

**Southern Division American Fisheries Society**  
**Annual Business Meeting**  
**Friday, 19 February 2016**  
**Olgebay Resort and Conference Center – Glessner Auditorium**  
**Wheeling, West Virginia**

The 2016 SDAFS Business Meeting was called to order at 1731 hrs by President Dennis Riecke. Current SDAFS officers were present: Dave Coughlan, President-Elect; Wes Porak, Vice President; John Jackson, Immediate Past President; and Kim Bonvechio, Secretary-Treasurer. Secretary-Treasurer Bonvechio confirmed a quorum was present. Vice President Porak passed out the agenda and resolution to all in attendance. After a short explanation of revisions to the agenda, Larry Conner made a motion to approve, which was then seconded by Lawrence Dorsey and Tom Bigford. No discussion ensued and no abstentions were reported. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

President Riecke recognized distinguished guests in attendance: AFS Executive Director Doug Austen, AFS Policy Director Tom Bigford, AFS Director of Communications Martha Wilson, AFS Associate Director of Student and Professional Education Jessica Mosley, AFS President Ron Essig, AFS First Vice President and SDAFS Past President Steve McMullin, SDAFS Immediate Past President John Jackson, and Past SDAFS Presidents Larry Connor, Pat Mazik, and Brian Murphy.

**AFS President Ron Essig's Remarks:** President Essig expressed his gratitude for being at this and last year's SDAFS meeting, given his roots with Georgia Department of Natural Resources early in his career. AFS is in a strategic planning process for AFS Communications, and members are asked to comment on a draft plan available on the AFS website. AFS Director of Communications Martha Wilson will be spearheading efforts to improve society communications. Also, the new and more user-friendly AFS website is now online, so he encouraged everyone to take a look at that. President Essig noted an increase in the number of new AFS members identified as students and young professionals, which now comprise about 36% of the total membership. At last count, total AFS membership stands at about 8,000. President Essig also mentioned the proposed creation of an AFS Imperiled Aquatic Species Section, an effort in which SDAFS member Gene Wilde has been involved. It is currently out for comment, then will be voted on by the membership before it can officially become a section. Finally, he mentioned the upcoming 2016 AFS Meeting which will be held in Kansas City, MO from August 21-25, 2016. He encouraged attendees to speak with him and other AFS staff throughout the SDAFS meeting to express their concerns and provide input about what's working/what's not working in AFS.

**AFS Executive Director Doug Austen Remarks:** Executive Director Austen expressed his gratitude for being "in the heart of the Southern Division" at this year's SDAFS meeting. He re-introduced the new AFS Director of Communications Martha Wilson, who works with Sarah Harrison [Managing Editor of *Fisheries* magazine] and Beth Beard [Digital Content and Engagement Strategist for AFS]. He invited attendees to speak with Martha Wilson about ideas, challenges, and opportunities regarding any of the AFS communication channels including the website, *Fisheries* magazine, and social media outlets. He also re-introduced AFS Associate Director of Student and Professional Education Jessica Mosley, who works with continuing education, as well as with Cynthia Oboh and the Hutton Program. He then mentioned AFS

Policy Director Tom Bigford who will lead the conversation about new policy recommendations that will be given to the incoming U.S. presidential administration to help them understand and address future aquatic resource needs. Through this initiative, AFS is taking a leadership role in Washington, D.C., bringing together fisheries professionals with marine and freshwater backgrounds from federal, state, and nongovernmental agencies. He invited everyone to the upcoming AFS Annual Meeting in Kansas City in August. He noted there are 39 symposia scheduled, including the “Big Rivers” symposium. After Kansas City, Tampa will host in 2017, Atlantic City in 2018, and Reno in 2019. The Reno meeting will be the first time that the AFS will host a joint meeting with The Wildlife Society. This will likely be one of the largest natural resources meetings to date. Many of the AFS Chapters are taking advantage of the AFS investment pool which has been averaging approximately 7-8% annual return. AFS is also interested in helping with other services as well, including web sites. Any comments, suggestions, or concerns can be brought to his attention or to the attention of Tom Bigford and Ron Essig.

**SDAFS President Riecke’s Address:** Along with Past President Jackson and President-Elect Coughlan, President Riecke has represented the SDAFS at the AFS Governing Board and AFS Annual Meeting in Portland. During his tenure as President, Riecke also updated all of the division-related content on the SDAFS website (e.g., updated the contact list). He further highlighted a few of the recent decisions that the EXCOM has reached. 1) The Nongame Aquatics Technical Committee was disbanded. At the same time, the SDAFS is reaching out to the Southeastern Fishes Council to strengthen our relationship with them. 2) The Pollution Ad Hoc Committee was elevated to Technical Committee status. This committee was originally formed to revise fish-kill monetary guidelines for fish and mussels. 3) Discounted SDAFS meeting registration rates for AFS members will be discussed in the coming year.

