

Southern Division American Fisheries Society
Spring Executive Committee Meeting
Thursday, 24 January 2019
Moody Gardens Conference Center – Floral Hall A2
Galveston, Texas

Secretary-Treasurer Kim Bonvechio announced a quorum was present. President Craig Bonds called the EXCOM meeting to order at 1705 hrs. Attendee introductions were made, including SDAFS officers [President, Craig Bonds; Past President, Wes Porak; President-Elect, Wes Neal; Vice President, Tom Kwak (absent); Secretary-Treasurer, Kim Bonvechio; Student Representative to the EXCOM, Kyler Hecke] and special guests [AFS President, Jesse Trushenski; AFS Executive Director, Doug Austen]. Proxies included Kelsey Lincoln for North Carolina, Dennis Riecke for Mississippi, and Ken Cunningham for Oklahoma.

AFS President Trushenski highlighted the five elements of her term: 1) creation of the next 5-yr strategic plan which will take a more quantitative approach than it has in the past; 2) addressing gaps in professional development of fisheries professionals; 3) strengthening AFS publications; 4) continuing efforts to increase diversity within the fisheries profession; and 5) making fisheries relevant to the public and increasing the accessibility of fisheries science to lay audiences. President Trushenski also noted the many AFS resources available to chapters (e.g., webinars, teleconference service, meeting insurance).

AFS Executive Director Doug Austen encouraged attendees to reach out to AFS staff with ways they can help make the Division and Chapters most successful. He also provided updates with The Society, including new AFS staff member Peter Turcik who is now the Editor of *Fisheries* magazine, activities of AFS Policy Director Drue Winters, and an overview of the 150th anniversary meeting in Columbus, OH in 2020.

President Bonds, on behalf of the Division, expressed his gratitude for AFS staff coming to the meeting.

Steve Lochmann spoke about SDAFS Chapter exhibits to be displayed at the SDAFS meeting in Little Rock and the AFS 150th anniversary in Columbus in 2020. He requested each Chapter provide an exhibit that describes its history and its role at the Division and Society levels.

AFS President Trushenski also mentioned the 2019 meeting in Reno, NV, which, for the first time, will be held in conjunction with The Wildlife Society, potentially making it the largest meeting of natural resource professionals in history.

President Bonds presented the Spring EXCOM Meeting agenda. Michael Homer made a motion to approve the agenda and Brett Timmons seconded the motion. No discussion ensued. Motion passed by unanimous consent.

SDAFS President Report

President Bonds' report stands as written in the SDAFS Briefing Book. From that report, he highlighted the work of Immediate Past President in completing the revision of the SDAFS Procedural Manual and Hae Kim's efforts in transferring SDAFS technical committees' websites to the new AFS server.

SDAFS Officer Reports

President-Elect Neal noted his report stands as written.

Vice President Kwak was unable to attend due to the federal government shutdown, so no report was given.

Immediate Past President Porak highlighted the completion of the SDAFS Procedural Manual, but otherwise noted his report stands as written.

Secretary-Treasurer Kim Bonvechio's reports were handled individually. Minutes from the 2018 EXCOM meeting minutes were published on the SDAFS website. Having received no comments or revisions, Jessica Baumann made a motion to approve the minutes and Past President Porak seconded. No discussion ensued, and no abstentions were reported. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Secretary-Treasurer Bonvechio provided an overview of the 2018 budget. Several income and expense items were highlighted, including: \$1,237.46 income from the 2018 SDAFS meeting in Puerto Rico, \$22,554 income from the 2017 Tampa AFS Meeting, \$2,084.64 in expenses for website services (vs. \$4002 budgeted), \$1,000 Disaster Relief Assistance for Puerto Rico, and \$5,718.80 for student travel assistance and awards for the 2018 SDAFS meeting in Puerto Rico. As agreed to at last year's EXCOM meeting, a total of \$10,000 was transferred from the SDAFS checking account to the AFS Investment Portfolio. The SDAFS had an end-of-year bank balance of \$14,158.34; however, the end-of-year balance of the AFS investment was not yet available.

