

**Southern Division American Fisheries Society**  
**Spring Business Meeting - Virtual**  
**Wednesday, 07 April 2021**

Secretary-Treasurer Jessica Baumann announced a quorum was present. President Tom Kwak called the 2021 SDAFS Business Meeting to order at 14:05 hrs.

President Tom Kwak presented the agenda to the members for approval. No discussion ensued and no abstentions were reported.

President Kwak recognized distinguished guests in attendance: AFS President and former SDAFS President Brian Murphy, AFS Vice President and former SDAFS president Cecil Jennings, Past SDAFS Presidents Craig Bonds, Dennis Riecke, John Jackson, Pat Mazik, and Steve Lochmann. AFS Executive Director Doug Austen was having technical difficulty joining the call, but with Brad Fink's assistance he was able to join for his remarks.

**AFS President Brian Murphy Remarks:** President Murphy presented his plan of work for 2020-2021 and noted that he wanted to focus his attention the issues as follows: (1) Science Outreach and Public Trust; (2) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and (3) Membership Value. He noted how misinformation has resulted in the public not knowing who to trust when it comes to scientific matters. President Murphy highlighted some current Congressional policies that AFS has been involved with including climate change and clean water acts. In terms of climate change, AFS has established a standing committee focused on this issue and developed training in effective outreach communications entitled Climate Ambassadors Science Communications Program (<https://climate.fisheries.org>). President Murphy then highlighted the importance of upcoming initiatives related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion within AFS including the work of the standing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee.

**AFS Executive Director Doug Austen Remarks:** Executive Director Austen highlighted the AFS joint venue, Diversity Joint Venture for Conservation Careers. He also focused on President Murphy's objective to highlight membership value. He noted the multistate conservation grants that were funded by AFS, including the gray literature database (<https://graylitreports.fisheries.org>). Executive Director Austen highlighted the improved, updated, and expanded AFS jobs board (<http://jobs.fisheries.org>) and AFS books program which now provides e-reader formats. He also noted the level of collaboration that occurs between AFS and its partners and highlighted the strategic partners program. Executive Director Austen reminded everyone of the annual AFS parent society meeting in Baltimore, MD occurring November 6-10, 2021 and the Joint Aquatic Sciences Meeting in Grand Rapids, MI occurring May 16-20, 2022.

Tim Bonvechio brought forward a question of who could fulfill the role of technical committee chairs. The ensuing conversation addressed that non-agency members could participate at all

levels of the technical committees. Also noted was the need of increased participation from students and university members within the technical committees.

**President Tom Kwak's Report:** President Kwak noted that the Virginia Chapter had an excellent spring meeting planned for Arlington, VA in 2021 but that due to the COVID-19 pandemic we were unable to safely hold an in-person meeting. President Kwak also noted the difficulty that was faced when trying to cancel our meeting contract through the hotel and switch over to a virtual platform. President Kwak highlights his presidential duties on the AFS Governing Board, the Management Committee, and the Awards Committee. He noted that SDAFS was able to release two newsletters and acknowledges Caitlin Carey for her excellent job as newsletter editor and in continuing to release high quality issues. President Kwak highlighted that he is serving as co-editor for the North American Journal of Fisheries Management to help publish a special edition for the Catfish 2020 International Symposium and notes that the issue will be open access in order to get the science out and increase access outside of our membership. President Kwak reports on his involvement in organizing an Anguillid Eel symposium for the World's Fisheries Congress and in helping form a Latin American and Caribbean Fisheries Congress which plans to hold their first meeting sometime during the spring of 2023. President Kwak announced that he is looking for two volunteers to help serve on the Program and Fundraising Committees for the 2021 annual Parent Society meeting to be held in Baltimore, MD. He is also looking for people to serve on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee that is being formed at the divisional level.

**Secretary-Treasurer Jessica Baumann's Report:**

Secretary-Treasurer Jessica Baumann's reports were handled individually.

Secretary-Treasurer Baumann provided an overview of the 2020 budget. Several income and expense items were highlighted, including \$12,000+ income from the 2020 SDAFS meeting in Little Rock, AR. She noted several budgetary line items, including going over budget for the award plaques due to a technical error in ordering. Two orders for plaques were placed through Amazon and those additional plaques will be held and used at upcoming meetings. Secretary-Treasurer Baumann noted that travel funds for the Podcasting Coordinator have not been utilized the last few years due to Baumann's double role as both Secretary-Treasurer and Podcasting Coordinator. She expressed her excitement and gratitude that Hunter Hatcher with the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources has accepted the role of SDAFS Podcasting Coordinator moving forward and that those funds will be utilized again at future meetings. Secretary-Treasurer Baumann reported that historical donations to SEAFWA Student Affairs and AFS EOS were made, in addition to a \$750 donation to the AFS Hutton Scholar program. She noted that SDAFS is holding funds for the Pollution Committee and highlighted the issues that are encountered by committee's trying to establish individual bank accounts. The ending SDAFS balance for 2020 totaled \$40,934.46 and included \$10,972 in the strategic reserve funds.

