



Management Committee Meeting Minutes

Friday, February 17, 2023

Participants:

Management Committee Members:

April Croxton, Miguel Garcia Bermudez, Gary Whelan, Leanne Roulson, Eric Fetherman, Anthony Overton, Julie Carter, Brian Nerbonne, Laurie Earley, Susan Cushman, Randy Shultz (Constitutional Consultant, non-voting), Doug Austen (Executive Director, non-voting)

Guests: None

ELMA: Tyler Plum, Matt Mensinger

AFS Staff: Dan Cassidy, Rachel Bruce, Shawn Johnston, Kelly Kotche, Lauren Maza, Laura Hendee

Key Tasks:

1. Divisions should send Nominating Committee representative to Lauren Maza (lmaza@fisheries.org)
2. Austen to update Procedures Manual travel policy based upon MC comments and submit to MC for review, discussion, and approval. Before being addressed by the MC, the Division leadership should discuss the draft policy with their Chapter leaders.
3. All AFS committees need to be sure to complete the mid-year committee report form.
4. Meetings Oversight Committee should review the guidance for establishment of AFS annual meeting registration rates.
5. The AFS DEI committee needs representatives from each of the AFS Divisions.

Minutes of the Meeting:

1. **Welcome/Determination of Quorum** (need 7 members) – Meeting called to order at 10:33 a.m. ET by April Croxton and quorum established by Randy Schultz
2. **Approval of Agenda**- April Croxton - Approved
3. **Review of January 11, 2023, Mid-year Governing Board minutes** - April Croxton and Doug Austen review the key results and subsequent tasks from the mid-year Governing Board meeting. This was not presented for approval but for review and discussion of action items. Approval will take place at the spring GB meeting.
 - a. Nominating Committee – Austen reminded the Divisions to establish their Nominating Committee representative before the spring/summer GB meeting and provide them to Austen. This will be needed by the Nominating Committee in order for them to start their work well prior to the Grand Rapids, MI, annual meeting.
 - b. No edits were noted in the minutes.
4. **Constitutional Consultant Report** - Randy Schultz

- a. Travel policy for AFS officers and Division officers to Division and Chapter meetings (Attachment 1) – Discussion topic, no formal motion is being presented. Key discussion points included:
- i. The suggested revisions improve clarity but the current language does not address travel to Chapter meetings nor does it address staff travel to unit meeting. It was suggested that Division leadership should discuss travel guidance with Chapters.
 - ii. AFS Officer travel issues:
 1. AFS President attempts to attend all Division meetings and select chapter meetings. A goal is to attempt to have some AFS Officer attend all chapter meetings at least every 5 years. However, there has been no full documentation of this coverage.
 - iii. Division officers generally attempt to have at least one officer attend each chapter meeting in their Division's boundary:
 1. SD – 80-90% attendance.
 2. WD – In travel budget for Division and go to most chapter meetings.
 3. NED – Try to attend.
 4. NCD – Planning to get back on the road and have in past attended most if not all Chapter meetings.
 - iv. Staff travel issues:
 1. ED generally attends all Division meetings and selected chapter meetings upon invitation.
 2. Staff attendance at chapter meetings is dependent upon locality and invitation. We like to have at least key staff attend chapter meetings to help them become more familiar with members and engage in discussions about member needs. These chapters are generally within reasonable driving distance to reduce costs. On occasion staff are specifically invited to attend Chapter meetings to discuss key programs such as Hutton, etc.
 - v. General guidance and considerations for AFS policy updates
 1. Engagement needs to be reestablished. It is always a good practice to have leadership, Division and AFS Officers, at chapter and divisions meetings.
 2. Annually the AFS Officers develop a travel budget based upon a compiled list of Division, Chapter, and international meetings compiled by staff. Staff work with Division leadership to identify meetings that they are attending to ensure full coverage to the greatest degree possible
 3. Need to have a common message available to both Division Officers and Society Officers
 4. Hosting Chapter is a critical meeting to attend for Society Officers. We need to assess the appropriate level of Chapter assistance with Officer travel.
 - a. Registration (minimum) and Hotel is suggested. This is dependent upon an invitation from the Chapter to the officer.
 - b. Maybe Divisions help where there are issues of inconsistency or lack of knowledge of policy.
 - c. Doug Austen will develop an updated policy statement for the MC to discuss at future meeting.

