



# ONCORHYNCHUS

Newsletter of the Alaska Chapter, American Fisheries Society  
Vol. XXXV Winter 2015 No. 1

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*Located at the mouth of the Knik and Matanuska Rivers, the Knik Islands Conservation Project is adjacent to the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge and Chugach State Park. The vast, 4,800-acre area supports salmon and other fish, as well as a range of other wildlife species. Photo by Carl Johnson.*

## Great Land Trust – A Focus on Salmon Habitat Conservation

*Phil Shepherd*

Southcentral Alaska is the state's fastest growing region, almost doubling its population in the past 20 years. As the number of people living in our region grows, land use and management decisions will be critical. Even non-biologists are realizing the importance of conserving an interconnected network of wildlife habitat to maintain cohesive and functioning ecosystems that can provide services such as clean drinking water, as well as lands that support hunting and fishing opportunities. In many areas of the nation and the world, habitat is being steadily lost due to human activities associated with growth. So what can we do to proactively prevent such losses and continued ecosystem degradation? We can look to land trusts that are quietly making a big difference.

Land trusts are nonprofit organizations with a unique toolkit for conservation; they work with landowners and communities to conserve land by accepting donations of land, purchasing land, and negotiating private, voluntary conservation agreements. Land trusts then steward this land for future generations. Across the country today, there are 1,700 land trusts with more than 100,000 volunteers and five million members. So far, land trusts have conserved 37 million acres of land in the United States — an area roughly the size of all the New England states combined. There are six land trusts in Alaska: Alaska Farmland Trust, Bristol Bay Heritage Land Trust, Great Land Trust, Interior Alaska Land Trust, Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, and Southeast Alaska Land Trust.

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## The President's Corner

*Jennifer Stahl*

As I begin my year as the President of the Alaska Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, I realize to successfully act as head of this organization that I need to ask for help from my colleagues. As a groundfish biologist for the Alaska Department



Fish and Game, my experience is in

*Jennifer Stahl, AFS Alaska Chapter President.*

marine resources. My expertise is limited when it comes to all the issues that we are faced with in this great state. So I hope that you all will collaborate with me and bring forth concerns that affect our state's resources; I can then invoke the support of the National Chapter and the Western Division to successfully address your concerns.

Collaboration is the word that comes to mind when thinking of our recent October Chapter meeting. The meeting theme of "Bridging Disciplines to Solve Today's Challenges in Resource Management" was well represented with 437 attendees, 215 talks, and 47 posters from hydrologists and habitat, marine, and freshwater biologists speaking on issues that affect commercial, sport, and subsistence users. This meeting reminded us that we have colleagues out there that can help address resource issues and expand our research beyond our own areas of expertise. Part of this meeting's success was due to the AFS Alaska Chapter working with the Alaska Section of the American Water Resources Association (AWRA) and the Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership (SEAKFHP) on meeting logistics.

At this meeting, we were also reminded that, as scientists, we must effectively present our work to the public. One of the most effective ways of doing this is through the avenue of film. We were lucky to have Travis Rummel, the film maker of Felt Soul Media, speak to us

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## Great Land Trust, continued

Since 1995, Great Land Trust (GLT) has worked with willing landowners, conservation partners, and communities to conserve over 11,000 acres of open space, habitat, and lands that provide access to public lands including seven new Anchorage parks, new access points to the Palmer Hay Flats Game Refuge and Chugach State Park, and three trail building projects in Southcentral Alaska. Along the popular Anchorage Tony Knowles Coastal Trail, a short walk from Westchester Lagoon, the Fish Creek Estuary is legally protected from development because of GLT's work.

The GLT service area is roughly the size of Italy and includes the Municipality of Anchorage, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB), and coastal communities of Cordova, Whittier, Kodiak Island, and Western Cook Inlet. With such a large service area we've needed to be strategic in our conservation planning efforts and have completed several mapping projects to help us identify and prioritize the lands with the highest conservation value. The GLT uses geographic information system (GIS) mapping tools to identify lands that have significant community and ecological values. Depending on the focus of the prioritization, parcels are given a score based on the number of conservation values the lands provide. Our conservation criteria includes important moose habitat, wetlands that filter

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*Three miles of salmon spawning and rearing habitat next to the largest subdivision development in the Mat-Su Borough and Mchetanz Elementary School was conserved by GLT in 2013; fundraising continues for a 4-mile trail. Photo by Carl Johnson.*

### The President's Corner, continued

at the banquet and remind us of the power of film. Travis was inspiring and shared his work on films that address issues that are close to our hearts here in Alaska. The documentary *Red Gold* was conceived after a conversation with Tim Bristol of Trout Unlimited on the concerns of mining near Bristol Bay. This powerful movie brought the issues of Bristol Bay to the world as it toured and was adapted to a piece for PBS's *Frontline*. Felt Soul Media has continued to bring issues to the forefront that are incredibly important to Alaska; within the last year, the movie *DamNation* has addressed the need for dam removal across America while a dam on the Susitna River is still being considered by the state of Alaska. Travis also showed footage from a walk by the film makers along a transboundary river in an effort to document the area as mines are being considered in Canada within this river's watershed. In the Felt Soul Media films, conservation issues are told through human interest stories which evoke an emotional response from the audience and a reason to care for the issue at hand. As I watched *DamNation*, I was struck with the powerful images of salmon returning after the removal of the Elwha Dam and the exhilaration of the subsistence users that could resume their community's thousand year old traditions of fishing this area.