An audit of the 2020 financial information was completed on March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021 by the SDAFS Audit Committee Chair Kelsey Roberts. Due to COVID-19 precautions, the committee was unable to meet in person with all members present. The 2020 financials will be reviewed by the entire committee once in-person meetings can safely resume. The Audit Committee report can be found in the briefing book and there were no errors identified in the 2020 financials. Chair Roberts did highlight one missing receipt for FedEx shipping costs, but noted that this purchase was accounted for by including the email correspondence confirming shipping. The Division's original investment into AFS's managed investment program of \$10,000 in October of 2018 has grown to \$10,972 as of September 2020. It was noted that the Audit Committee Chair suggested the Division look into a more aggressive investment to complement our financial portfolio.

The Proposed 2021 SDAFS Budget was discussed. Secretary-Treasurer Baumann noted that typical levels of income and expenses were expected in 2021. The current bank balance is sufficient to maintain SDAFS operations.

Secretary-Treasurer Baumann noted that the meeting minutes from the 2020 EXCOM meeting were posted on the SDAFS website and released in the SDAFS newsletter and requested a motion to approve them. Jason Olive made a motion to approve those minutes and that motion was seconded by Steve Lochmann. No objections were brought forward by members.

**Host Meeting Report:** General Meeting Chair Brad Fink noted that the virtual platform for the 2020 annual meeting was going smoothly. He recognized sponsorship of the meeting by The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, Dominion Energy, the US Forestry Department, and multiple state chapters. Brad highlighted that the virtual meeting hosted 500 registrants, multiple technical committees and workshops, 23 poster presentations, and 107 oral presentations. Special recognition went to Dr. Eric Hallerman, Jeff Williams, Dr. Don Orth, Dan Michaelson, and Rachel Dixon for their roles in holding a successful virtual meeting. Brad also noted that recordings of all presentations will be available post meeting.

President Kwak highlighted that the Virginia Chapter will also be hosting the 2023 in-person annual meeting and expressed his gratitude to the chapter for a well-run meeting.

**President-Elect Cindy William's Chapter Activity Report:** President-Elect Williams summarized the 2020 annual reports submitted by AFS Chapters within the Southern Division. She highlighted that four state chapters were able to hold in-person meetings prior to the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown, three chapters had to cancel their annual meetings, and the rest were able to hold meetings through a virtual platform. She noted that multiple chapters' focused on updating their by-laws and procedural manuals, as well as increasing efforts toward engaging student members.

The Florida Chapter focused on their student blogs and increased viewership by 64%, they held a virtual 2020 annual meeting that included increased participation in workshops due to the virtual platform, and noted that all proceeds from the meeting were donated to the Hutton Scholar Program. The Georgia Chapter worked with the state ANS coordinator to help develop and distribute outreach material focused on aquatic invasive species and focused efforts on improving student candidacy when applying for jobs. The Mississippi Chapter established and supported a display at the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks Fish Hatchery and Education Center which detailed the history of the chapter and the role of science in fisheries management. The Puerto Rico Chapter was heavily involved in planning the Latin American and Caribbean Fisheries Congress planned for 2023. The Texas Chapter held two virtual workshops with over 150 participants and focused on communications with students in order to keep them engaged during the pandemic.

President Kwak acknowledged and congratulated Aaron Bunch and his fellow student organizers from Clemson University on their organization of the first ever AFS virtual meeting. Aaron Bunch acknowledged three Clemson undergraduates, Hannah Mulligan, Logan Bodiford, and Rachel Moore, and AFS staff member, Lauren Maza, who were all heavily involved in hosting the meeting. He highlighted that the meeting consisted of 8 individual sessions that occurred over a four week period. Aaron also thank SDAFS and FLAFS for sponsorship of the meeting and noted that all proceeds from the meeting were donated to the Hutton Scholar Program.