An audit of the 2018 financial information was completed on January 17, 2019 by the SDAFS Audit Committee. A motion to approve the committee's report was made by Past President Porak and seconded by Cindy Williams. No discussion ensued, and no abstentions were reported. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

The Proposed 2019 SDAFS Budget was discussed next. Secretary-Treasurer Bonvechio noted that typical levels of income and expenses were expected for 2019. However, several items were highlighted: additional income of \$1,000 from the John F. Dequine Estate, reduction in web hosting expenses due to cancellation of HostGator services and completion of technical committee website transfers, and reduction of Student Affairs budget back to \$4,200. A motion to approve the 2019 budget was made by Cindy Williams and seconded by Robby Maxwell. Some discussion ensued regarding SDAFS donations, specifically with regards to the 2020 Catfish Symposium. President Bonds noted that the standard amount allotted for AFS-related donations is \$1,500 per year, but multiple donations for the 2020 Catfish Symposium could be made in consecutive years.

He noted this specific donation request is on the agenda and will be discussed in detail later in the meeting. With no further discussion, motion passed by unanimous vote.

Catfish 2020 Discussion

Catfish Management Technical Committee Chair Aaron Bunch noted that Catfish 2020 will take place immediately before the 2020 SDAFS meeting in Little Rock, AR. On behalf of the Technical Committee, he requested a \$5,000 donation from the SDAFS similar to what had been received from the North Central Division. He summarized the work of the Committee and noted that papers from the symposium will be published in the *North American Journal of Fisheries Management*. President Bonds recognized the broad support among the SDAFS officers for providing a donation for Catfish 2020 and encouraged some discussion as to the amount of that donation. President-Elect Neal added the possibility of breaking the donation up among consecutive years, to alleviate burden in any one budget cycle. Michael Homer mentioned a potential meeting profit of \$40,000 that will be split between the Texas Chapter and SDAFS, which should put the SDAFS in a good place financially this year. Some discussion occurred about publication of a book vs a special journal edition for the symposium. Aaron cited papers in the journal can be searchable in the future, whereas papers in a book cannot. However, it was noted that there is a page limit for the journal, which will limit how many papers can be published. Further, the committee will not receive any income from the journal, whereas the book has the potential to funnel money back to them (and the SDAFS). AFS Executive Director Austen commented that low sales for books on symposium proceedings has led AFS to move away from publishing those types of books. In addition to typical meeting expenses, it was noted that donations were being sought to offset the large publication cost of approximately \$20,000. Following discussion, President Bonds suggested starting with \$1,000 and if proceeds from the Texas meeting are as anticipated, then the EXCOM can vote to increase that amount in the future. President-Elect Neal agreed and noted that he would rather extra funds go back to support worthwhile causes like this. Cindy Williams asked if unused grant money could be carried over from last year, but that is not standard procedure because expenses and income can vary a lot from year-to-year. Past President Porak made a motion for a \$1,000 donation to be given now and a second donation to be considered later in the year based on meeting income and budget situation. Motion was seconded by Cindy Williams. No further discussion ensued, and no abstentions were reported. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Student Survey Report

Student Representative to the EXCOM, Kyler Hecke, summarized the results of the 2018 Student Engagement and Involvement Survey, which was sent to students within SDAFS following the AFS Atlantic City meeting. In the month it was conducted, a total of 60 responses (~1/3 undergraduate students; ~2/3 graduate students) was received. Of these, about 80% had attended some kind of AFS meeting, mostly at the local level. Most students were not familiar with the SDAFS technical committees, but those that were found out about them from other AFS members. Further, most students were not aware that committees meet at the SDAFS meeting each year. Suggestions to increase student-involvement on technical committees included improving communication with students and adding a student rep to each committee. With regards to SDAFS workshops, the

majority of students surveyed were familiar with them, but most had not attended a workshop at a SDAFS meeting. Reasons for this varied but included price, timing, and perceived lack of relevancy. To improve student involvement with workshops, it was suggested to improve communication and advertisement and allow virtual/remote attendance. When asked what topics should be considered for future workshops, survey respondents mentioned R, scientific writing, career advice, GIS, identification classes, modeling techniques/programs, and boating skills. AFS President Trushenski suggested creating “dating profile” descriptions for each technical committee to help advertise what’s available and to match members to relevant groups that they may not know exist or what they were about. President-Elect Neal also mentioned another idea that was brought up earlier by one of the technical committees, which is to change the name from “technical committee meeting” to “open forum” or “open discussion” to make it more inviting. Finally, President Craig reiterated the importance of having a student representative on the EXCOM, like Mr. Hecke, who brings a unique and valuable perspective to the leadership team. He also provided some final take home messages for the group: 1) take steps to make the technical committees more inviting to students; 2) promote the business of each technical committee to students on an annual basis; and 3) more awareness about the technical committees may increase student interests that are currently more aligned with workshops.

