

**Minutes of the 40thAnnual Business Meeting of the Florida Chapter
American Fisheries Society**
June 3, 2020
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

President Bob Heagey called the meeting to order at 1407 hours and Chris Anderson established a quorum.

Current officers, past-presidents, and committee chairs of the Florida Chapter were read and most of those in attendance were acknowledged: Bob Heagey, Dan Nelson, Nick Trippel, Chris Anderson, Allison Durland Donahou, Beth Bowers, Lauren Kircher, Grace Sowaske, Amanda Croteau, Chelsey Crandall, Scott Bisping, Eric Sawyers, Eric Nagid, Chuck Cichra, Kevin Johnson, Wes Porak, Kathy Guindon, Kerry Flaherty-Walia, Travis Tuten, and Chris Bradshaw.

One revision was made to the agenda for the 40th Annual Meeting of the Florida Chapter American Fisheries Society Business Meeting: an announcement from National AFS was added to New Business.

Past-president Nick Trippel then asked for and received approval of the agenda.

Kerry-Flaherty Walia gave an update on the National AFS Membership Committee. She is now co-chair of National AFS Membership Committee and shared some of their new initiatives including revamping the AFS job board and increasing organizational membership. For example, she said entire agencies like FWC can now join as a member at different levels. Since the 2020 National Meeting is going virtual due to Covid-19, they are incentivizing current members to recruit new members to national AFS with prizes TBD. She also encouraged members to renew their national memberships and contact her with any membership related questions.

Bob Heagey announced that FL AFS won the Southern Division AFS Outstanding Chapter of the Year for 2019.

Wes Porak provided his comments on why he believed FL AFS won the SD AFS Outstanding Chapter award. He highlighted chapter leadership, the diversity of work our members accomplish, and our work to include and support students of all levels via scholarships and donations. He also talked about how successful the 2020 Southern Division meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas was and highlighted the Third International Catfish Symposium (Catfish 2020) that took place at that meeting. Wes spoke about 2020 AFS Virtual Spring Conference and how it raised \$15,000 for the Hutton Junior Fisheries Biology Program. He also stated that the 2021 Southern Division AFS meeting will be in Virginia and that the Southern Division is partnering with AFS headquarters to host the 2021 AFS Annual Meeting in Baltimore, MD.

President-elect Dan Nelson then shared the image of FL AFS' 2019 SD AFS Outstanding Chapter Award. Chris Anderson commented on how the active involvement of our Student Sub-unit also likely contributed to us winning the award.

Kathy Guindon announced that she is now the co-chair for AFS' Hutton Committee. She also said that only 11 of the 24 Hutton Scholars were able to complete their mentorship programs due to covid-19.

Secretary/Treasurer Chris Anderson asked for a motion to approve the Minutes of the 39th (2019) Annual Business Meeting of the Florida Chapter American Fisheries Society as they appeared in the July 2019 Shellcracker newsletter. The motion was made, seconded and passed.

Chris Anderson then presented the 2019 Treasurer's Report. The chapter ended the year with \$71,073 in total assets, a \$12,654 loss from the beginning of the year. Rottman Scholarship endowment, meeting sponsorships, youth organization donations, and sending the 2019 FL AFS Best Student Paper winner, Kailee Schulz, to the parent society meeting in Reno accounted for most of the loss. Chris also gave an update on the Roger Rottmann Memorial Scholarship Fund via an email from Larry Connor. The Fund had assets of \$48,936 as of 31 December 2019, representing a \$16,445 increase from the 31 December 2018 assets of \$32,491.

Bob Heagey announced that the officers of the Executive Committee will carry over due to the cancellation of the annual meeting from covid-19. However, the Student Subunit Executive is holding Virtual Elections later this month.

Committee Reports

Membership – Chris Anderson gave an update on membership via an email from Larry Connor. The Florida Chapter ended the year with 223 members. This represents an increase of 9 members from 2018. A total of 63 members paid their dues at the annual meeting in 2019. The number of members paying their dues through the Society was 150 in 2019. The Chapter received nine renewals sent directly to the Secretary/Treasurer in 2019. The Chapter's membership included 68 student members. Approximately 80% of the chapter members, 178, were also Society members. The breakdown of student and society member should be used with caution. This information is readily available for the 150 chapter members who paid their dues through the Society. However, it is more difficult to track this information for members who join at the annual meeting and requires due diligence by the registration desk personnel at the annual meeting to ensure that the information is collected at that time.

Newsletter – Chris Anderson forgot to mention that Scott Bisping, the Shellcracker newsletter editor, is doing a great job and will stay on as editor for the next year.

Website – Eric Sawyers, who maintains the Chapter's website, discussed updates to the FL AFS website including updating the list of previous symposia, linking it to the

Chapters' Facebook page, and adding a brief highlight about the Chapter winning the 2019 SD AFS Outstanding Chapter Award. He also requested photos from members that highlight their work for the website. Eric will be remaining in his role for the next year.

