

**Minutes of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Business Meeting of the Florida Chapter  
American Fisheries Society  
April 6, 2022  
FFA Leadership Training Center, Haines City, FL**

President Dan Nelson called the meeting to order at 1600 hours and Steve Beck established a quorum with approximately 55 Chapter members in attendance.

Current officers, past-presidents, committee chairs, and several members of the Florida Chapter were in attendance: Dan Nelson, Chelsey Crandall, Bob Heagey, Steve Beck, Jason O'Connor, Kyle Miller, Casey Murray, Amanda Croteau, Chuck Cichra, Chris Anderson, Kevin Johnson, Nick Trippel, Wes Porak, Kerry Flaherty-Walia, Travis Tuten, Ed Camp, Matt Cleary, Drew Dutterer, Summer Lindelien, Alexis Trotter and many more.

One revision was made to the agenda for the 42nd Annual Meeting of the Florida Chapter American Fisheries Society Business Meeting: Discussion of the new West Palm Beach Fishing Club-Dennis Panches Memorial Scholarship to the Committee Reports Discussion.

Dan Nelson then asked for and received approval of the agenda.

**AFS and Southern Division AFS Business:**

Mark Rogers (President Elect, Southern Division AFS) reviewed presidential charges and provided several updates summarized as: 1) encouragement to become aware of and make nominations for awards, 2) increasing communication between technical committees and agency leadership (several vacant seats on committees), 3) New Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, 4) importance of change of officer forms, 5) briefing book, 6) AFS Code of Conduct, 7) importance of International AFS membership, 8) upcoming meetings: International AFS: Aug 21-25, 2022, SEAFWA: Oct 23-26, 2022, Latin American and Caribbean Fisheries Congress: May 15-18, 2023, and the SDAFS annual meeting location schedule, and 9) reflected on Thomas Kwak, longtime AFS member, recently passed.

Amanda Croteau gave an update on the AFS Membership Committee. She informed members of a new survey coming out soon as a follow-up to the DEI survey, upcoming free webinars about the benefits of International AFS membership, and that the process to “gift” memberships is being developed.

Secretary/Treasurer Steve Beck asked for a motion to approve the Minutes of the 41st (2021) Annual Business Meeting of the Florida Chapter American Fisheries Society as they appeared in the April 2021 Shellcracker newsletter. The motion was made, seconded and passed.

Steve Beck then presented the 2021 Treasurer's Report. It was noted that changing officers on accounts in January is not ideal due to security issues limiting account access that arose immediately prior to the annual meeting. The chapter ended the year with \$74,539 in total assets, a \$2,075 loss from the beginning of the year. The loss came primarily from our Morgan Stanley mutual funds. The Chapter's main debits in 2021 were our Rottmann Scholarships (\$2,000), sponsorship of the FWC Snook Management Symposium (\$1,000), and virtual 2021 meeting expenditures. The Chapter's main credits in 2021 came from the 2020 AFS parent society dues FL Chapter dues refund check (\$1,230), Chapter dues from PayPal/checks (\$1,039), donations (\$500), and Subunit income from various sources including 2021 Sheepshead Shuffle (\$477), the 2021 Virtual Silent Auction (\$878), and the 2021 ExCom Challenge (\$444).

Steve Beck also gave an update on the Roger Rottmann Memorial Scholarship Fund via an *a priori* email from Larry Connor. The Fund had assets of \$51,611.47 as of 31 December 2021, representing a \$3,858.34 increase from the 31 December 2020 assets of \$47,753.13.

Past-President Bob Heagey then facilitated elections for chapter President-Elect. Candidates Kristy Lewis and Ed Camp each gave a bio about themselves and their vision as chapter president (Kristy Lewis *in absentia*, bio presented by Kira Allen). There was some discussion whether Steve Beck needed to be elected as Secretary since he was appointed by the ExCom in January 2022 to replace Chris Anderson when he stepped down (permitted in the Bylaws). Bylaws also state all officers must be elected at the annual meeting when terms expire, but since the term for Secretary-Treasurer position is open-ended, it is unclear whether Secretary-Treasurer needed to appear on the ballot. It was decided that all appointed officers should be elected at the next annual meeting and Steve Beck was included on the ballot running unopposed for Secretary-Treasurer. Paper ballots were distributed, collected, and tallied by Bob Heagey.