- b. AFS Procedures Manual (PM) updates -
Revision as of February 15, 2023, sent as a separate attachment – All members of the Governing Board are asked to review the Procedures Manual and submit recommendations for updates to Constitutional Consultant Randy Schultz and Doug Austen.
- c. Approval of registration rates for Grand Rapids annual meeting (Attachment 2).
 - i. How the virtual and hybrid meeting design options are incorporated needs more consideration for future meetings. This should be assigned to the Meetings Oversight Committee.
 - 1. Good data now available on virtual participation from Spokane meeting based upon X-CD analytics. This information can be obtained from Shawn Johnston or Rachel Bruce.
 - ii. SFR funds can be used for meetings and AFS membership.
 - iii. Rates are developed by a set formula and set in 2018 and should be reviewed and revised as appropriate.
 - iv. Registration costs will be the same for students and retirees and funding is available for retiree attendance. See AFS website for [Retiree Travel Award](#)
 - v. Motion to accept registration rates in Attachment 2 by Gary Whelan; 2nd by Laurie Earley. Adopted by unanimous consent.
- d. Review and approval of new CASS MOU language and authorization to sign (Attachment 3).
Moved by Gary Whelan; 2nd by Laurie Earley. Adopted by unanimous consent.
- e. Constitutional Consultant Randy Schultz stated that there will be a number of new Chapter bylaw revisions in the future MC meetings.

5. Officers Reports

- a. April Croxton
 - i. Traveling to Division meetings except for Western Division that will be covered by Leanne Roulson. April greatly appreciated the support and hospitality of Division leadership and enjoyed meeting all members.
 - ii. Key ideas that have come from the various meetings include:
 - 1. Student interest – Mentorship, Continuing education and guidance
 - 2. DEI – Unclear on where to begin
 - iii. Society of Canadian Aquatic Sciences (SCAS) meeting up next and working on a presentation for the conference.
 - iv. NOAA is looking for diverse set of reviewers for Young Anglers Program – Contact April with interest.
 - v. The National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) anticipates between \$1,000,000 and \$2,000,000 of federal funds will be available to support approximately 2-5 awards in order to develop and execute local, regional, and national programs, workshops, and services to enable fishermen to enter career paths and make a living supplying seafood from our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes. Awards will be made for no more than \$400,000 in

federal funds per project, and may be for one or two years, though for no more than \$200,000/year.

- b. Miguel Garcia Bermudez - Participation in SD meeting and heavily involved in LACFC planning and communications.
- c. Gary Whelan
 - i. Attending the Membership Committee meetings and the CASS call of Directors of Publications and journal editors to share information on publication challenges such as open access, etc.
 - ii. Attended MFWC and assisted with staffing the AFS booth
 - iii. Will attend Ontario AFS Chapter Meeting in March
- d. Leanne Roulson
 - i. MT meeting in Butte, OR meeting in Eugene (Room and registration provided by OR Chapter), and WD meeting in Boise, ID.
 - ii. Awards Nomination Process and guide update
 - 1. New portal available
 - 2. Subcommittee list now up to date
 - iii. Heavily involved in the Hutton review work

6. Committee Report Update

- a. Request for mid-year reports and plans for national call of committee leaders
- b. Schedule development for 2023-2024 appointments – Cecil wants them done early
- c. DEI Committee – Need for Division representatives to the committee