As scientists, most of us convey our research through dry agency reports or journal articles. Those of us that have worked with film are generally novices. However, high-quality, inexpensive video equipment is currently available. This was obvious as I sat and watched the first annual film festival put on by the SEAKFHP at the meeting welcome social. Twenty-five conservation-related films by Alaskan scientists across the state were shown. The beauty and quality of the images were stunning. As scientists in Alaska, we are able to work in some of the most beautiful and seldom visited locations in the world; incredible footage can be obtained as we perform our surveys, walk our streams and beaches, dive our oceans, and fish our rivers, lakes, and sea. However, as scientists, we may need help conveying our message through these images, so that we can hook our audience and keep them interested. In the future,

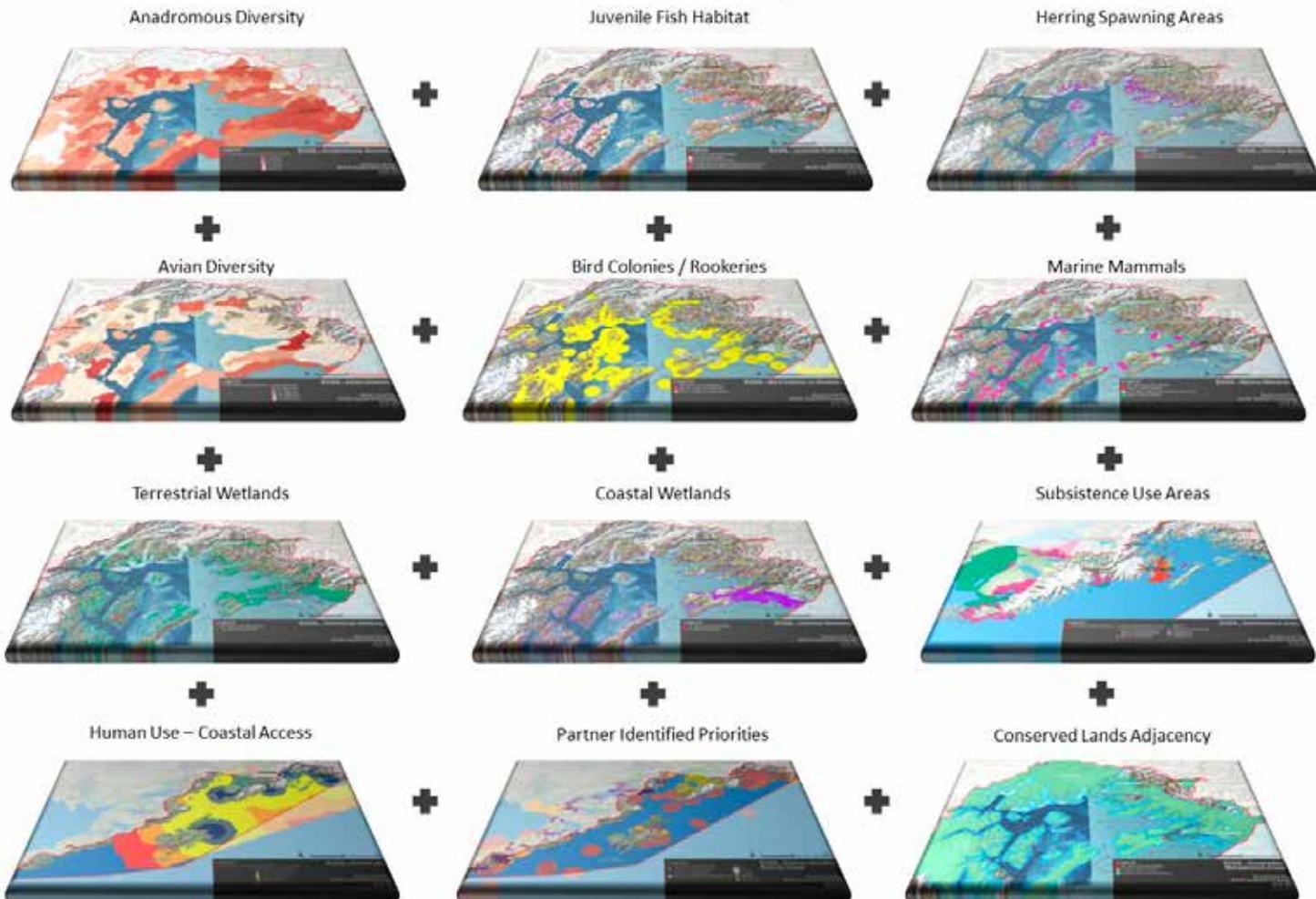
SEAKFHP is considering sponsoring classes that will help novice film makers present their message, such as story boarding. Partnerships with established film makers can also assist scientists. After the film festival, Deborah Hart, coordinator of SEAKFHP, noted that there was a connection made between Bob Armstrong, a well-known naturalist in Juneau who is new to film, and Pat Race of Alaska Robotics, who is a local film maker that is new to observation. Such collaborations could be successful in bringing conservation issues to the public.

