American Fisheries Society Governing Board Meeting
August 15, 2015
Portland Hilton Hotel, Portland, Oregon
Minutes of the Meeting

Participants

Governing Board Members:
Donna Parrish, President
Ron Essig, President-elect
Joe Margraf, First Vice-president
Steve McMullin, 2nd Vice-president
John Cooper, President, Northeastern Division
Kristen Ferry, President-elect, Northeastern Division
Vince Travnichek, President, North Central Division
Melissa Wuellner, President-elect, North Central Division
Dennis Riecke, President, Southern Division
Dave Coughlan, Pres-Elect, Southern Division
Hilda Sexauer, President, Western Division
Jim Bowker, President - Elect, Western Division
Laura Wildman, President, Bioengineering
Jack Imhof, President, Canadian Aquatic Res. Section
Myron Peck, President, Early Life History Section
Craig Paukert, President, Education Section
Marybeth Brey, President, Equal Opportunities Section
Abigail Franklin Archer, President, Estuaries Section
Jesse Trushenski, President, Fish Culture Section
John Sweka, President, Fish Habitat Section
Tom Bigford, President-elect, Fish Habitat Section
Rod Getchell, President Fish Health Section
Mike Stone, President, Fisheries Administrators Section
Thom Litts, President, Fish Information & Technology Section
Mark Porath, President, Fisheries Management Section
Jeffrey Olsen, President, Genetics Section
Bill Franzin, President, International Fisheries Section
Pam Fuller, President, Introduced Fish Section
Ben Walther, President, Marine Fisheries Section
Mark Shrimpton, President, Physiology Section
Tom Lang, President, Socio-Economics Section
Margaret Murphy, President, Water Quality Section

AFS Staff: Doug Austen, Dan Cassidy, Jasmine Sewell, Beth Beard
Constitutional Consultants: Jessica Mistak and John Boreman (Apprentice)

Guest: Gwen White, Hanna Krugman, Cindy Williams, Jeff Billington and Leonard Greenberg (Potomac Communications Group), Karen Dunmall, Andrew Carlson, Mike Garello

Minutes of the Meeting

Note that the 2015 Governing Board Briefing Book, available on the AFS web site, includes detailed reports from Governing Board members on activities of the units and committees as well as the President’s and Executive Director’s plan-of-work and budget documents.

1. **Quorum confirmed (by Mistak) and meeting called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Parrish**

2. **Announcement of Proxies**
   - Ken Kurzawski for Mike Stone, Fisheries Administrators Section
   - Doug Munson for Rod Getchell, Fish Health Section

3. **Approval of Agenda**
   - Motion by Margraf, 2nd by McMullin. Passed by unanimous consent

4. **Approval of Minutes** - February 2015 Governing Board Mid-Year Meeting
   - Motion by Porath, 2nd by Brey. Passed by unanimous consent

5. **President’s Opening Remarks**
   - a. Essig review key roles of the Governing Board
      i. To conduct society business
      ii. Helping to guide the society on strategic planning
   - b. Essig review protocols for the Governing Board meeting
      i. Use microphone
      ii. Be recognized to speak
      iii. Turn card on end and you will be recognized
      iv. Try to keep comments short
      v. Make your point twice

6. **Approval of President-Elect’s Proposed Plan of Work**
   - Essig referred to his plan of work which was previously submitted to the Governing Board members for their review. A couple of key points were noted:
     a. Let members know about officer travel to other countries
     b. Implement the strategic plan into daily society business
     c. Looking into the potential of doing a joint annual meeting with The Wildlife Society

   - Motion by McMullin, 2nd by Coughlan. Passed by unanimous consent
7. Executive Director’s Report

Austen provided a brief review of AFS activities with the following highlights. Details are provided in the Briefing book.

a. The communications plan developed by Potomac Communications Group (PCG) with direction from the Communications Committee is being submitted for Governing Board discussion and has moved from a phase of contractual work by PCG to an AFS internal process of implementation.

b. Continuing Education (CE) – several questions were raised after the review of CE at the Portland meeting

   i. Walther- What kind of continuing education courses does AFS want to have, some sections would like to develop their own continuing education classes? Austen response was that the CE committee and staff have done membership surveys to develop an understanding of CE needs. Also, course are developed and submitted by the host annual meeting organizing committee to reflect regional needs.

   ii. Bowker- Most of the CE classes are science based course, can we have non science based CE courses that are free. This might include financial planning or other such courses that would be a member benefit.

   iii. Reicke – The instructors have to go through a long approval process, can we make it easier to get approved?