7. Executive Director and AFS staff reports

- a. Membership renewal update – Kelly Kotche (Attachment 4)
 - i. Report out recently and updated to February 10. Membership is down from 2022 with many campaigns underway to address this shortfall. AFS unit leaders will be contacted to assist with messaging their contacts about membership renewal.
 - ii. Strategic Partners program is approximately double from last year but still behind 2021
 - iii. People can join anytime during the year. Dues year ends in August and dues in September will be for the 2024 membership year. Grace period will end a bit earlier this year in March.
- b. Financial report – Dan Cassidy
 - i. December report in hand - Total AFS assets now at \$5.3M with is down from \$6.2 M in 2022. This is primarily due to market downturn that has impacted all investments. Cash reserve at \$206K but AFS does have to address a current line of credit of \$350K with monthly payments of \$2,000 in interest. However, it was noted that investment income is up from previous periods.
 - ii. As we move forward with the LACFC planning it is anticipated that we may need to make more withdrawals to address meeting bills. However, this will be highly

- dependent upon registration, fundraising, and continuing negotiation with the conference venue.
- iii. Annual meeting income will start with the opening of registration on April 1
 - iv. Employee retention credit is being worked on and we qualify for 2020-2021 credit of approximately \$330,000.
 - v. Staff costs have been reduced to a minimum with the movement of Drue Winters from a salary position to contractual and substantial reduction in time. There are no more current staff reduction planned and any such reductions would result in substantially reduced services.
 - vi. The annual audit will start in March.
 - vii. The process of moving forward with possible Bethesda office building sale is still mired in easement acquisition with homeowners association. AFS continues to work with commercial realtor to analyze options with the possibility of starting marketing in the summer. However, all timelines are highly vulnerable to revision due to the lack of movement by other tenants and uncertain easement approval by HOA and zoning change by Montgomery County.
- c. AFS Development Program (Jenna Hanks) – Re-establishment of the Standing Committee on Development (Jenna Hanks). A request will be sent out to each Division to identify a representative to serve on the Development Committee
- d. Policy Update (Drue Winters and Doug Austen)
- i. Contractual arrangement with Drue Winters completed to reflect her now position as an independent contractor. This will provide AFS with 1/3 of Drue's time (600 hours per year). CASS is working to contract Drue for 100 hours of time
 - ii. Update on recent activities. WOTUS is the key issue this year and is being re-introduced in the Senate.
- e. Publications (Laura Hendee)
- i. Journal retreat preview (discussion topics, invitees, expected outcomes) set for March 27-28 in Alexandria, VA, and an agenda will be ready soon
 - ii. EOY books sales report – Very successful - \$18K and up 142% from 2022 with about 1500 books sold.
- f. Meetings update (Shawn Johnston)
- i. Latin Congress status, budget projections – Miguel and Doug. Abstract submittals open until 2/20 and 23 abstracts have been submitted (note that final submission was about 330). It is likely that AFS not make any profit on the LACFC and likely experience a negative budget. Fund raising has been difficult, but many AFS units have been very generous with their support.
 - ii. World Fisheries Congress planning is moving forward smoothly. Site visit and planning team meeting set for April 6.
 - iii. Grand Rapids – Symposiums can be submitted through today and planning team is very well organized.

iv. Honolulu – Monthly calls of the planning team are scheduled. Discussions with the Hawaii Conservation Alliance (consortium of 27 conservation organizations) have been very productive and the planning team will attend the HCA conference in late June.

g. Officer Elections – Schedule of activities (Lauren Maza)

i. Candidate statements being edited and will be printed in the March issue of Fisheries. Vote will be open from March 21-April 28

h. DEI efforts – report on joint DEI/EOS committee call and NSF LEAPS grants

8. Additional Topics and New Business

a. MC meeting schedule for 2023

b. Establishment of date for spring GB meeting – Doodle to be sent for times on May 3, 4, 5, and May 8-12. ***Note that GB meeting has been scheduled for March 3 at 11:00 a.m. EDT.***

9. Meeting adjourned

Attachment 1 - Proposed Revisions to Policy on Joint Travel Support for AFS Officers and Staff at Division and Chapter meetings.

