

The Outlet



A publication of the Montana Chapter American Fisheries Society
January 2012

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President's Corner

Craig Barfoot, President MCAFS

I'll be forthright with you and admit that I put off writing this column for about as long as propriety would allow. With that in mind and with the New Year upon me, I sat down at the computer early one morning over the holiday break and began considering a message, but daylight came and I regrettably still had nothing on paper. So, with the day dawning clear and very little snow on the ground, I decided to step over our back fence and take a hike in the tribal forestland behind the house, thinking that walk would inspire me, but also knowing that I was probably just compounding my procrastination.



I started the hike at a quick pace and, for the first mile or two, kept up a kind of mindless ground-eating stride that was certainly not geared towards my objective of thoughtfully considering a message for the looming Outlet deadline. But after a while, my eyes were drawn, as they always are, to a great stand of pumpkin-colored ponderosa pines. These are big stately trees and over the years I've watched and discovered a variety of natural occurrences among them such as the cone-crawling antics of red crossbills, a wide-eyed northern saw-whet owl peering from a northern flicker cavity, and a mountain lion cache containing a buck white-tailed deer.

So, what does all that have to do with a president's message? Well, being in those woodlands prompted me to think that almost all of what we see today in the natural world is the legacy of past and ongoing decisions about conservation and natural resource management. The simple existence of those large old pines and the remaining ecological function of the surrounding managed forest in a generally suburban landscape is the outcome of the application of knowledge, values, and management decisions. These thoughts turned my thinking towards natural resource management and conservation in the past and present, something that's been much on my mind of late, especially given the press that these issues are receiving in the current Montana political scene.

President's Corner, continued

When I think of the history of conservation my thoughts often gravitate towards the sweeping decisions and actions that were aimed at protecting and conserving some of our most stunning landscapes, plants, and animals (e.g., the establishment of Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks and the Bob Marshall Wilderness). Maybe this is because I've watched "The National Parks, America's Best Idea" by Ken Burns so many times that the mere sight of the DVD box for the series elicits a collective groan from my wife and daughter. The landscapes protected in these past efforts continue to inspire large numbers of people and they often remain strongholds for native plants and animals, but conserving these areas and the biological productivity found within them was almost always highly controversial. In fact, many of these big land management decisions and conservation efforts finally came to fruition only because people of tremendous wealth or political power pushed them through.

Today, conservationists with great wealth and political influence seem relatively uncommon, and conservation is typically accomplished on smaller, but no less important scales (after all, the collective effect of many small ripples can be a large splash). That often leaves the job of maintaining the functionality and biological productivity of our existing landscapes to what could be referred to as the quiet conservationists, and I think that as fisheries scientists and managers we play an important role in that effort, namely by doing our day-to-day jobs, but also by providing decision makers with science-based information that can be incorporated into the thoughtful management of natural resources. In Montana we are fortunate to have an amazing diversity of functioning fishscapes, and they are certainly worth working for and keeping. We're also fortunate to have you, the MCAFS membership, working passionately and quietly on behalf of our aquatic resources, whether it's the unrivaled rainbow trout fishery of the Missouri River, a remnant cutthroat trout population in an unnamed stream, or an intact native fish assemblage in a prairie waterway.

Sometimes, however, the day-to-day office work in the depths of winter can leave even the most dedicated professional exhausted. Well, one way to recharge your batteries is to attend the MCAFS annual meeting and learn about what's going on around the state, reconnect with other fisheries professionals, and contribute to the business of the Chapter. This year President-elect Travis Horton has been working hard and putting lots of thought into the meeting, which will be in Helena. The meeting theme *Successfully Navigating the Social and Political Realm of Conservation* centers on a very relevant and current topic, and I am very much looking forward to the plenary talks and discussions. It will be great; please plan on being there. In the meantime keep up the often unrecognized great work, but think big too. Who knows, maybe I'll be watching you in the next series by Ken Burns.

Next, I'd like remember Dale Miller, a Chapter member who died last June, and one that exemplified the title of quiet conservationist. Dale worked tirelessly on behalf of aquatic resources in Montana and elsewhere. Throughout his career he was primarily employed in the private sector, although much of his work was for governmental or non-profit resource organizations. Dale's work focused on stream channel restoration, but recent jobs included a dam removal project on the Clearwater River and design and construction oversight on fish barriers for protection of cutthroat trout populations. Last June, less than two weeks before his death, Dale hosted a living wake on the banks of the flooding Gallatin River; his composure and dignity proved to be an example that I'll never forget, and the streams and rivers lost an ally with his passing. Here's to his memory.

Finally, I'd like to again thank everyone who helped with last year's annual meeting and thank the committees for the ongoing work they do. I'd also like to make a pitch for volunteerism. There is plenty of opportunity and need for people to contribute to the chapter, so please consider it. Volunteering doesn't mean you have to run for office. You could instead become active in a committee or write something for the Outlet (not an easy task in my opinion). Give it a thought. See you in Helena.



