

2022 Business Meeting
Southeastern Fishes Council 48th Annual Meeting
Athens, Georgia
Thursday 17 November 2022, 16:30
Chair: Mark Cantrell
Chair-elect: Mike Sandel
Past Chair: Brian Alford
Secretary: Bernie Kuhajda
Treasurer: Stephanie Brandt

I. Call to Order – Chair, M. Cantrell

Mark asked if anyone had any additions to the SFC Business Meeting agenda. Hearing none, Mark called the SFC Business Meeting to order. First order of business was to recognize the SFC Charter Members, specifically those in attendance – Jim Williams, Wayne Starnes, and David Heins. Wayne mentioned that he had supplied several years of information from the early days when he was SFC Secretary/Treasurer for the information on the history of SFC through 1993, which is on the SFC website.

II. Approval of 2021 Business Meeting Minutes – M. Cantrell

A draft of the 2021 meeting minutes has been posted on the SFC website and a copy was sent out via email to the membership, with the final version incorporating minor edits/corrected typos sent on 13 November. Mark called for the 2021 SFC Business Meeting minutes to be approved, and the motion unanimously passed.

III. Report of the Secretary – B. Kuhajda

Bernie thanked everyone that helped with the meeting, especially the local committee. Everything has been good throughout the year.

IV. Report of the Treasurer – S. Brandt

Stephanie reported SFC banking is now with Regions Bank, with the hope that future Treasurers can keep using this regional bank. We are still using Wild Apricot and AffiniPay for website and financial services which incur a significant portion of our annual expenses. Meeting expenses were higher this year with inflation, but our large attendance (85 students!) has helped offset this increase. However, we will lose money on this meeting, but it should not be a large amount.

Our investment with Oxford Financial lost 21.9% of its value during this year, with the current balance at \$39,176. After all meeting income and expenses are finalized our checking account should be around \$30,000.

V. Report of the Committees

a. Constitution Committee – ExCom, B. Kuhajda, M. Cantrell

i. Edits being made to reflect bylaw changes from previous meetings

Bernie is working on updating the version of the SFC Constitution that is currently on our website by referring to past meeting minutes. The current version was updated in 2006. We have already passed amendments for a Code of Conduct, a Membership, Website, Meeting Site, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committees, and we have dropped State Reports. He will provide membership with an updated version soon,

which does not need to be voted on because the previous changes were already approved by membership. Please provide any feedback to Bernie, especially on the descriptions of the new Committees.

b. Program Committee – D. Elkins, B. Albanese

Brett thanked everyone for their help setting up and running the meeting, especially Bernie and Stephanie Brandt. Thanks to everyone who donated items to the student auction, especially Jim Williams and David Heins. Really appreciated those who changed their presentations from a full 15 minutes slot to Lightning Talks to allow students to give full-length presentations. Thanks to all who helped out at the registration table, especially Bo Baxter who was there for most of the meeting. Mark thanked the Program Committee for successfully addressing all of the logistical issues arising from the overwhelming response from membership displayed by their attendance at this meeting and in all of the presentations.

c. Resolutions Committee – A. George

Anna was contacted by Stephen Walsh about a resolution for restoration of the Ocklawaha River in Florida. He wants support from SFC to return the river to a free-flowing system as proposed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and has included a list of politicians, agencies, etc. that the resolution should be sent to if SFC should approve the resolution. In the interest of time the resolution will be sent to membership by email. Steve was not at the SFC meeting, so all questions should be directed to Jim Williams. Bernie reminded all that we can vote on the finalized resolution by email. There was a two-week period established for reviewing the proposed resolution with comments and shortly thereafter membership will vote.

i. RESOLUTION FOR OKCLAWAHA RIVER RESTORATION

WHEREAS the Ocklawaha River in northcentral Florida, the largest tributary of the St. Johns River basin, is a unique ecosystem with a long history of major ecological, hydrologic, and cultural value and importance, and

WHEREAS sixteen miles of the Ocklawaha River is impounded as a result of construction of the Kirkpatrick (=Rodman) Dam, completed in 1968, as part of the Cross Florida Barge Canal, and

WHEREAS the Cross Florida Barge Canal was deauthorized by the Congress of the United States of America in 1990, and

WHEREAS natural physical processes in the Ocklawaha River and lower St. Johns River basin have been substantially altered, including natural flow regimes, seasonal floodplain inundation, nutrient and sediment transport, and