**Secretary-Treasurer Bonvechio’s Report:** Minutes from the 2015 Savannah Business Meeting were published in the Summer 2015 SDAFS Newsletter and posted on the SDAFS website. Hearing no call for revision, Bryant Bowen made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by John Odenkirk. No discussion ensued and no abstentions were reported. Motion passed by unanimous vote. Secretary-Treasurer Bonvechio then reported that the Audit Committee completed their audit of the 2015 budget in January 2016, and their report was accepted by the EXCOM. She provided an overview of the 2015 budget, both expenses and income. Hearing no questions or concerns, John Odenkirk made a motion to approve the 2015 budget, which was seconded by President-Elect Coughlan. No discussion ensued and no abstentions were reported. Motion passed by unanimous vote. Secretary-Treasurer Bonvechio presented the 2016 budget, including expected income, expenses, and donations. Hearing no questions or concerns, an AFS member made a motion to approve the 2016 budget, which was seconded by another AFS member. No discussion ensued and no abstentions were reported. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

**Host Chapter Report:** West Virginia Chapter General Meeting Chair Pat Mazik welcomed attendees to Wheeling. Mazik noted registered attendees totaled approximately 250 (at time of Business Meeting), similar to the attendance of the 2008 meeting held at the same location. Committees met on Thursday, seven workshops were held on Friday, and technical sessions and symposia will take place over the weekend. She thanked the Planning Committee, including Kyle Hartman (Program Chair), Stuart Welsh (Program Co-Chair, Symposia), Frank Borsuk (Program Co-Chair, Workshops), Erin Thayer and Dave Thorne (Posters), Dave Wellman (Student Affairs Chair), Lara Hedrick (Fundraising Chair), Jim Hedrick

(Webmaster/AV/Technology Chair), Brandon Keplinger (Finance Chair), and Scott Morrison (Registration Chair). A special note of gratitude was given to West Virginia DNR and students for their help with the meeting.

**President-Elect Dave Coughlan's Chapter Activity Report:** President-Elect Coughlan provided some highlights from the Chapter reports. After 20 years of inactivity, the Alabama Chapter has re-emerged. They recently had a joint meeting with the Georgia Chapter and over 170 people attended. The Arkansas Chapter just celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and has six student subunits. They have been offering a large number of continuing education classes for their members and sharing their knowledge through outreach events with various public and school groups. The Auburn Chapter has awarded \$2,325 in travel assistance to 25 students in 2015 and raised a total of \$7,250 by selling shrimp! The Florida Chapter hosted their 35<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in Ocala and is gearing up to host the 2017 AFS Meeting in Tampa. They presented SDAFS Past President Larry Connor the Rich Cailteux Award for career contributions to fisheries. The Georgia Chapter hosted the highly successful SDAFS Meeting in Savannah last year, with over 700 registered attendees. The Chapter also hosted the first edition of the Southeastern High School Kayak Fishing Championships, a potential fertile ground for recruiting future fisheries professionals. The Louisiana Chapter had 151 attendees at their recent annual meeting and hosted a fish identification workshop. The Mississippi Chapter presented Steve Miranda with the Lifetime Achievement Award at their 2015 annual meeting. North Carolina Chapter members judged fisheries papers at the 2015 SEAFWA meeting in Asheville, NC. At their annual meeting, they also hosted a crayfish identification workshop with 25 attendees. The Oklahoma Chapter revamped their website and sponsored a fish-kill investigation workshop. They are also gearing up to host the 2017 SDAFS meeting in Oklahoma City. The Potomac Chapter frequently interacts with AFS staff in Bethesda, MD and gets involved with national initiatives. The Puerto Rico Chapter is collaborating with SARP in the restoration of connectivity for five major rivers and is strongly being considered to host the 2018 SDAFS meeting. Last year's meeting of the South Carolina Chapter at Santee State Park had 122 attendees. The Clemson Student Subunit has re-emerged and recently had their student bylaws approved. The Tennessee Chapter held their annual meeting at the Tennessee Aquarium and are getting the message out about their chapter and fisheries issues via a listserv, website, Facebook, and newsletter. The Texas Chapter continues to foster their relationship with The Patsy B. Hollandsworth Family Foundation, which contributes \$17,500 to the Texas Chapter AFS Endowment fund supporting a wide array of scholarships. The 2015 Tidewater Chapter held their annual meeting in Pine Knoll Shores, NC. The Virginia, Virginia Tech, and West Virginia Chapters held a joint meeting in 2015. The Virginia Tech Chapter held its 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Mudbass Classic Kid's Fishing Tournament. Members also got valuable fisheries experience by partnering with Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries biologists. The West Virginia Chapter activities focused on putting on this SDAFS meeting.

