

# Outlet



MONTANA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY

January 2023

## President's Hook By Dave Stagliano



Dave Stagliano: MTAFS President

Change is coming and it's not always good. No, this piece will not address Climate Change, even though the drought of 2021 is still fresh in our minds, as one of the top 10 hottest and driest. We even devoted the Plenary Session of our 2022 meeting to discuss its effects on our fisheries.

But oh, how a year can change things! A cool, wet start to 2022 (including record flooding) kept Montana landscapes green well into July, and skies less smoky from wildfires. As I write this in early December, we are already deep into an early winter that started with the coldest November in decades. It has me reflecting upon some of the really cold winters that I've experienced here. 2023 marks my 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a Montana resident, moving here from Moscow, Idaho. Travis Horton always thought I was following him, first to Idaho

in 2000, and then to MT in 2003, after we overlapped as graduate students at Kansas State.

Truthfully, I was just trying to find some unpopulated mountains and rivers to explore after living in Denver, Colorado in the mid-90's. What I saw happening with population growth on the Front Range from 1995 to 1998 truly disgusted me and eventually caused my departure: open space was being gobbled up by sub-divisions, rampant McMansion growth pushing into the foothills (i.e., the wildland interface), traffic turning my 15-minute commute into 40 min., trail-head parking areas overflowing, trail use conflicts devolving into fistfights, my secret fishing, camping and hunting spots overrun. I could go on, but you get the picture. If any of this sounds or feels familiar, you might live in, or adjacent to, one of the many Montana cities that are recently experiencing unprecedented growth, especially since 2020. This change is not good, and I fear that Montana is losing its 'Last Best Place' moniker (many folks say that it's happened years ago). No longer are people moving here for jobs, they are just moving here

because they can, with expendable cash and lots of free time. These folks are buying up houses, land, ranches, pricing out locals, contributing to suburban sprawl and traffic, all while putting a strain on our aquatic resources through consumptive and non-consumptive uses. Management conflicts are looming large.

With change comes an opportunity to act. We can act as a cohesive, scientific organization to try and bring science to inform policy on these issues. Our President Elect, Leo Rosenthal, will be planning and executing our 2023 meeting: the first in-person meeting in two years, yay! The theme of this meeting will be "Population Growth and its effects on Montana's Fisheries and Aquatic Resources." Now is the opportunity for our membership to step up. First and foremost, participate: Please register and attend the meeting. Secondly, if you have any projects that fall within this theme, please share them with your colleagues with a presentation. Finally, consider becoming involved in one of our committees or to be a future member of the ExCom.

### Important Dates:

- **JANUARY 13, 2023:** ANNUAL MEETING ABSTRACT DEADLINE
- **JANUARY 23, 2023:** WALLY MCCLURE SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE
- **JANUARY 23, 2023:** AWARD NOMINATIONS DEADLINE
- **JANUARY 30, 2023:** RAF SUBMISSION DEADLINE
- **FEBRUARY 21-24, 2023:** MTAFS ANNUAL MEETING

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Leo Rosenthal: MTAFS  
President-elect

**“THE TIMES THEY  
ARE A-  
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RESOURCES”.**

## Montana Chapter AFS Annual Meeting 2023 by Leo Rosenthal

Greetings MTAFS members. After two years of virtual annual meetings, I am pleased to announce that this year's meeting will not only be held in person, but will take place in none other than Butte, America! A lot has changed in our state since we last met in person, and the surge in population growth from both new residents and tourists has become the focus of much of the work we do. This led me to the meeting theme this year: "The Times They are a-Changing: Population Growth and its Effects on Montana's Fisheries and Aquatic Resources". In many ways, the changes occurring in Montana have led to unexpected challenges, but they have also paved the way for opportunities that did not exist 20 years ago. While change is always difficult, it's

not always a bad thing. The 2023 Chapter meeting will be held at the Copper King Hotel February 21-24. Butte is a great location for our annual meeting, as it is easy to get to from anywhere in the state and offers great food and recreation opportunities. From skiing at Discovery Basin to pork chop sandwiches, there is something for everyone in Butte. A block of rooms is being held under "Montana Chapter American Fisheries Society" or "AFS" at the Copper King Hotel (<https://copperkinghotel.com/>). Please mention to hotel staff that you are reserving your room as part of this block. This is also a call for all presentations, both oral and posters. Please send all abstracts to [lrosenthal@mt.gov](mailto:lrosenthal@mt.gov) by January 13, 2023. Abstract

submissions for papers and posters should be emailed in MS word using the following format: Times New Roman (12 point) font with single spacing. All abstracts must include the title, author(s), and a concise abstract body that does not exceed 250 words.