## **Committee Reports**

Membership – Steve Beck gave an update on membership via an *a priori* email from Larry Connor. The Florida Chapter ended the year with 253 members, which is an increase of 93 members from 2020, though this increase may be inflated due to the Covid pandemic. A total of 142 members paid their dues through the Chapter website in 2021. The Chapter's membership included 76 student members. Approximately 64% of the chapter members, 163, were also Society members. The breakdown of student and society member should be used with caution given missing data from some members who did not register through International AFS. Pre-pandemic Chapter membership was 214 total (58 student/175 Society) in 2018, and 223 total (68 student/178 Society) in 2019.

Newsletter – Kyle Miller introduced himself as the new Shellcracker newsletter editor, replacing Scott Bisping who served July 2018-January 2022. He reminded members that they can submit articles for the Shellcracker at any time and types of articles that get highlighted.

Website – Jason O’Connor replaced Chris Anderson as webmaster in 2021. He reviewed changes made to the Chapter website including: 1) updating format to better match the International AFS website, 2) improved information access, 3) updated past meeting information archives, 4) developed annual meeting abstract submission portal and export format to facilitate meeting program assembly.

Raffle/ Silent Auction – Amanda Croteau started by reviewing the 2021 virtual silent auction and how the ExCom Challenge had been created. She highlighted prizes available for the 2022 raffle/auction/challenge including several rods, artwork, and a kayak and how all funds are used for student travel for the next annual meeting. Amanda reported over \$7000 worth of prizes had been donated for the 2022 fundraiser.

Student Scholarships and Awards – Chuck Cichra began his comments by mentioning that this is the 24<sup>th</sup> 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 Natasha Viadero (Florida International University) received the M.S. Rottmann award and Tyler Coleman (University of Florida) received the Ph.D. Rottmann award. He went on to comment about how impressive students resumes and applications are these days, and how that (plus an increased endowment of the Rottmann fund) led to the separation of the award into a M.S. and Ph.D. level. Five universities were represented by this year’s applicants.

He also spoke about the student travel grants and that 14 students applied. While awarding all applicants full travel grants (meals/lodging) for the annual Chapter meeting would have slightly exceeded the student travel grant budget (temporarily increased by no travel needed for the 2020-21 virtual meetings), the Chapter was willing to cover the excess expense. However, two student applicants were not able to attend the meeting so the student travel grant budget was not exceeded. Given the number of applications, this committee will develop stricter evaluation criteria and/or alternative award structure before the 2023 annual meeting.

Florida Chapter Awards – Bob Heagey presented 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. Lew Bullock was then named the 10<sup>th</sup> recipient of the Rich Cailteux Award for his pioneering marine fisheries research and Bob read several nomination letters. There was no Outstanding Achievement Award this year.

Continuing Education – Jason O’Connor reported on the October 2021 Marine Fish ID workshop, materials for which can be found on the Chapter Website. He thanked Vic Dicenzo for conducting the 2022 annual Chapter meeting workshop on Critical Thinking and Problem Solving. He said they would like to organize a summer and fall workshop for 2022 and that they are currently collecting ideas.

Marketing and Membership – Kerry Flaherty-Walia discussed social media pages created/managed by Allison Durland Donahou and Amanda Croteau and encouraged

members to join/follow/like the pages and provide content. Between 25-206 people were reached with each post, with the most popular posts being job announcements. Kerry reviewed International AFS Communication Committee initiatives; presenting the new AFS logo and the need to incorporate this into the Chapter logo. This also provides an opportunity to design the Chapter logo. International AFS is developing guidance on incorporating the new logo and the MMC will work on this for the Chapter and is looking for volunteers.