Announcing:



***Successfully Navigating the Social
and Political Realm of Conservation***

The 45th annual meeting of the Montana Chapter
of the American Fisheries Society
6 – 10 February 2012
Red Lion Colonial Hotel
Helena, Montana

To reserve a room, contact the Red Lion Colonial Hotel at:
2301 Colonial Drive
Helena, MT 59601
Phone: 406.443-2100
Or
Toll Free: 1.800.733.5466

Ask for the MT AFS Reserved Block of Rooms



Updates will be posted on the MT AFS website:
<http://www.fisheries.org/units/AFSmontana/index.html>

Abstracts due 20 January 2011

E-mail abstracts to thorton@mt.gov

For abstract guidelines go to:

<http://www.fisheries.org/units/AFSmontana/abstract.html>

For additional information email or phone Travis Horton at: thorton@mt.gov or 406-994-3155

MAKE A DONATION TO THE RAFFLE

Please consider donating something to the annual raffle fundraiser. The proceeds from the raffle are used to fund scholarships and to generate funds for the student subunits. The raffle is always an entertaining part of the banquet evening, so help make this another fun year by donating art, books, trips, etc.

For more information contact Michael Duncan at MSU Subunit
michaelduncan12@hotmail.com

Resource Action Fund

The Resource Action Fund (RAF) was established by MCAFS in 1989 and has provided nearly \$170,000 to support projects relating to Montana's aquatic resources. Originally designed to support small outreach and on-the-ground projects proposed by Chapter members, the fund has evolved to consider all types of RAF proposals, including habitat, management, conservation, fish passage, research, and data management projects from both members and non-members. Focus areas include projects showing clear benefit to native and special concern species.

RAF grant applications must clearly state how the proposed project will provide at least one of the following:

- benefits to one or more of Montana's native species of special concern;
- short and/or long term benefits to Montana's or regional fisheries resources;
- support of the objectives of the MCAFS;
- relevance to ongoing and previous work in the area (e.g., geographic area, research area, etc.).

Further, the RAF grant application should demonstrate the following:

- the support of an appropriate MCAFS committee, if expenditures relate to a committee's responsibility;
- coordination with applicable local, state, or federal agency personnel;
- all necessary permits or licenses have been obtained or are obtainable;
- funding from sources other than MCAFS has been obtained, solicited or denied;
- no additional commitment of MCAFS funds would be necessary to complete the project.

RAF grant applications can be submitted using the form provided on web site to the current MCAFS president at any time (although see additional guidelines for grant requests in excess of \$2,000 below). All applications will be reviewed by the MCAFS executive committee (EXCOM), comprised of the president, past-president, president-elect, and secretary-treasurer. The EXCOM will evaluate and act upon all individual grant requests of \$2,000 or less within 60 days of receipt. The disposition of these requests will be reported in the EXCOM meeting minutes, and posted on the web page. Requests greater than \$2,000 are required to be presented to the full membership for vote at the annual meeting. The annual meeting is typically held in mid-February each year, thus applicants requesting more than \$2,000 must submit their applications by January 15 each year for consideration at the upcoming annual meeting. Applications for more than \$2,000 received after January 15th each year will not be considered for funding until the following year's annual meeting. The EXCOM will review the proposals prior to the annual business meeting and provide the membership with an EXCOM recommendation. The membership attending the business meeting will approve or decline these larger RAF requests after considering the EXCOM's recommendation.

All RAF requests with merit will be posted on the MCAFS web page upon receipt. Members are free to provide comments regarding pending RAF applications to any member of the EXCOM, although there will not be an official comment period for requests of less than \$2,000.

Wally McClure Scholarship

The Montana Chapter of the American Fisheries Society will be presenting two Wally McClure Student Fisheries Scholarships this February at our annual meeting in Helena, Montana. The McClure Scholarships will be awarded to individuals pursuing a graduate or undergraduate degree in aquatic natural resources from a University/College in Montana.

Please visit the MCAFS website for scholarship, membership and meeting details. The McClure Scholarship application is posted in two places on the web – under the “grants” tab, and also at the home page under AFS business news.

<http://www.fisheries.org/units/AFSmontana/index.html>

2012 Awards for MCAFS—nominations due now!

The deadline for nominations is 16 January 2012.

Categories include:

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

There are 2 new award categories to consider.

- Mysis award – to recognize any gaffes, mishaps or blunders that deserve to be formally recognized. Does not require consent of the nominee to receive the award.
- Award of Excellence – to recognize significant achievements, efforts, or milestones that benefit our aquatic resources of individuals not fitting into other award categories.