Raffle/Online Silent Auction – Amanda Croteau started by thanking everyone (who helped gather and solicit items for the raffle, and the ~30 companies that combined to donate over \$1,900 worth of items. She mentioned all items will carry over to the 2021 raffle, so it will be loaded with items. She mentioned Allison Durland Donahou, Geoffrey Smith, Kathy Guindon, Alan Collins, and Bob Heagey all helped acquire raffle items.

She then spoke about the 2020 silent auction donations exceeding \$3,700. Since the in-person meeting was cancelled, they decided to take the silent auction virtual with bidding starting today (June 3rd) and closing June 17th. She relayed that they confirmed with business that all packages/trips are still open/valid and cautioned that winners should check new policies related to social distancing prior to making reservations. She also said that a lot of the packages do not expire for years. She remarked that all money raised supports student travel grants and that there is an option of donate if members would like to contribute without bidding.

Student Scholarships and Awards – Chuck Cichra began his comments by mentioning that this is the 22nd year the Rottmann Scholarship has been awarded. He also highlighted the increased student involvement over the years and how important it is for our Chapter. Chuck then gave the history of the Roger Rottmann Memorial Scholarship and summarized the recipient applications before announcing that Grace Sowaske, of the University of Florida, received the M.S. Rottmann award, and Allison Durland Donahou, of the University of Florida, received the PhD Rottmann award. He went on to comment about how impressive students resumes and applications are these days.

He also spoke about the student travel grants and that 19 students from 5 different universities (UF, FAU, FIU, USF, Nova Southeastern) ranging from undergrad researchers to PhD candidates applied. He lamented that the awards couldn't be given this year due to the cancellation of the meeting. He also announced that writing a blog post to the Reefs to Rivers blog as part of the travel grant application is required from now on.

Florida Chapter Awards – Chuck Cichra gave a brief summary of the career of Rich Cailteux and the history of the Rich Cailteux Award, which is meant to recognize individuals for their career contributions to the fisheries profession and the Florida Chapter. He announced that no Chapter awards would be awarded this year due to the cancellation of the annual meeting.

Student Subunit Report

Student Subunit President Allison Durland Donahou began by announcing that Carissa Gervasi won the 2019 AFS writing contest and commenting on the new blog post requirement for student travel grant awards. She then promoted student research by discussing the Reefs to Rivers blog, Shellcracker student highlight articles, and the

Subunit's Facebook and Instagram pages. Allison then reminded the chapter to support subunit fundraising efforts which include signing up for the 4rd annual Sheepshead Shuffle. She provided an overview of the Sheepshead Shuffle fundraising since 2017 and the 2019 winners. She also announced that the Sheepshead Shuffle was expanded this year to include any AFS members that wanted to support a Chapter whose meeting was cancelled in 2020 due to covid-19 and advertised during AFS' Virtual Spring Conference. She also mentioned that buying FLAFS buffs and hats, and signing up on Amazon Smile to donate to FL AFS are other ways to contribute to student travel grants to Southern Division and Annual Meetings.

Old Business

Nick Trippel acknowledged members of the FL AFS Aquatic Cleanup Project Committee: Angela Collins, Amy Brownfield, Beth Bowers, Lauren Kircher, Allison Durland Donahou, Andy Strickland, Kathy Guindon and himself. He went through the aquatic clean up projects FL AFS has been involved in, highlighted who led those efforts and the amount of trash removed during each event. Nick then showed pictures from the events that already took place. He then stated that the committee plans to continue events in the future and they will likely continue to take place on International Coastal Cleanup Day, which is usually the third Saturday in September. He mentioned that cleanup events can be organized at any time and encouraged members to contact him if they want to host an event and/or attend events held by other groups.

Eric Nagid then gave a report for the AFS 2017 Funds Ad Hoc Committee, which was formed in 2018 to explore uses of the profit earned by the Florida Chapter AFS from hosting the 147th Annual Meeting in Tampa. The estimated profit was about \$33,000 and therefore available for FL Chapter projects, activities, or donations. He acknowledged that past president Jeff Hill appointed Chuck Cichra and himself co-chairs and that they were joined on the committee by Kevin Johnson, Kerry Flaherty-Walia, and Travis Tuten.

Eric reported on the progress towards the top three recommendations, which included: (1) increase the amount of money in Rottmann scholarship fund by \$15,000 to maximize the gains generated by the fund and be more capable of withstanding the annual scholarship withdrawals totaling \$2,000, (2) send the winner of the FL Chapter AFS Best Student Paper to the AFS meeting of their choice and support all travel expenses with the stipulation of this support is that they are required to then compete at the AFS Best Student Presentation Symposium and acknowledge the FL Chapter for their travel support in hopes that other states may offer the same incentive and opportunity, and (3) a one-time donation in the amount of \$8,000 to be split evenly between each of the 3 youth conservations centers (FYCCN) in Florida and the University of Florida's Fishing for Success program and that donated funds may be used for any of the program's needs (e.g. supplies, field trip transportation, etc.), with the recommendation that each program acknowledge the Florida Chapter by displaying the Chapter's logo at regular events.