Policy – Ed Camp detailed providing Chapter support for HR 2773, Recovering America’s Wildlife Act of 2021, which aligned with International AFS advocacy. He also outlined discussions around a decision not to establish a Chapter position on (not become involved in) proposed changes to the Lake County Water Authority that appeared to increase political influence on water management decisions. He also shared that the next policy topic could be proposed changes to the Lacy Act which could negatively affect marine ornamental fish aquaculture and that we were waiting to see if International AFS will develop any guidance.

2017 Tampa Profits Ad Hoc – Eric Nagid provided comments *a priori* via email, stating this committee has been dissolved and that the remaining funds from the International AFS 2017 meeting in Tampa should be used to send Jack Dequine Award winners to International AFS meetings and provide sponsorship to Southern Division meetings.

New Venue Search Committee – Matt Wegener provided comments *a priori* via email and Kevin Johnson provided a brief presentation on meeting venue history and considerations. Information has been compiled on FFA cost and amenities, reasons for moving locations, requirements for a new venue, potential locations, and selection criteria for a new location. There has also been renewed interest in doing a joint meeting with surrounding states. The president of Georgia AFS made this point during their recent state meeting. This, of course, comes with its own hurdles but it’s very much on the table.

## **Student Subunit Report**

Student Subunit President Casey Murray began by promoting student research by discussing the Reefs to Rivers blog, Shellcracker student highlight articles, and the Subunit’s Facebook and Instagram pages. Casey then reminded the chapter to support subunit fundraising efforts which include purchasing merchandise, utilizing the Amazon Smile account, and signing up for the 5th annual Sheepshead Shuffle. She encouraged members to sign up for Amazon Smile, which generates donations to the Chapter when items are purchased on Amazon at no cost to the purchaser. Casey then presented the newly elected officers for the Student Subunit: President: Nick Castillo (FIU), Vice-President: Brent McKenna (FAU), Secretary/Treasurer: Jonathan Rodemann (FIU), and University Liaison: Mack White (FIU).

## **Old Business**

Aquatic Cleanup Events

Nick Trippel spoke about the beginnings of the now annual FL AFS Aquatic Cleanup events around the Harris Chain of Lakes and how the event has led to a good relationship with local government and facilitated future interactions. Over 2000 lbs of garbage was removed with over 6000 lbs removed since the program began. He mentioned that the events are held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in September, which coincides with the International Coastal Clean-up. He said that cleanup events can be organized anywhere and at any time and encouraged members to contact him if they want to host an event and/or attend events held by other groups. He reminded members to record and submit the amount of trash (number of items, pounds of trash, etc.).

### **Installation of New Officers**

Bob Heagey congratulated Ed Camp on being voted the new President-Elect and Steve Beck as Secretary/Treasurer. Chelsey Crandall then presented a plaque to Dan Nelson for his time as Chapter President. She also presented a plaque to Casey Murray for her time as Student Subunit President. A plaque will be sent to Scott Bisping for his time as Newsletter Editor (July 2018 – January 2022).

### **New business**

Chelsey Crandall announced that the 2023 meeting location and time has yet to be determined and is a top priority post-meeting.

Chelsey Crandall announced the formation of a new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee following the International AFS initiative (volunteers needed), which would utilize the International AFS Equal Opportunity Section toolkit.

Dan Nelson announced the need for two Code of Conduct officers to help facilitate the International AFS Code of Conduct initiative.

Dan Nelson announced that the Chapter will host the 2029 Southern Division AFS annual meeting.

Chuck Cichra presented the new annual Dennis Panches Memorial Scholarship to be provided by the West Palm Beach Fishing Club. This club often donates merchandise to the annual meeting raffle/auction and in the past won an International AFS conservation award. He stated the club was interested in providing the Florida Chapter an annual scholarship \$2,500-\$5,000 in value in exchange for promoting the club/Dennis Punch, and the club would like the Chapter to figure out distribution requirements. Volunteers are needed and a new committee may need to be established.

Chelsey Crandall thanked membership and adjourned the business meeting at 1815 hours.