Issue and Background:

Travel by officers and AFS staff to Division and Chapter meetings is an essential part of conducting AFS business. The involvement, awareness, and relationships built through these visits enhances AFS activities and leads to a better society. Current policy (see below) states that the President or their designee should be visiting all Division meetings. Travel support is shared between the officer (provides travel and meals) and the host division (provides lodging and registration). No policy is provided for participation in Division and Chapter meetings by AFS staff. Participation in these meetings by staff is an important part of conducting AFS business and AFS should encourage this where possible and cost-effective and it is suggested that a modified shared support model be developed for this participation. The proposal is that AFS staff (including the Executive Director) cover all travel costs (including lodging) and the host organization simply waive registration costs.

Questions for discussion:

1. How can we ensure that Division meeting organizers are aware of the expectation of AFS President participation? Many of these meetings are delegated to chapters to manage the event and getting appropriate information to them is sometimes challenging?
2. What are chapters willing to do in support of officer and staff participation? Is there an acceptable model for mutual support? Can we develop an overall participation plan for officers and staff in unit meetings?

Proposed Motion:

No motion proposed at this time. Rather, the discussion will inform additional proposed changes to the AFS Procedures. These will be presented to the MC at an appropriate upcoming meeting. It would be helpful to also get feedback from chapters on how to better engage and share support for AFS leadership and AFS staff at chapter meetings.

Current Procedures Manual

Travel Policy Procedures for Society Officers

There is an expectation that Society Officers will participate in key events that are central to the function of the Society. It is also expected that Officers will use funding available to them from employers or other entities, if available, before requesting Society funds for covering travel expenses associated with the events. However, there are cases where an Officer cannot justify using funds other than those provided by the Society to cover travel costs. For example, one of the roles of the President is to represent the Society at a number of international meetings; these costs need to be covered by the Society and the host society.

Annual travel planning process: Each Officer will submit a proposed travel plan by November 30 for the next calendar year. The plan will specify event, location, dates, and estimated travel costs for which Society funds will be requested. Travel costs allowed will not exceed those under the federal system. The Executive Director will compile all requests and work with the Officers to accommodate the requests.

Other considerations in Society travel planning include:

1. Travel by the Society President associated with the annual meeting at which ~~s/he~~ they will preside will be included in the annual meeting budget.
2. For the annual meetings, it is anticipated that most Officers can cover most or some of the expenses of attending the regular meeting. Exceptions will be Officers who do not have other funding (e.g., those retired or for whom their employer has denied support).
3. The Society will fund transportation, meal reimbursement, and other incidental expenses to the international and Division meetings for the President or their designated representative, but the host Division and international society will fund lodging and registration.
4. ~~Officers will be provided a prepaid credit card to cover requested support, and~~ The Society can purchase flights for those who cannot receive cash reimbursement. Officers are not allowed to exceed the amount approved by the Executive Director in their travel plans. Maximum meal coverage will be equivalent to the federal per diem rate.
5. Other meetings will be considered in light of the overall travel budget with preference given to those that either provide partial support or are determined by the Society President to add the greatest value to the advancement of the Society mission.

Expected travel: The following meetings/events are defined as part of the core expectation for participation by the Officers. Additional meetings are considered as per guidance above.

President: Annual meeting, mid-year meeting (if held), Bethesda fall meeting, Division meetings, international meetings (e.g., Australian Society for Fish Biology, China Society of Fisheries, Korean Society of Fisheries and Aquatic Science, Japanese Society of Fisheries Science, Fisheries Society of the British Isles, Brazilian Society of Ichthyology in odd-numbered years).

Immediate Past-president: Annual meeting, Bethesda fall meeting, mid-year meeting (if held), and face-to-face Society staff interviews. If possible, the Immediate Past-president will conduct the staff interviews during the fall meeting in Bethesda. S/he may represent the Society at meetings if the President is unable to do so.

President-elect, First Vice-president and Second Vice-president: Annual meeting, Bethesda fall meeting, mid-year meeting (if held). These Officers may represent the Society at meetings if the President is unable to do so.