**Vice President Wes Porak's Technical Committee Report:** Vice President Porak noted that the Southern Division has more active technical committees than any other division and we should be proud of their annual contributions to fisheries science. He recognized some of the achievements and accomplishments of these technical committees from 2015. The Pollution Technical Committee is in the process of updating the Special Publication #30 entitled *Investigation and Monetary Values of Fish and Freshwater Mussel Kills*. Committee members are also involved with a comprehensive survey of state agencies to identify procedures, agency responsibilities and trainings for fish kill investigations, experiences with assigning monetary values to kill events. The Warmwater Streams Technical Committee held a workshop at last

year's SDAFS meeting titled *Standardization and Management of Fish Data for Rivers and Streams of the Southern U.S.* At the same meeting, they also held a symposium titled *Meeting our Data Needs with Limited Resources: Recent Advances in Stream Sampling Techniques*. Both of these initiatives were important for advancing the aquatic sciences in the southern U.S. The Reservoir Technical Committee provides expertise to the Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership and is updating the Reservoir Habitat Manual, which increases awareness of reservoir habitat impairments and directs research to address reservoir habitat needs. The committee is also working on another reservoir habitat survey. The Small Impoundments Technical Committee initiated a study to control recruitment of largemouth bass in small impoundments as a management tool. Members also provided continuing education opportunities at a variety of different levels. The Trout Technical Committee is in their 49<sup>th</sup> year and is active in the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture, a fish-habitat partnership which serves to conserve Eastern Brook Trout and their habitats. They are also working with geneticists to update the Committee's position statement *Managing Southern Appalachian Brook Trout* first published in 2005. The Committee continues to develop MicroFish, a free Windows-based software package designed to assist fisheries managers with analysis of removal depletion data. The Catfish Management Technical Committee has been developing a database of state regulations for recreational and commercial catfish fisheries. They also have started planning for Catfish 2020 symposium and book. The Striped Bass Technical Committee is working on a website that will provide data, reports, statewide regulations, and state stocking data for Striped Bass. The Black Bass Conservation Ad Hoc Committee members are working on range-wide management plans for Guadalupe Bass and Shoal Bass. This committee works collaboratively with SARP on a native black bass initiative to advance the science and conservation of black bass species in the southern U.S. The Alligator Gar Technical Committee has been active exchanging information on program development and sampling techniques, which has helped agencies new to sampling for Alligator Gar. The Committee also created an Alligator Gar Spawning Habitat Suitability Index. Both of these activities have been valuable for developing strategic approaches to managing this species. The Student Affairs Committee offers student travel assistance to recruit new and talented scientists into fisheries science careers. As such, they organized a student-mentor lunch at the 2015 SDAFS meeting in Savannah in which 84 students participated. They also assisted 44 students with hotel costs, moderated, and judged student posters and presentations at the same meeting. Finally, the Awards Committee solicited and evaluated nominations and granted 11 Southern Division awards and plaques for service in 2015. This committee is often underappreciated, but its role is a valuable one in which fisheries professionals are recognized for their career and societal contributions. Many of these committees are actively working in outreach and information transfer via websites and Facebook. Both the Reservoir and Catfish Management Technical Committees gave student awards, and the Trout Technical Committee gave two distinguished service awards. All combined, these committees do a tremendous amount of work!

**Resolutions Committee Report:** President Riecke recognized Gene Wilde as Chair of the Resolutions Committee. Wilde read a prepared resolution in appreciation of the host Chapter. President Riecke called for a motion to approve the resolution. Steve McMullin made the motion and Larry Connor seconded. No discussion ensued and no abstentions were reported. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

**Ballot Committee Report:** President Riecke recognized Past President John Jackson as Chair of the Ballot Committee. Past President Jackson noted the three primary responsibilities of the Immediate Past President: 1) to review and revise the SDAFS Procedure Manual, 2) support the

other EXCOM members throughout the year, and 3) serve as the Chair of the Ballot Committee. In summer 2015, there were elections for two offices: Vice President with nominees Joey Slaughter and Craig Bonds (winner Craig Bonds) and Student Representative to the EXCOM with nominees Daniel Walker and Andrew Taylor (winner Andrew Taylor). Elections are conducted online and Past President Jackson encouraged more members to vote.