   iv. Austen- Continuing Education can be done through distant learning and continuing education material, and podcasts

c. Membership numbers from 2014 to 2015. Litts asked if the Society is doing better than Seattle? What is our retention? Austen response was that Portland meeting registration won’t exceed Seattle but that membership numbers have improved in the past year (referred to the Executive Directors presentation and membership charts)

d. Murphy- Is there an automatic renewal option? Austen response is that there currently is no automatic renewal option. AFS should explore this option and evaluate how well it is working for other societies.

e. Auditor’s Report (Austen referred to the Audit Committee report in the briefing book)

f. Overview of Budget (Refer to Cassidy’s Financial Report). Cassidy provided the following highlights

   i. 2016 is an investment budget with an expected deficit that we anticipate will be recovered upon full development of new program areas.

   ii. AFS is moving from an antiquated budget format that is non-function, line-based to a programmatic budget that will allow for assessment of program performance. This will require modification to the financial management software used by AFS but is fully supported by the current software (Great Plains, now Microsoft Dynamics GP)

   iii. The proposed 2016 budget includes expanded support for membership development, communications development, and specific lines for staffing cost and travel that was not tracked in sufficient detail in the past.

   iv. AFS staff are also working on expanding our outside grant opportunities. Beginning with the 2015 budget and through FY 2017, AFS is working with the National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center, U. S. Geological Survey, on an agreement
through Cornell University (through a funding mechanism as a member of the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit program) to manage the reviews of the eight regional Climate Science Centers.

8. Constitutional Consultant’s Report

Parliamentary Note- The Procedures may be suspended or amended by a simple majority vote of the Governing Board. If passed by the Governing Board, the Rules may be amended by a simple majority of Active Members voting at the annual Society meeting.

a. Recommended Motion: Amend the Society’s Rules to more accurately reflect the current duties and roles of the Governing Board and Management Committee as follows:

- 4.E. The Governing Board decides Society policies, approves the annual budget as presented by the Management Committee, and transacts other necessary Society business. leads Society strategic planning initiatives, and reviews Society business matters that need membership approval.
- 5.D. The Management Committee meets monthly and handles general oversight of Society operations including budget approval; Executive Director activities and, through him/her, staff activities; society-wide meetings; communications with membership, external partners, and government entities; and matters related to and affecting Society Procedures.
- Replace “Governing Board” with “Management Committee” as needed to throughout the Rules to reflect delegation of responsibilities.

Background for Motion: As part of the 2013 Governing Board Retreat in Little Rock, several recommendations of the Special Committee on Society Governance were adopted, including a motion to “delegate additional authority to the Management Committee to facilitate the Governing Board’s ability to focus on issues involving strategic planning, accountability, and the President’s plan of work.” We have been operating under that model for approximately 2 years and it is working well and has allowed for more efficiency.

Motion by Jim Bowker, 2nd by Joe Margraf. Passed by unanimous consent

b. Recommended Motion: Amend the Society’s Rules to remove the Time and Place Standing Committee:

14.B.xxiv. TIME AND PLACE COMMITTEE generates competitive proposals for the future site of the annual Society meeting, from which the Governing Board shall choose one site.

Background for Motion: After much discussion among the Management Committee, it was determined that the Society’s processes could be streamlined by removing the Time and
Place Committee Standing Committee. There could be occasions when the Time and Place committee members do not have as much knowledge or background information as perhaps the Management Committee or officers when it comes to evaluation of bids, especially given the recent pursuit of different meeting models (e.g., joint meeting with The Wildlife Society).

Rather than hastily recommend elimination of the Time and Place Committee, the Management Committee passed a motion to recommend the Governing Board to suspend rules related to the Time and Place committee and render the Time and Place committee as inactive for the coming year. This motion was considered and passed by the Incoming Governing Board on August 21, 2014. The Management Committee again discussed this issue on January 20, 2015 and agreed to recommend a motion to the Governing Board to eliminate the Time and Place Committee.

Motion by Ron Essig, 2nd by Jim Bowker. Passed by unanimous consent

c. **Recommended Motion:** Amend the Society’s Rules to modify the Young Professional membership category to extend to 5 years after graduation, as opposed to 3 years, as follows:

10. Dues, Fees, and Charges

   B. Members in the following categories pay dues as specified.

   ii. Young Professionals, defined as recent school graduates up to three 5 years after graduation, pay no more than one-half of the general dues.

Background for Motion: This motion was presented by the Fisheries Management Section Management Section’s Young Professional committee to improve retention of Young Professionals to full members. This motion was considered and approved by the Management Committee in March 2015.

Note- If passed by the Governing Board, the Rules may be amended by a simple majority of Active Members voting at the annual Society meeting.