Resolutions Committee Report

Resolutions Committee Chair Dennis Riecke discussed the Warmwater Streams Technical Committee’s resolution regarding water quality standards. When seeking EPA counsel about the original resolution to incorporate hydrologic alterations in water quality standards, it was recommended not to pursue this on a national level with the Clean Water Act but rather to focus on state-level action. Therefore, the resolution presented to the EXCOM urges all state fish and wildlife agencies to incorporate numeric or narrative flow criteria to their state water quality standards. The resolution was sent out for comment on the SDAFS website and via the SDAFS listserv. Comments were received by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Arkansas Environmental Affairs Committee and the resolution was edited accordingly. Robby Maxwell made a motion to bring the resolution to membership, which was seconded by Wes Porak. Cindy Williams provided some insight regarding the challenges associated with this resolution. After a short discussion, a vote was taken, and the motion passed with unanimous consent.

Next, President Bonds provided a brief overview of the Host Meeting Resolution that will be brought to membership later at the SDAFS Business Meeting.

Chapter Reports

Host Comments – Texas Chapter President Michael Homer thanked everyone for attending the meeting, which he estimates will have 500-525 attendees and about \$40,000 in profit. For their 2018 chapter meeting, a total 11 student scholarships (\$15,500) and 13 awards were awarded, and 222 people attended. The Chapter also wrote letters of support for the RAWA and recognized the professional achievements of several Chapter members. The rest of the report stands as written in the 2018 SDAFS Briefing Book

Alabama – The 2018 meeting was the Chapter’s first solo meeting with 73 attending, and the next meeting is scheduled for February 2019. The rest of the report stands as written in the 2018 SDAFS Briefing Book.

Arkansas – Report stands as written in the 2018 SDAFS Briefing Book. Highlighted was their next chapter meeting that will be taking place in February 2019.

Florida – Not present. Report stands as written in the 2018 SDAFS Briefing Book.

Georgia – Report stands as written in the 2018 SDAFS Briefing Book. Highlighted were the Chapter’s FAMS workshop series, aging workshop which may be expanded to the state agency, and consideration of hosting a future AFS meeting. The Chapter’s next meeting will be held in two weeks and will include a symposium featuring all nine riverkeepers of Georgia. Also noted was the increasing number of students and decreasing number of professionals presenting at the annual meeting.

Kentucky – Not present. No report submitted.

Louisiana – Report stands as written in the 2018 SDAFS Briefing Book. Highlighted were last year’s meeting with 117 attendees (~¾ professionals and ¼ students) and updates to the Chapter’s bylaws. Next meeting is scheduled for May 23-24, 2019.

Mississippi - Report stands as written in the 2018 SDAFS Briefing Book.

North Carolina - Report stands as written in the 2018 SDAFS Briefing Book.

Highlighted were the increasing number of travel awards with this past year being the first year that undergraduate awards were incorporated, increasing diversity of talks and workshops (e.g., crayfish, mussels), and efforts to create more formal financial procedures (e.g., budget, donation requests, forms). Executive Director Austen encouraged chapters to contact AFS for assistance in updating their bylaws.

Oklahoma – Report stands as written in the 2018 SDAFS Briefing Book.

Potomac – Not present. Report stands as written in the 2018 SDAFS Briefing Book.

Puerto Rico – Report stands as written in the 2018 SDAFS Briefing Book. Chapter President Gus Engmann thanked everyone for their assistance with the 2018 SDAFS meeting in Puerto Rico, contribution to disaster relief efforts, and participation in the beach restoration project.

South Carolina – Not present. Report stands as written in the 2018 SDAFS Briefing Book.

Tennessee – Report stands as written in the 2018 SDAFS Briefing Book. Highlights from the 2018 chapter meeting include three workshops, first professional symposium about natural resource partnerships, addition of professional awards, and vote for hosting a future SDAFS meeting.

Tidewater – Not present. Report stands as written in the 2018 SDAFS Briefing Book.

Virginia – Report stands as written in the 2018 SDAFS Briefing Book. Several items were highlighted. The Chapter has had success with providing lightning talks, which are half the time of regular talks and allow speakers to provide updates, new study intros, etc. This was also their 3rd year of sponsoring the Junior Fisheries Biologist Program, which is a scholarship available to high school or community college students. Finally, the Chapter’s *Freshwater Fishes of Virginia Field Guide* is nearing completion and should be available sometime in 2019.

