

**Minutes of the 41st Annual Business Meeting of the Florida Chapter
American Fisheries Society
April 21, 2021
Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

President Bob Heagey called the meeting to order at 1445 hours and Chris Anderson established a quorum.

Current officers, past-presidents, and committee chairs of the Florida Chapter were read and most of those in attendance were acknowledged: Bob Heagey, Dan Nelson, Nick Trippel, Chris Anderson, Allison Durland Donahou, Lauren Kleiman, Amanda Croteau, Chelsey Crandall, Scott Bisping, Eric Nagid, Chuck Cichra, Kevin Johnson, Wes Porak, Kathy Guindon, Kerry Flaherty-Walia, Travis Tuten, Ed Camp. David Kerstetter, Brian Murphy, Michael Murphy, and Kim Bonvechio.

Two revisions were made to the agenda for the 41st Annual Meeting of the Florida Chapter American Fisheries Society Business Meeting: designated the Policy Committee as an AD Hoc committee and moved the 2017 Tampa Profits Ad Hoc Committee from Old Business to Committee Reports.

Bob Heagey then asked for and received approval of the agenda.

Brian Murphy (AFS President) presented his Plan of Work for AFS during his term as president. He detailed three of the main aspects of his plan: (1) science outreach and public trust, (2) diversity, equity, and inclusivity, and (3) value of membership within AFS. He informed the Chapter that the abstract deadline was extended for the 2021 AFS Baltimore and that there will be a rolling approval process for abstracts. He told the Chapter about the 2022 Joint Aquatic Sciences Meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

President-Elect Dan Nelson then played the advertisement video for the 2021 AFS meeting in Baltimore and thanked Brian for attending our meeting.

Kerry-Flaherty Walia gave an update on the AFS Membership Committee. She informed members of the new job board on the AFS website and invited them to provide feedback on it. She also said to look out for a survey regarding the benefits of AFS membership and encouraged Chapter members to become AFS parent society members.

Kathy Guindon provided an update on the AFS Hutton Junior Fisheries Biology Program. She said it was a banner year for the program because funds rolled over from Summer 2020 due to Covid-related cancellations. In 2021, the program is able to support 37 Junior Fisheries Biologists, which is a record number! She continued with a brief overview of the program and application process. Of the 37 students, 8 students from FL were selected and 3 received open funded positions. She then inquired about a mentor for a Hutton scholar in the Miami-area. She also told members about the new conference/summit for Hutton scholars, which is taking place at Virginia Tech.

Wes Porak gave an update from Southern Division AFS. He said that the division just finished up a very successful virtual meeting. He mentioned that the 2022 Southern Division meeting will be in Charleston, South Carolina from January 20-23. He informed members that SD AFS just formed a diversity, equity, and inclusivity committee. Wes also told the Chapter that the division has revised the award process for the Outstanding Chapter of the Year award. It will now be awarded in two separate categories: large chapter (>100 AFS parent society members) and small chapter (<100 AFS parent society members), which mimics the AFS parent society. He encouraged the Chapter to apply every year because only Florida and Texas qualify for the large chapter award. He quickly highlighted the Third International Catfish Symposium (Catfish 2020). He then encouraged Chapter members to become AFS parent society members and reminded them that division membership is included in parent society membership.

Dan Nelson asked Wes who won the 2020 Outstanding Large Chapter of the Year award, but Wes was unsure. Chris Anderson chimed in that FL AFS was in fact the winner, which made us back-to-back winners of the award. Chris commented on how the active involvement of our Student Sub-unit contributed to us winning the award and thanked all members for their involvement and support.

Secretary/Treasurer Chris Anderson asked for a motion to approve the Minutes of the 40th (2020) Annual Business Meeting of the Florida Chapter American Fisheries Society as they appeared in the July 2020 Shellcracker newsletter. The motion was made, seconded and passed.

Chris Anderson then presented the 2020 Treasurer's Report. The chapter ended the year with \$76,615 in total assets, a \$5,542 gain from the beginning of the year. The gain came from our Morgan Stanley mutual funds. The Chapter's main debits in 2020 were our FYCCN donations (\$6,000) and our AFS Hutton program donation via our sponsorship of the AFS Spring 2020 Virtual Conference (\$1,500), and both Rottmann Scholarships (\$2,000). The Chapter's main credits in 2020 came from the 2019 AFS parent society dues FL Chapter dues refund check (\$1,420), Subunit Income from various sources including Sheepshead Shuffle (\$1,265), and the 2020 Virtual Silent Auction (\$1,194). Chris also gave an update on the Roger Rottmann Memorial Scholarship Fund via an email from Larry Connor. The Fund had assets of \$47,753 as of 31 December 2020, representing a \$1,183 decrease from the 31 December 2019 assets of \$48,936. This decrease primarily came from a \$1,000 liability associated with the increased refund amount (from \$1,000 to \$2,000) to the Chapter for the Rottmann Scholarships.