Motion by Ferry, 2nd by Tom Lang. Passed by unanimous consent

9. **Resource Policy Committee Recommended Motion:**

The Governing Board approves sending the Position Paper and AFS Policy Statement on Mining and Fossil Fuel Extraction to the membership for a vote at the Portland Business Meeting.

Background for Motion: From September 2012 to September 2013, an 11-member mining subcommittee of the Society Resource Policy Committee wrote Drafts 1 and 2 of the AFS position
paper and policy statement on mining and fossil fuel extraction. During its September 2013 meeting, the Society Governing Board approved sending Draft 2 to the membership for comment. That draft was posted on the Society website and a summary and call for comments was published in the December 2013 Fisheries. The public comment period on Draft 2 ended February 2014. Following those comments, Draft 2 was revised into Draft 3 and a point-by-point response to the comments received was completed in June 2014 and reviewed by the Resource Policy Committee and the Management Committee. Further revisions and additions of two mining engineers to the authorship were recommended. Draft 4 was sent to the Management Committee for review in March 2015 and it was approved unanimously by the Management Committee during its May 2015 meeting.

Motion by Bowker, 2nd by Trushenski. Passed by unanimous consent

10. Special Committee on Development Recommended Motion:  
Move to approve a formal development program based on the Operating Guidance provided by the Special Committee on Development.

Background for Motion: A Special Committee was established in December 2014 to “develop operating guidance for a development program to enhance revenue”. The committee reported back to the Management Committee during the June and July 2015 monthly calls. On July 21, 2015, the Management Committee passed a motion to recommend to the Governing Board approval of a formal development program.

Motion by Wildman, 2nd by Murphy. Passed by unanimous consent

11. Special Education Committee Retreat and Communications Special Committee Report - Gwen White

See attachment #1 below for report on communications retreat

12. Round Robin Review of other reports (Divisions, Sections, Committees, and Liaisons)

- Northeastern Division (Ferry) - Active with chapter meetings successful, 2015 Northeastern Division meeting in Rhode Island and continuing to explore location for 2016 meeting.
- North Central Division (Tranvicek) – Report stands as written and looking forward to the 2016 AFS annual meeting in Kansas City. Wuellner revised their way participants evaluated applications updating continuing education courses and they revised the NCD evaluation process
- Southern Division (Riecke)- Report stands as written
- Western Division (Sexauer) – Provided $15,000 to student travel to Portland meeting. Of that amount, $5,000 went to non USA members to assist them to come to the meeting, matched by the chapters. Division has been active in policy issues such as Susitna and Pebble mine.
noted that members have been experiencing problems with agency travel approval to allow them to go this Annual meeting

- Bioengineering Section (Wildman) - Report stands as written. Section hosted several successful webinars (4 presented) with sponsorship by private companies. Fish passage conference held in Netherlands very successful. World Fish Migration day May 21, 2016.
- Canadian Resources Section (Imhof) – No report.
- Education Section (Paukert) – Allocation $25,000 in section budget for Skinner Fund challenge program where they would match contributions to the Skinner Fund, dollar per dollar. Specific request to sections, chapters and divisions to provide funds to Skinner.
- Equal Opportunities Section (Frey) - stand as written. Highlighted they were able to fund five student travel awards. Section is bringing back their luncheon this year which had not been held in recent years due to lack of funding and participation.
- Estuaries Section (Archer) - Noted the “Monsters of Stock Assessment workshop”
- Fish Culture Section (Trushenski) – Report stands as written. HaMAR completed this year. Considerations Guidance Document published in North American Journal of Aquaculture. Governing Board reports – add questions about most unique or interesting activity that they accomplished this year. Suggested that all units add Google Analytics to their web site.
- Fish Habitat Section (Sweka) - Developed five symposia in Portland with one specifically focused on National Fish Habitat Plan (NFHP). Working with NFHP on habitat achievement award.
- Fish Health Section (Getchall) - QA-QC committee is working on stepwise accreditation for small laboratories. FDA center for veterinary medicine is going to recommend that only veterinarians will be able to dispense anti-biotics. FHS working on some options that will allow non-DVM’s to dispense in certain circumstances.
- Fisheries Administrators Section (Kurzawski) – Sport Fish Awards continues to be a great way to highlight accomplishments of SFR program administrators and market AFS.
- Fisheries Information and Technology Section (Litts) – Report stands as written. FAMS software being sold and sales up to $14K. FITS coordinating two symposia at PDX. Annual Governing Board reporting tool for online GB reporting is being developed. Will be discussed more at FITS meeting.
- Genetics Section (Olsen) - Report stands as written. Highlighted a new award for young professionals.
- International Fish Section (Franzin) - Report-stands as written.
- Estuaries Section and Marine Fisheries Section – organized a joint social meeting. Noted that the section has a new chair of the student travel award
- Fish Physiology Section-
- Socioeconomics Section- financially at $ 4,000 dollars short $500, new president highlight they had 100 members this year’s 20 were students and young professionals. There are now 187 members with free membership to students and young professionals
- Water Quality Section (Murphy) – Report stands as submitted. Murphy noted that 65% of section membership is students and that all student memberships are free
- Fisheries Management Section (Porath) - Trial young professional exchange program (Rebecca Krogman is recipient)
• Student subsection – Noted the travel awards to Portland meeting and that they have a “how to series”