Virginia Tech – Not present. Report stands as written in the 2018 SDAFS Briefing Book.

West Virginia – Not present. Report stands as written in the 2018 SDAFS Briefing Book.

New Business

General Meeting Chair for the 2020 SDAFS meeting, Ben Batten, provided a summary of the upcoming meeting. The meeting will be held at the Marriott Hotel Downtown in Little Rock, Arkansas on February 20-23, 2020. Mr. Batten recognized some planning committee members. He also noted that the 3rd International Catfish Symposium (aka Catfish 2020) will immediately precede the meeting and that a discount will be available for attendees that go to both. Further, he requested technical committees hold afternoon meetings if only planning a half-day meeting, so that attendees at the symposium can also participate if desired. A promotional video will be shown at the business meeting.

President Bonds gave a note of thanks for chapters willing to host future meetings, including Virginia in 2021, South Carolina in 2022, and Tennessee in 2023.

President Bonds began discussions regarding two new committee requests.

1. Endemic Black Bass – Amy Cottrell provided an overview of the input she had received about forming an Endemic Black Bass Technical Committee. Overall, there was a lot of support for the idea, but there were also some challenges to be addressed. Pros included increased networking and communication; cons included possible overlap with other technical committees, concern about creating another technical committee when issues can be addressed within an existing one, and some issues that are state specific and not regional in nature. President Bonds noted the benefit from a state agency perspective to working with SARP's Native Black Bass Initiative (NBBI) group but said having a separate science-based group within AFS may be advantageous. Past President Porak provided some background information and insight for the group. In short, there is a lot of science still needed for endemic black bass, but he suggested going back to the NBBI group for additional feedback. President Bonds suggested that discussion also occur at the SEAFWA state fish chief meeting to get their insight. Despite a general consensus for the need of a science-based group like this, there is some uncertainty as to where it should be housed and what form it should take. Options to consider include a subcommittee within an existing technical committee (similar to American Eel Subcommittee within the Warmwater Streams Technical Committee), an ad hoc committee in SDAFS, and a working group under SARP. No motions or decisions were ultimately made, but future action may be considered by the EXCOM after additional input is received.
2. Ash Bullard talked about the Aquatic Animal Health Plan for the Southeast and justification for the creation of an ad hoc committee to provide technical assistance to the Aquaculture Technical Committee for that plan. Mr. Bullard provided background information and a summary of the work that has been done so far. This ad hoc committee, if created, would include various fish health

experts in the Southeast. President Bonds noted the EXCOM officers were in agreement to form an ad hoc committee charged with assisting in the writing of the Aquatic Animal Health Plan. Once that task is completed, then the plan would be to assess the need for the creation of a technical committee. However, he left the comment period open for another week so EXCOM members could provide additional input. The new SDAFS President Neal can, with officer approval, then make the ad hoc appointment.

President Bonds provided an overview of the SDAFS Bylaws changes. To be considered are: 1) merging the SDAFS Policy and Resolutions Committees, with the chair serving on the AFS Resource Policy Committee; 2) changing the number of standing committee members from a minimum of 4-5 to 2 per committee; and 3) moving the duties of the SDAFS Ballot and Nominating Committees to the Immediate Past President role. The EXCOM officers plan to seek guidance from AFS's constitutional consultant about these proposed changes and will circle back to the EXCOM for discussion and voting on specific changes.

The Alligator Gar Technical Committee requested a letter from the SDAFS to support a recent petition by Henry Foster to make Alligator Gar the official state fish of Arkansas. The SDAFS officers agreed to do that.

Executive Director Austen wanted the SDAFS EXCOM to consider co-hosting the AFS meeting in Baltimore with the Potomac and Tidewater Chapters and the Northeast Division in August 2021. President Bonds voiced some concern with donor fatigue and logistical challenges due to the meeting's location but would welcome a revenue-sharing partnership with The Society. Mr. Austen mentioned that involvement would include membership on meeting committees and an MOU (memo of understanding) would be written to define the duties and revenue sharing amounts for all groups involved. President Bonds agreed to that arrangement.

Finally, Mr. Austen encouraged attendees to submit an application for the Emerging Leaders Mentorship Program. In addition to a \$500 stipend, this opportunity will allow those interested in becoming future leaders of The Society to participate in activities of the AFS Governing Board for one year.

A quick message of gratitude was given to EXCOM members.

Meeting was adjourned by President Bonds at 1923 hrs.