Past-President Nick Trippel then facilitated elections for chapter President-Elect. Candidates Chelsey Crandall and Drew Dutterer each gave a bio about themselves and their vision as chapter president, and then ballots were cast virtually in an anonymous poll.

Committee Reports

Membership – Chris Anderson gave an update on membership via an email from Larry Connor. The Florida Chapter ended the year with 160 members, which is a decrease of 63 members from 2019. Chris mentioned that cancelling the annual meeting due to Covid was the main driver behind this decrease. A total of 18 members paid their dues through the Chapter website in 2020. The number of members paying their dues through the Society was 141 in 2020. The remaining member was comped Chapter dues for holding a continuing education workshop. The Chapter's membership included 44 student members. Approximately 94% of the chapter members, 150, were also Society members. The breakdown of student and society member should be used with caution. This information is readily available for the 150 chapter members who paid their dues through the Society. However, it was difficult to get responses from the members who paid via the Chapter website. Chris explained that this was the reason registration was required even though the meeting was free for Chapter members and how these responses affect our refund from AFS parent society and funding for our student subunit.

Newsletter – Scott Bisping, the Shellcracker newsletter editor, will stay on as editor for the next year. He reminded members that they can submit articles for the Shellcracker at any time and types of articles that get highlighted.

Website – Chris Anderson, the new Webmaster, spoke briefly about our former webmaster, Eric Sawyers and why he was such a great webmaster. He also talked about changes to the website that included selling Chapter merchandise from the website, the new Continuing Education page, and adding the links to the Chapter's social media pages/blogs. He then announced that the Chapter was looking for a new Webmaster and encourage anyone interested to reach out.

Raffle/Online Silent Auction – Amanda Croteau started by reviewing the 2020 virtual silent auction and talked about the donor search process for the 2021 silent auction. She highlighted the donors from 2020 whose items rolled over to the 2021 auction. She relayed that the 2021 silent auction is up and running, and that it will close at 9:00pm instead of 12:00pm. The auction included 14 packages valued at over \$1,800, which includes a custom fishing rod and kayak. She mentioned that all auction packages will be shipped free of charge to the winning bidder, except the kayak. Amanda also explained the 2021 ExCom Challenge and Meeting Scavenger Hunt and encouraged members to participate. She then went over the current “standings” of the ExCom Challenge. Dan and Chris commended Amanda and Chelsey for their hard work in adapting the auction to a virtual and making our 2021 meeting more engaging.

Student Scholarships and Awards – Chuck Cichra began his comments by mentioning that this is the 23rd year the Rottmann Scholarship has been awarded. He also highlighted the increased student involvement over the years and how important it is for our Chapter. Chuck then gave the history of the Roger Rottmann Memorial Scholarship and summarized the recipient applications before announcing that Taylor Dluzniewski (University of Florida) received the M.S. Rottmann award and Lauren Kleiman (Florida Atlantic University) received the Ph.D. Rottmann award. He went on to comment about how impressive students resumes and applications are these days, and how that (plus an

increased endowment of the Rottmann fund) led to the separation of the award into a M.S. and P.h.D. level. He said that 8 students applied in 2021 and highlighted some of the applicants' achievements anonymously.

He also spoke about the student travel grants and that 4 students from 4 different universities (FAU, FIT, FIU, Nova Southeastern) applied. In lieu of a traditional travel grant, the 4 travel grant recipients were entered into a random raffle for \$100, which was won by Emily Akins (Nova Southeastern).

Florida Chapter Awards – Eric Nagid gave a brief summary of the Outstanding Achievement Award, which was awarded to Kim Bonvechio, Chelsey Crandall, Kerry Flaherty-Walia, and Janice Kerns for their roles in Women of Fisheries, Inc. Eric read their nomination later and commented that this was the first time this award has been given out.

Eric then gave a brief summary of the career of Rich Cailteux and the history of the Rich Cailteux Award, which is meant to recognize individuals for their career contributions to the fisheries profession and the Florida Chapter. Eric Sawyers was then named the 9th recipient of the Rich Cailteux Award and Eric Nagid read his nomination letter. Chris Anderson then requested a moment of silence in Eric Sawyer's memory/honor, which was granted.

Continuing Education – Allison Durland Donahou began by speaking about the Introduction to R virtual workshop hosted by Paul Schueller (FWC) in August 2020. She reviewed the number of participants (80) and the responses from the post-workshop survey, which were very positive and included feedback on future workshop topics.