He commented that all three recommendations were completed in 2019/2020 with a couple caveats. Eric mentioned that our best student paper winner, Kailee Schulz, was unable to compete in the Best Student Paper contest at the 2019 AFS conference in Reno. He noted that the committee had not met further and requested guidance from President Bob Heagey on whether to dissolve the committee. Chris Anderson then brought up the idea of donating some of the remaining profits to the Jimmie Pigg Memorial Scholarship, which is awarded by the Warmwater Streams Committee of Southern Division AFS. He went on to discuss the award and its application requirements/deadlines. Bob Heagey announced that he would like the committee to stay together to evaluate other uses for those profits. Eric Nagid then commented on the Jimmie Pigg and how it may better to donate towards a scholarship that is not as narrowly focused (i.e., freshwater streams only). Eric then confirmed with Bob that he will remain as chair for the committee and continue evaluating how to spend the remaining profits. Kerry Flaherty-Walia then commented on banking the additional profits to fund FL AFS Best Student Paper travel to national AFS meetings. Chris Anderson replied by informing the group how much sending Kailee to Reno cost (\$1,800) and that we could only afford 3-4 national meeting travel grants at that rate. Cheree Steward agreed we should continue to explore spending avenues, but cautioned that we may want to hang on to the money due to past and potentially future economic impacts from covid-19. Chris then commented about performance of the Rottman Memorial Fund in 2020 and financial implications moving forward. Chuck Cichra then asked as to why the FYCCN donations did not appear on the 2019 Treasurer's Report. Chris informed the group that the check was not cashed until 2020 so it was left off the 2019 report. Bob then commented about why the check got delayed and how our FYCCN photo op at MarineQuest got cancelled due to weather.

New business

Kerry Flaherty-Walia discussed what the Marketing & Membership Initiative Ad Hoc Committee did in 2019. She said Allison Durland Donahou and Amanda Croteau created of a Chapter Facebook page and encouraged members to share information on their research/events so it can be posted. The Committee is also working with Eric Sawyers to help update/enhance the Chapter's website (i.e., adding list of previous symposia). She then introduced Chelsey Crandall, who presented some of the results from the 2019 FL AFS Membership Survey conducted by herself, Nick Trippel and Stephen Jones. Chelsey mentioned that full results can be found in their report, which was distributed via email prior to this meeting, and encouraged members to contact her if they have any questions. She also announced that Emily Milton was the winner of the random participant drawing.

Dan Nelson then announced that the 2021 FL Chapter Annual Meeting will take place at the FFA Center in Haines City from April 6-8th, 2021. He noted that those dates are Tuesday-Thursday instead of Wednesday-Friday like the last few meetings. He mentioned that the symposium will likely stay the same as 2020 but details are still being finalized. Chris Anderson then commented about how FFA handled the cancellation of our 2020 meeting and how they transferred our deposit to 2021. He mentioned that lodging costs for lodge rooms will be increasing from \$100/person/night to

\$140/person/night in 2021 due to renovations by FFA, but villa rooms will remain at \$100/person/night. Chris said that attendees will now choose their rooms during early registration due to the differences in costs between rooms and that other changes will likely occur to the early registration process. He also commented on the results of the membership survey and reached out to members to gage interest in forming a venue search committee to find alternate venues in different areas of Florida. He informed interested members to reach out to Bob Heagey or anyone in the Executive Committee if they would like to be on the search committee. Bob then commented on how meeting venues have changed over time, the difficulty in finding venues that meet all our meeting needs, and the cons of having meetings in hotels/more urban settings.

Allison Durland Donahou provided an update regarding the work of the Continuing Education Committee. The Introduction to Fisheries Statistics in R workshop hosted by Paul Schueller (FWC) is still in the works. It will be virtual and likely take place in late August. She also discussed adding more workshops throughout the year in addition to a workshop at the annual meeting.

Dan Nelson then discussed the process of getting our workshops approved by national AFS so that individuals could earn continuing education credits (aka professional development qualifying points). He said these points are used for obtaining associate/professional certification through national AFS. He mentioned that, if approved, credits would likely cost \$7-10 per course. Dan then requested attendees to fill out a poll regarding their interest in obtaining continuing education credits and ~50% of attendees said they were interested in the credits. Lauren Kircher asked if workshop attendees could audit the workshop (i.e., take the workshop but not pay for the credits) and Dan was unsure of AFS' policy on that. Kevin Johnson then asked if the chapter would be willing to reimburse attendees for their credits and Dan said the committee would take that under consideration.

Dan Nelson shared the statement from National AFS regarding recent victims of racial inequality and injustice in the US, and how AFS strives for the advancement of equality and inclusion in the fisheries profession.

Bob Heagey announced that Cecil Jennings, a former FL AFS member, won the election for AFS Second Vice President earlier this year.

Bob Heagey then asked for a motion to adjourn the business meeting. Chris Anderson made the motion, and it was seconded by Dan Nelson and passed at 1607 hours.