

President's Plan of Work

Leanne H. Roulson

August 2021 – August 2022

As the Society's President my goals are to support AFS in our mission to:

To improve the conservation and sustainability of fishery resources and aquatic ecosystems by advancing fisheries knowledge and promoting the development of fisheries professionals.

However, as a member of a fluid leadership team, I know that my term must retain ties to past work and look to the future to try to sense where AFS needs to go next. To that end, I have noted how my primary goals link to those of the immediate past president, Brian Murphy, and to the multistate grant programs that constitute substantial efforts by AFS staff and our partners. I hope to continue to the work of past presidents to pursue our vision to:

Advance fisheries knowledge and strive to be the home society for all fisheries disciplines. In that pursuit, AFS seeks to be recognized as the pre-eminent organization providing fisheries information to decision makers in all arenas. While fulfilling our vision, we will recruit and develop new fisheries professionals by offering learning and training opportunities crucial to maintaining a well-trained profession, support programs and efforts to increase diversity and inclusion, and enhance the value of AFS professional certification.

I have identified five high-priority areas of focus for my term as President of AFS:

- 1. Increase AFS engagement and interactions with other professional societies on large-scale issues such as environmental policy and climate change.**
- 2. Continue to address the need for support of scientists from diverse demographic groups in fisheries, specifically to increase long-term retention of scientists who are members of one or more marginalized groups.**
- 3. Continue work of past presidents to encourage outreach and communication of fisheries science by fisheries professionals to the general public and policy makers.**
- 4. Support the JASM 2022 and AFS 2022 Meetings and plan for a successful transition to in-person meetings and/or continued blended meeting formats**
- 5. Keeping the organization of AFS up to date and provide resources relevant to our members and leadership**

These goals are intentionally connected to the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan (Bowker et al. 2019), which was revised to guide the Society forward and includes the following specific objectives:

Objective 1. Advance fisheries disciplines, conservation, and management.

Objective 2. Develop fisheries professionals

Objective 3. Communicate the importance of both the science and the value of fisheries discipline.

Objective 4. Increase diversity among fisheries professionals and promote an inclusive environment in AFS.

Objective 5. Provide effective governance of AFS and high-quality service to AFS’s members.

I discuss each focus area in more detail below. Although as president, I am to be a key leader for AFS, I understand that AFS Staff have finite time available to support my plan of work. Where relevant, I have identified the staff who I believe I would need to rely on to accomplish my action items.

1. Increase AFS engagement and interactions with other professional societies on large-scale issues such as environmental policy and climate change.

AFS is a source for fisheries knowledge, but knowledge in isolation has limited utility. I have never understood the friction between research, academia, and resource managers since the health and sustainability of our fishery resources is a common goal among pretty much every AFS member I have met. To that end, I would like to continue to promote AFS as a source of information on how quality science is the best support for effective policy and fisheries management practice.

<i>Specific Actions Proposed</i>	AFS Staff Involvement?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue the involvement of AFS with the Consortium of Aquatic Science Societies (CASS) including supporting the planning and programming for the 2022 JASM Meeting. 	Doug
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote awareness of the links between national and international resource management policy and the health and sustainability of fisheries resources 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host or attend at least one Hill briefing on a key environmental policy action and provide scientific information to decision makers on implications for fisheries resources (<i>focus TBD- based on political policy actions under consideration during my term</i>). 	Drue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify three specific policy issues to prioritize for the 2021-2022 year and develop webinars for each issue. 	Drue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include symposiums, workshops, and policy forums on large scale issues such as climate change at the 152nd annual meeting in Spokane. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charge the Climate Ambassador’s program participants to report on how they are using the training they received in 2021 	Beth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress positive benefits of climate-aware management 	

Strategic Plan Objectives: 1, 3, 5

Link to Multistate Grant: Communicating the effects of climate change on fish and fisheries (\$118,870)

Tie to B. Murphy’s plan of work: Increase public visibility and trust in the work of our profession and of our Society.

2. Continue to address the need for support of scientists from diverse demographic groups in fisheries, specifically to increase **long-term retention** of scientists who are members of one or more underrepresented groups.

Brian’s POW referenced the Penaluna et al. 2017 article and in reviewing the nine action items listed, one that did not seem to have been addressed so far was (#8) related to tracking our progress towards increasing diversity. As scientists, we know that **measurable indicators are key** to understanding progress or lack thereof. After several years of working towards DEI goals, I’d like to be able to talk about whether AFS has made progress, and if not, address the questions I get asked a lot, “what can AFS actually DO/ What has AFS actually DONE?”

Specific Actions Proposed	AFS Staff Involvement?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charge the DEI Committee to recruit member representatives from each Division. Request that they identify 2-5 measurable indicators that AFS can track or is tracking to assess DEI goals. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with the EOS to identify support resources for scientists who identify with one or more underrepresented groups and resource management agency supervisors looking to retain this talent pool. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with membership on the links between DEI and social science. Stress benefits of reflecting societal diversity in our fisheries research and management staff and programs 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up with Hutton applicants and participants- Support/ continue collaboration between the Hutton Program and university fisheries programs (possibly through the Education Section and NAUFWP) to provide information to all Hutton applicants regarding university fisheries programs and careers in fisheries science. 	Mary Webb/ Lauren
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a plenary (Spokane 2022) /webinar/ training for agency supervisors that addresses reasons that people leave our profession with examples of actions they can take/ others have shown to reduce attrition. 	Doug
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Membership Committee to collect information on demographics of our membership to enable AFS to measure movement on this issue. This takes its cue from the “Diversity Scorecard” 	Eva

Strategic Plan Objectives: 2, 4, 5

Link to Multistate Grants: Propose a grant for 2021 to address one of the action items above (open to ideas from other officers/ EOS/ DEI)

Tie to B. Murphy’s plan of work: To redouble our efforts to increase diversity and improve equity and inclusion within our profession and our Society

3. Continue work of past presidents to encourage outreach and communication of fisheries science by fisheries professionals to the general public and policy makers.

