

THE ANGLER

NEWSLETTER OF THE COLORADO/WYOMING CHAPTER OF
THE AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY

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EDITED BY KENDALL BAKICH & BEN FELT

2026 CO/WY AFS Annual Meeting March 2 - 4

*Hilton Garden Inn Conference Center
Laramie, WY
Registration is open!*

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PHOTO CREDIT: THOMAS DANIELS

THE VENT

Beth Bear - CO/WY AFS President

As we approach our annual meeting in a few weeks, I encourage us all to think of ways to meet and interact with someone new, get outside our comfort zone, socialize with a new group of colleagues, be bold and give a presentation or a poster about something you've been working on or that is of interest to you. Our meeting is a time for us to come together as a group and learn from and support each other. As times continue to be uncertain for many of us, we can rely on our collective strength as a community, and there is no better time to do that than our Chapter meeting.

The annual Chapter meeting will take place at the UW Conference Center/Hilton Garden Inn in Laramie, WY Monday through Wednesday; March 2-4, 2026.

The meeting will start with two engaging Continuing Education courses on Monday. Science Communication and Media Relations, and Indoor Swiftwater Awareness and Technical Training are the courses being offered at this year's meeting; you can sign up for either course at no additional cost during the registration process. Our meeting will follow our typical format with an opening session on Tuesday morning followed by Contributed Papers on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Please plan on joining us for several networking and fellowship opportunities this meeting! We will have a Fisheries for All and Welcome Social on Monday, Business Meeting Happy Hour followed by the Student Hosted Social on Tuesday, Coffee Poster Hour in the morning on Wednesday and will close with our Banquet including awards and raffle.

Thank you to the many members of our Chapter who have already been hard at work planning this meeting. Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns about the meeting or anything with our Chapter (Beth.Bear@wyo.gov). I look forward to catching up with many of you and meeting many new people as well.

We're excited to see you in Laramie!

WANT TO HELP OUR CHAPTER OUT?! DONATE TODAY!

ANYTHING HELPS! DONATE TO THE CO/WY AFS CHAPTER HERE:
[HTTPS://CHECKOUT.SQUARE.SITE/BUY/AVP6LHVVTM5ECPAX5QHJVGHW](https://checkout.square.site/buy/avp6lhvvtm5ecpax5qhjvghw)

SECRETARY-TREASURER: ALEX JOUNEY



I have always been drawn to the outdoors, and spent much of my childhood exploring the waters and wilds of northern Michigan. Fishing, hiking, camping, and paddling during my younger years led me to develop a deep interest in aquatic ecosystems and the critters that inhabit those spaces. I earned my Bachelor's in Biology from Grand Valley State University, with an emphasis in aquatic ecology in 2016. I followed this with a Master's degree in 2018 from the same university, where I studied amphibian metapopulation dynamics in seasonal waterbodies. I worked as an adjunct instructor at my university for a few years before moving to Colorado to begin working for Colorado Parks and Wildlife as a seasonal fisheries technician. I spent three seasons working in Northern Colorado prior to my current role as the CPW Native Aquatic Species Biologist for the Southeast Region. In my spare time I enjoy hiking, skiing, fishing, paddling, camping and generally anything that gets me outdoors with my wonderful wife, Jessica. My involvement in the Colorado/Wyoming Chapter of American Fisheries Society began around the same time that I started my current role as the Southeast Region Native Species Biologist. This community has helped to foster my growth, allowed me to network with other professionals, and expand my knowledge base in aquatics. I have been active in the A/V, Arrangements, and Awards committees over the past few years, and look forward to staying involved in these committees moving forward. I have been fortunate enough to serve in a variety of leadership roles throughout my life too: various leadership in scouting and other clubs; vice president of the Graduate Club in college; and most recently serving as the President of the Great Plains Fishery Workers Association in 2024-25. I am humbled by and eager for the opportunity to serve AFS as Secretary-Treasurer, and I hope to use what I have learned in previous roles to help foster community, and mutual growth within our chapter. In this position I will work to actively expand recruitment, commit to securing and keeping stable the Chapter finances, prioritize mentorship and actions that support the mentorship of newer members, and collaborate with others to expand and promote American Fisheries Society to a variety of audiences.