The 2014 Alaska Chapter meeting was extremely successful in cross-fertilization and making connections with new and old colleagues. There is extreme value in such meetings. This year I traveled a great deal for fun and work and attended several conferences and workshops. Travelling provides a broader perspective as you meet new people from different backgrounds. However, I also discovered that workshops and conferences connect you with people performing similar research or resource management; working with these people can help you more effectively perform your job. With restrictions and increased costs on travel, we need to explore other ways to collaborate with colleagues, whether through teleconferences, webinars, or some new geeky-scientist social media avenue that hasn't yet been invented. Through our collaboration with others, we will be able to face the resource challenges that are presented to us in the future.

I would like to quickly thank some of the people that made the 2014 AK Chapter meeting a success: Deborah Hart, coordinator of the SEAKFHP partnership, and Trey Simmons, AWRA Alaska Section President, were key in the organization of this meeting. A lot of gratitude goes to Lee Ann Gardner, who continued to donate a ridiculous amount of time in order to get everyone registered for the huge meeting this year. A special thanks goes to Emily Whitney, the student representative who worked tirelessly to help organize over 40 student volunteers in order to produce a successful meeting. There are a ton of others to thank; these folks are mentioned in the program booklet posted on the chapter website (<http://www.afs-alaska.org/annual-meetings/past-meetings>). ?

Great Land Trust, continued

## Prioritization Scoring Process



*Examples of different data layers created by Great Land Trust to help identify the best habitat for conservation to mitigate the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill. Figure from Great Land Trust.*

and store water supplies, streams that provide spawning and rearing habitat for salmon and other fish, and parcels adjacent to or within protected areas that enhance public access. Using tools like these ensures that GLT is working strategically to conserve the lands and waters that directly support the Alaskan outdoor lifestyle that residents cherish.

In 1999, we completed our first GIS prioritization to assess wildlife corridors and open spaces in the Municipality of Anchorage. Over time, we have been able to conserve many of the areas that were identified as having high conservation and community value including Campbell Creek and Fish Creek estuaries, the Helen Louise McDowell Sanctuary, and Near Point — a new trailhead

access to Chugach State Park.

In the MSB, GLT recently completed a multi-year effort to identify and prioritize salmon habitat in the “Core Area” — the fastest growing area between the cities of Palmer and Wasilla. We sent the top 1,000 private landowners an information packet on how to be a “salmon friendly” landowner and what resources are available to them to restore, enhance, or conserve their property for wildlife and salmon. Being a small land trust, we realize that we cannot conserve all the priority salmon habitat in our region, so we reached out to landowners to help them understand how they could care for this important shared community resource.

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## Great Land Trust, continued

In 2012, GLT started an initiative called “Community Asset Mapping” directed at reaching out to local community councils, neighborhood groups, and cities to share GIS information highlighting where all the salmon streams, trail corridors, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and open spaces are within a particular area. By empowering the community with this information, we have been able to generate conversations about these community assets and discuss how the different land types provide direct benefits and services to the community for free. These meetings have resulted in productive discussions toward incorporating these data layers in community comprehensive plans such that these priority habitats are not developed. As a result of Community Asset Mapping, we have also been approached by a local economic development corporation to help map less sensitive lands that would be more suitable for development.

The GLT is also a key partner in the Mat-Su Salmon Habitat Partnership, a large local coalition dedicated to salmon habitat conservation and efforts to maintain and enhance salmon runs. In addition, GLT helps host the annual Salmon Symposium attended by many local agency staff and fisheries professionals, as well as local landowners and elected officials.

Recently, GLT was asked by the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council to map and prioritize habitat within the spill area that would be best suited for purchase to mitigate the 1989 oil spill. A total of 14 different data layers (see graphic) were used to assemble a final map. Anadromous waters and fish richness by sub-watershed were two critical data layers for this project. The GLT is now working with state and federal agencies to purchase top ranked parcels.

Our conservation mapping efforts range in scope from smaller parcels within 5 miles of Knik Arm to efforts to map the entire *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill area by habitat value. These prioritizations have used the best available data from sources such as the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Anadromous Waters Catalog, National Wetlands Inventory, Natural Resource Conservation Service, National Hydrography Dataset, National Oceanic



*One of several partnerships between Great Land Trust and the Alaska Native corporation Eklutna, Inc., the Mud Lake Conservation Project was completed in the winter of 2014. Ownership remains with Eklutna, Inc., with the land permanently serving as a place for shareholders to hunt and fish and permitted public access. Photo by Carl Johnson.*

and Atmospheric Administration, The Nature Conservancy, and local governments. We update this information annually to make sure we are using the most current data, and we seek feedback from local agency professionals in order to correct any data errors inherent in large scale mapping projects. Our prioritizations are assemblages of between 6 and 14 data layers, depending on the area being mapped and the funding focus. Using GIS based prioritization to justify our conservation efforts has been a successful method to generate support for our work.

We live in a special place. Alaska is home to one of the last thriving salmon populations in the world, and for many residents fishing for salmon is a major part of our lifestyle. Over the last 20 years, conserving salmon habitat has been a priority for GLT and so far we have conserved 44 miles of riparian habitat along salmon streams and 7,000 acres of wetlands including areas important for migration, spawning, rearing, and overwintering for all salmon species in the Eastern Pacific. Protected salmon habitat means robust populations returning to Southcentral’s lakes, streams, and wetlands, and more salmon to fill our freezers. Collectively, GLT and our many partners and members have been able to accomplish a great deal. We look forward to continued conservation of

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## Great Land Trust, continued

critical salmon habitat in Southcentral Alaska for years to come. For more about Great Land Trust and our work visit [www.greatlandtrust.org](http://www.greatlandtrust.org).

