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“Building Resilience”
May 11-15, 2025**

ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION



2025 Joint Annual AFS Meeting Western Division and CO-WY Chapter May 11-15, 2025

Location: Westin Westminster in Westminster, Colorado

Theme: Building Resilience: Investments in Fish Passage, Habitat Restoration, and Hatchery Modernization

Substantial resources, such as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act, Inflation Reduction Act, and other funding initiatives, are being allocated in the US and Canada to enhance fish passage and habitat restoration projects in an effort to increase resilience in fish populations and their ecosystems. Concurrently, both public agencies and private aquaculture are focusing on modernizing existing hatcheries and designing new facilities to withstand future climate challenges. We invite submissions for symposia that align with this theme and invite other sessions that look to advance the fisheries profession.

Look for meeting registration information and abstract submission instructions on the Colorado/Wyoming Chapter and the Western Division websites in the coming months!

The History of Joint Western Division and CO-WY Chapter AFS Annual Meetings

By Lori Martin, Chapter Archivist

In May of 2025, the Western Division of AFS (WD) will be holding its Annual Meeting in cooperation with the Colorado-Wyoming AFS Chapter (Chapter) for the fifth time since the Chapter was formed in 1966 (see table below for more details). The WD annual conferences in 1983 and 1985 were convened in association with the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA), separate from the Chapter's annual meetings those years. The Chapter's 1992 Annual Meeting was held in Grand Junction, Colorado, in collaboration with the Bonneville (Utah) Chapter in February. In July of 1992, the first combined Annual Meeting of the WD and the Chapter occurred in Fort Collins, Colorado, with 242 people attending. There were 25 technical sessions, a riparian tour (an additional continuing education workshop on time management was canceled due to insufficient interest), and 15 trade show exhibitors. Students from the Colorado State University AFS Student Subunit provided the audio/visual assistance during the technical sessions, along with moving tables and chairs, delivering food and beverages, and transporting attendees to airports and social events. A raffle and multiple socials were organized, along with a spawning run, volleyball, and tours of the Fort Collins area for spouses of conference participants. The meeting registration cost was approximately \$100 (including meals) with an option for dormitory housing.

Subsequent joint annual meetings of the WD and Chapter occurred in Telluride, Colorado, in 2000, followed by the 2004 conference in Salt Lake City that the Chapter co-hosted with the Bonneville (now Utah) AFS Chapter. The most recent Annual Meeting of the WD and Chapter took place in Jackson, Wyoming in 2012. The plenary session focused on "Ecosystem Management in a Twitter World", and five social scientists and natural resource managers discussed the difficulties and approaches to conducting long-term, ecosystem level management in a society that expects instant results. Four continuing education workshops were offered (AFS Leadership, Aquatic Plants, Introduction to R, and Stable Isotopes). Eighty-six technical presentations covered the topics of Ecology and Management of Western Native Fishes; Stream Restoration; Changing Climate and Aquatic Ecosystems: Looking Back to Move Forward; Energy Development and Extractive Industries; Advances in Fisheries Technology; Burbot Management and Research in the West; Cutthroat Trout; Communication; Anadromous Fish and Land Management; Lakes; and Streams. Meeting organizers provided an environmental DNA open forum; welcome, student, and poster socials; trade show; Elk Refuge sleigh ride-tour; Jackson National Fish Hatchery tour; spawning run; and banquet with awards, auction and raffle to 178 participants. The early meeting registration cost for a regular, parent society member was \$315, and included the Chapter Business Meeting lunch, WD Business Meeting breakfast, and socials.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Continuing Education & Symposia



The AFS Western Division and the Colorado/Wyoming Chapter are excited to host a joint annual meeting in Westminster, Colorado, from May 11 to 15, 2025. The theme of the meeting is Building Resilience: Investments in Fish Passage, Habitat Restoration, and Hatchery Modernization. The Westminster Program Committee invites proposals for symposia, continuing education workshops or courses, and innovative sessions supporting the meeting theme and advancing the fisheries profession. Please be aware that this meeting is being planned as in-person only.