13. New Business

a. Franzin – The International Fisheries Section is requesting that AFS participates as a financial sponsor of the International Fisheries Prize, at an appropriate level, along with other member societies in the WCFS, with the amount of $500-1,000 USD. Background to motion: this award is given every 4 years and will be a onetime donation. IFS notes that the award recognizes the recipient with medal and prize
   i. Motion by Franzin: IFS moves that AFS participate at an appropriate level, along with other member societies in the WCFS, in the funding of the International Fisheries Science Prize
      Franzin motioned; 2nd by Murphy
   ii. Amendment proposed: replace “appropriate level” with a specified contribution of $750.00.
      Trushenski motioned; 2nd by Bowker
      After additional discussion, Trushenski withdraws motion
   iii. Amendment proposed: replace “appropriate level” with a specified contribution of $1,000.00.
      Motion by Margraf; 2nd by Trushenski. Passed by unanimous consent

b. No other new business

14. Meeting Adjourned at 5:00 p.m.
Attachment Number 1

Report on the AFS Governing Board Retreat on Communications
Saturday, August 15, 2015
Portland, Oregon

Overview:
In late 2014, AFS President Donna Parrish established a Special Committee on Communications. This committee was chaired by Gwen White and included Parrish, Ron Essig, Steve McMullin, and Doug Austen. Through a request for proposals developed by White and approved by the committee and with funding authorization from the Management Committee, AFS contracted with Potomac Communications Group (PCG) to develop a strategic plan for communications. Work on the plan was initiated in early 2015 and included a telephone survey of 29 AFS members and selected other individuals on communications issues, a several hour work session with the Governing Board at their 2015 mid-year meeting in Savannah, Georgia, as well as other activities. As the final product from the PCG contract, the Governing Board, meeting on August 15, 2015, in Portland, Oregon, dedicated a one-half day segment of the meeting to communications discussion. This included a general introduction by Gwen White (Appendix A) and report by PCG representatives, Leonard Greenberger and Jeff Billington (Powerpoint slides provided as Appendix B). An extensive follow-up discussion was led primarily by Gwen White, chair of the Special Committee on Communications. This discussion focused of several key recommendations in the PCG Strategic Plan that were identified, through an extensive staff analysis of the PCG plan, as benefitting from input and guidance from the Governing Board. These topics were:

1. Streamline the AFS membership process - Eliminate affiliate-only membership
2. Public And Policy Outreach –
   a. Establish a speakers bureau
   b. Arrange a media day in D.C.
   c. Establish an annual branding event
   d. Plan member Hill days
   e. Expand opinion outreach
3. Develop written social media guidelines

The discussion was wide ranging and the notes below capture the key issues and recommendations from the discussion. Individual comments were included when they had specific relevance to a topic and added unique new perspectives. Other general comments were grouped into statements that characterized a general observation or recommendation.
Affiliate membership

Background: Affiliate membership is generally defined as individuals who are members of an AFS unit (chapters and some sections) but are not society members. With the exception of a few chapters (e.g., Alaska, Oregon), most chapters allow membership in the chapter to those who are not AFS members. Furthermore, the Fish Culture and Fish Health Sections allow for an affiliate status.

