinley have been organizing a symposium for the AFS meeting in Little Rock.  Currently, there are 45 speakers scheduled for the 2-day symposium.  Presentation topics will include how resource agencies manage their hatcheries and utilize the hatchery reared fish; how genetics may be used, and how research can be used to improve hatchery stock.  Scott also brought up the request from the committee for financial support from the Section to aid in reimbursement of symposia presenters.

Craig Bonds – AFS Special Committee on Education Requirements

This AFS committee was created to evaluate how prepared current College/University graduates are to meet the needs of employers.  The committee has broken the issue down into two components to accomplish this task.  One subcommittee will develop a list of Colleges and Universities in North America with fisheries related degrees and publish on the AFS website.  The second subcommittee will develop a list of employers from the AFS member list that have hired fisheries related degree employees.  This group of employers will then be surveyed to determine how effectively the Colleges/Universities prepared the recent graduates in meeting their new employer’s needs. Survey results will be published in Fisheries. Coursework expectations of employers will be compared to current coursework requirements of universities and degree requirements for certification as a Fisheries Professional to bring any discrepancies into alignment.  The special committee will provide a presentation, given by Chair Ron Essig (AFS 2nd Vice President), titled “AFS Special Committee on Educational Requirements: What the Society is Doing to Help Fisheries Students Find Work” at the 2013 AFS Annual Meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Don Gabelhouse – Don reminded the group that he had conducted a previous survey of Administrators to assess Agency Education needs. He will provide Craig with results of that survey for consideration in the current project.

Don Gabelhouse – Cabelas’ Wanna Go Fishing for Millions Promotion

* 2012 promotion recap and evaluation:
* 19 states participated
* 92 water bodies nationwide with tagged fish
* 1,060 fish tagged, 108 of those tagged fish were released in NE reservoirs
* Grand Prize valued at $10,000 🡪 $2,000,000
* Additional prizes ranged from 2 Ranger Boats to minor merchandise prizes
* Various Marketing efforts through Cabelas and state partners (NE spent $76,485 for radio advertising space)
* 118 of the 1,060 tagged fish redeemed for prizes (10 were from Nebraska)
* Nebraska assessed program effectiveness through angler surveys. Found high awareness, but prize incentives provided low motivation to fish water bodies.
* NE continues the program, but without the radio advertising

Doug Nygren mentioned that KS used a catfish stocked into one of their rivers worth $1 million to the angler that caught it as an incentive. Public response was very strong to the event with many people fishing to catch the fish. No one did catch the tagged fish. Second year they followed up with a largemouth bass tagged. Prize for catching the bass was a bass boat. This prize was effective at generating increased fishing participation, too.

Fish and Wildlife Service Update & Sequestration

No one from the Fish and Wildlife Service was at the meeting, but Doug passed on information he had recently received.

* Sequestered money can roll over for each year for 10 years if a budget bill is not passed.
* Mitigation stocking by Fish and Wildlife Service was discussed and concerns expressed for both western and eastern states.
* FWS Fisheries strategic plan was discussed.
* National Survey
  + Georgia – Conducted a Responsive Mgt survey on fishing participation the same year that the National Survey was completed. Responsive Management surveyed over 1,000 people in state while the National Survey only involved 128. Numbers are significantly different with the Responsive Management survey estimating more anglers in the state than the National Survey.
  + Texas – Numbers on economics don’t add up
  + Florida – Non-resident numbers don’t jive wit license sales
  + Wisconsin – Seeing non-resident numbers change that don’t add up
  + May be worth a discussion with Rob Southwick and Sylvia Cabrera during the Little Rock AFS meeting

Jeff Boxrucker – Reservoir Fish Habitat Partnership Update

* RFHP is still receiving the minimum FHP amount from the FWS
* Have become a member of ASA
* Developing sponsorship recruiting brochure targeting angling industry
  + will have a booth at the ICAST show
* 2011 MSCG (funded operations) is ending 30 June (working on final report)
* 2013 MSCG begins 1 May
  + objective 1: make reservoir habitat restoration BMP's available on web
    - will list by specific impairments identified in assessment
  + Objective 2: expand outreach efforts
    - 50 Friends of Reservoirs members
* Summarizing assessment information on web is behind schedule (person responsible has a real job and having to do in spare time)
  + Will provide to Chiefs as soon as available

General Discussion on Fisheries Administration Section Budget

* Budget has been stable, but not growing
* Mike Stone is upcoming President and not supported by state agency which means he will have to depend on the Section bank account more heavily than past Presidents.
* Suggested that we continue to charge a registration fee at meetings. Some discussion about whether it was advisable to charge a registration fee for the AFS Annual meeting as it is only 2 hour meeting. Should continue to charge registration for Spring meeting.
* **Action** – Ask Gus R. if they can help with travel expenses for IFM trip and Spring AFS Governing Board meetings.
* Also discussed low attendance at Spring meetings held at current president’s home state. Attendance has been low at these meetings and often without a quorum of members. Recommendation was to hold meeting in conjunction with other existing meetings such as the North American.

Mike Stone – Sport Fish Restoration Awards

* Call has gone out to the states.
* June 15th deadline
* Review Committee established
* **Action –** Send out reminder to states June 1st

Mike Stone – Coordinated National Fish Habitat Board/Fisheries Administration Section/Fish Chiefs

* Need for NFHB to hear from Fish Chiefs on how they can better meet state’s needs
* Suggest a meetinging at March, 2014 North American conference in Denver
* Hold FAS meeting in conjunction with North American and NFHB meeting
* Mike Stone will discuss possibility with NFHB

Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association

* MICRA has requested time to meet with FAS at Little Rock AFS annual meeting.
* FAS will try to accommodate

Doug Nygren – web site update

* Doug worked with AFS staff to develop a new site
* Doug will make updates for the foreseeable future

Doug Nygren – Mid-Year Governing Board Meeting

* Governing Board reviewed the nomination committee recommendations for Executive Director
* All were supportive of the proposal to hire Doug Austin for the position
* He starts to work on August 12th
* New Society approach to annual meetings
  + Society will hire a meeting planner to run the 2016 meeting
  + States and Chapters will have a much reduced role in organizing meetings

Salary Survey – Is it helpful?

* Group discussion on the benefits of the recent salary survey
* Can be used as a recruitment tool
* Not that helpful in salary negotiations unless union representatives or other similar groups can use it to negotiate for better salaries

Soft Plastic Bait regulations were discussed. No one present was aware of any efforts to restrict their use except for in Maine.

Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership

Funding concerns were raised through AFWA. AFWA asked for letters of funding restoration support. Tough to accomplish in current political climate in many states.

Corps of Engineers – tailwater fisheries

Corps of Engineers has recently worked to close a number of reservoir tailwaters to boaters in an effort to improve safety for users. Don Gabelhouse did analysis on boater mortality within the South Dakota/Nebraska tailwater that was closed by Corps of Engineers as a safety measure. Fisheries Management and Law Enforcement staff from South Dakota and Nebraska worked together on the analysis. Data showed no safety threat to anglers. Corps relented on full closure.

Doug Nygren – Age distribution of licensed anglers

Doug has found that the modal age distribution of Kansas license holders has shifted from baby boomers to 21 – 30 year olds. Asked if other states have seen similar changes.

Meeting Participants

Kansas City, Kansas

May 16, 2013

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