Our state has changed a lot in three years, and so has our membership. Loved ones have been lost, and retirements have occurred quietly since we last saw each other. However, we have gained many new faces during this time, and our meeting will be a great opportunity to catch up on old times and meet our new professionals. I look forward to seeing everyone at the meeting this year.



Tracy Wendt: MTAFS Out-  
reach Committee Chair

## Outreach Committee Update By Tracy Wendt, Committee Chair

The MTAFS Outreach Committee conducted a survey earlier this year to learn how to improve communication with membership. This survey asked members what kind of information they like to receive and what format do they prefer for communication. The Committee would like to thank everyone who participated, and especially Katie Vivian for her work co-ordinating this effort and compiling the results. Some highlights include:

100% of respondents read email updates from MTAFS - 85% said the frequency is about right. 15% would prefer more frequent updates. 90% of respondents have used the MTAFS website ([www.units.fisheries.org/montana/](http://www.units.fisheries.org/montana/)); the majority use the site to find information about the annual meeting. 97.5% of respondents read and enjoy The Outlet newsletter.

The Outreach Committee will meet at the 2023 MTAFS

meeting to discuss how to incorporate survey results across email, website, newsletter, social media, and other outreach tools to improve Chapter communication. For detailed survey results or to join the Outreach Committee, please contact [tracy-wendt@gmail.com](mailto:tracy-wendt@gmail.com).

Be sure you are following the Montana Chapter of AFS on Facebook. If you do not receive emails with Chapter news, please contact [mtafsmember-ship@gmail.com](mailto:mtafsmember-ship@gmail.com).

# January 2023

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## Welcome Clint Smith MTAFS Secretary / Treasurer

I grew up in the foothills of the Big Horn Mountains near Sheridan, Wyoming where I spent plenty of time fishing the mighty Tongue River and its forks. I tried to resist the call of Montana and attended the University of Wyoming for a few years before transferring to Bozeman. I completed my undergrad at MSU and then immediately started on a graduate project working with Tom McMahon studying the effects of rearing environment on hatchery

westslope cutthroat trout fitness and survival. While at MSU I was a member of and infrequently active in the MSU Chapter of AFS. Upon graduation, I struggled to find work in fisheries, with stints in construction, hospital admitting, and hotel clerking – not my most glamorous year of work! I was fortunate to start my fish career at Giant Springs State Fish Hatchery in Great Falls before moving on to my current position of the Lewistown Area Fisheries

Biologist. I've now been in Lewistown for almost 10 years and love the diversity of work I get to do – everything from westslopes to pallids. Throughout my career path, I've benefitted from the information, education, networking, and support provided through my participation with the Montana Chapter of the American Fisheries Society. I look forward to continuing my involvement and seeing how the sausage is made in my role as Secretary/Treasurer.



Clint Smith: MTAFS Secretary / Treasurer

## 2022 Montana AFS Photo Contest Winner—Craig Barfoot



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## Fish Talk: Featuring Carol Endicott by Sam Bourret



Carol Endicott: recently retired Montana FWP Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout Biologist

**"THE SCIENCE NEEDS TO REMAIN ROBUST, BUT FISHERIES BIOLOGISTS MUST FIND MORE ENGAGING WAYS TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC."**

**What inspired you to work in the fisheries field? What was one of your ah ha moments?**

When I was 10, my ambition was to be a herpetologist or naturalist. An aha moment came on a 6<sup>th</sup> grade school trip when they demonstrated electrofishing, and it was as if a bell sounded in my head when fish started bubbling up. Despite this, my route to fisheries was indirect. I got a BA in psychology before becoming an undergrad in zoology at Colorado State University. I saw many potential career paths with critters and working with chuckwallas was compelling. Volunteering for fisheries graduate students re-rang that electrofishing bell again.

**Where did you start your fisheries career?**

Unofficially at Colorado State University when I started volunteering. I then went to graduate school at Montana State University where I focused on livestock grazing and fish.

**What was one of the most fun moments in your fisheries career?**

Being active and outside

while handling fish is always fun. The really gratifying moments were the completion of big projects like diverting water from a channelized reach into restored channel with access to the floodplain or watching water fill in behind a newly constructed barrier that protects miles of habitat with abundant Yellowstone cutthroat trout. That said, the simple joy of dragging a seine through a muddy prairie stream and capturing an assemblage of little silvery fishes was some of the most fun work.

**What are some of the largest challenges faced by the Fisheries of Montana?**

Nonnative fishes, climate change, habitat degradation, and dewatering are obvious challenges. Educating the public on the threats and necessary measures is another challenge. Environmental assessments detailing the need, the policy and legal framework, and the value of native fishes usually go unread by those opposing necessary projects. Countering false information requires a more accessible and entertaining approach than the long technical documents we prepare for public review. The science needs to remain robust, but fisheries biologists must find more engaging ways to educate the public.