WHEREAS the Ocklawaha River and lower St. Johns basin is ecologically impaired as a result of degraded water quality and abundance of invasive plants that require management through application of herbicides and reservoir drawdowns, and

WHEREAS the dam, lock, and impounded river present a barrier to migratory fishes, manatees, and other aquatic fauna from moving between the Silver River, upper Ocklawaha River, lower Ocklawaha River, and the St. Johns River, and

WHEREAS substantial declines in the abundance and diversity of native fishes and other aquatic organisms have been documented in the Silver River, and,

WHEREAS numerous environmental studies and assessments of options to restore the Ocklawaha River, by many different agencies and organizations over decades, have concluded that there would be many ecological and socioeconomic benefits to restoring the river to a free-flowing state, and

WHEREAS among anticipated ecological benefits would be the recovery of many native species and populations including some that are imperiled, and

WHEREAS The *Southeastern Fishes Council* (SFC) is a nonprofit scientific organization of experts dedicated to the study and conservation of freshwater and coastal fishes and other aquatic species of the southeastern United States, and

WHEREAS the SFC is comprised of diverse professionals representing academic institutions, governmental agencies, and nongovernmental organizations directly involved in the protection, management, and recovery of species and habitats facing environmental threats to their long-term persistence and sustainability,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the SFC endorses plans to return the Ocklawaha River to a free-flowing river in accordance with a partial restoration alternative as proposed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and supported by a U.S. Forest Service Environmental Impact Statement, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the SFC supports efforts and projects that will enhance and expand recreational opportunities and educational programs to a broad diversity of stakeholders across the entire Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway.

Adopted at an official meeting of the Southeastern Fishes Council on 16 November 2022 in Athens, Georgia.

d. Membership Committee – M. Hayes

Malorie had nothing to report.

e. Proceedings Committee – B. Keck, B. Fluker, S. Powers, J. Ray

Ben reported that the Proceedings are right at 23,000 downloads from the website, about 3,000-4,000 downloads a year! If you have something to submit, please do so. We will be voting on a new Associate Editor this Business Meeting. Ben is working with the University of Tennessee to get DOI (Digital Object Identifier) numbers for all previous Proceedings articles; all new articles automatically get DOI numbers. Ben is also working to get Proceedings articles listed through the Directory of Open Access Journals. Even though we do not publish the minimum number of articles per year to be eligible, the Proceedings have been around for a long time, which means we should be able to get it listed. Brook Fluker is rotating off as an Associate Editor, and Ben will present a gift to him later.

f. Meeting Site Committee – B. Kuhajda, T. Darden, M. Wagner

i. Chattanooga, TN in 2023 – B. Kuhajda, A. Geroge

Bernie reported on the SFC meeting venue in 2023 is at the Chattanooga Hotel in downtown Chattanooga. Dates will be 15-17 November 2023. The hotel is very close to the Southside historic district and Westside, with lots of restaurants and nighttime venues. There is a free electric shuttle to go north to the Aquarium and beyond. A block of rooms will be reserved at the Chattanooga, with rooms at \$129/night plus taxes, self-parking \$12. The main meeting room will hold up to 300 at a cost of \$750 per day. The room for the reception and poster session is no cost. The food minimum is \$10,000 but we should have no problem spending that much. The social will be at the Tennessee Aquarium!

The 2024 meeting will be in Arkansas, with possible venues at a state park or in Little Rock. The meeting site for 2025 will be in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Bernie is filing for tax-exempt status in Tennessee for SFC to save some money on the Tennessee meeting.

g. Investment Development Committee – B. Keck, D. Heins, J. Schaefer

Nothing to report by this committee.

h. Website Committee - J. Schaefer

i. Species Table – B. Kuhajda

Jake indicated that a list of fish species for the southeast has been commented on and waiting for Bernie to incorporate the edits. Bernie said he would get to it.

ii. Dick Bryant's slides of Southeast fishes donated to SFC

Dick Bryant approached Jake about donating his Southeastern fishes slides to SFC. Jake noted that these may not be a good fit for the Wild Apricot website, which is made for managing meetings and not storing photos for members to use. This is the same issue for Malcolm Peirson's slides of Alabama rivers that were donated last year.

i. Awards Committee – M. Cashner, S. Walsh, J. O'Connor, G. Adams

A big thanks to the SFC members for serving as student presentation judges.