STUDENT SUBUNIT REPORTS

WESTERN COLORADO UNIVERSITY

The WCU student subunit has had a busy fall semester. We hosted our second annual Ichtoberfest Potluck, held a fish trivia night, and organized several documentary viewings.

Looking ahead to the spring, we are planning an ice fishing outing, a series of guest speakers from CPW, and we will be attending the CO/WY AFS meeting in Laramie. Our subunit is also registered for the Hardwater Havoc Ice Fishing Tournament, where we'll be competing against other western AFS student chapters. We're excited for a productive and fun semester ahead!

COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY

The Colorado Mesa Fish and Wildlife Club started doing monthly meetings with various activities on the first Tuesday of each month last semester. In September, we went bird banding with Grand Valley Audobon. We also hosted a Natural Resources Career fair for all students. In October, we redecorated our poster board in the hall to bring more life and attention to it. November, we had a trivia/jeopardy night with a fish and wildlife theme created by our vice president Keira Stephens. We also had a guest speaker – Isabella Harris come and talk about her job as the Climate and Energy Regional Organizer, where we learned the difference between an advocate and organizer. The meeting coming up in December we plan to do fish printing, inspired by the event at the last WDAFS conference.

The vice president Kiera Stephens has also started a weekly email that informs the students of current scientific discoveries and other local fish and wildlife news.

We plan to come into the next semester strong with activities such as fly tying and ice fishing (both activities we did last year and had a great time). We also want to do a panel with biologists coming from all different organization types such as federal, state and private. Another event that we're excited about is a resume building and job application workshop with local biologists.

We will be hosting another Natural Resources Career Fair on February 4th from 4:00-6:00 pm. If anyone is interested in attending the career fair as an employer, please reach out to Dr. Eriek Hansen (erihansen@coloradomesa.edu) or Bethany Meyer (bmeyer@coloradomesa.edu).

We can't wait to attend the WDAFS conference in Laramie and the TWS conference that will be hosted in Grand Junction this year!

STUDENT SUBUNIT REPORTS

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

The fall semester of 2025 was extremely successful for the Colorado State University Student Subunit of American Fisheries Society. Our first meeting had a record-breaking attendance of 52 students. Meetings continued to be successful as the semester went on, with attendance regularly reaching 30 students. The subunit hosted a fishing trip to Joe Wright to catch Arctic Grayling early on in the semester, planned by the club's secretary, Ryan Edgar. In October, the annual Kids Fishing Derby was held, with 30 children in attendance.

The subunit hosted two workshops in collaboration with CPW over the semester, an electrofishing workshop planned and coordinated by the club's vice president, Alex Wagner, and a fish processing workshop planned and coordinated by the club's president, Moira Benish-Kingsbury. These workshops were both very successful, with high attendance. The electrofishing workshop taught members the essential field sampling techniques used in fisheries research and management, as well as species identification, handling, and data recording procedures. The fish processing workshop helped CPW process Smallmouth Bass from the Ridgway Reservoir fishing tournament and also taught members how to remove otoliths, sex fish, obtain length and weight data, and determine stomach contents.

We are happy to share that the subunit now has 37 due paying members, most of which are regularly active in the club, and we are looking forward to next semester's meetings and events!

2026 CO-WY CHAPTER ANNUAL MEETING



MARCH 2-4, 2026

Hilton Garden Inn Conference Center
Laramie, WY

REGISTER FOR THE MEETING

<https://tinyurl.com/2026AFSRegistration>



PRESENT A PAPER OR POSTER

Submit an abstract: <https://tinyurl.com/2026AFSAbstract>

BOOK A ROOM

Hilton Garden Inn - block rate \$110/night
<https://tinyurl.com/2026AFSRoomBlock>



IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

- **January 16** - Award nominations deadline
- **February 10** - Early registration ends
- **February 22** - Last day to register for banquet
- **February 10** - Abstracts submission deadline
- **February 15** - Room block deadline

MEETING SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

MONDAY, MARCH 2

- Continuing Education Courses
 - *Science Communication and Media Relations* - Led by Dr. Kelly Dunning from the University of Wyoming, and Ashley Leonard and Amanda Fry from Wyoming Game and Fish, this workshop equips fisheries professionals with the essential tools to bridge the gap between technical research and public communication.
 - *Indoor Swiftwater Awareness and Technical Skills Training* - This classroom-based workshop, hosted by CPW's River Outfitter License/Swiftwater Investigators, offers an intensive introduction to river safety and rescue techniques in a "dry land" learning experience.
- Welcome Social