Incoming Second Vice-president: Annual meeting at which s/he will assume office.

Attachment 2 – Proposed registration rates for AFS Grand Rapids annual meeting

<https://afsannualmeeting.fisheries.org/registration/>

Registrant Type	Early Reg Fee	Regular Reg Fee	Differential	Virtual
Professional	\$625	\$775	\$150	\$395
Non-member	\$825	\$1,025	\$200	\$530
Early-career	\$469	\$619	\$150	\$300
Non-member	\$825	\$1,025	\$200	\$530
Student	\$375	\$525	\$150	\$240
Non-member	\$575	\$775	\$200	\$370
Retired	\$375	\$525	\$150	\$300
LMIC	TBD	TBD	-	\$25
Non-member	TBD	TBD	-	
Daily	\$375	\$475	\$100	
Non-member	\$475	\$575	\$100	
Guest	\$200	\$200	\$0.00	



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

AMONG THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS:

American Fisheries Society (AFS)
Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography (ASLO)
Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation (CERF)
Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society (FMCS)
International Association for Great Lakes Research (IAGLR)
North American Lake Management Society (NALMS)
Phycological Society of America (PSA)
Society for Freshwater Science (SFS)
Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS)

*To form a Consortium of Aquatic Science Societies (CASS)
to broaden the reach and strengthen the impact of aquatic sciences.*

CASS will foster collaboration and coordination among its members to promote

- the advancement of aquatic sciences*
- scientifically sound policy*
- education and outreach for an informed public*
- professional development opportunities*
- engagement across disciplines*
- international scientific partnerships*

The parties agree to the following:

I. Purposes

1. To jointly promote scientific research on aquatic ecosystems, from headwaters to the oceans, to better understand the hydrology, ecology, biogeochemistry, ecosystem services, and socio-economic values of these natural resources.

2. To leverage our collective scientific knowledge of aquatic ecosystems and their watersheds to help inform management and policy decisions.
3. To jointly promote global awareness of the wide range of important functions and values carried out by aquatic ecosystems, and the significance of large-scale changes to these systems.
4. To organize and host joint meetings and symposia of the member organizations.
5. To promote expanded participation of each organizations' members, chapters, and national committees through membership and attendance at each other's symposia, workshops, and annual and regional meetings.
6. To seek opportunities for sharing of expertise and professional standards among CASS members, and training of aquatic scientists, particularly in developing countries.
7. To promote active participation in scientific meetings and international memberships in all CASS organizations, particularly among scientists from developing countries.
8. To develop joint proposals for funding, when possible, to advance the shared objectives of the member organizations.
9. To share exhibit or booth space at select events of interest to multiple CASS members.
10. To promote awareness of CASS member organizations among their respective memberships through regular sharing of information items noting conferences, publications, and activities
11. To develop and host a CASS web portal for member organizations to facilitate sharing of scientific information on aquatic ecosystems for external users To share governance, meeting and other best practices and lessons learned to promote better efficiency and effectiveness of the individual organizations.

II. Functions

1. **CASS Liaison:** To facilitate the actions outlined above and provide continuity and effective functioning of the consortium, each organization is asked to select one person to serve a three-year term as their CASS Liaison, and to also designate an alternate. There is no limit as to the number of terms that an organization's liaison can serve. Responsibilities include:
 - Regular attendance in CASS meetings
 - Voting on behalf of your organization or ensuring your organization responds to votes promptly (e.g., approval of new CASS member organizations, approval of policy statements)
 - Providing coordination on communications from CASS to member organizations (by working with your organization's communications staff)
 - Recruiting members from your organization to serve on CASS working groups and projects (e.g., participation in events such as the National Diversity in STEM Conference, writing of policy statements, Joint Aquatic Sciences Meeting planning)
 - Keeping your organization's leadership informed of CASS activities

Additional representatives from CASS organizations, particularly Presidents and board members, are encouraged to participate in CASS meetings.