- Fish Health Section - Veterinarians have expensive dues to pay with AVMA and would not like to see affiliate membership disappear. How do we sell this to vets who are sort of in fish health but not (AVMA)?
- Jim Bowker - Do vets see a value of being a member? AFS needs AVMA more than AVMA needs us.
- Joe Margraf - We need affiliate membership because it’s an important recruitment tool. Affiliate members fall into two groups one is its people that are at the lower end of the pay scale and don’t think of themselves as professionals and the other group are true fisheries biologist but they don’t want to be a member of the society because there not a joiner. But we want to keep both the groups because people will probably advance in their careers and the ones that are not joiners we would have to give them a reason to want to join.
- John Boreman-in Seattle there was a whole retreat about affiliate members and what we got out of that was sometime it works sometimes it doesn’t. There was a request from units to see how many affiliate members they actually had for each unit. Field techs use to make up a major part of affiliate membership. At that time a request was made to count the number of affiliates and it was estimated to be in the range of 6,000 – 8,000.
- Craig Paukert - Student chapter members often don’t know about the national society
- Dennis Reicke - Let’s not do anything to affect section or chapter membership because people should try AFS membership and that would lead us to recruiting members. Nonmembers and members should pay differently at every meeting.
- Tom Lang - It’s a structure change we don’t want to run affiliate members off but we do want to utilize them.
- There has been a suggestion that the chapters have a difficult time obtaining accurate chapter membership from the Bethesda office. It was suggested that chapters experiencing this perceived problem should work directly with AFS staff (Eva Przygodzki and Juanita Flick) to explore the source of the problem.

Conclusion: No general guidance or action was provided as a result of the discussion on affiliate membership.
Public And Policy Outreach

Background: The PCG report recommended a much more active AFS presence in the media and with policy advocacy issues, particularly in Washington, D.C. This included media days, creating a singular event that AFS would be branded with, Op-Ed articles strategically identified and timed, and fly-in days or other events that bring AFS members to D.C.

A series of general comments reflected the need to be cautious about engaging state and federal employees in advocacy or other legislative issues. Each unit of government will have its own policies on staff involvement and both the individual member and AFS need to recognize the limitations and appropriate levels of engagement.

- Jesse Trushenski- The opportunity cost of not engaging in the media is that sometimes they get the information right but sometimes they don’t. If we don’t engage in the media the public won’t care as much about fisheries issues.
- Margret Murphy- AFS is more than just fish, we are more broad but we have to show it
- Kristen ferry- The sections can be used as key people to get expertise from.
- Dennis Reicke- There are fisheries groups that go to congress for media day... maybe AFS should?
- Tom Bigford- In the three recent Congressional briefings that AFS hosted (pursuant to a cooperative agreement with NOAA-NMFS), AFS sought as speakers the best communicators on the various issues whether they were an AFS member or not. We worked with congressional staffers and with other committee staff to ensure that speakers would be well received and to best present information to the congress on issues of policy relevance.
- John Boreman- There are existing congressional “fly-ins” where organization members visit congress to convey information on key issues. These work pretty well with the congress and agencies, why doesn’t AFS adopt national fisheries week and take it nationwide with events, coordinating with chapters and section and turn it into an AFS event?
- Steve McMullin- AFS needs to formulate policies that will be of high interest and create more awareness of what AFS does through these policies.

Conclusion:
1. AFS policy staff should evaluate the viability of “fly-ins” or other activities that more directly engage AFS members with congressional staff and elected officials.
2. AFS policy and communications staff should evaluate developing Op-Ed submissions on key, timely topics of importance to AFS.
**Social Media and AFS Website**

**Background**: AFS is working to launch a completely new website and expand social media presence. The PCG report focused less on the web presence since it was being developed by another contractor and was nearing completion. Social media, however, has been a relatively new area for AFS and it has been recognized that additional guidance is needed to better utilize social media for benefit of the membership.

- **Website**
  - How easy is the new website? It needs to be functional for ourselves (Governing Board) and for the members
  - Suggestion- make it easier to join as a member on the new website!
  - Dennis Reicke- Do we want another website for public consumption. A tab for the public and a tab for kids?

- **Facebook**
  - Beth beard –We need to fix the dead Facebook pages from chapters
  - Tom Lang- Can we have a Facebook administer that is an admin on everybody’s pages?
  - Jim Bowker- Is there a way to tie to chapter and section Facebooks together?

**Conclusion**:
1. AFS communications staff should develop social media guidance documents that address society-wide use of social media.
2. Evaluate developing a “public” component to the AFS website. Should AFS invest time and resources in providing general fisheries information oriented towards the public conveyance of information or should the society focus on fisheries professionals and those in specific need of information of AFS-related issues?