TUESDAY, MARCH 3

- Opening Session and Contributed Papers
- Chapter Business Meeting-Happy Hour
- Student Hosted Social

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4

- Poster Session-Coffee Hour
- Contributed Papers
- Banquet and Awards

TENTATIVE MEETING AGENDA

MONDAY, MARCH 2

- 7:30am - 5:00pm: Registration; Lobby
- 9:00am: Morning Beverage Station; Lobby
- 10:00am - 5:00pm: CE Course - Science Communication; Salon A
- 12:00pm - 1:00pm: Lunch - on your own
- 1:00pm - 5:00pm: CE course - Indoor Swiftwater; Salon B
- 3:00pm: Afternoon Break; Lobby
- 5:00pm - 6:00pm: Fisheries for All Social; Salons CDE
- 6:00pm - 10:00pm: Welcome Social; Salons CDE

TUESDAY, MARCH 3

- 7:00am - 5:00pm: Registration; Lobby
- 7:30am: Morning Beverage Station; Lobby
- 8:00am - 10:00am: Opening Session; Salons CDE
- 10:00am: Morning Break; Lobby
- 10:00am - 12:00pm: Contributed Papers; Salons CDE
- 12:00pm - 1:00pm: Lunch - on your own
- 1:00pm - 4:00pm: Contributed Papers; Salons CDE
- 4:00pm - 5:30pm: Business Meeting/Happy Hour; Salons CDE
- 6:30pm - 10:00pm: Student Hosted Social; Off-site

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4

- 7:00am - 12:00pm: Registration; Lobby
- 8:00am - 10:00am: Coffee Poster Session; Salon A/B
- 10:00am - 12:00pm: Contributed Papers; Salons CDE
- 12:00pm - 1:00pm: Lunch - on your own
- 1:00pm - 5:00pm: Contributed Papers; Salons CDE
- 3:00pm: Afternoon Break; Lobby
- 6:00pm - 10:00pm: Banquet/Awards/Raffle; Salons CDE

CONTINUING EDUCATION

MONDAY, MARCH 2

Science Communication and Media Relations

Led by Dr. Kelly Dunning from the University of Wyoming, and Ashley Leonard and Amanda Fry from Wyoming Game and Fish, this workshop equips fisheries professionals with the essential tools to bridge the gap between technical research and public communication. The curriculum focuses on transforming complex data into dynamic presentations tailored for all. Participants will understand how to effectively communicate with the media while maintaining scientific integrity and refining their interview skills, and learn how to best deliver their fisheries work into clear and impactful messaging. This course will likely be a 3/4 day course. No maximum capacity.

Indoor Swiftwater Awareness and Technical Skills Training

This classroom-based workshop, hosted by CPW's River Outfitter License/Swiftwater Investigators, offers an intensive introduction to river safety and rescue techniques in a "dry land" learning experience. Designed as an Awareness and Skills program, the course blends theoretical instruction with hands-on technical training to build a foundation for future on-water operations. Participants will engage with interactive presentations and table-top scenarios focusing on the use of throw bags, the mastery of essential rescue knots, and assembly of mechanical advantage systems. This class will be either a full day or half day training depending on the size of the class. Maximum capacity is 40 participants.

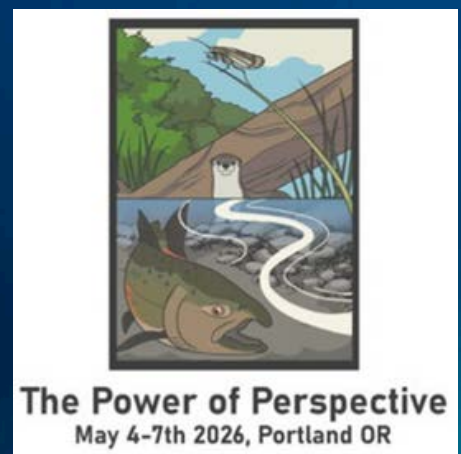
2026 TRAVEL GRANTS

CO-WY Chapter will award three travel grants for chapter members to present at meetings in 2026

One student and one professional at the annual meeting in Laramie, and one member of the CO-WY Chapter will be selected for a travel grant of up to \$2,000 to attend the Parent Society Meeting in Columbus, OH, Aug 30-Sep 3 or Western Division Meeting in Portland, OR, May 4-7.