Symposium Proposals

An organized symposium will contain a series of integrated presentations organized around a single topic or theme. These sessions provide a forum for focused discussions on new and emerging topics or innovative applications of established approaches. Although not required, symposia proposals are encouraged to address the meeting theme. Innovative Session Proposals will also be accepted. Creative proposals for sessions that use engaging design, approaches, and formats. These proposals could include panel discussions, lightning/speed presentations, slam sessions, or other interactive and non-traditional sessions.

Workshop/Continuing Education Course Proposals

Pre-conference workshops and continuing education courses will be offered onsite as half-day or full-day sessions on May 12th, 2025. Courses should be designed to offer in-depth professional development to students, professionals, or specific audiences. Please Submit Symposia, Innovative Sessions, and Continuing Education/Workshop Proposals by copying and pasting: <https://forms.gle/NfWuvhuhuKom6GWd9>

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AWARD NOMINATIONS

The Colorado/Wyoming Chapter has four awards for recognizing our fisheries professionals. The Awards Committee needs your help in determining qualified candidates to receive awards at the Annual Meeting. This is an opportunity for you to become involved and see that your professional peers receive their deserved recognition from the American Fisheries Society.

- (1) **Award of Excellence:** Recognizes an individual who has made significant contributions in the fishery-aquatic resource field.
- (2) **Max Award of Merit:** In honor of Max Rollefson (WGFD), this "atta boy" recognizes a short-term professional accomplishment in management, administration, research, or culture.
- (3) **Outstanding Mentor Award:** This award recognizes a fisheries professional who has demonstrated substantial devotion in assisting or mentoring prospective fisheries students/professionals, current fisheries students, or fisheries professionals.
- (4) **Leaky Boot Award:** Recognizes the most outrageous behavior of any fisheries student or professional in the year prior to the Chapter's Annual Meeting.

The deadline to nominate is March 31st. To nominate your peers for any award other than the Award of Excellence, please send a <1 page nomination letter outlining why you feel they are deserving to Travis.Neebling@wyo.gov. Nomination letters for the Award of Excellence can be longer than one page and typically include multiple letters of support.

If you have any questions, please contact Travis Neebling at (307) 233-6410 or Travis.Neebling@wyo.gov.



Max Rollefson: The inspiration for the "Max" Award of Merit



Raffle Items Needed

The Raffle Committee will be working hard to round up some great items for the Annual Meeting. Please consider donating something to the cause this year. On that note, if you have a great skill set to share, please consider donating some of your time! Fishing trips, hunting trips, wilderness expeditions, float trips, etc., would all be appealing to those of us who love spending time outdoors, not to mention hanging out with our colleagues! Don't hesitate to reach out to our committee with questions, offers, or ideas. We look forward to raising some money for the chapter and our great aquatic resources in 2025!

If you have raffle contributions, please contact:

Chris Craft

ccraft@geiconsultants.com

(303) 264-1052

Clay Kampf

clayton.kampf@usda.gov,

(970) 749-9259

Nick Scribner

nick.scriber@wyo.gov

(307) 335-2641

PHOTO CONTEST - START LOOKING THROUGH YOUR FANTASTIC AND INSPIRING PHOTOS FOR THIS YEAR'S CONTEST. STAY TUNED FOR MORE INFORMATION!

The Role of Men in Ending Stories of Sexual Harassment

By Mark Smith on behalf of the Chapter Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Note: This article briefly mentions instances of sexual harassment and could be triggering for some. While the article focuses on sexual harassment of women by men, people of all genders can be victims of sexual harassment.

In 2018, I found myself sitting in a classroom with a group of dedicated conservationists from across the country. Convened to study leadership at great expense to our organizations, we hoped to return at the end of our training week better prepared to tackle the conservation challenges of our day. However, frustratingly the group discussion of leadership kept circling back to recent news of sexual assault and harassment associated with the #MeToo movement.

