

# The Outlet



A publication of the Montana Chapter American Fisheries Society  
September 2006

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

It is hard to believe that another year has slipped by so quickly. This is my last message to you as President of the Montana Chapter of the American Fisheries Society. I will be handing over the reins to the very capable Leanne Roulson as of September first. I also want to welcome David Schmetterling to the EXCOM as our president-elect!!

First, I want to thank you all for your hard work over the last year. A chapter can only be successful if its membership is involved and we are fortunate to have very active members!! As a chapter we have commented on various topics related to fisheries in Montana and hosted a meeting for over 400 members of the Western Division of AFS. Our committees continue to be very proactive.

Second, I want to remind everyone that there are always opportunities to stay involved in the chapter. Committees and officers are always needed. Please contact any of the EXCOM members if you have questions. The highlight of my year has been working with folks across the state for the resources of Montana. Give it a try – we will all benefit!

Lastly, I want to remind you all how fortunate we are to have the resources we do here in Montana. I spent 4 months working in Washington D.C. this last year, and I was amazed how “in the limelight” Montana resources continue to be! Congress continues to hear about the good things that happen here in a cooperative manner with landowners, agency personnel, and on our private and public lands.

Continue your good work out there and I thank you for the opportunity to serve you!

*Kate Walker*

Montana Chapter AFS President

## Summary of 2006 Western Division Meeting

The Montana Chapter should be proud! We successfully hosted the Western Division of the American Fisheries Society on June 15-17, 2006. There were **440 registrants** who enjoyed Montana hospitality at its best! Thanks to all of you who made it a success!

With the funds raised by hosting the meeting, EXCOM voted to put additional money into the Wally McClure Scholarship Fund. **There will now be a scholarship offered for graduate students and undergraduate students.**

Additional information on the meeting can be found in *The Tributary* (WDAFS newsletter at [www.wdafs.org](http://www.wdafs.org)).

## **Montana Chapter Awards Presented:**

**Educator:** Ms. Robin Arnold, Bozeman MT

**Groups, Organizations or other Individuals:** Cherry Creek Westslope Restoration  
Scott Barndt Darrin Watschke Clint Sestrich Bruce Roberts Travis Lohrenz  
Pat Clancey Brent Mabbot Carter Kruse

**Natural Resource Professional:** Mark Petroni, Ennis Ranger District

**Outstanding Fishery Professional:** Pat Byorth, Bozeman, MT

**Best Student Paper:** Brian Bellgraph, MSU

**Wally McClure Scholarship:** Windy Davis, MSU

**AFS Special Award for WEB Site:** Eileen Ryce and Lee Nelson

## **Officers Elected:**

**President-elect:** Davis Schmetterling

**Committee Chair Changes:**

**Awards:** Travis Horton

**Resource Management Concerns:** Leslie Bahn

**Legislation:** Leanne Roulson

## **Business Meeting Highlights:**

- Bylaw changes were accepted and now officially changed to give more flexibility to the Chapter in the formation and release of committees.
  - The status paper for torrent sculpin was reviewed and posted. Status papers have now been prepared for all Species of Special Concern except spoonhead sculpin.
  - RAF funding of \$5,000 request from the National Parks Conservation Association was approved.
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## **Montana Chapter 2007 Annual Meeting Announcement**

Dates: **February 14-16, 2007**

Location: Hilton Garden Inn  
Missoula, Montana

Call for Symposia Ideas – **Due October 15, 2006**

Respond to David Schmetterling at [dschmett@bigsky.net](mailto:dschmett@bigsky.net)

## **Montana Chapter 2007 Continuing Education Announcement**

Dates: **February 13, 2007**

Location: Hilton Garden Inn  
Missoula, Montana

Call for Continuing Education Topics – **Due October 15, 2006**

Respond to Lisa Eby at [lisa.eby@umontana.edu](mailto:lisa.eby@umontana.edu)

# Montana AFS Meeting Trade Show – VENDORS NEEDED

Dates: **February 14-16, 2007**  
Location: Hilton Garden Inn  
Missoula, Montana

If you are interested in participating or know of companies that are please contact:  
Kate Walker at [kpwalker@fs.fed.us](mailto:kpwalker@fs.fed.us) ASAP!

## 2007 Awards for MCAFS – *start nominating now!*

Categories include:

- Outdoor Writers or Reporters
- Educators
- Landowners
- Groups, Organizations or other Individuals
- Career Achievement
- Natural Resource Professional
- Outstanding Fishery Professional

Send letters of nomination to: Travis Horton at [thorton@state.mt.us](mailto:thorton@state.mt.us)



### Wally McClure Scholarship



#### Call for Applications!

The *Wally McClure Student Fisheries Scholarship* shall be awarded to students pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree in aquatic natural resources from a University/College in Montana with a research project focused on native fisheries conservation, management, and habitat restoration.

