



Fish Health Section - American Fisheries Society

Dear Fellow AFS-FHS Members,

As the AFS-FHS President for the 2020-2021 term, I would like to begin by thanking you for the opportunity to serve you and our professional organization, which not only has a history of outstanding excellence, but also one of taking initiative and leading, as evidenced by being the first section within the AFS ever formed (out of >20 that now exist). This is just one of several facts I recently learned as I continue to review the newsletters from the inception of the AFS-FHS in 1972 to present. The contributions that have been and continue to be made by FHS members are striking, and I believe now maybe more than ever, such contributions will be even more imperative. But before I delve into the efforts that I plan to pursue, I would like to thank and congratulate several individuals.

First, thank you to my good friend and colleague, Dr. Ben LaFrentz, for his outstanding dedication and tireless efforts as the AFS-FHS President and AFS Governing Board member last year. Per usual, Ben went above and beyond and was an instrumental force behind several important FHS initiatives that continue to unfold as I write this. Thank you, Ben!

Second, I would like to thank all of the FHS members that served on the standing and ad hoc committees last year, especially those that have now completed that service. Because of you, the AFS-FHS remains at the forefront of fields of aquatic animal health and beyond.

Next, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to two long time AFS-FHS members, each of whom received the most prestigious honor the AFS-FHS can bestow: the S.F. Snieszko Distinguished Service Award. The 2020 S. F. Snieszko Distinguished Service Award awardees were Dr. Gael Kurath of the USGS Western Fisheries Research Center and Bruce Stewart of the Tribal Fish Health Program of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. Neither Bruce nor Gael need any introduction, as they are true giants in the fields of aquatic animal health with an outstanding record of service to the section. A gargantuan congratulations to you both!

Finally, I would like to extend my congratulations to our newest members that were elected to the committees of the AFS-FHS. Congratulations to Anita Kelly, who was elected Vice President; Stephen Reichley, who was elected to the Technical Standards Committee; Joe Marcino, who was elected to the Professional Standards Committee; Jesse Trushenski, who was elected to the Policy/Position Development Committee; and Nicholas Phelps, who was elected to the Nominating and Balloting Committee. Thank you for volunteering your time and congratulations again! At the end of this message, you will find the rosters comprising the committees for the 2020-2021 term. You will notice there are a few seats I am still in the process of filling and once complete, this list will be posted to the FHS website. To help broadcast the efforts of the AFS-FHS, I will also be appointing an additional "social media" savvy member to the Section Communications Committee to not only help with our currently existing Facebook page (which was suggested by the Sections Committee last year), but also to establish additional social media outlets (e.g., Twitter) to help widen our communication efforts and further increase the visibility of our section.

Before turning to my focus for the upcoming term, I would like to acknowledge how challenging much of this past year has been for all of us, but some far more than others. COVID-19 has taken lives, derailed our economy, disrupted our research and education plans, set our normal way of life into disarray, as well as exacerbated and further exposed the social injustices that continue to plague humanity. And yet from this

darkness, I believe we can learn and grow. For instance, the dark clouds of COVID-19 have affirmed that science and unity, rather than rhetoric and divisiveness, need to be the guiding light for humanity to fight a seemingly ever-growing list of challenges. Likewise, the most recent waves of racial injustice highlight more than ever the need to stand firm with one another, regardless of ethnic background, gender, or creed, as the solutions to our problems shine only when we are all united in humanity, working together. As Victor Hugo once said, “In joined hands there is still some token of hope, in the clinched fist none.” And so, as we all continue to navigate a multitude of challenges in the upcoming year, let’s join together to help make the world a better place for all by never underestimating the difference that kind deeds and collaboration can make.