Send letters of nomination to Ken Staigmiller at: kstaigmiller@mt.gov

In Memoriam

Your fellow fisheries biologists mourn the passing of **Phil Stewart** who worked for Montana FWP for 27 years. We also remember **Dale Miller** who worked on many fisheries projects as a private consultant. These men left behind a legacy of good fishery management and a circle of friends. We honor their memory.

Treasurer's Report from 11/28/2011 to 1/5/2012

Prepared by Amber Steed, Treasurer

1. Total Chapter Assets/ Liabilities as of 1/5/12

Checking account	\$10,240.36
Trust fund	\$27,688.55
Wally McClure scholarship fund	\$28,170.35
Total	\$66,099.26

2. Checking account—First Interstate Bank

Starting balance	11/28/2011		\$11,154.36
Gains/(Loss)			(\$914.00)
Ending balance	1/5/2011		\$10,240.36
Withdrawals for the period			
12/22/2011	1289	Lotek Wireless, Inc. (Sauger RAF)	\$2200.00
		<i>Total withdrawals for the period</i>	<i>\$2,200.00</i>
Deposits for the period			
12/22/2011		Lotek vendor booth and meeting registration fee	\$385.00
		PPL sponsorship	\$400.00
		River Design Group sponsorship	\$250.00
		Smith Root, Inc. sponsorship	\$200.00
		Frigid Units, Inc. sponsorship	\$50.00
		Reconciled \$1 difference between checkbook register and account	\$1.00
		<i>Total deposits for the period</i>	<i>\$1,286.00</i>

3. Trust fund—PAX World fund balance

Starting balance	11/28/2011	\$26,195.06
Gains/(Loss)		\$1,493.49
Ending balance	1/5/2012	\$27,688.55

4. Wally McClure scholarship fund

Starting balance	11/28/2011	\$27,120.55
Gains/(Loss)		\$1,049.80
Ending balance	1/5/2012	\$28,170.35

American Fisheries Society – annual meeting

Come join us in the Twin Cities!

Begin making plans to attend next year's Annual Meeting in the Land of 10,000 Lakes, beautiful Minnesota. The meeting focus is Fisheries Networks: Building Ecological, Social and Professional Relationships. Conference attendees will have the opportunity to network with fisheries professionals and students, stay current on the latest in fisheries science, and enjoy the sights and scenes of the Twin Cities and beyond.

AFS President Bill Fisher; Meeting Co-Chairs Don Pereira, Brian Borkholder, and Ann Schneider; and Program Co-Chairs Peter Jacobson and Charles Anderson are pleased to invite you to the 2012 AFS Annual Meeting in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Minnesota. The Twin Cities have much to offer. The AFS Technical Program will be hosted at the River Centre in Saint Paul while other meeting events will take advantage of Minneapolis venues. Located at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers in the "City of Lakes", the Twin Cities offers nearby recreational, entertainment, and educational opportunities. Please take a look at our "Things to Do" page for more information.

The 2012 AFS Annual Meeting will bring professionals together to network and share knowledge in fisheries science and management. Speakers will present a broad range of Fisheries topics at the plenary session, technical symposia and poster session as well as in continuing education courses. The Twin Cities meeting will feature a broad range of topics including ecological networks and trophic food webs, social networks that inform human-fisheries interactions, and professional networks that support and enhance interactions among fisheries scientists. Regional topics will reflect the diversity of Minnesota both in terms of the variety of its fisheries, its unique location at the headwaters of three continental drainages, and its wide range of resource professionals. Typical Upper Midwest topics address special regulations, shoreland and stream restoration projects, watershed and landuse, fisheries habitat, human dimensions, aquatic invasive species, fish culture, climate change, aquatic education, and GIS applications. Management and research topics cover a broad range of fish species such as walleye, northern pike, muskellunge, trout, bass, catfish, sturgeon, and various panfish as well as non-game fishes. We also invite symposia topics that will have broad coast-to-coast appeal, such as state of the art biotelemetry methods.

Be a participant in the American Fisheries Society network by attending the 2012 Annual Meeting in Minnesota's Twin Cities next August. Join us in expanding our ecological, social and professional relationships centered around our common interest in Fisheries.



Tag, You're It!

Wade Fredenberg, US Fish & Wildlife Service

Me and Andy Rooney

I've felt the weight of the world on my shoulders these past few months after being "Tagged" by David Schmetterling. I mean, there are exceedingly few honors/responsibilities/opportunities a fish-squeezer can garner in their career as awesome as this. My first thought, fresh on the heels of the 2011 meeting, was to go off on a rant about AFS presentations today- after seeing one too many "horrendograms" displayed on the old Powerpoint projector. You know who you are, so STOP IT! There's the "Holy Crap I have a lot of data from my 2-hour university lecture and I didn't really want to whittle it down so I'll just show it all to you in 10 minutes even though you can't begin to see or interpret this" style. Or there's the "17 minute Introduction and family travelogue followed by an unsupported conclusion – BaBoom" style.