*Purpose:* To recognize and promote academic and professional excellence in the field of fisheries science and especially native fish conservation and management, and habitat restoration.

There are now 2 categories! Undergraduate and Graduate Awards will be made at the annual meeting in 2007.

**Please submit applications no later than December 1, 2006** to Darin Watschke, Fisheries Biologist, Custer National Forest, 1310 Main Street, Billings, MT, 59105, or email to [dwatschke@fs.fed.us](mailto:dwatschke@fs.fed.us)

*Eligibility:* A student recipient must meet the following criteria:

1. Full-time enrollment as an undergraduate or graduate student in aquatic natural resources at a University/College in Montana (**Fall 2006/Spring 2007**).
2. Research project shall focus on the conservation or management of native fish and/or aquatic habitat restoration.

For the Full Application Package – please go to Montana Chapter AFS web page <http://www.fisheries.org/AFSmontana/>

# Chapter Notes

At the 2006 MCAFS meeting, we were honored with the 2006 Collaborative Group Award. Not all of us were present to accept, and those present were so stunned by the honor that they were rendered uncharacteristically mute! So, as a group, we wanted to take the opportunity to thank the Chapter for the award. We feel that such group award is appropriate because the fisheries work we've been able to accomplish together would not have been possible if we didn't share a common vision of fish conservation beyond our respective affiliations.

Thanks again!

Sincerely,

Darin Watschke, Carter Kruse, Pat Clancey, Brent Mabbot, Bruce Roberts, Clint Sestrich and Scott Barndt

**Tag, You're It!** Check out the latest "Tag" article written by **Craig Barfoot**. Thanks Craig for great article! The next "Tag" will be from **Scott Barndt**, so Scott can't be "uncharacteristically mute" for long!!

Thanks Travis, I'm greatly honored with being tagged, which is the reason I've procrastinated for nearly six months before trying to put some thoughts on paper. Recently, however, I became more anxious about my delayed response out of fear that Dalby or Kornick might come after me with various implements of torture, especially now that much of this year's fish tormenting activities are finished. I have struggled greatly with a topic for this column—I desired to write something funny and clever, but I'm afraid the previous authors set the standard too high. In fact, a few of the pieces were so humorous that they caused me to openly chortle while alone within the confines of my office, adding to my peers' suspicions that I just might be a tad off.

That being said, I'll take a stab at this and see what kind of stream of consciousness I can put together. I decided to use my turn with the "Tag You're It" feature to inform chapter members about me and then use my twisted life story as a springboard to examine an issue that increasingly vexes me.

I'll venture a guess that my background is reasonably unique and perhaps somewhat incongruous among us fish squeezers. I grew up in a logging family and spent most of my early years in the Black Hills of South Dakota, but also here in Montana. So, as you might imagine, I've spent a lifetime outdoors, interacting with the environment on various different levels. My perceptions of the natural world and the ways in which I interact with it have certainly changed through time. But in the last two decades, I've come to look at the wild places and the not so wild places around us in far less utilitarian terms and as exceedingly more complex and valuable "resources".

As a kid, I hung out with lots of other loggers and ranchers and their offspring. I observed, for example, that a 30-.06 was a multi-purpose tool that could be used for hunting, fishing, and even obtaining the Christmas tree (don't ask). I learned that a substantial injury in the woods would earn someone a spot on what was called the fishing team—that is, fishing is what was done until a person could once again carry a chainsaw or climb up into a skidder. To us, catch-and-release fishing was generally a foreign concept, with all trout going onto a stringer and the mountain and white suckers going into my grandmother's garden as fertilizer.

Perhaps the overriding influence on my choice to become a fisheries biologist was a close proximity and near constant interaction with the natural world as a young person. This interaction eventually grew to the point that I strongly desired to learn more about natural systems and become a conservationist and hopefully give something back through my profession. In my case this progression was facilitated by the literature of natural history and by the learning opportunities that undergraduate and graduate studies provided. Okay, that's enough about me.

Here's where I segue to that issue that vexes me. I am increasingly puzzled and I guess I could even say somewhat dismayed by what appears to be a growing disconnect between people (kids and adults) and the natural world, even here in the Rocky Mountain west where wild country is just minutes away even in the most urban of areas. Maybe I'm just not very observant, but unfortunately it seems that kids don't spend nearly enough time catching frogs, turning over rocks, or climbing trees these days. As for adults, most lead very busy lives, so for many people hunting and fishing outings provide one of the few annual opportunities to reconnect and interact with the natural world. Unfortunately, however, these pursuits increasingly appear to be centered on gadgetry, technology, and mechanization rather than looked upon as opportunities to interact with wild places on a more basic and far less frenetic level. It's my observation, for example, that hunting season these days seems more like an occasion for people to break out the GPS units and four-wheelers, instead of a compass, some boot leather, and a strong desire to learn more about wild animals and their habitats while pursuing some good organic table fare.

