

Business Meeting 32nd Annual Meeting (2006) Southeastern Fishes Council

The 2006 meeting of the Southeastern Fishes Council was called to order by Chair-elect Bernard Kuhajda at 4:05 PM on 14 July 2006 at the Sheraton Hotel in New Orleans, LA. The meeting was held in conjunction with the 86th annual meeting of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists. Twenty members were in attendance, plus at least three others who came in late.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary Brett Albanese was not able to attend but sent hard-copies of the minutes from the 2005 meeting. Motion was made and seconded to approve minutes and minutes were approved by voice-vote.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Kyle Piller distributed and explained financial report. SFC expended more funds than received over the past year. Checking account balance is \$10425.85 as of 15 June 2006. As of the meeting, SFC had 51 members with current dues paid, including 6 student members.

EDITOR'S REPORT

Marty O'Connell reported he had now recovered from Katrina sufficiently to move ahead as new Editor of the Proceedings. Regional reports for 2006 had not yet been called for; there was one paper in the review process for the next Proceedings volume.

OLD BUSINESS

Bernie Kuhajda reported on his trip to Washington DC as a representative of SFC and ASIH to meet with Senate Aids regarding proposed revisions to the Endangered Species Act (ESA). SFC signed on to a joint statement by several scientific societies opposing moves by Congress to alter the ESA. On short notice, Bernie went to DC with representatives from two other organizations (World Wildlife Fund and Environmental Defense Council) and met with about 40 Senate Aids regarding issues with ESA legislation. In addition to giving SFC a voice in legislation that could weaken species conservation, the trip provided Bernie the opportunity to buy a suit jacket (not charged to SFC), and Bernie reported that he is ready to serve again in this capacity as necessary.

NEW BUSINESS

Changes to Constitution and Bylaws Article VI. Chair Noel Burkhead has proposed changing Article VI to allow changes to Constitution and Bylaws at the annual business meeting or by email. Noel's proposed change to text of the Article was discussed and modified to stipulate a 10-day period for accepting votes by email and that proposed changes voted on by email would require approval by a two-thirds majority of the members responding. The revised text for Article VI read as follows:

"Changes to the Constitution and Bylaws can be made at annual business meeting or by email. Proposed changes to the constitution at the annual business meeting must be voted on by members, and passed if two-thirds of the members present at the meeting support the change. Changes made by email must be voted on by the current membership of the society at the time of the vote, and passed by two-thirds majority vote of the members voting by email. Notification and proposed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws should be submitted for consideration by the Constitution Committee during the normal nine month school year (members may be out of the country for extended periods during the summer). The announced voting time will be a 10-day period stipulated in a 30-day

notification of a proposed change to the Constitution and Bylaws, which will be sent by the Constitution Committee to the membership."

Motion to accept these changes was made and seconded, and approved by a voice vote.

The Meeting Venue Issue and Noel's Plan X (APPENDED), Bernie reviewed the perennially recurring issue of the most effective venue for holding the SFC annual meeting (i.e., this really belongs under "Old business") and the reasoning behind last year's business meeting decision to meet with the Southern Division of the American Fisheries Society (SDAFS). Bernie then outlined a proposal by Chair Noel Burkhead, Plan X: adopt the Desert Fishes Council (DFC) model and hold the SFC annual meeting independently of other organizations. Considerable discussion ensued addressing questions such as whether SFC would attract members and partners (agencies, NGO's) to yet another annual meeting. Bernie also presented Brian Wagner's email response "Why go to Plan X when we haven't even given Plan W a chance?" (APPENDED), which passionately argued that SFC should adopt a broad view of what constitutes the "southeast" and continue with its decision to meet with SDAFS. Jim Williams presented some of the history of DFC, including how DFC decided to meet independently in Death Valley at NPS facilities on the cheap (no catering, minimal registration fee). Jim discussed the format of DFC meetings consisting of State reports, federal agency reports, and technical reports and suggested that if SFC followed this model, we might similarly devote the 1st day of the meeting to reports from states and agencies and the 2nd day to technical papers. Jim stressed his belief that a key to DFC's success has been always holding the meeting at the same time each year (e.g., the Thursday and Friday in the week before Thanksgiving), so no one has to think about when or where the meeting will be - simple scheduling that even fish-heads can handle.