*Phil Shephard was born and raised in Alaska, exploring many of the trails and waterways in Southcentral Alaska. Phil has a B.S. in Geology, and has worked for the USGS in central Idaho,*

*Teton Science School in Wyoming, and The Nature Conservancy in Wyoming and Oregon. As Executive Director of Great Land Trust since 2008, Phil has overseen the expansion of Great Land Trust and the completion of 8,500 acres of conservation projects. Phil lives in Anchorage with his wife Angie and kids Samantha, Levi, and Elizabeth.*

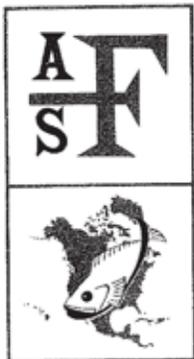
## Did You Know – The First Chapter Meeting and President

*Randy Brown, Chapter Historian*

As we gathered for the annual Alaska Chapter American Fisheries Society Meeting (AK AFS) in Juneau last month, it became clear that the 12 Chapter past-presidents in attendance included the second president, Ted Merrill. Mr. Merrill presided over the Chapter from his election during the first formal meeting of the Chapter in Juneau during January 1975, until the second meeting at Anchorage in February 1976, when Ralph Pirtle took over as the third Chapter president.

Jon Nelson organized the effort to establish an Alaska Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (AFS) beginning in 1972. Mr. Nelson had recently moved from North Dakota and was surprised to find numerous AFS members in Alaska, but no active chapter. At the time AFS had 22 chapters and formation of new chapters required a petition signed by at least 10 regional AFS members. Mr. Nelson submitted a petition in July 1972 to the Parent Society with signatures of 14 Alaskans who were AFS members. The Executive Committee of the Parent Society approved the petition on September 10, 1972, and at the 103rd Annual Meeting of the AFS in September 1973, society members approved the charter and formally recognized the AFS Alaska Chapter, retroactive to September 10, 1972, which became the formal date of charter for the Chapter. The 1st Alaska Chapter meeting occurred in Juneau during May 22-23, 1974 with attendees electing

Jon Nelson as Chapter President, Jack VanHying as Vice President, and Alan Davis as Secretary-Treasurer. The attendees then adopted Chapter Bylaws and created the following committees: Executive, Membership, Program, and Nominations. It is interesting that the bylaws set a quorum for voting at the Chapter business meeting of 20 Chapter members, the same as it is today.



*The*  
**AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY**  
*hereby recognizes the*  
**Alaska Chapter**

*as officially and duly chartered by the parent society*

*The American Fisheries Society, the oldest professional society in North America dealing with the natural resources, was organized in 1870. Among its objectives are conservation, development and wise utilization of the fisheries, promotion of the educational, scientific, and technological development and advancement of all branches of fisheries science and practice, and exchange and dissemination of knowledge about fish, fisheries, and related subjects.*

*Edwin L. Cooper*  
President  
*Richard C. Wade*  
Executive Secretary

*Date of Charter*  
September 10, 1972

## Student Subunit Happenings

### Morgan Sparks, New Student Subunit Representative

I was born in Tenino, Washington where I grew up on the banks of the Deschutes River, a small south Puget Sound river. It was there, with net and bucket in hand, that I developed my early love of aquatic ecology. After graduating high school, I moved to Montana where I pursued two degrees, one in Wildlife Biology and one in Journalism, at the University of Montana. On top of my studies at UM, I also served as the University of Montana AFS student subunit chapter president for three years and volunteered on the board of the WestSlope Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Apart from education, I have worked in a variety of fisheries jobs, which have taken me to Alaska, Montana, Oregon, and finally back to Washington.



*Morgan Sparks, new student subunit representative for the Alaska Chapter.*

At UAF, I will be pursuing a M.S. and researching how climate change will affect early life stage development of Bristol Bay Sockeye Salmon. The project will focus on populations in the Kvichak River watershed, especially around the Iliamna Lake and Lake Clark areas. In my free time, I enjoy fishing, especially feeding my new steelhead addiction. I also like hiking, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, and wildlife viewing with my wife, Melissa.

### Student subunit events

With winter break only a few weeks away, the student members of the AFS Alaska Chapter are finishing up another successful semester. In October, more than 50 students from across the state helped volunteer, present, and network at the AFS Alaska Chapter meeting." Of those students attending, seven were from Anchorage, 16 from Fairbanks, and 26 from Juneau, with additional students attending from other areas like Kodiak and Sitka. Most of those in attendance were graduate students, but many highly motivated undergraduates also made time for the meeting. Multiple students were recognized for their work at the meeting, including Lauren Bailey and Sky Brandt (Molly Ahlgren Scholarships), Molly McCarthy (Cultural Diversity Travel Award), Elizabeth Figus (Best Student Paper), and Allison Martin (Best Student Poster). On behalf of the Chapter, we would like to thank all the students for their volunteer hours, which helped make the meeting a success, and Emily Whitney, outgoing student representative, for the countless hours she spent organizing and overseeing volunteers at the event.