**Presentation of Awards:** President-Elect Coughlan announced the following SDAFS Awards while President Riecke congratulated recipients and presented awards:

The runner-up 2015 SEAFWA John F. Dequine Best Paper Award was given to Kevin J. Hining of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission for his manuscript/presentation entitled *Use of Trail Cameras to Assess Angler Use of Two Remote Trout Streams in North Carolina*. First place was given to David L. Buckmeier (Nathan G. Smith, J. Warren Schlechte, Allyse M. Ferrara, and Kirk Kirkland, co-authors) for their manuscript/presentation entitled *Characteristics and Conservation of a Trophy Alligator Gar Population in the Middle Trinity River, Texas*. Plaques and checks for \$50 (runner-up) and \$100 (first place) were given to each first author. Co-authors received certificates.

There were no Distinguished Service Awards.

The Outstanding Achievement Award was given to Pat Mazik for her role in mentoring students and her AFS contributions at the West Virginia Chapter, Southern Division, and Society levels.

Awards of Merit were given to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and Mississippi State University for submitting at least one publication per year to the SEAFWA Proceedings over a three year period. A total of 23 manuscripts were submitted by these three groups, which was more than 25% of all submissions.

The Georgia AFS Chapter received the Outstanding Chapter Award for their efforts in putting on the highly successful SDAFS meeting in Savannah in 2015, establishing a new student scholarship, and supporting youth outreach efforts.

The Best Student Subunit Award went to Mississippi State University for their outreach efforts, including fishing derbies, educational workshops, youth classes, 4H groups, and their work with the Tennessee Aquarium Conservation Institute, Hutton Junior Fisheries Biology Program, and the Mississippi Delta Farmers.

The Best Poster Award from the 2015 SDAFS Meeting in Savannah went to Eric Tidmore (Nicole Sadecky and Zachary Loughman, coauthors) of West Liberty University for their work entitled *Epigeal Crayfishes of the North, Middle, and South Forks of the Kentucky River: Life History and Ecology*. Second place Best Student Presentation Award from the 2015 SDAFS Meeting was given to Derek L. Bahr (Douglas L. Peterson, coauthor) of University of Georgia for their work entitled *Atlantic Sturgeon Recruitment in the Savannah River, Georgia*. The Best Student Presentation was awarded to David A. Dippold (Robert T. Leaf, J. Read Hendon and James Franks, coauthors) of University of Southern Mississippi for their work entitled *Estimation and Validation of the Length-at-Age Relationship of Mississippi's Spotted Seatrout*. Plaques and checks for \$50 (Best Poster and Second Place Best Presentation) and \$100 (First Place Best Presentation) were given to each first author prior to the meeting. Co-authors received certificates.

Robert M. Jenkins Scholarships were presented by Incoming Chair of the SDAFS Reservoir Committee Lawrence Dorsey. The \$1,000 scholarships were awarded to Clay Raines (Mississippi State University) and Cole Harty (Tennessee Tech University). Dorsey expressed the committee's appreciation of Mossback Fish Habitat for sponsoring both scholarships this year.

Brian Alford, Chair of the SDAFS Warmwater Streams Technical Committee, presented the Jimmie Pigg Memorial Outstanding Student Achievement Award to Andrew Taylor of Oklahoma State University for his work on the conservation genetics of shoal bass. The award included a plaque, \$500, and one-year membership to AFS.

Jerry Brown, Chair of the SDAFS Catfish Management Technical Committee, presented its first student scholarship to encourage students to attend technical committee meetings. The \$300 award went to Joseph Smith of Virginia Tech for his work with blue catfish and was used to help offset his cost to attend the SDAFS meeting.

John Damer, Chair of the SDAFS Trout Technical Committee, recognized Monte Seehorn who started the Trout Technical Committee over 47 years ago and has provided invaluable service to the Committee and trout conservation during his career.

Resolution of Appreciate to Host plaques and certificates were given to the West Virginia Chapter, Pat Mazik (General Meeting Chair), Kyle Hartman (Program Chair), Brandon Keplinger (Finance Chair), Lara Hedrick (Fundraising Chair), Frank Borsuk (Workshop and Local Arrangements Chair), Dave Wellman (Student Affairs and Local Arrangements Chair), Scott Morrison (Registration Chair), Jim Hedrick (Webmaster/AV/Technology Chair), Erin Thayer and Dave Thorne (Poster Chair), and Stuart Welsh (Symposia Chair). Plaques were presented to the West Virginia Chapter, the general meeting chair, and the program chair. Everyone else received certificates.