**Do you have any advice for early career professionals in the fisheries field?**

While in school, volunteer for graduate students, agency biologists, and nonprofits. The experience is invaluable as are the connections. Consider fine-tuning your written and verbal communication skills as a lifelong endeavor. Dabble in the social sciences so you understand how people reach their current understanding and views, learn how to persuasively counter false ideas, and develop skills to defuse conflict. Partner with schools and teachers to bring fisheries into classrooms or bring kids into the field. Distribute fish posters and other fish swag. Kids are especially receptive to conservation messages. At minimum, they will see someone enthusiastic about fish, which is contagious. Maybe you can ring a bell in a child's head that inspires them to a career in fisheries or conservation.

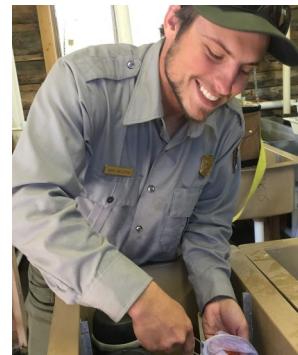
# January 2023

## Student Profile: Keith Wellstone

I was born in Minnesota but spent most of my childhood on the northern coast of California. After receiving a bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies from Sonoma State University, I worked a variety of seasonal positions throughout the Western United States. These positions ranged from conducting trail maintenance and prescribed burns in the San Francisco Bay Area, to conducting genetic assessments of Westslope Cutthroat Trout populations in Yellowstone National Park. My graduate

research evaluates strategies the National Park Service can use to monitor the abundance of Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, Rainbow Trout, and hybrids of the two taxa in the Lamar River watershed. Specifically, I am simulating different sampling efforts to evaluate trade-offs in cost and precision, using data collected from the watershed. These data will allow the National Park Service to evaluate the response of trout populations to management actions. This research also leverages angler involve-

ment for abundance estimation. Results from this research will guide National Park Service monitoring efforts in the Lamar River watershed, direct future efforts of the Yellowstone Volunteer Fly-Fishing Program, and help bridge the gap between angling and cold-water fisheries management. When I am not working on my thesis, I am probably outside, enjoying all four seasons Montana has to offer. Some of my hobbies include fishing, hunting, cooking, and playing hockey.



Keith Wellstone: MSU AFS  
Student Sub-unit president

## Student Profile: Kelsey Stansberry

Hi all, I am a senior at the University of Montana studying aquatic ecosystem restoration. I was raised in Salmon, Idaho situated along the main Salmon River where I spent much of my time whitewater rafting, fly fishing, and skiing. The Salmon River Watershed supports several anadromous fisheries and native trout populations, and I spent two summers monitoring some of the target species as a technician with Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Having worked on a snorkel crew for one of those summers, I developed a strong passion for observing aquatic life. In Jan-

uary of 2022, I moved to Sitka, Alaska on an academic exchange to get an occupational endorsement in scientific diving at the University of Alaska SE. I spent the next several months becoming a scientific diver, studying and researching the local marine ecology, and operating skiffs in Sitka's challenging conditions. I loved SE Alaska so much that I stayed the summer to work two seasonal positions for Alaska Department of Fish and Game on a Steelhead weir in Yakutat, AK and on a Chum Salmon Genetics study in Juneau, AK. I am now in my last semester of my undergraduate degree,

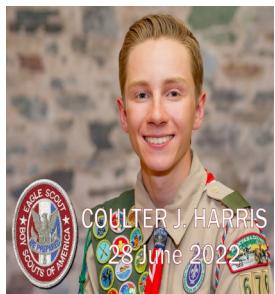
and I am excited for the next chapter. I plan on eventually making it to graduate school, but until then - I want to use my scientific diving certification and also narrow down what type of master's program I'd like to pursue.



Kelsey Stansberry: UM AFS  
Student Sub-unit President

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Coulter Harris: Recipient of \$1,600 MTAFS RAF grant in 2022

## Improving Tree Canopy along East Catron Creek in Bozeman, MT by Coulter Harris

The goal of my Eagle Scout project was to improve riparian habitat and increase shade over and around the creek with the goal of lowering water temperatures. To accomplish this, I planted 15 trees and shrubs. I planted 6 Golden Currant bushes, 5 Thin Leaf Alders, and 4 Lance Leaf Cottonwoods. These are all native species to Montana. The location I picked was Kirk Park, which has East Catron creek running through it. I picked this location because it was a place that had little to no vegetation on the stream, and it was a part of my community. I felt like this was a great place to educate the community on the purpose of this project.