Turning to my focus as AFS-FHS President, my first and foremost priority will be towards updating and contemporizing the Blue Book. As many of you are aware, the AFS, in collaboration with the FHS, recently received a grant from the Multistate Conservation Grant program to support revising and updating the Blue Book. Although COVID-19 delayed the process, this effort is set to begin in earnest at the outset of 2021. Between now and then, a project manager will be hired using the funds from this grant and, in collaboration with a steering committee that will be appointed and comprised of state, federal, tribal, and private stakeholders, the direly needed Blue Book revision process will begin. Importantly, these efforts will be guided by the recommendations of the ad hoc committee that were circulated to the membership for review and comment this past March. I am extremely excited about the momentum my predecessors gave this initiative, and I will be placing heavy emphasis on elevating the productivity of this endeavor throughout my term even further. However, given the extent of revisions that are needed, I do not believe this is a “1-year job.” To that end, I will be striving to form a consortium with entities interested in sustaining efforts to keep the Blue Book in a contemporary state for years to come and intend to utilize this partnership to competitively pursue extramural funds to help do so.

While emphasizing efforts to update the Blue Book, I also intend to work closely with the various AFS-FHS ad hoc and standing committees, as they too will not only be crucial for this process, but also for their annual duties. To do so, I will follow the model that Past President Guppy Blair devised and that Ben LaFrentz also utilized: in short order, I will be contacting all Committee Chairs and request that they, in concert with each respective committees’ members, devise goals to be tackled and seen to fruition this year.

Last but definitely not least, I will be establishing an ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee, as I believe having short, medium, and longer-term visions for the AFS-FHS is crucial. To do so, I will be reaching out to various individuals to help with this endeavor. Please stay tuned.

In closing and to quote the first President of our section, Dr. John Fryer, “The future of the FHS lies in the members, individually and collectively.” I could not agree more! Thank you for the privilege of serving as the AFS-FHS President, and I am excited to work shoulder to shoulder with you all over the next year.

Most Sincerely,



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Committee	Position	2020-2021 Members
Executive Committee	President President Elect Vice President Secretary-Treasurer Past President TS Committee Chair PS Committee Chair	Thomas Loch Gary Marty Anita Kelly Carolyn Richards Ben LaFrentz Kathleen Hartman Wes Baumgartner
Nominating and Balloting Committee	Chair (3rd year) Member (2nd year) Member (1st year) Member (Past President)	Danielle Van Vliet Jayde Ferguson Nick Phelps Ben LaFrentz
Professional Standards Committee	Chair (3rd year) Member Member (2nd year) Member (1st year) Secretary to Chair	Wes Baumgartner Al Camus Brandon Taro Joe Marcino
Policy/Position Development Committee	Chair (President Elect) Member (VP) Member (3rd year) Member (2nd year) Member (1st year)	Gary Marty Anita Kelly Carl Smith Gael Kurath Jesse Trushenski
Technical Standards Committee	Chair (3rd year) Member (2nd year) Member (1st year)	Kathleen Hartman Stephen Reichley
Archives Committee		Barb Johnston Matt Stinson
Awards Committee	Chair Member Member	Luke Iwanowicz Nicole Nietlisbach
Continuing Education Committee	Chair Member Member Member	George Sanders Tom Waltzek Mark Fast Sascha Hallet
International Meeting Oversight Com.	Chair Member Member	Dave Groman Andy Kane Jerri Bartholomew

Committee	Position	2020-2021 Members
Section Communications	Chair Member Member	Stacy Strickland Benjamin Americus
Recruitment and Student Involvement	Chair Member Member	Katharine "Ono" Onofryton Megan Shavalier
Fish Health Lab QA/QC	Chair Member Member Member Member Member Member Member	Chris Wilson Wade Cavender Doug Munson Aimee Reed Joel Bader Joe Marcino Rick Cordes Vicki Milano Hui-Min Hsu
HROC	Co-Chair (USFWS) - Year 2 Co-Chair (FHS-TSC) - Year 2 USFWS - Year 3 outgoing USFWS - Year 1 FHS-TSC: past chair year 3 FHS-TSC - year 1 USFWS NAAHC (ex-officio) AFS-FHS Chairman (Ex-officio) NOAA FSNAAHC (Ex-officio) USDA-APHIS APM (Ex-officio)	Devin Chappel Kathleen Hartman Gavin Glenney Mohamed Faisal Joel Bader Thomas Loch Janet Whaley Janet Warg