**General Communication Comments**
- The communications plan is an action plan and needs to have appropriate follow-through
- Margaret Murphy- The Water Quality Section had a conference line for their section members but it wasn’t worth the money. How do we really engage the membership?
- Dennis Reicke- Are we going to hire a communications person?
- Can we have podcasts from the business meeting and the chapters and sections of the business meetings because not every member can attend?
### Student Engagement

- **Hutton Program** - Coordinate with the Hutton committee to get information on the program out to the staff.
- **Student subsection** - Has three main goals: education, communication, recruitment, and retention. In essence, what students need to do well so that they can find a job.
- **Dave Coughlan** - His survey found generic natural resources training/coursework never come up at the state agency department level. Employers a master student.
- **Dennis Reicke** - There is a disconnect between what universities are teaching as opposed to what employers are seeking.
- **Steve McMullin** - Students think they do a lot better at things than the faculty or even their employers think that they do.
  - State support for universities is deteriorating
  - Hard money funding is going down
  - Employers hire at lower level thinking they’ll still get masters level employees.
- **Margaret Murphy** - Make sure students understand safety. That’s what employees are looking at and what it really means to sample fish outside of academia.
- **Mark Porath** - Experience first is what jobs are looking for but federal doesn’t provide that for students. How will we encourage the regulatory government to improve?
- **Steve McMullen** - Students want to work for agencies that provide opportunities.
- **Joe Margraf** - You have to have somewhere to go to do internships but students don’t get paid enough to do them.
- **People who have a more specific job title** they tend to be more successful and stay in touch with the society.
- **Tom Lang** - We need the best minds to face these challenges and diversify these skill sets. We have to stay competitive.
- **Student subsection** - Networking and engagement will give students experiences.
- **Donna Parrish** - Students often haven’t developed critical thinking skills because they haven’t been sufficiently challenged with real-world problems to do so. When you work, your skills get better and better. One semester or class is not enough they need content they can’t get everywhere else.
- **Melissa** - AFS role is supporting employer and employee.
- **Tom Lang** - Suggests identifying accredited schools that provided coursework and programs that meet AFS certification standards.

### Random notes

- **Craig Paukert** - Did you look at age groups such as student’s vs professionals? Are we doing better in one group rather than the other?
- **Most agencies or employers** don’t think meeting attendance is as valuable as the attendee. Nonmembers didn’t know that chapter membership is different from the parent society.
- **Mark Porath** - We need to know where the support is on every level. Such as having your employer support you with travel or some agencies give you a bump in pay if you are certified.
# Appendix A

## AFS Governing Board Discussion
### Strategic Communications Plan with Draft Member Survey

**Saturday 8/15/2015**
9:30 AM to Noon (2.5 hr discussion)
Portland, OR

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<tr>
<th>Participants:</th>
<th>Governing Board</th>
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<tr>
<td>Resources:</td>
<td>Communications Special Committee - Doug Austen, Ron Essig, Steve McMullin, Donna Parrish, Gwen White</td>
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<td>PCG staff – Jeff Billington, Leonard Greenberger</td>
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<td>Please read:</td>
<td>Draft member survey questions at the end of this agenda</td>
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<td>AFS Final Findings Report</td>
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<td>AFS Strategic Communications Plan (revised 8/5/15)</td>
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## Agenda

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<th>TOPIC</th>
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<tr>
<td>Topic 1</td>
<td>PCG</td>
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<td>Topic 2</td>
<td>Gwen White</td>
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<td>Topic 3</td>
<td>Gwen White/Doug Austen</td>
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### Discussion topics

- **A.** Increase footprint of AFS journals
- **B.** Leverage Fisheries magazine
- **C.** Focus member e-Newsletter
- **D.** Provide training for unit leadership
- **E.** Enhance continuing education
- **F.** Streamline attractive membership levels
- **G.** Develop relationships with reporters
- **H.** Elevate awareness with decision makers
- **I.** Manage social media structure
- **J.** Focus social media content
- **K.** AFS Website

### Evaluation metrics

- **PCG**

### Next steps

- **Doug Austen**
DRAFT Survey of AFS Members on Implementation of Communications Strategies

Please review these draft member input questions. There is an online forum for general comments on sections of the AFS Strategic Communications Plan. After the Governing Board meeting in Portland, we will revise the questions. This Member Survey will go out as a separate e-Blast and Facebook notice to focus on a few specific topics. This survey will open no later than September 1 and close at least 30 days later (October 1).

Action A4 - Ensure functionality of the journal notification alert system.

Q1.a. Do you use the journal notification alert system?
   _ Yes, it works well for me
   _ Yes, but it needs some modifications
   _ No, I don’t use it, but I am aware of it
   _ No, what’s the journal notification system?

Q1.b. What would improve the journal notification system? Comments: text box

Actions B1, B3, B4 - Establish regular features and sections in Fisheries magazine. Emphasize broader topics. Expand coverage of international issues.