One of my particular favorites is the "last minute morning prep using black font on a dark blue background (never previewed) but it looked so good on the monitor" talk - it does tend to make you listen more to the speaker, though! Finally, how about the "faux early conclusion leading one to think we will hit the break early to relieve my bulging bladder- followed by a whole 'nother talk to fill my time." All I'm saying is that some of us older people who are not quite so tech savvy would just like to see some consequential information concisely presented without all the bells and whistles followed by honest to goodness questions. PLEASE!

Now, if that makes me sound just a little bit like Andy Rooney, well YES, that is my secret fear..... Bob Wiltshire and I are channeling Andy. I mean, the guy croaked at the age of 92, just one month after retiring. So, if you're counting, I've decided to work until 93, just in case. After all, I do have a 21 year old salamander at home that leads a stress-free life and needs to be provided for, and his trust fund is sinking right now. And isn't it just amazing how long the Fisheries of Montana have been going to hell without ever having actually gotten there? With climate change, this is no doubt going to finally be it for many species- or maybe not. The best biologists I have observed had a common ability to base their actions and decisions 51% on data and 49% on good gut level observation and intuition. That's a skill to die for. I mean, if you need proof that sitting in front of a computer every day and crunching models is an abject waste of intellect, just look at what economists do and then look at the resulting state of our economy. No wonder they call it the "dismal science".

I do sympathize with the seemingly poor timing of kids today who are just getting out of school and eager to jump into the field of fisheries. My best advice, start at the bottom (with the suckers and sculpins) and SLOWLY work your way up into the epilimnion. You'll be smarter, savvier, and a better manager if you actually spend and savor time in the field communing with the fish and you just might actually know what the hell you're talking about when you get to a position of responsibility. And BEWARE the "Shifting Baseline

Tag, You're It! *continued*

Syndrome.” As Daniel Pauly noted, “Essentially, this syndrome has arisen because each generation of fisheries scientists accepts as a baseline the stock size and species composition that occurred at the beginning of their careers, and uses this to evaluate changes”. When the next generation starts its career, the stocks have further declined, but it is the stocks at that time that serve as a new baseline. The result obviously is a gradual shift of the baseline, a gradual accommodation of the creeping disappearance of resource species, and inappropriate reference points for evaluating economic losses resulting from overfishing, or for identifying targets for rehabilitation measures.” Wiser words were never spoken.

In all sincerity, I wouldn't trade my now-33 year career in fisheries for any other. Anybody can be an attorney, but it takes REAL MEN AND WOMEN OF GENIUS TO BE FISH BIOLOGISTS.

Today, I salute you, Mr. Fish Biologist.... You Pragmatic Picassos of Piscatorial Pursuits... You Purveyors of Piscine Prognostication! You heard it would be a career of glamour and distinction. Little did you know you would get to travel by boat in the rain, mud and darkness to exotic new places; sleep six to a room on State per diem in a louse-ridden motel while eating tuna from a can for dinner and living the high life at yet another irrelevant politically-correct training session. Who could have guessed that a fisheries career would decimate your chances of snagging a beautiful mate and having superior children born with one leg up on a Harvard education; shattering your dreams of becoming a “respected” scientist while bankrupting your own family. Now you sit, contemplating carp in a gillnet, all the while sheltered from the wind and yellow jackets, smugly ensconced in a Government-built crapper no bigger than the cardboard box your refrigerator came in..... celebrate your career in the Great Outdoors. Occupy That! Once again you're dragging your bleary self out of the sack for yet another all-night electrofishing adventure, whilst you chisel ice from the deck of your rundown tub of a leaky jet sled, in hopes of making it down the section one more time without the motor quitting and snagging you on a sweeper to dangle like a rag doll in the winds of time. Starbucks schmabucks! Look at you exuding COOL, in the haze of generator smoke with a painfully distended bladder fueled by a clinical overdose of Town Pump coffee, resisting to the end the urge to drop your otherworldly neoprenes patched with duct tape and reeking with the stench of rotting fish slime no longer recognizable as foreign to your olfactory organ. Yes, you Mr. (Ms.) COOL have a Masters Degree. Even though you work for peanuts and your true Master is the IT Department and admin staff at HQ and you live to serve the goober who works on your car but intuitively knows more about fish than you ever will, GO AHEAD, kick up your non-gripping, felt-free booties and crack open an ice cold Bud Light (off duty, of course) you depraved, electrode twirling mime. Because YOU SIR (MA'AM) are living the High Life!

And I wouldn't trade it for the world! Now go get 'em mates! And **Chris Clancy**, TAG you're it!

Editor's Note: Wade really does have a 21 yr old salamander. He is not referring to any family members.

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