**Vice President Jason Olive's Technical Committee Report:** Vice President Olive highlighted that the Alligator Gar Technical Committee published the proceedings from their 2019 symposium held at the SDAFS annual meeting in Galveston, TX in a special edition of the North American Journal of Fisheries Management. The Catfish Technical Committee held Catfish 2020 immediately prior to the annual SDAFS meeting in Little Rock, AR and those proceeding are scheduled to be published in an upcoming special edition of the North American Journal of Fisheries Management. The Pollution Committee hosted a successful fish kill workshop at the 2020 annual SDAFS meeting in Little Rock, AR.

Vice President Olive's official review was directed at the Reservoir Committee. He thanked Sean Kinney, the current chair, who provided all the needed information for the review. Vice President Olive focused his review on the three primary goals of the committee. Goal 1: provide a forum to exchange ideas on reservoir management practices. To accomplish this goal, the committee holds two annual meetings, maintains an active listserv and Facebook page, and provides a current website containing relevant material. Goal 2: promote and encourage or perform necessary and appropriate reservoir research. To accomplish this goal, the committee sponsors the Robert M. Jenkins award, they are currently conducting research to evaluate angler satisfaction with artificial fish reefs, and are currently looking for funding to research micro plastics in regards to the deployment of artificial fish reefs. Goal 3: advance the science of reservoir management to meet modern needs. To accomplish this goal, the committee has

sponsored multiple reservoir habitat workshops at annual SDAFS meetings and are currently collaborating with the North Central Division to host a reservoir symposium at the annual 2021 parent society meeting in Baltimore, MD. Vice President Olive reports that the Reservoir Committee is an active and relevant committee within the Division and serves their members well. His recommendation to EXCOM is continued support of the Reservoir Committee.

**Resolutions Committee Report:** Chair of the Resolutions Committee Dennis Riecke presented the Resolution of Appreciation to the Host Chapter to acknowledge the appreciation SDAFS has for the members of the Virginia Chapter in hosting the 2021 virtual annual meeting. No other resolutions were presented.

**Ballot Committee Report:** Past President Wes Neal announced the winners of the election held electronically in 2020. Past President Neal noted that there were a large number of volunteers for Student Representative and two very qualified candidates for Vice President. The new officers for 2021 are Mark Rodgers (Vice President) and Zach Moran (Student Representative to the EXCOM). Past President Neal did note the low voter turnout for the Student Representative to the EXCOM.

**Presentation of Awards:** President Kwak acknowledged Amy Cottrell, Award Committee chair, for her hard work putting together the divisional awards. President-Elect Williams announced the following SDAFS Awards:

The John F. Dequine Best Paper Awards were given to the two best papers/presentations presented at the 2020 Annual Conference of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies held virtually. First place was given to Warren Schlechte (Daniel Daugherty, Nathan Smith, and David Buckmeier, co-authors) of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for their manuscript/presentation entitled Angler practices and preferences for managing Alligator Gar in Texas. The runner-up award was given to Timothy Birdsong (Gary Garrett, Megan Bean, Stephen Curtis, Kevin Mayes, and Sarah Robertson, coauthors) of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for their manuscript/presentation Conservation status of Texas freshwater fishes: Informing state-based species protections. Plaques and checks for \$100 (first place) and \$50 (runner-up) will be mailed to each first author. Co-authors will receive certificates.

The Distinguished Service Award was presented to Kathi Wong in recognition of her continued service to the Southern Division as Technical Editor of SEAFWA for more than 40 years.

The Distinguished Service Award was presented to Brad Fink in recognition of his resilience, diligence, and leadership that were necessary to pull the 2021 SDAFS virtual meeting together.

The Outstanding Achievement Award was presented to Cecil Jennings in recognition of his remarkable contributions to fisheries management, ecology, and mentorship of young professionals.

The Outstanding Large Chapter Award (chapters with greater than 100 members) was presented to the Florida Chapter for their investment in the future of fisheries management

and ecology, continued support of young professionals, and their commitment to aquatic species and habitat conservation.

The Outstanding Small Chapter Award (chapters with fewer than 100 members) was presented to the Georgia Chapter for their dedication to ethical and conservation-driven fisheries research and management, support of young professionals, and continued community engagement.

The Best Student Sub-Unit Award was presented to the University of Tennessee - Knoxville for fostering professional opportunities, engaging with their community, and providing an appealing platform for students to learn and grow in fisheries and aquatic sciences.