In other recent news, Jane Sullivan, M.S. student in Juneau, was elected Western Division Student Representative by her peers in the AFS Western Division. Beyond being a voice for students in the Western Division to the division Executive Committee, Jane is also helping organize the Western Division Student Colloquium, which will be hosted by the Utah State student subunit this February. Apart from her role with AFS, Jane is also working on her thesis about fishery, climate, and ecological effects on Pacific Halibut size-at-age. If you have any questions about the Western Division or want to get involved, please contact Jane at [jysullivan@alaska.edu](mailto:jysullivan@alaska.edu).

In the past quarter, student subunits have also continued to stay busy. The end of August brought on the start of school and the end of the sampling season for many student projects. For Fairbanks students, the new semester involved multiple meetings with professional speakers, two fishing trips, one to the Delta-Clearwater River and the other to Birch Lake for ice fishing, and the start

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## Student Subunit Happenings, continued

of the student subunit research project. The subunit will be studying population dynamics of Alaska Blackfish in a seasonally-connected pond in the Goldstream Creek drainage near campus. Using minnow traps, students will capture, mark with fin clips, release, and recapture blackfish to develop a mark-recapture population abundance estimate for the pond. Recently, graduate and undergraduate students have been setting minnow traps through the ice and have captured 14 blackfish so far. Of those captured, only four fish have been marked due to methods refinement and the associated modifications to our permits, but the students plan to get out for several more weeks of trapping and marking before the winter break arrives. Marking efforts will continue after winter break until a sufficient number of fish (probably 30-50 individuals) have been marked. A recapture effort will occur in late winter or spring. Other student subunits have continued to stay busy with meetings, classes, and research projects.

Finally, we would like to thank Emily Whitney again for her service as the outgoing Alaska AFS student representative and wish her luck in her continued professional work. 🐟



*One of the Alaska Blackfish marked and released by Fairbanks student members as part of a population dynamics study in the Goldstream Creek. Photo from the Fairbanks Student Subunit.*

## Training Opportunities for Acoustic Tag and Hydroacoustic Assessments

Several short courses in acoustics will be presented through HTI and the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences at the University of Washington, Seattle, WA.

*Using Acoustic Tags to Track Fish*, offered from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm on February 5-6, 2015, will address aspects of tracking fish movement with acoustic tags, including three-dimensional tracking with sub-meter resolution. The course will include hands-on-operation and a variety of applications.

*Using Hydroacoustics for Fisheries Assessment* is offered from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm on February 12-13, 2015. The hydroacoustics course covers mobile and fixed-location survey techniques including: basic hydroacoustic theory; deployment logistics; data collection and processing; and split-beam, single-beam, and multi-beam frequency techniques.

These courses are available on-site or online, with tuition discounts up to 50% for university students and staff, non-profit, and tribal organizations. To reserve a seat or ask a question, email HTI at [support@HTIsonar.com](mailto:support@HTIsonar.com), or go to [http://www.HTIsonar.com/at\\_short\\_course.htm](http://www.HTIsonar.com/at_short_course.htm). 🐟

### ONCORHYNCHUS

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Deadline for materials for the spring issue of *Oncorhynchus* is March 10.

## 2014 Committee Reports

### Awards Committee

*Theresa Tanner, Chair*

The Awards Committee is responsible for selecting the Meritorious Service Award, the Alaska Chapter Service Award, the Almost Darwin Award, and the best student paper and poster presented at the annual Chapter Meeting. The Awards Committee, in conjunction with the Wally Noerenberg Award Committee, extended the award submission deadline from January 31 to March 15 in 2014. Despite the extended deadline, no award nominations were submitted for the Meritorious Service Award, Alaska Chapter Service Award, or Almost Darwin Award.

In 2014, 37 students presented papers and 19 students presented posters. The student presentations were evaluated by 24 Chapter members who volunteered to serve as judges. The best paper and best poster award recipients selected from the presentations at the AFS Annual Meeting in Girdwood, Alaska were:

**Best Student Paper:** Elizabeth Figus, "Monitoring in the commercial halibut fishery off Southeast Alaska: incorporating local knowledge."

**Best Student Poster:** Allison Martin "Habitat potential for juvenile Chinook Salmon (*Onchorhynchus tshawytscha*) in the Chena River."

The Awards Committee congratulates our student awardees, and thanks the volunteer judges who make the student awards possible. We also recognize Mary Beth Loewen for her outstanding efforts coordinating the student presentation evaluations on-site at this year's meeting.

### Electronic Communications Committee

*Bert Lewis – Chair; Hamachan Hamazaki - Communications Lead; Audra Brase - Web Master*

The Chapter list server is working well. We previously distributed through the Parent Society list server, but a transition in the Parent Society list server created communication difficulties, and the Alaska Chapter migrated to our own email distribution process. The distribution list for the Chapter list server is generated from the Parent Society database and updated approximately every 6 months. Committee discussion resulted in the distribution list skewed toward being more inclusive, rather than exclusive (e.g., a member



*Mark Wipfli passes the gavel to incoming Chapter President Jennifer Stahl at the October 2014 Alaska Chapter meeting. Photo by Randy Brown.*

who occasionally lapses still receives emails and the newsletter). In the past year, the Chapter website was updated to an improved version that continues to provide real time access to Chapter resources and activities. All members of this committee anticipate continuing in their current roles for the coming year.