This area of focus will continue to build upon the work in progress during Presidents Scott Bonar and Brian Murphy’s terms. During my presidential term, we will further implement strategies to increase communication of large-scale issues affecting fisheries and the fisheries profession. This includes educating the general public, policy makers, and anglers.

<i>Specific Actions Proposed</i>	AFS Staff Involvement?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide science communication training via webinars/ continuing education at annual meetings 	Mary Webb
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with the <i>Fisheries Podcast</i> creators to spotlight connections between research and community value of fish and fisheries 	Beth?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue work on Climate Change website resources page 	Beth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Resources Policy Committee to develop short, accessible summaries of policy issues that AFS prioritizes 	Drue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Climate Ambassadors Program as a participant and promote the next year’s class and increased involvement. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on CAP participants’ outreach efforts in at least one President’s hook 	

Strategic Plan Objectives: 1, 3

Link to Multistate Grants: Retaining 2020’s Surge of Licensed Anglers (AFS is managing this grant after RBFF withdrew due to conflict of interest issues. Total amount is \$188,712 and we will work with Southwick Associations and Responsive Management)

Tie to B. Murphy’s plan of work: Increase public visibility and trust in the work of our profession and of our Society.

4. Support the JASM 2022 and AFS 2022 Meetings and plan for a successful transition to in-person meetings and/or continued blended meeting formats

As President, I will work to promote the JASM 2022 meeting as an opportunity to spotlight the commonality among the JASM and CASS members. For the Spokane 2022 meeting, my goal is to develop a theme promoting diversity in fisheries professionals and “walking the talk” of creating a meeting that is welcoming and that celebrates the value of diverse voices in fisheries research and management.

Specific Actions Proposed	AFS Staff Involvement?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the recommendations of the Meetings Oversight Committee on making meetings more accessible (as practicable) 	Shawn, Steve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan the Spokane Plenary to include voices from tribal members and the information on DEI retention roadblocks mentioned in #2 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively participate in the JASM 2022 planning to encourage cross-society symposia 	Doug
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively work to engage our international partners and strengthen/ renew relationships that may have faded during the past year(s) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	

Strategic Plan Objectives: 2, 4

Link to Multistate grant: Instream Flow and Water Level Conservation Training and Research Center (\$119,325 with the Instream Flow Council) - AFS is a partner and Doug is co-chair of the committee but in reality all of the work is done by a group of instream flow experts. AFS does get a major workshop and symposium at the Baltimore meeting funded through this grant- so not JASM or Spokane, but these meetings could build on the work at Baltimore

5. Keeping the organization of AFS up to date and provide resources relevant to our members and leadership

As an organization of action, it is hard to keep our documentation up to date. This is not as glamorous as some of the other items I have listed, but given recent discussions, I think I need to spend effort to get our governing documents (Procedures, Constitution, Rules) current and perhaps discuss ways to make this less onerous for future Executive Committees.

My predecessors have written books and developed programs that have done this for our role as a source for fisheries information, so I will not attempt to continue that work, except to support the many multistate grants we have in process.

Specific Actions Proposed	AFS Staff Involvement?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the AFS procedures manual- set a schedule for review and revisions with the Management Committee. Coordinate review with Constitutional Consultant. 	Doug
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information to our membership on the Multistate grants AFS has secured/ progress on these 	Aaron /Peter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Financial Planning Committee to engage and educate Management Committee members in the financial planning and status of the Society 	Dan

Strategic Plan Objectives: 5

Link to Multistate Grants:

1. The **AFS Fish Disease Diagnostics "Blue Book"** for \$83,406. Jesse is one of the leads on this with the Fish Health Section.
2. **Research Web Tool** for \$84,373. This project is actually moving along well but travel funds will be redesignated for additional software development. Grant Price (the AFS contracted web developer) is the lead and we have a national advisory team of about 20 people who provide project guidance.
3. **Research Agenda Assessment and Guidance** for \$90,872. This project is a partner to the Web Tool project above. In fact, they have the same advisory committees. We are contracting Andy Loftus to assist with much of the work of this project.
4. (Likely completed in 2021) Part 2 of **Scott Bonar's standard sampling book** (\$97,399) - this finishes out the research components as well as funds the complete publishing process for Scott's book including all of the AFS staff time and costs for editing, layout, design, indexing and printing. Essentially, all sales of the book will be AFS profit since the entire publishing cost will be covered through this grant and the original 2019 grant.

References:

Bowker, J., T. Bigford, S. Bonar, J. Defilippi-Simpson, R. Essig, J. Jackson, S. Midway, and M. Murphy. Charting the course for the American Fisheries Society: Strategic Plan for 2020-2024. *Fisheries* 44(3):119-122.

Penaluna, B. E., I. Arismendi, C. M. Moffitt, and Z. L. Penney. 2017. Nine proposed action areas to enhance diversity and inclusion in the American Fisheries Society. *Fisheries* 42(8):399-402.