I'm dismayed by all of this because the growing detachment from wild places certainly won't help us as fish biologists manage and maintain the natural systems that we depend upon. We need a knowledgeable and concerned public to work with us. I don't have illusions of grandeur and I can't offer any earth-shattering formulas for changing the world. What I'd like to suggest though, is that us fish folks provide good examples for kids, our families, and our neighbors.

Many of the people I most admire are naturalists or scientists-naturalists and I think they provide great role models that should be emulated by all of us in small ways if we can, so we too can be good role models. I know, I'm mostly preaching to the choir, but I had to start somewhere, and being "tagged" provided me with a captive audience. That being said, I've a few suggestions for activities that will maybe help all of us to keep our connections strong with the earth around us and possibly influence the public and also the next generation of conservationists. I purposely chose a few somewhat arcane (at least to many people) activities and skipped obvious ones like hiking and fishing.

- Break out the field guides, and go to the woods, fields, ditches, or ravines—set a goal to know the plants and animals of your region. Familiarize yourself not only with the life history and ecology of Montana's fishes, but also its plants, insects, birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles. Set a goal, for example, to learn a new plant or two each week during the spring (if you are like me you'll have to look most of them up again the following year). During winter strap on a pair of snowshoes or cross-county skis and use Murie's "A Field Guide to Animal Tracks" to determine what animals are present in the local drainages.
- Record phenological observations in your home area and encourage others to do the same. I keep a somewhat inconsistent and haphazard logbook of what I observe on our three wooded acres and it's actually kind of cool to know for example that spotted towhees arrived two weeks earlier in 2005 than they did in 2004 or that the single rein orchid I've been able to find on our place has flowered on nearly the same date for the last few years.
- Read and share a good book by a great naturalist or scientist-naturalist—Olaus and Mardy Marie, Aldo and Luna Leopold, Valerius Giest, Robert Behnke, Frank and John Craighead, and Theodore and Kermit Roosevelt are a few of my favorites.
- Break out the dip nets and sweep nets and see what lives in the local pond or field. Okay, it might be best to have the kids join you on this one, otherwise folks might worry about you, but I would argue that a scientist is just an adult that has maintained a child's curiosity and sense of wonder.
- Get your hands into the earth—plant a garden with your family or neighbors. This one isn't exactly interacting with the wild, but it's a great outdoor activity. My family's garden plot is laughably small, but it yields some fresh produce and our two-year old daughter thinks that picking tomatoes is somewhat akin to going on a treasure hunt.

**Scott Barndt**      *You're it!*

**Tag, You're It**" (TYI) is a great opportunity for Montana Chapter AFS fisheries professionals to express ideas or anecdotes to entertain others and/or to explore issues. TYI takes advantage of Internet communication and provides an excellent opportunity for members to get to know one another better. *Check out the previous Tag, You're It articles on the MCAFS website!*

## *Other Conference News:*

### **SECOND CALL FOR PAPERS!**

The Southern Division AFS Reservoir Committee invites abstracts for contributed oral and poster presentations for the

### **4<sup>th</sup> North American Reservoir Symposium**



**June 6-9, 2007  
Atlanta, Georgia**

The symposium's theme is "Balancing Fisheries Management and Water Uses for Impounded River Systems" and will address the challenges of managing reservoir fisheries in the context of competing water uses. Within this scope, topics for contributed papers and posters include: (A) Balancing fisheries issues with basin-wide water uses; (B) Aquatic habitat; (C) Human dimensions; and (D) Catch and release and use of regulations.

Due to limited space in the program, poster submissions are encouraged. Both contributed oral and poster abstracts should be submitted electronically to Dr. Mike S. Allen at [msal@ufl.edu](mailto:msal@ufl.edu) by October 16, 2006. An e-mail confirmation of the abstract submission will be sent upon receipt. A formal acceptance to the symposium will be sent by December 1, 2006.

When submitting the abstract, please indicate the topic above that best fits the presentation and indicate your format preference as: (A) Oral presentation only; (B) Poster presentation only; or (C) Oral presentation preferred, but poster presentation acceptable.

Proceedings of the symposium will be published in an AFS book, with manuscripts due for submittal by June 1, 2007. The external review process and publication is expected to take no longer than one year from June 2007. Oral presentations will be limited to 20 minutes with a 15-minute presentation and 5 minutes for speaker introduction and questions.

*Additional information about the Symposium can be found at: [www.sdafs.org/reservoir/symposium](http://www.sdafs.org/reservoir/symposium).*

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