### Environmental Concerns Committee

*Cecil Rich*

The Environmental Concerns Committee (ECC) is an ad hoc on-going committee of the AFS Alaska Chapter. The ECC was established by the Executive Committee to provide coordinated technical and policy analysis and Chapter input and comments on environmental issues that affect Alaska's fishery resources. Two issues were brought forward to the AFS Alaska Chapter for action in 2014. The first was a request by the Western Division that the Chapter provide comments on the Magnuson-Stevens Act Reauthorization. This request was forwarded to several Chapter members; however, no comments were received. The second request was from the Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society to join them in providing a letter to the Alaska State Legislature

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## 2014 Committee Reports, continued



*Jim Bowker Western Division President-Elect, offers insights at the October 2014 Alaska Chapter meeting. Photo by Randy Brown.*

requesting continued support for the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve. This letter was not sent due to concern over the letter being perceived as advocating for a funding priority.

### **Financial Assets Oversight**

*Ray Hander (Chair), Tim Joyce, and Lee Ann Gardner*

Guidance to the Financial Assets Oversight Committee (FAOC) is provided in the Chapter's Procedure Manual under the Chapter Financial Plan within the Chapter Investments section. The purpose of the FAOC is to oversee, advise, and make recommendations for directing the financial assets of the Chapter by way of tracking the Chapter's monetary holdings that are invested through financial or banking institutions. In 2014, the FAOC met quarterly with the Chapter's Wedbush Securities (WS) representative, Todd Fletcher, to receive portfolio status updates and perform account maintenance as needed to conduct Chapter business. Lee Ann Gardner, Treasurer, is in

frequent contact with WS as she conducts day-to-day Chapter business and informs FAOC members with updates on an as-needed basis. The Chapter's WS portfolio is invested using a moderately conservative strategy with an investment horizon of 7 to 10 years as determined by the Finance Committee members in consultation with the WS investment representative.

Awards from the following endowments (Table 1) may only be paid out of interest earned. All contributions to individual endowments are added to their respective principals. The FAOC made a general process decision beginning in 2014 to change the date when the balance of a fund is calculated for disbursement purposes from July 31 to June 30 to match the end of a quarter.

**Wally Noerenberg Fund (WNF)** – The WNF principal amount is \$15,000 and the account balance as of June 30, 2014 was \$19,400.

**Cultural Diversity Fund (CDF)** – The CDF principal amount is \$15,000 and the account balance as of 30 June 2014 was \$16,200. The CDF is generally spent down to the principal amount each year to support CDF award recipients.

**Molly Ahlgren Scholarship Fund (MASF)** –  
*Continued on next page*



*Past President Bill Heard and President Jenny Stahl honor the Alaska Chapter's second President, Ted Merrill at the October 2014 Alaska Chapter meeting banquet. Photo by Randy Brown.*

## 2014 Committee Reports, continued

The MASF principal amount is approximately \$126,400 and the account balance as of June 30, 2014 was \$138,600. The total scholarship amount for 2014 was \$12,000. The Molly Ahlgren Scholarship fund principal increases annually from additional contributions to the fund and 10% of the earnings each year, calculated on June 30. Remaining earnings, rounded down to the nearest \$1,000, are disbursed as a scholarship(s). The earnings balance remaining after rounding will be added to the following year’s scholarship(s). Using these guidelines, a scholarship amount of \$12,000 was available in 2014. Contributions to the principal increases the MASF’s potential for generating increased interest and greater amounts available for scholarship distribution. Annual contributions (2004-2013) to the MASF have been approximately \$12,000. The greatest share of the annual contributions has come from the Ahlgren family.

The Chapter Investment Fund A (Fund A) in June 2013 was valued at \$55,500 and in June 2014 it was \$40,300. The Fund A balance reduction was incurred from the 2013 annual meeting and in large part because of the Federal government shutdown, precluding federal employee attendance. Generally, annual gains are from payments made from general funds such as earnings from the annual meeting, continuing education events, membership dues, and interest. Interest earned from Fund A may be used for expenditures such as travel and scholarship awards and special projects. Unexpended annual earnings from Fund A are reinvested into the Fund A principal.

The interest bearing money market checking (MMC) and 1st National Bank Alaska cash (CA) accounts fluctuate annually during August through December due to annual meeting and

continuing education expenses and income. The CA houses petty cash and online income such as meeting registration and continuing education. Following the annual meeting, online sales from the CA are transferred to Fund A or the MMC while leaving a balance of approximately \$500 for petty cash during January to July.

In summary, the Chapter continued experiencing modest positive investment returns during the past year while maintaining a moderately conservative investment portfolio. Realized portfolio gains are due to the Chapter’s portfolio asset allocation leaning heavily towards bonds that continued paying modest returns over the past year. Recent improvement in market conditions has allowed for a modest asset allocation shift to actively managed funds that have greater potential returns but more equity exposure.

### Fisheries and Environmental Education

*Katrina Mueller*

The Fisheries and Environmental Education Committee was established by the AFS Alaska Chapter to impart outreach knowledge, and stimulate respect and stewardship of Alaska’s unique fisheries and aquatic resources. During the October 2014 meeting of the AFS Alaska Chapter in Juneau, the committee offered two workshops: Basics of Wordpress/Making a Simple Website; and Fisheries Outreach/In-Reach Discussion & Network Building. Unfortunately, these outreach-focused lunch sessions were not well attended. Subsequent discussions indicated the sessions were not well noticed on the agenda. People are encouraged to contact the committee chair, Katrina Mueller (*katrina\_mueller@fws.gov*), regarding thoughts for other workshops.