On Friday 18 November announcements of student awards and recognition of judges took place. Those details are listed below:

SFC members serving as presentation judges: Reid Adams, Sue Colvin, Kit Wheeler, Jeff Simmons, Ani Escobar, Calvin Rezac, Brook Fluker, Tanya Darden, Luke Etchison, Rebecca Johansen, Pat Rakes, Thomas Martin, Malorie Hayes, Nathan Whelan, Kayla Fast, Jason Doll, Tom Near, Jeff Zuiderveen, Jason O'Connor, Jim Long, Ben Keck, Daniel Holt, Daniel Farrae, Cameron Long, Shawna Fix, Mollie Cashner, and Ginny Adams.

There were 53 student presentations at this year's meeting, 20 more than last year!! These included 32 oral and 21 poster presentations by 8 undergraduate and 45 graduate students. The winners of the Student Awards were:

Dave Etnier Best Student Oral Presentation 2022:

1st (\$300) River Watson (Austin Peay State University)

Tie for 2nd (\$200)

Alexis Culley (Austin Peay State University)

Ryan Hudson (Tennessee Tech University)

Tie for 3rd (\$100)

Brittany McCall (Arkansas State University)

Hayley Robinson (University of Georgia)

Royal Suttkus Best Student Poster 2022:

1st (\$200) Jessica Rath (University of Central Arkansas)

2nd (\$150) Hannah Alloway (University of Tennessee)

Tie for 3rd (\$75)

Jackson Pav (University of Central Arkansas)

Ester Atutey (Ball State University)

Bob and Fran Cashner Best Undergraduate Presentation 2022:

Poster (\$100) Sahara Morgan (University of Central Arkansas)

Poster (\$100) Cade Richesin, Krista Yari, Peyton Manry (University of Central Arkansas)

j. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee – R. Watson

River reported on the results of the DEI Committee's survey of membership demographics. The survey was sent out to membership a couple of weeks before the meeting. We had 131 respondents!! Most common career/profession for SFC membership was agency scientists, followed by Master and PhD students and professors. Most are age 25-34, with an even spread for other age classes. No surprise, the vast majority of SFC members are white, which is not indicative of the human diversity we see in the Southeast. We really want to work to better represent this diversity in SFC. Most of SFC members are men, but we do have a good number of women. There is one person who identified as non-binary, and the proper pronouns to use for this group are they/them. Most respondents identify as heterosexual, but we do have representation from other sexual orientation groups, which is hidden diversity. There are also some members with disabilities. While most respondents replied "no" to having ever experienced any unwelcome comments or conduct at SFC annual meetings, 10 responded that they had, which is unacceptable. The DEI Committee is working on an anonymous reporting system. Another survey question asked if anyone has felt discriminated against at the meeting, and all responded no. Respondents were asked what issues or topics would they like to bring to the attention of the DEI Committee and there were many amazing ideas, including issues such as equal opportunity treatment (misogyny, stigma against LGBTQ+ peoples), consistent use of microphones, and unapproachable leadership. Some topic included LGBTQ+ representation, social equity, and lack of BIPOC (black, indigenous, and people of color) representation. There was a discussion that some people did not get the survey, Bernie explained that he sent them out through the SFC/Wild Apricot database and encouraged everyone to check and update their information in their profiles on the SFC website.

River also presented on DEI Committee accomplishments, including research into other DEI actions in the Southeast and in similar societies, adding preferred pronouns on nametags, the first and continuing annual demographics survey, and highlighting membership, such as past winners. River hopes to highlight member's careers, our more diverse members, and even some people outside of SFC. Other future directions include a discord shell (see Daniel Akin for details) for communicating outside of the SFC annual meeting, a student liaison, a fully paid (travel, hotel, per diem, SFC registration) diversity travel award, adding a harassment self-report form, and incorporating/honoring indigenous peoples into SFC. Mark

thanked those on the DEI Committee for all of the hard work they have done to remove barriers and promote diversity for those wanting to study Southeastern fishes.

Nominating Committee – R. Johansen, A. Escobar

Rebecca noted that Matt Thomas and Pat Rakes were rotating off on the Nomination Committee after several years of service. Ani Escobar has agreed to serve on the committee and Rebecca is looking for one more person to assist with seeking nominees for SFC officers. This year there was only one position to fill, Associate Editor, and Rebecca thanked Brook Fluker for his editorial services. We will be voting today to elect Brook's replacement. We got many volunteers as nominees for Associate Editor, and that is great!