The Best Student Paper from the 2020 SDAFS Meeting in Little Rock, AR was awarded to Kenneth Erickson of Louisiana State University for their work entitled "Watching a Fishery Collapse? Southern Flounder Declines in the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean". Runner-up for Best Student Presentation Award was presented to two individuals. Loren Stearman of University of Southern Mississippi for their work entitled "Coevolution of geomorphology and fish assemblage structure in the Bayou Pierre, Mississippi" and River Watson of Arkansas State University for their work entitled "Taxonomic evaluation of the Goldstripe Darter *Etheostoma parvipinne*, using species delimitation methods with molecular and morphological data". The Best Student Poster Award went to Cameron Atkinson of College of Coastal Georgia for their work entitled "Oyster reef restoration suitability index for the Georgia coast with a focus on Red Drum habitat suitability". Runner-up for Best Poster Presentation was awarded to three individuals. Anna Millender of University of Southern Mississippi for their work entitled "Preliminary assessment of the reproductive biology of two cryptic species of cownose ray, *Rhinoptera bonasus* and *Rhinoptera brasilienses*, in the Northern Gulf of Mexico". Amelia Atwell of Arkansas State University for their work entitled "Effects of land use intensity on sediment inputs and fish communities in the agriculturally dominated upper Cache River watershed, Arkansas", and Sara Ricklefs of Eastern New Mexico University for their work entitled "Investigating drifting behavior in juvenile crayfish in the Pecos River, New Mexico".

Trevor Starks of the SDAFS Warmwater Streams Technical Committee presented the Jimmie Pigg Memorial Outstanding Student Achievement Award to Nathan Thompson and Joshua Mouser. Nathan Thompson is a Master's student at Auburn University studying Red Eye Bass in the Tallapoosa River Basin and Joshua Mouser is a PhD candidate at Virginia Tech studying the efficacy of agricultural BMP in Southwest Virginia streams.

Resolution of Appreciation to Host was read by Dennis Reicke and given to the Virginia Chapter and key members of the meeting planning committee. President Tom Kwak makes a motion to adopt this resolution of appreciation to the host of the 29<sup>th</sup> annual meeting and the motion is seconded by Mark Rodgers. No objections were brought forward.

### **Old Business:**

President Kwak reminded the membership that at the 2019 business meeting they voted in favor of splitting the Outstanding Chapter award into a Large and Small Chapter. EXCOM decided to move forward with splitting the chapter sizes at the same threshold as the parent society level, with large chapters having over 100 members and small chapters having less than 100 members. President Kwak noted that only two chapters currently meet the threshold for Large Chapter (TX and FL) and encouraged chapters close to the 100 member mark to increase membership in order to compete for that large chapter award.

President Kwak noted that EXCOM decided not to move forward with splitting the student sub-units into small and large units at this time. He highlighted the difficulty in determining membership levels due to the high level of turnover within those units. John Jackson suggested having a runner-up award for the student sub-unit award.

President Kwak reported that EXCOM has decided to create an ad-hoc committee focused on diversity and inclusion issues. The EXCOM would like to use this committee to help coordinate all efforts directed towards diversity and inclusion issues across AFS. President Kwak requested volunteers to help develop this ad-hoc committee. President Kwak also suggested that chairs of chapter level diversity and inclusion committee's be contacted for the divisional level committee.

**Installation of 2020 Officers:** New officers were Zach Moran, Student Representative to the EXCOM; Jessica Baumann, Secretary-Treasurer; Mark Rodgers, Vice President; Jason Olive, President-Elect; Cindy Williams, President; and Tom Kwak, Past-President.

**Newly Installed President Cindy William's Remarks:** President Williams presents Past-President Tom Kwak with his plaque for Appreciation for Services as President of the Southern Division. She expressed her appreciation for Tom's extended service, his leadership and mentorship. President Williams presented her gift for the outgoing president, a trout sculpture.

President Williams thanked the membership for their support during these uncertain times. She highlights how members can have multiple, and sometimes disagreeing, points of views but that SDAFS is a place of mutual respect where these differences can be safely discussed. She notes that because of this ability to respectfully disagree, AFS allows scientists to focus on the science and push for the best actions for the resources. She also highlights that SDAFS takes the code of conduct seriously and wants to make sure all members feel safe, respected, and included. President Williams thanks the membership for this opportunity to serve as their president.

**New Business:** President Williams invited Joey Ballenger to speak about the 2022 SDAFS annual meeting to be held in Charleston, SC. He highlighted some of the tourist attractions around the Charleston area, the hotel meeting space and social events, and invited attendees to the meeting next year.

Meeting was adjourned by President Williams at 17:30 hrs.