To apply, an applicant must:

- Be a current CO-WY AFS Chapter member in good standing (e.g., current Parent Society member).
- Submit a 1-2 page letter detailing:
 - The meeting you'd like to attend and why you want to attend
 - Confirming AFS involvement, including but not limited to committee service and presenting experience at AFS meetings
 - Fisheries background
 - Why it would be appropriate for you to present at the meeting, what your subject matter would be, and how it meets the goals of the CO-WY Chapter
- Send applications to CO-WY AFS Past-President, Stev Vigil at cowy.afs.pastpres@gmail.com by February 10, 2026. The recipients will be selected by the Chapter Executive Committee and will be announced at the 2026 Chapter Business Meeting in Laramie on March 3.



CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

We want to hear from you!

Please consider presenting a poster or paper at this year's meeting.

Paper/poster abstracts submitted at:

<https://tinyurl.com/2026AFSAbstract>



CALL FOR SESSION MODERATORS

Anyone interested/willing to moderate a session, please email Stephen Siddons at Stephen.Siddons@wyo.gov

JUDGES NEEDED!

We rely on volunteers to evaluate papers and posters presented at our annual meetings.

We need 20-30 judges for paper and poster presentations, so a great deal of help is needed from CO/WY AFS members.

Please consider volunteering at the meeting to give valuable feedback and award our presenters.

If you are interested in helping, contact Zach Hooley-Underwood at

zachary.hooley-underwood@state.co.us

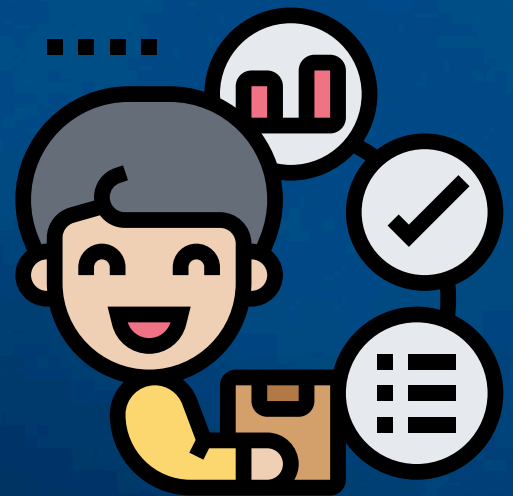


PHOTO CONTEST



Please consider submitting your high-quality fish, people, and landscape photos for the 2026 Photo Contest. Visual media is a great way to tell your story. A special sub-committee will vote on the top three photographs and a prize awarded for the best artistic depiction of . . . I guess we will have to wait and see! The deadline for submissions is February 10. Please email your high resolution digital photos to cowy.afs.pres@gmail.com. Limit three photos per person, please.

RAFFLE PRIZES WANTED!

The Raffle Committee will be working hard to round up some great items for the 2026 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 that love spending time outdoors, not to mention, hanging out with your colleagues! Please don't hesitate to reach out to our committee with questions, offers, or ideas. We look forward to raising money for the CO/WY chapter and our great aquatic resources in 2026.



Raffle Contacts:

Nick Scribner - nick.scribner@wyo.gov

Kristina Morben - kristina.morben@state.co.us



FIRST CALL FOR PAPERS

October 13-16, 2026

West Yellowstone, Montana, USA

<https://wildtroutsymposium.com>

WILD TROUT SYMPOSIUM XIV

MANAGING WILD TROUT IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

Originating in 1974, this symposium brings together a broad and diverse audience of governmental agencies, non-profit conservation groups, media representatives, educators, anglers and fishing guides, and business interests associated with trout fisheries to exchange technical information and viewpoints on wild trout management and related public policy. Held every 3-4 years, each symposium has offered a unique forum where participants have been exposed to the latest wild trout science, technology, and philosophies, equipping participants to better manage, preserve, and restore wild trout populations. Presentations can be in oral or poster format.

DEADLINE FOR ABSTRACT SUBMISSION: APRIL 3, 2026.

Abstract guidelines and online submission forms at

<https://wildtroutsymposium.com>. Questions: WT-XIV Chairman, Jason Burckhardt, (307) 527-7125