Certificates of Appreciation were presented to several SDAFS leaders, including Bob Curry (2013-2015 SDAFS representative to SEAFWA), Brandon Peoples (2013-2014 SDAFS Newsletter Editor, 2015 SDAFS Listserv Administrator, 2013-2015 Student Representative to the SDAFS EXCOM), Sasha Doss (2015 SDAFS Newsletter Editor), Nicole Rankin (2015 SDAFS Student Affairs Committee Chair), Gene Wilde (2015 SDAFS Awards Committee Chair), Zach Martin (2015 SDAFS Webmaster), Brian Alford (2015 SDAFS Webmaster), Hae Kim (2015 SDAFS Webmaster), Jessica Baumann (2013-2015 SDAFS Podcasts), and Chris Wood (2015 SDAFS Podcasts).

**Old Business:** None.

**Installation of 2016 Officers:** New officers were Dave Coughlan, President (escorted by Steve McMullin); Wes Porak, President-Elect (escorted by Jim Long and Andrew Taylor); and Craig Bonds, Vice President (escorted by Rick Ott and Jake Norman). New Immediate Past President Dennis Riecke offered some final remarks and presented the EXCOM members with gifts as tokens of appreciation for their service.

**Newly Installed President Dave Coughlan's Remarks:** President Coughlan commended Past President Riecke for his leadership and service to the SDAFS, then offered him a plaque of

appreciation and special bottle of bourbon. President Coughlan requested that Steve McMullin escort him into his new office, because for three of the four years that he was on the SDAFS EXCOM, President Coughlan acted as his SDAFS Secretary-Treasurer. Although extremely honored for that, he had hoped that his wife could have had the honor to do so. Unfortunately, due to medical reasons, she was unable to make the trip this year. She did provide some important advice, however: “Keep it simple, stupid!” He remarked that the strength of the SDAFS lies with its members who participate on technical committees, volunteer for AFS service, mentor students, and protect our natural resources. President Coughlan reminded attendees that his job is to support and assist them in any way he could. During his presidential tenure, he will be focusing on work safety and encouraged attendees to keep an eye out for more information that will be forthcoming about that. He challenged everyone to select an AFS book and read it cover-to-cover this year; in return, he agreed to read the AFS book, *Challenges for Diadromous Fishes in a Dynamic Global Environment* (Symposium 69). As a final remark, he reminded those 50 years and older to get a colonoscopy; it could save their lives.

**New Business:** President Coughlan introduced AFS Policy Director Tom Bigford for his discussion on the *Future of the Nation’s Aquatic Resources: Recommendations for the Next Administration*. This document will include aspects such as a list of upcoming fisheries leaders in federal agencies, priorities in appropriation bills, and which regulations get reviewed. The AFS is leading this effort which involves staff meeting with -- at present -- almost 100 groups to get their input and recommendations. All of this information will be summarized and made available to the next U.S. presidential administration, bringing together issues of science, management, and policy. These are big picture issues, such as regional or basin-wide approaches and agency appropriations and will include specific examples. He encouraged SDAFS members to supply input and share knowledge about other similar reports (e.g., at the state or agency level) with him or other AFS staff involved in this effort. An early draft of the report is expected to be complete by early summer, finalized at the AFS meeting in Kansas City, and presented to the next administration following elections in the fall. A short handout containing more information was made available to meeting attendees.

Barry Bolton, representing the Oklahoma Chapter AFS, invited meeting attendees to the 2017 SDAFS meeting to be held in downtown Oklahoma City from January 26-29, 2017. On behalf of the Oklahoma Chapter, he also praised the efforts of the West Virginia Chapter Planning Committee for putting on a successful 2016 SDAFS meeting.

Past President Riecke provided some final thoughts to meeting attendees. His parting words came from a quote by Brian Tobin, former Canadian Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, in the July 1995 Fisheries Magazine article: “Let us join our voices and speak for the fish together...Lest the science come before the political, economic, business, social, or other considerations, fisheries are going to be in trouble.” His hope is that leaders in our agencies, universities, and in the Society would hold the same philosophy. He stated that he sees that leadership spirit exhibited by our current Society leaders.

Hearing no other new business, President Coughlan adjourned the meeting at 1904 hrs, noting (with humor) that he would have been finished on time at 1900 *if not for the added words of Past President Riecke*.