### Oncorhynchus Newsletter

*Bill Bechtol, Editor*

The *Oncorhynchus* serves as a medium to distribute information to AFS Alaska Chapter members and other interested individuals. The newsletter is produced by editor, Bill Bechtol, who compiles articles submitted by Chapter members then sends the articles to Connie Taylor of Fathom Publishing for design and layout, and mailing of hard copies. Electronic

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Fund	Begin	Value	End	Value
	Quarter	(\$)	Quarter	(\$)
WNF	July 2013	18,900	June 2014	19,400
CDF	Dec. 2013	15,300	June 2014	16,200
MASF	July 2013	126,400	June 2014	138,600

*Table 1. Approximate endowment values from the quarters ending July 2013 to June 2014 (rounded to the nearest \$100).*

## 2014 Committee Reports, continued

copies are posted to the Chapter listserv. The AFS style conventions described at [http://www.fisheries.org/afs/publications\\_style](http://www.fisheries.org/afs/publications_style) are generally followed. Prior to finalizing the newsletter, the Alaska Chapter President, the Electronic Communications Committee Chair, and other individuals make final edits.

Submissions of articles for inclusion in the newsletter are solicited quarterly via the Alaska Chapter listserv; high-resolution photos are encouraged. Newsletter submission deadlines are the 10th of March, June, September and December. Each issue includes a front-page feature article, including two or three photos. An effort is made to distribute feature article authorship among organizations. Feature articles, by issue, in 2014 were: Winter (Vol. 34 no. 1) "World Wildlife Fund - Working from Alaska to Russia" – Heather Brandon; Spring (Vol. 34 no. 2) "Protecting Fish Habitat – Scientists and Science Must Work Together" – Bob Shavelson; Summer (Vol. 34 no. 3) "Alaska Blackfish – A Mysterious Member of Alaska's Freshwater Fish Fauna" – J. Andrés López; and Fall (Vol. 34 no. 4) "Alaskan Weathervane Scallops: Shucking Socioeconomic and Biological Unknowns" – Jessica Glass.

During 2014, the four issues were each published near the beginning of each calendar quarter. All issues were largely distributed electronically, although 65–70 paper copies of each issue were printed and mailed to subscribing libraries and individuals requesting hard copies, or retained for Chapter archival. Total newsletter publication and distribution costs for 2014 were \$1,264.28. If you have a newsletter contribution, contact Bill Bechtol (299-6146, [bechtolresearch@hughes.net](mailto:bechtolresearch@hughes.net)).

Vol. (Issue)	Hard copies*	Email distribution**	Total distribution	Cost
34 (1)	65	370	435	\$390.52
34 (2)	65	370	435	\$251.82
34 (3)	70	370	440	\$230.29
34 (4)	70	370	440	\$391.65

\*Hard copies are mailed to Chapter members, libraries, Parent AFS officers, AK congressional members, and retained for archival purposes.  
 \*\*Email distribution estimates are approximate and do not include website downloads.

## 2014 Wally Noerenberg Award

*Kenneth Gates, Committee Chair*

There were no nominations for the Wally Noerenberg Award for Fishery Excellence in 2014, but this is not uncommon. The Committee is comprised of a Committee Chair, appointed by the Chapter President to a three-year term. The Chair must be a Chapter member, but cannot be a Past President of the Chapter. The balance of the committee is comprised of three Past Presidents randomly drawn from Chapter members and serving staggered three-year terms. The Committee for 2015 will include Ken Gates as Chair, and Past Presidents Jim Reynolds, Carol Kerkvliet, and Mark Wipfli.

## 25-Year Members

The American Fisheries Society issues commemorative pins to recognize individuals that have been members for 25 years or more. The following AFS Alaska Chapter members were recognized at the October 2014 Alaska Chapter meeting. Congratulations!

25-Year Member	City	Joined
Steven Klein	Anchorage, AK	1989
Mark Lisac	Dillingham, AK	1989
David Parker	Fairbanks, AK	1989
Mary Price	Eagle River, AK	1989
Tim Sands	Dillingham, AK	1989
Trent Sutton	Fairbanks, AK	1989
Thomas Taube	Fairbanks, AK	1989

## The Steven Berkeley Marine Conservation Fellowship

This fellowship was created by AFS in 2007 to honor the memory of Steven Berkeley, a dedicated fisheries scientist with a passionate interest in integrating the fields of marine ecology, conservation biology, and fisheries science to improve fisheries management. Berkeley was a long-time AFS member and on the first Board of Directors for the Fisheries Conservation Foundation. The fellowship provides a \$10,000 award to a graduate student actively engaged in thesis research relevant to marine conservation. Research topics may address any aspect of conservation; a focus on fisheries issues is not required. Applications must be received by February 1, 2015. For more information, contact Howard Williams ([hwilliams@fisheries.org](mailto:hwilliams@fisheries.org)).