Additional discussion addressed the phenomenon of diluted SFC attendance when we meet with national organizations and the need to focus on the southeast. Bernie noted that ASIH will not meet in the Southeast (according to common definitions) for the next 5 years; SDAFS will meet in Memphis, TN 2007 and Wheeling WV in 2008, raising again the question of what constitutes the Southeast and whether it includes WV. Other issues raised included: out-of-state travel problems for State biologists, and whether going to a meeting other than SDAFS would be more difficult; whether we collectively have the time to attend another meeting; the fact that considerably more funding is available for endangered fish research and conservation in the SW than in the SE; whether we have a group of dedicated individuals that can attend an independent SFC meeting; and the effect on graduate student involvement. Throughout, Jim continued with impassioned pleas for Plan X. Mary Freeman noted that Jim is retired and might have a more expansive view of time availability, and suggestively asked who is going to organize this meeting? Jim noted that if we do move to our own independent meeting, maybe some of the NGO's and agencies that have become interested in Southeastern aquatics would help support the meeting. For example, a location like Chattanooga could be good, and we might seek with from TN Aquarium Research folks.

It was noted that meeting with SDAFS will only work well if SFC folks are on the AFS Planning Committee to set up a symposium; it will not work if we just have a business meeting because we will be overshadowed by the larger meeting (as at ASIH).

It was agreed that to follow-up on Plan X, we need a Committee to make a decision as to meeting site within 90 days. We also need a Program Committee. It was asked whether we were tied to Spring meetings, and Jim suggested late October, or November timing. Mel Warren proposed that the Executive Committee should appoint a committee to consider all issues and make a recommendation to the membership. Bernie called for a show of hands to see how members in attendance felt about options. Steve Ross, who has defected to the west, opined that it would be a major change for SFC to move to DFC model. Steve noted that DFC has strong graduate student participation (in what is now a 3-day meeting) and SFC could use some of our funds to support student participation in our meetings. Steve noted that the DFC model allows for strong interactions, and that it takes awhile to get to that point; DFC was helped along with crisis over the Devil's Hole pupfish. More discussion revolved around whether we can do a lot of work (as needed to interact effectively with SDAFS), or a lot more work (as needed to have our own meeting); the costs of meeting with SDAFS; the value of small meetings; where our decision to meet independently might leave the SE Division-ASIH; the possibility of providing some sort of support for graduate students; and whether we should go back to meeting with ASB.

A show of hands gave the following counts of those who:

Preferred to meet with SDAFS or some other large organization : 1

Favored SFC meeting on our own : 8

Were confused: about 12.

Jim Williams moved the discussion forward by volunteering to organize and make all arrangements for first two SFC meetings if we decide to go it on our own. A motion was made to table details until the Executive Committee can consider

the issues, report back to the membership and ask for a decision. Motion was 2nd, and approved. It was noted that the Committee should review whether we can have a symposium at SDAFS in 2007.

Web-page revisions: Noel has provided a detailed proposal (In Plan X, Appended) for making fish images, underwater videos and an updated, downloadable list of Southeastern fishes, organized by drainage available on the website and Joe Tomelleri offered to provide lo-resolution images also. Meeting attendants broadly agreed that these are great ideas and Steve Ross noted he would be willing to post his images. Bernie asked for volunteers to begin forming a Committee to make this happen (and need to move forward with getting .pdfs of all Proceedings on the website). Jake Schaefer volunteered to start the process of revising the web-page; Bernie will advise Noel to contact Jake directly at Jake.Schaefer@usm.edu.

New membership issue: SFC needs a membership committee that will harass members to get their graduate students and colleagues to join. Discussion included: that we need to make it very clear what one gets by joining; that we could roll membership dues into registration if we meet independently; that a better website will improve our visibility; that a list-serve could be helpful in engaging members. Pam Schofield raised the issue of the Wild Turkey - perhaps we need to use alcohol to reward those who bring in members/students? Hank Bart volunteered to chair a Membership Committee.

Other new business: what to do with checking account funds? After some discussion on possible restrictions imposed by our non-profit status, Kyle agreed to bug Steve Ross and Mel Warren for advice on managing SFC funds to return some interest.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Freeman (standing in for Secretary Brett Albanese).