Each time the topic resurfaced, a nearly palpable discomfort permeated the room. Almost as soon as the topic was raised, someone would quickly shift the conversation back to a more comfortable and traditional leadership challenge. Finally, a woman stood up. Visibly upset, she began reading from her notebook a story of harassment endured at the hands of her male colleagues. With all attention on her emotional vulnerability, she announced that this shared story was the “easy” one. Tearing a page from her notebook and crumpling it into a ball, she proclaimed this page was a worse story. Tossing the paper ball into the center of the classroom, she added that she could only face having this story read if others added theirs.

In my memory, the room went silent save the sound of pens on paper; and then the sound of crumpling paper. The second paper ball came from over my right shoulder falling to the floor and joining the first. A hailstorm of paper balls followed. Stories crumpled on paper, painful stories, stories of sexual harassment, micro-aggressions, stories of being left out or disinvited, stories of being referred to as the big-breasted woman, stories of hurtful jokes, stories of sexual threats, stories of cover-ups and victim blaming, stories of groping, stories of expected sexual favors, even stories of rape.

The stories came from every corner of the room. It appeared every woman in the room had at least one story.

As a man with decades of work in our field, the experience of the paper ball stories was both uncomfortable and transformative. It was troubling to recognize what I had not previously had the empathy to see. The system I was a part of was clearly hurting women. With time to reflect, I was even more troubled as I recalled moments where I was a direct participant or stood by without intervening as harassment occurred. Ultimately, this has led me to acknowledge that I am/was part of the problem.

The Role of Men in Ending Stories of Sexual Harassment

(Continued)

Almost seven years since the paper balls, I have come to the recognition that most of the women we work alongside carry stories. I also believe it is true that most men don't want to contribute to a system that hurts women. Yet in my experience, men remain largely silent and absent from working on changes that could end these stories.

It's time for more men to lean in and speak up.

I believe the path forward includes helping men acknowledge the problem and their role while encouraging all of us (both men and women) to offer grace as we try to do better together. One of the obstacles for men is that it's easy to tell oneself that sexual harassment happens elsewhere ("This does not happen where I work or to the people I work with"). It's almost certain that this belief is false. Female colleagues may not be offering their stories (and they shouldn't need to) but if you can begin to believe that behavior that undermines equality (a definition of sexual harassment) and micro aggressions (subtle acts of discrimination) are happening, there's a strong chance you will start seeing them.

For men, accepting that we are part of the problem is uncomfortable but need not hold us back. In my experience, there is abundant grace offered to those who recognize the problem and are willing to work towards change. Changing the system requires men to be more thoughtful about words and actions, and open to feedback and even correction from others. Importantly, changing the system requires the courage to change from being a passive bystander to an intervening ally. There are great resources available to help bystanders learn how to intervene skillfully. In some (but not all) cases, intervention can be as simply saying "What you just said made me feel uncomfortable. And here's why...".

Experiencing the paper ball stories revealed the depth of a problem I was a part of, yet blind to. I couldn't sit inactive with this recognition. I started engaging in the conversation, examining my own behaviors and showing up for others. This work takes empathy and understanding, grace and courage for both yourself and others. I know men in our fisheries community are capable of this work and I urge more to lean in and speak up.

For a more thorough examination of bystander intervention, check out the National Sexual Violence Resource Center <https://www.nsvrc.org/bystander-intervention-resources>

The DEI Committee thanks Ashleigh Pilkerton! As she moves on to her newest adventure, the DEI Committee would like to extend Ashleigh a huge "THANK YOU!" for her years of service as an integral part of our committee. We are always looking to add more perspectives to our discussions, so please reach out to Liz Stewart Krone (elizabeth.krone@state.co.us) if you are interested in joining us!