Fisheries Administration Section

Meeting Minutes

August 9, 2012

St. Paul, MN

**Doug Nygren** calls meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

**Jim Gregory**, Vice President, Institute of Fisheries Management

The Institute of Fisheries Management is a 1,000 member organization managing recreational and commercial fisheries in the United Kingdom. Their organization is affiliated with the Society for the Environment. They hold a number of conferences on rare and endangered species, also predator control. Their members provide government consultation on impacts to fisheries.

Membership count was made and a quorum was present.

**Doug Nygren** provided the meeting minutes from the March 13, 2012 meeting in Atlanta. Gary Whelan moved acceptance and approval and Gary Saul 2nd the motion. All voted in favor to accept the minutes.

**John Biagi** presented the treasurer report. Steve Filipek moved that the group accept the treasurer’s report. Jeff Boxrucker 2nd and all voted in favor to accept the report.

**Ryan Roberts** gave an update on the National Fish Habitat Partnership. The National Fish Habitat Partnership released its 2nd edition of the action plan. The plan was approved at the July meeting and will be printed soon. State agencies provided input into finalizing the plan. The 2012 annual update is also completed. The update includes new objectives. The new website will be up and running on Wednesday of this week. New Science and Data assessment will be on website, too.

**Doug Nygren** briefed the membership on the AFS governing board meeting. Gus Rassam is retiring from his role as AFS Executive Director, which will result in many changes within the Society. Doug participated in a focus group meeting on where AFS should concentrate the Society’s attention in the future. Group spent time discussing the skill set needed for the Executive Director position to help lead the Society into the future.

**Kathryn Winkler**, Hutton Program/Continuing Education Program Coordinator, thanked the Fisheries Administration Section members for their continued support for the Hutton Program. The Program goal is to increase participation in Fisheries Management by underrepresented demographics. High school level students receive a $3,000 scholarship and are partnered with a fish biologist. Last season, the program received 79 applications for the 15 scholarship positions.

**John Boreman**, President Elect AFS, briefed the membership on his AFS Plan of work that he developed and presented to the Governing Board. The Board approved the plan. The plan focuses on a review of the current education systems at colleges and universities in Canada, USA and Mexico to determine if students are receiving the training that will prepare them to address the new challenges we face. AFS will also review the professional certification criteria to make sure it is relevant. The Governing Board structure will also be reviewed to evaluate if the current 34 member composition is too large to be effective. Declining membership is also a concern and the plan calls for looking for ways the Society can be more relevant to professionals.

**Doug Nygren** updated the membership on the AFS Lead in Fishing Tackle Policy statement. The new policy, with minor revisions, will go out to the membership shortly for votes to accept. Ron Brooks participated in the revision on behalf of the Fisheries Administration Section.

**Jeff Boxrucker**, Reservoir Fish Habitat Partnership

The Reservoir Partnership is about state agencies and adding value to state agencies. The Reservoir Partnership is disbursing around $90,000 per year to conduct habitat restoration projects. The Partnership also developed a foundation to assist with fundraising and putting dollars on the ground. Habitat assessment is complete and will be presented this week at the AFS meeting. Jeff submitted a multi-state grant application for addressing reservoir impairments that have been identified on a regional scale. Grant will also build Friends of Reservoir programs.

**Mike Stone**, President Elect, Fisheries Administration Section

Sportfish Restoration of the Year Award is presented each year in three categories. This year’s recipients are: Research and Surveys – Idaho Department of Fish and Game; Aquatic Education – Iowa DNR; Development and Management – Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism. Award submission reviewers were Ken Kurzawski, Joe Larscheid, Mike Staggs, Gary Whelan and Mike Stone.

**Gwen White** of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service informed the membership of the Sportfishing and Boating Partnership Council’s stakeholder input process for the Fish and Wildlife Service, Fisheries Program strategic plan development. Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies meeting and other venues will be used to provide multiple opportunities for stakeholder input in the plan development process. Go to [www.FishPlan.org](http://www.FishPlan.org) for more details.

**Dale Burkett and Doug Nygren** lead a discussion on how the American Fisheries Society is meeting the need of Fisheries Administrators? The new Executive Director will be briefed on member services needed. This group input is sought to help inform the new Executive Director.