2. **Administration:** Two CASS Liaisons will be appointed to serve staggered two-year terms as Executive Coordinators. Their responsibilities include providing oversight of and direction for any administrative support.
3. **Meetings:** CASS will hold regular meetings by phone call, videoconference, or in person. All member organizations will be notified of the meeting date and time at least five days in advance. A two-thirds majority of the member organizations shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a CASS meeting.
4. **Voting:** All parties must diligently and conscientiously attempt to make decisions by consensus with full and careful consideration of minority views. When a consensus cannot be achieved, each member organization shall have one vote and decisions will be made by a majority vote. Any organization may choose to opt out of a CASS activity (e.g., participation in events, signing on to a policy statement) by providing written notice in advance of the deadline for that activity. Any changes to the CASS bylaws will be reviewed at one or more CASS meetings prior to a vote to approve by the executive committee of each organization, which will then be reported back to CASS. All societies will then sign the revised and approved MOU.
5. **CASS Standing Committees/Working Groups:** Much of the work of CASS is accomplished by working groups that meet independently and report back to CASS at monthly meetings. Each working group is responsible for designating one or more leads to coordinate its meetings and provide communications updates. Working groups will be established for the following topics:
 - Policy
 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)
 - International Partnerships
 - Joint Meetings
6. **New Members:** Additional organizations will be considered for CASS membership by first participating in a CASS meeting to describe their organization's interests related to aquatic sciences, and then providing a written letter of intent to CASS describing their organization, the reasons for wanting to join CASS, and their willingness to agree to the terms of this MOU. A membership decision will be made by the CASS members during a regular meeting and then conveyed to the interested organization by a CASS Coordinator.
7. **Funding:** An annual minimum contribution will be requested from each member organization to support CASS operations and activities, Additional contributions may be solicited for activities if needed.
8. **Effective Date:** This MOU shall become effective upon the signature of all parties and may be amended from time to time (including when other organizations join CASS), by written consent of all parties hereto.
9. **Withdrawal from CASS:** Any party to this MOU may withdraw from CASS upon two (2) weeks prior written notice.

10. Removal from CASS: If an organization fails to fulfill its CASS obligations, the representatives will be notified in writing of the intent to revoke membership. The organization has 30 days to make an appeal, after which it may be removed from CASS membership after a vote of two-thirds (or greater) of the membership.

Signed on behalf of their respective organizations:

Date
President, AFS

Date
President, ASLO

Date
President, CERF

Date
President, FMCS

Date
President, IAGLR

Date
President, NALMS

Date
President, PSA

Date
President, SFS

Date
President, SWS

Attachment 4 – Membership Reports

Membership Type	Product Code	2023 Member Count as of 2/10/23	2022 Full-Year Count	2021 Full-Year Count	2020 Full-Year Count	2019 Full-Year Count
Regular Membership Dues	REGULAR	1,913	3,043	3,158	3,296	3,502
Early Career Membership Dues	RETIRED	337	430	429	469	447
Retired Membership Dues	STUDENT	695	1,330	1,306	1,422	1,717
Student Membership Dues	YPROF	505	998	923	980	994
Low Middle Income Countries Membership Dues	DEV	42	91	78	95	87
Hutton Students - comp memberships	HUTT	-	39	-	-	-
TOTAL:		3,492	5,892	5,894	6,262	6,747

Strategic Partnership Memberships						
Gold Strategic Partner	GOLD	-	2	1	-	-
Silver Strategic Partner	SILVER	15	15	41	-	-
Sustaining Membership Dues	SUSTAIN	14	16	40	47	57
		29	33	82	47	57
TOTAL:						

Member Action	2023 Count	2022 Count	2021 Count	2020 Count	2019 Count
New Members	493	556	480	584	619
Renewed Members	3,033	3,632	4,367	5,013	4,870
Rejoin Members	139	336	12	2	-
Lapsed Members	-	2	1,027	1,095	884