Chris Anderson then talked about the non-lethal aging virtual workshop that was hosted by Summer Lindelien (FWC) and Kristen Rynerson (FWC) in April 2021. He said that 18 people attended the workshop and anecdotal feedback from attendees was very positive. He then thanked Summer and Kristen for hosting the workshop. He informed members to keep an eye out for a survey regarding CE workshop topic preferences and a new call for workshops page on the Chapter website.

Jason O'Connor commented about the upcoming workshop survey and the timing of future workshops (2 per year, 1 near meeting, 1 in summer). He also elaborated on the process for how workshops are chosen.

Marketing and Membership – Kerry Flaherty-Walia discussed the difficulties 2020 presented from the MMC perspective. She reached out to members about joining the MMC and the committee's plans for the future. She highlighted the new social media pages created by Allison Durland Donahou and Amanda Croteau and encouraged members to join/follow/like the pages.

Policy Ad Hoc – Ed Camp detailed the goals and potential outputs/products from the newly established Policy Ad Hoc Committee. He said the outputs would include science-

based management briefs and/or policy position statements. He mentioned that the committee is willing to take suggestions for which issues to create the aforementioned outputs. The committee would contact subject matter experts for assistance crafting outputs for policymakers. Ed also reviewed the downsides and challenges the committee may face. He recommended sticking to well-established science over cutting edge/controversial topics and avoiding political lobbying. He talked about the importance of protecting committee members from conflicts of interest with their agency of employment. He highlighted the importance of building relationships with both governmental and non-governmental agencies and the need to work with the AFS parent society and Southern Division to determine the best ways to proceed with a policy committee. He said first steps for the committee are to identify needs, establish approaches and solicit feedback on the operating procedures of the committee. Once this is completed, it could be presented to the full Chapter membership to determine whether it should become a standing committee.

2017 Tampa Profits Ad Hoc – Eric Nagid reviewed the charter of this committee and reminded members that the 3 primary recommendations had been completed. These included 3 donations of \$2,000 each to FWC’s FYCCN Centers, a \$2,000 for UF’s Fishing for Success program, and funding the Jack Dequine Award winner to go to the international AFS meeting. He said that there are approximately \$6,700 left in profits, and he discussed the new recommendations from the committee. These included continuing to send the Jack Dequine Award winner to the international AFS meeting, providing sponsorships for Southern Division meetings, and a one-time donation to Women of Fisheries, Inc. He took a moment to speak about how Women of Fisheries, Inc. would primarily use the money to fund their mentorship program and in-person meetings. Eric then left it up to the ExCom to decide whether or not to approve the recommendations.

Student Subunit Report

Student Subunit President Lauren Kleiman began by promoting student research by discussing the Reefs to Rivers blog, Shellcracker student highlight articles, and the Subunit’s Facebook and Instagram pages. She informed the Chapter that there is a new buff design, and that buffs and hats can now be purchased on the Chapter website. Lauren then reminded the chapter to support subunit fundraising efforts which include signing up for the 5th annual Sheepshead Shuffle. She spoke about the success of the 2020 Sheepshead Shuffle and how we were able to help the student subunit of another Chapter raise money for travel grants. She encouraged members to sign up for Amazon Smile, which generates donations to the Chapter when items are purchased on Amazon Smile at no cost to the purchaser. She said the Subunit raised over \$100 in 2020 through Amazon Smile. Lauren then promoted the upcoming student subunit meeting where elections for officers will take place for vacated positions.

Old Business

Nick Trippel spoke about the beginnings of the now annual FL AFS Aquatic Cleanup events and how Covid limited the number of events in 2020. He shared some photos from the annual Harris Chain of Lakes Clean-up Event in 2020 and how the event has led to a good relationship with local government. He mentioned that the events are held on the 3rd Saturday in September, which coincides with the International Coastal Clean-up. He said that cleanup events can be organized anywhere and at any time and encouraged members to contact him if they want to host an event and/or attend events held by other groups. He reminded members to record and submit the amount of trash (number of items, pounds of trash, etc.).

Nick then congratulated Chelsey Crandall on being voted the new President-Elect. He then presented a plaque to Bob Heagey for his time as Chapter President. He also presented plaques to Allison Durland Donahou and Lauren Kleiman for their respective times as Student Subunit President.

New business

Dan Nelson echoed the congratulations to award winners and thanked our members for making our chapter so outstanding. He thanked Bob for his uplifting President's Messages and commended him for his positivity that was much needed during the pandemic.

Dan announced that the 2022 meeting will be held at the FFA Leadership Center in Haines City, FL from April 5-7th. He then discussed the results from the membership survey regarding forming a Venue Search Committee and encouraged members to reach out to the ExCom if they would like to start/join the search committee.

Chris Anderson announced that Jason O'Connor will be the new Webmaster for the Chapter and thanked him for volunteering.

Dan Nelson thanked membership and adjourned the business meeting at 1705 hours.