* Mike Staggs asked if the Society is meeting both the Fisheries Administration Section needs and the needs of individual agencies.
* Minnesota uses AFS education criteria for applicant review but don’t use the professional certification.
* Arkansas uses AFS certification for pay adjustments, but maintaining certification is a challenge because of travel restrictions. Adding on-line courses would help.
* Bob Curry suggested that merging meetings together where possible (such as the AFWA) is beneficial.
* Jeff Boxrucker pointed out that AFS journals need to be more relevant to state agency biologists.
* Suggestion made that it may be beneficial to involve Human Resources staff in review of certification standards for biologists.
* Agency staff would benefit from availability of pod-casts of national meetings. Andy Loftus pointed out that virtual meeting technology came up 2 years ago, but has not moved forward.
* Don Gabelhouse – The Fisheries Administration Section provides opportunity for personal interactions that allow him to bounce problems and issues off others to help him in his job.
* Dale Burkett posed the question – How does the Section benefit the new fish chief?
* Don Gabelhouse – Recertification of fisheries professionals is required a rate that is too frequent and is too easy to meet.
* Tom Lang- Expand InfoBase to include old Proceedings.
* Gary Whelan - Future Proceedings will become electronic.
* John Boreman – Succession Planning Committee looked at AFS as a whole. Conducted a series of surveys (staff, Governing Board and external stakeholders). Need to get Executive Director out to Agencies in future. Also promote AFS as a profession. Represent membership interests to Congress with state wildlife agency Directors to push fisheries issues.

**Doug Nygren** discussed where to host the Fisheries Administration Section spring meeting. Possible sites included Kansas City, Kansas, at the North American in Alexandria, Virginia, or at the AFS Southern Division Black Bass Symposium in Nashville, Tennessee. It was pointed out that the North American is too costly for many to attend.

**Tim Birdsong** briefed the membership on the upcoming Black Bass Symposium in Nashville. A group of Southern Division AFS members got together to develop a business plan for an aquatic restoration of black basses. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) took the plan to raise funds for on the ground habitat work. Guadalupe bass work in Texas was the first project approved. NFWF has granted around $500,000 in work so far for Texas bass habitat improvements. New shoal bass work in Georgia and Florida has now been funded.

Black Bass Symposium will have four concurrent sessions. End of Symposium will include a half day workshop to develop additional guidance for NFWF to fund.

**Andy Loftus** motioned to adjourn the meeting. **Gary Whelan** 2nd and the motion carried.

After adjourning the Fisheries Administration Section meeting, we began a joint session with the Fisheries Management Section.

**Bill Fisher**, AFS President

Reinstituted the fisheries salary survey. Responsive management is conducting the survey. Ken Kurzawski, Dirk Miller and Jim Long are directing efforts. The agency survey has been completed. The Federal Agencies and private industries have been surveyed, too. Report will be available in the fall.

AFS Policy statement on lead in fishing tackle was developed in 2010. The policy statement was revised in 2011. Policy under revision again and will go out for Society review in the near future.

Executive Director Gus Rassum is in the last year of his contract. He has done a great job of placing AFS on solid financial footing. A committee has developed a position description. Will have 3 top candidates at the February Governing Board meeting in Little Rock.

Attendance at the St. Paul, Minnesota meeting is around 1,500.

Retreat topic: “Reimagining AFS - How to sustain itself and remain relevant to its members.”

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**Ron Essig** – 75th Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration Symposium will occur this Thursday, focusing on creation of Sportfish Restoration and projects that have received Sportfish Restoration Project Awards.

**Scott Stuewe** – PFIRM2 is now called Hatcheries and Management For Aquatic Resources (HMFAR). Theme for this effort will be to decide what is next on the horizon for issues facing hatcheries and stocking. Still deciding on when symposium will occur, maybe in Nashville at the Southern Division AFS meeting or in Little Rock at the AFS Annual meeting. HMFAR created a survey that is in draft form. Scott sent the draft survey out to FAS membership for comments and other HMFAR members are soliciting comments from their contacts, too.

**Mike Allen** – *Foundations in Fisheries Science.* Book project, selecting papers and expecting book to be completed in 1 year

Meeting was adjourned

Attendees:

John Biagi Georgia Department of Natural Resources JBiagi@dnr.state.ga.us

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Working Lunch meeting with Senior U.S. Fish & Wildlife Fisheries Staff

Occurred during the AFS National Meeting in St. Paul

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Director requested an opportunity to meet with Fisheries Administration Section Executive Committee to discuss fish management direction within the Service. Unfortunately, Director Dan Ashe had to cancel, but Ben Tuttle represented Dan Ashe at the meeting. Mike Weimer and Brian Bohnsack of the Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) were also present. Doug Nygren, Mike Stone, Don Gabelhouse, Jeff Boxrucker, Robert Curry and John Biagi were present from the Fisheries Administration Section.

The working lunch provided an opportunity for the FWS staff to explain recent efforts to review and prioritize activities within the FWS Fisheries program. This included the Sportfish and Boating Partnership Council strategic plan development and the efforts to have responsible parties pay for mitigation trout stockings below federal hydropower facilities. FWS is reprioritizing activities and budgets to better reflect the direction they are receiving from Office of Management and Budget, the President and Congress.

Executive Committee staff agreed to pay the cost of the lunch at end of meeting.