Q2.a. Rate the value of the following regular or possible features, according to your feeling for what AFS members need to know or would be interested in:

Score from 1 = always read / very useful to 5 = never read / not useful

   a) President’s column (score 1-5)
   b) Government affairs updates (score 1-5)
   c) Member profiles (score 1-5)
   d) Thematic features on marine fisheries (score 1-5)
   e) Thematic features on freshwater fisheries (score 1-5)
   f) Thematic features on international fisheries (score 1-5)
   g) Review or synthesis articles on broad topics (score 1-5)
   h) Focused science articles on narrow topics (score 1-5)
   i) Point / Counterpoint feature presenting different sides of an issue (score 1-5)

Q2.b. What other features or sections would you like to see? Comment: text box

Q2.c. Do you have suggestions for improving Fisheries magazine? Comment: text box

Action C2. Set content guidelines for e-Newsletter.

Q3.a. Provide input on the structure and function of the e-Newsletter:

Score from 1 = very satisfied to 5 = very dissatisfied

   a) How satisfied are you with the e-Newsletter format (e.g., style, layout, appearance, design)? (score 1-5)
   b) How satisfied are you with the e-Newsletter content (e.g., stories, articles)? (score 1-5)
c) How satisfied are you with the e-Newsletter frequency?

Q3.d. What other suggestions do you have to improve the e-Newsletter? Comment: text box

Q4. ADD question(s) here on New AFS Website

**Overall review comments on Strategic Communications Plan**

Q5. How satisfied are you overall with the AFS Strategic Communications Plan? (score from 1 = very satisfied to 5 = very dissatisfied)

Q5. Do you have any suggestions about implementing the actions in the AFS Communications Plan presented by PCG? Comment: text box

Q6. What other comments do you have about AFS communications tools or procedures? Comment: text box

**Demographics**

Q7. How long have you been in the fisheries profession (any branch)?
Q8. How long have you been an active member of AFS?
Q9. In what Division (region) are you located?
Appendix B

American Fisheries Society Strategic Communications Plan

A Guide for Building Increased Member Engagement and Long-term Public Awareness

Presented by Potomac Communications Group
August 15, 2015

How We Got Here

- Substantive Research
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Findings Analysis
- Board & Member Feedback
- Final Plan
Substantive Research

Reviewed Existing Materials

- Explored the AFS website
- Read past issues of Fisheries magazine
- Reviewed the various AFS journals
- Followed AFS’s social media accounts
Audited Traditional Media

- Found mentions of AFS in mainstream and trade media outlets
- Explored and reviewed media presence of related organizations and groups

Evaluated Social Media Presence

- Reviewed AFS’s social media platforms
- Identified social media usage by related organizations and groups
- Compared AFS’s social media presence to other leading professional societies
Stakeholder Interviews

Multiple Professional Sectors...

- Federal Agency: 27%
- State Agency: 33%
- Nonprofit: 12%
- Academic: 27%
- Media: 8%
- Commercial: 7%
... And Professional Roles

**AFS Members**
- Fish/Fisheries Biologists & Researchers
- Fisheries Managers
- Academic Professors
- Publications

**Nonmembers**
- Fish/Fisheries Biologists & Researchers
  - Fisheries Managers
  - Congressional Staff
  - Nonprofit Communications Staff

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**Various Levels of Engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonmember Non-Fisheries Professional</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonmember Fisheries Professional</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonmember Non-Fisheries Professional</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonpaid Member</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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PCG Presentation to AFS Governing Board
August 15, 2015, Portland, Oregon

Geographic Diversity

Findings Analysis
AFS Is Already Successful

- A strong reputation and credibility with those who know it
- Fills a unique niche
- Journals are the most used resource
- Monthly e-newsletter is a welcome addition

Areas for Improvement

- Central messages are unclear
- Communication is uneven between chapters and the society’s headquarters
- Social media component is undefined
- Policy makers and the public are largely unaware of AFS and what it does
- AFS’s continuing education opportunities are limited
Board & Member Feedback

Development of Messages

- Held a messaging training with the governing board, followed by ongoing conversations with the leadership team to develop key messages.
  - **Expertise** — AFS's diverse membership represents the world's leading experts in fisheries science, management and conservation.
  - **Science** — AFS provides the science-based information that members and policymakers need to manage fisheries resources effectively and efficiently.
  - **Community** — AFS supports the professional development of members and students through leadership opportunities, shared knowledge, continuing education and networking events.
Feedback on Initial Plan

- Provided initial strategic communications plan to AFS on April 14
- Received feedback from AFS leadership in following two weeks
- Made revisions to the plan and submitted the final plan on April 30

Final Plan
Communications Strategies

- Better align messaging and focus of AFS publications
  - Journals
  - Fisheries Magazine
  - Member e-newsletter