VI. Old Business – M. Cantrell

a. Internal financial audit

The Internal Financial Audit was completed in 2022 and found no irregularities.

VII. New Business

a. Review of Organization, Elections, Committee Appointments – M. Cantrell, R. Johansen

Mark reviewed how we do business as SFC. He went over several topics, including the purposes of SFC, a list of officers, the length of the terms for each office, the various committees (some added recently), and Mark noted that the Chair appoints SFC members to these committees for 2-year terms (can be reappointed).

Rebecca then gave an overview of the process that the Nominating Committee goes through to elect members to leadership positions. She is doing this in the interest of inclusion and transparency so those who want to be participate know the process and can become involved. Rebecca again noted that there is an opening on the Nominating Committee and encourage members to volunteer. The Nominating Committee's primary function is to solicit and confirm nominees for elected positions and may also assist with identifying candidates for appointed positions. The current process is to send an email to membership in September and ask for volunteers for open positions or for nominations of individuals. The committee then confirms if all nominees are willing to accept (or decline). Some vetting of nominees occurs for their qualifications and experience for the Chair position. In October the list is shared with the Executive Committee and ballots are created for voting during the SFC Business Meeting. The final nominee list is supposed to appear in the SFC Annual Meeting Program, but we have not been doing this. We will do this moving forward. The voting process includes distributing ballots at the SFC Annual Business Meeting, calling for nominations from the floor (nominee must be present to accept or decline), and the nominee with the most votes is elected to that position. Proposed changes include soliciting for nominations earlier (August), receiving a short summary of qualifications and interest in the position they are seeking and past service to SFC, and to be sure to have all of their information shared as soon as possible on the SFC website and again in the SFC Annual Meeting Program. Rebecca welcomed any other suggestions on how to make the process better. She noted that most offices will be up for a vote next year.

b. Constitution Updates – B. Kuhajda to review for approval

Mark reminded members that this was already discussed and Bernie will notify membership when those previously approved updates are posted on the SFC website.

c. Discussion: Meetings- 1) increasing annual meeting to 2 ½ days? or 2) how to squeeze all the talks and posters (concurrent sessions) into one day?)

Mark noted that the SFC stand-alone annual meetings have been going on since 2007, and it has steadily grown to the 200 registrants at this meeting, not counting those who attempted to register late that we had to turn away. We want to increase our diversity and have the capacity to allow all interested in the meeting to attend. How do we do this? Do we add another day or have concurrent sessions in a two-day meeting? Membership did not support the idea of concurrent sessions. Bernie noted that we had requests for 17 hours of presentations, which corresponds to 9 hours a day with no breaks and no time for lunch, which is impossible. Do we continue to have professionals just give 5-minute talks and posters and have students give 10-minute talks with 2 minutes for questions? Or do we have an extra day and return to the standard 15-minute talks? But that means attendees have to pay for another night in a hotel and another day of meals, and perhaps cancelling another day of classes if extra day is Wednesday. Jim Williams noted that Desert Fishes Council, which SFC is modeled after, has expanded their meeting into Saturday and sometime Sunday. Mark has received feedback that everyone wants to attend in person, so adding a virtual component to the meeting is not a good solution. It was noted that hotel rooms for Friday night will have to be booked well before a date in October when we will know if Saturday sessions are necessary. But those who have to travel long distances will likely need the Friday night rooms anyway, and we can always develop workshops or have field trips for Saturday if that day is not needed for presentations. Mark called for an end to the discussion and suggested an electronic poll to get more feedback on this important issue.

d. Election – R. Johansen

One nominee will be elected as Associate Editor of the SFC Proceedings. The nominees are:

Amy Alford (Lake Erie, Island Nature and Wildlife Center)

Michael Floyd (USFWS)

Bruce Stallsmith (University of Alabama Huntsville – retired)

Steve Walsh (USGS – retired)

Kit Wheeler (Tennessee Tech University)

Votes were counted and the new SFC Proceeding Associate Editor is Kit Wheeler, Tennessee Tech University!

e. New Committee Appointments – M. Cantrell

This year reappointments were made for all committees except the newly formed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, which were all new appointments.

f. Other?

Brett canceled the 5:00-5:30 nap he had scheduled for himself and asked all attendees to go directly to the dinner at the conclusion of the Business Meeting. The poster session will start at 6:00.

VIII. Adjourn – M. Cantrell

Hearing no other new business from membership, Mark asked for a motion to adjourn, it was made and seconded, and unanimously approved.