To achieve the goal of improving vegetation on E. Catron creek to lower water temperatures for aquatic life took a few different steps. The first step was to contact the City of Bozeman. I was then put in direct

contact with the Forestry division. I talked with Alex Norquest, the head of the City's Forestry program. I talked with him about different tree species that would be appropriate to plant along the creek. We landed on the golden currant, thin leaf alder, and lance leaf cottonwoods because they were native, and will provide adequate shade and habitat. I then found a nursery that carries these species. I chose Blake Nursery, in Big Timber, MT. I placed the order and scheduled delivery for my work day (June 11th). I then had the City of Bozeman Parks division come out and mark possible digging hazards. (nothing ended up being a problem). I then marked the exact location of each tree and shrub for my work crew. I had my work day on June 11th, 2022. It took about 2.5 hours with about 15 volunteers helping. After my project, I came back with Alex and staked the bigger trees. The City of Bozeman donated those supplies. I have been

watering the trees weekly till they get established. I also put a sign up to educate the public on the goal of this project.

I think that this project was a major success. I was able to use the grant money to buy 15 trees, organize a volunteer event, and plant all of the trees in a day. Since it is only 2 months after the trees were planted, I expect to see continued improvement of the vegetation along E. Catron creek. This was a stand-alone project but after planting the trees it only covered about one-half of the exposed part of the stream at Kirk Park. It would be great for the rest of the stream to be covered with additional trees. Perhaps this could be a future Eagle Scout project or part of the Gallatin Watershed Council's urban tree program.



# January 2023

## 2023 Meeting Agenda at a glance

	21-Feb Tuesday	22-Feb Wednesday	23-Feb Thursday	24-Feb Friday
9:00-10:00am				
10:00-11:00am	Continuing Education	Symposium/Contributed Papers	Contributed Papers	Contributed Papers or Continuing Ed #2
11:00-noon		Break	Break	Break
noon-1:00 pm	Lunch Break (on your own)	Lunch Break	Business Lunch	Lunch on your own
1:00-2:00 pm	Opening Remarks and Plenary Talks	Symposium/Contributed Papers	Contributed Papers	
2:00-3:00 pm	Break	Break	Break	
3:00-4:00 pm	Plenary Session Talks	Symposium/Contributed Papers	Contributed Papers	
4:00-5:00 pm	Break	Break	Break	
5:30-9:00 pm	Plenary Session Talks and Panel Discussion	Symposium/Contributed Papers Committee meetings	Contributed Papers MT Association of F & W Biologists	Awards Banquet
	Welcoming Social and Poster Session	Evening Social (Drinks and Apps)		

## Did you know...

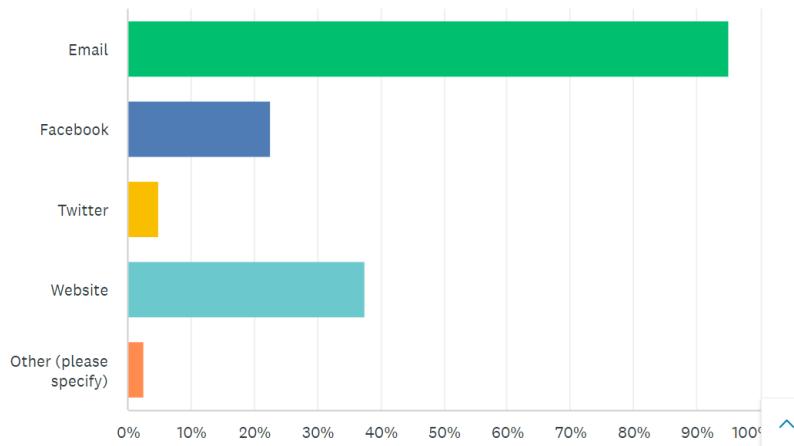
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How do you prefer to get information from Montana AFS? (Choose all that apply)

Answered: 40 Skipped: 0



Survey results from the outreach committee survey summarized on page 2.

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**The Montana Chapter of the American Fisheries Society was chartered in 1967. Among its objectives are conservation, development, and wise utilization of the fisheries; promotion of the educational, scientific, and technological development and advancement of all branches of fisheries science and practice; and exchange and dissemination of knowledge about fish, fisheries, and related subjects.**



## MONTANA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY

<http://units.fisheries.org/montana>  
[Facebook.com/MontanaChapter AFS](https://www.facebook.com/MontanaChapterAFS)  
[@MontanaChapterAFS](https://twitter.com/MontanaChapterAFS)

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