Communications Strategies

- Enhance communication between AFS leadership and members and unit leadership
  - Improve training for unit leadership
  - Expand focus of continuing education offerings
  - Streamline membership process
Communications Strategies

• Stay active in public and policy outreach
  • Develop relationships with prominent national and regional reporters
  • Increase presence and awareness among decision makers and policy advisors

Communications Strategies

• Remain involved in social media
  • Add focus to social media management and marketing
  • Develop consistent and proactive social media content
Strategic Action Plan

- Provides specific tactics that support the four broader strategies
- Divides tactics into issue areas to avoid confusion or redundancy
- Outlines a timeframe to encourage action on the various strategies and tactics

Metrics
Metrics – Members

- Membership satisfaction as measured by AFS’s regular member surveys
- Downloads/applications of member toolkits
- Placements of member op-eds and letters to the editor
- Engagement on AFS member Facebook group
- Anecdotal feedback from members (dedicated email)

Metrics – External Stakeholders

- Number and quality (positive/neutral/negative) of media stories
- Number of incoming media calls and interview requests
- Frequency of meetings with/incoming requests from policymakers and their staffs
- Progress on legislative/regulatory priorities (not necessarily laws passed/rules promulgated)
- Invitations to present at conferences and other events
Metrics – Social Media

- Number of followers and likes on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Pinterest
- Engagement scores on Facebook and Twitter
- Number of comments and questions

AFS Review Process
PCG Presentation to AFS Governing Board
August 15, 2015, Portland, Oregon

**AFS Review Process – How did we get here?**

- AFS Communications Committee – oversight of contract, format & processing input
- PCG conducts stakeholder interviews, GB retreat & develops AFS Strategic Communications Plan
- Guest article in Fisheries inviting input – Aug 1
- Online forum for comments on plan sections
- Staff review of recommendations
- Governing Board discussion – Aug 15
- Member Survey – specific questions open Sept
- Compile all streams of input – October
- Prepare recommendations for GB consideration with staff & budget implications - Nov
- Action prioritization at Mid-Year GB meeting

**Discussion of Actions & Priorities**
Options for considering actions

1) AFS staff – review & immediately act
2) Refer to sectors – purview of existing committees or establish new Task Force to determine procedures
3) Member survey – input to explore & clarify needs for action
4) GB discussion – review & explore approach for complex or new actions

Review & use of AFS staff input
Refer for input from particular sectors

A1. Evaluate and set journal topic area guidelines  
B5. Standards for Fisheries  
D. Provide training for unit leadership  
E. Enhance continuing education  
G7. Provide access to journals and other information  
I. Social media management & marketing

A1. Refer to POC & Editors  
B5. Refer to POC & Editor  
D. Refer unit leadership needs to a Task Force?  
E. Refer to CE Committee  
G7. Refer to T&F, staff, editorial boards  
I1, I3. Establish Task Force and formal procedures?

Member Survey – focused input

A. Increase footprint of AFS Journals  
B. Leverage Fisheries magazine  
C. Focus member e-Newsletter  
K. Website revision  
Other questions?

A4. Awareness & utility of journal alert system  
B1, B3. Regular/new features; synthesis; marine, international  
C2. Format/design, content, frequency  
K. New website design/function  
Demographics – time in profession & AFS, geography (Divisions), other factors?
### GB Discussion – F. Membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GB讨论 – F. 会员讨论</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>F1. Eliminate affiliate-only membership</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F2. Increase young professional membership period</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F3. Expand discounts for student members</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### GB Discussion – G. Reporters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GB讨论 – G. 报告者讨论</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>G5. Establish a speakers bureau</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>G6. Arrange a media day in D.C.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GB Discussion – H. Decision makers

H1. Establish an annual branding event
H3. Plan member Hill days
H7. Provide courtesy access to journals and other information
H8. Expand opinion outreach

H1. Charge a Task Force?
H3. Value, guidelines, outcomes, host jointly, officer or GB visits to DC?
H7. Create policy summaries of articles?
H8. Officers & Policy Director to identify topics for op-ed?

Update on revision of AFS website
### Reconsider Member Survey questions or other input on potential actions?

| A. Increase footprint of AFS journals | A4. Awareness & utility of journal alert system |
| B. Leverage Fisheries magazine | B1, B3. Regular/new features; synthesis; marine, international |
| C. Focus member e-Newsletter | C2. Format/design, content, frequency |
| K. Website revision | K. New website design/function |

Other questions? Demographics—time in profession & AFS, geography (Divisions), other factors?
AFS Review Process – What’s next?

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Strategic Communications Plan

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