## Debby Burwen Retires

Debby Burwen an internationally recognized expert in the field of acoustics, particularly in-river sonar work, retired recently after over 29 years with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). Debby Burwen came to Alaska from California in 1975, establishing a foothold by working at crab and herring canneries in Kodiak, and for Princess Tours in Skagway. She soon began pursuing degrees in Biology and Computer Science from University of Alaska Fairbanks, and working summers for ADF&G, U.S. Forest Service, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Memorable summer gigs included counting salmon at Ugashik and Kwiniuk towers, tagging crab in Shelikof Strait, overseeing a mark-recapture experiment on Noatak and Kobuk River Chum Salmon, test fishing for Norton Sound herring at Klikatarik, and being a crab fishery observer out of Nome. In 1983, Debby was present for the very first installation of sonar in the Yukon River at Pilot Station, and in 1986 she landed a permanent job with ADF&G deploying sonar in the Kenai River. She stayed for 29 years, immersed in the challenge of counting King Salmon with dual-beam, split-beam, and, finally, DIDSON technology. Debby retired from ADF&G in August, and celebrated with many friends and colleagues on September 26. She is keeping her post-ADF&G options open for now, but they will definitely include more travel from her Anchorage home base. 🐟



*Debby Burwen, long-term ADF&G employee and internationally recognized acoustician, shown here in 1983, retired in September 2014. Photo from Steve Fleischman.*



*Attendees of Past Presidents Luncheon at the October 2014 Alaska Chapter meeting. Photo by Randy Brown*

## Past Presidents Meeting

The Chapter's Past Presidents Committee exists to consolidate a large reservoir of knowledge and experience of potential value to the Chapter, not the least of which is providing institutional knowledge of the Chapter's history and purpose. The October 2014 Alaska Chapter meeting in Juneau had what is believed to have been the largest gathering of past presidents in the history of the Chapter with a total of 12 past presidents. Notable among the attendees was Ted Merrill who was the Chapter's second President, serving during 1975–1976. 🐟

## 2014 Molly Ahlgren Scholarship

*Ray Hander, Committee Chair*

The AFS Alaska Chapter created the Molly Ahlgren Scholarship to honor the life and work of the late Molly Ahlgren, a Professor of Environmental Science at Sheldon Jackson College. The scholarship is intended to support a student's senior year of undergraduate study and was first issued in 2006. In 2014 the Molly Ahlgren Scholarship Committee (MASC) met and recommended that two \$6,000 scholarships be given. The MASC recommendation was approved by the Chapter Executive Committee. The application was sent out on August 5, 2014 to various outlets such as financial aid offices, scholarship coordinators, and professors at the University of Alaska and Alaska Pacific University, as well as the Chapter web site and Chapter Student Subunit representatives. The application deadline was September 24. The application and selection process by the Committee was completed on October 1 and received Executive Committee approval. The 2014 scholarship recipients were Lauren Bailey and Sky Brandt, both attending the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Items to be completed by the MASC after the ceremonial scholarship is given are confirming disbursement of funds to the recipient's university account in time for their upcoming term and a letter to the Ahlgren family from the Alaska Chapter reporting on the 2014 scholarship.



*Hal Geiger recognizes Sky Brandt and Lauren Bailey as Molly Ahlgren Scholarship recipients at the October 2014 AFS Alaska Chapter meeting. Photo by Randy Brown.*

### **Lauren Bailey**

I have always had a passion for fish and fisheries, and I am excited to see where my passion takes me in life. Through my work with Dr. Jeff Falke and Dr. Andrés Lopez, I have learned more about the fisheries world. Receiving the Molly Ahlgren Scholarship means so much to me, and will help pursue my goal of becoming a fisheries biologist. Learning about Molly and her contributions to undergraduate education made receiving this scholarship even more meaningful. I lost my father when I was in high school, and he taught me to love fish. Finding out more about Molly made me think about all of the influential people in my life who have helped me get to where I am today. I would like to thank both them, and the scholarship committee for awarding this scholarship to me. I had the opportunity to attend the AFS meeting last year in Fairbanks, and learned a lot. Receiving this scholarship allowed me to attend another meeting, and I believe that it has been influential. I have one more year of course work to complete in the Fisheries and Biological Sciences programs at UAF, and I intend to pursue a Master's Degree following my graduation. By receiving the Molly Ahlgren Scholarship, I believe that my future graduate and career plans have been furthered. 🐟

### **Sky Brandt**

What an honor this has been to receive the Molly Ahlgren scholarship in memory of such an incredible teacher. I did not have the pleasure of meeting her, although I have the sense that she was a very special individual and, therefore, I humbly accept this award. The AFS meeting in Juneau this year was a first for me. The whole experience of receiving a scholarship and attending this meeting was very sincerely an inspiration. I have been working for many years towards my bachelor's degree, attending the University of Alaska Fairbanks part-time while working full time at the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game, and at the same time raising a six year old as a single mother. As many students can surely relate, I at times lose momentum and motivation under stress. I have a renewed sense of purpose and confidence after attending this meeting. I thoroughly enjoyed the multitude of posters and presentations that really opened my eyes to the variety of work that is being done around the state in the field of fisheries. Attending the meeting was a great opportunity to meet other fisheries students and scientists from around the state. I attended my first AFS business meeting which helped me to understand the structure of AFS. Furthermore, I had such a great time! 🐟

## 2015 Call for Chapter Award Nominations

*Theresa Tanner and Kenneth Gates*

The Alaska Chapter is currently soliciting nominations for the Meritorious Service Award (MSA), the Chapter Service Award (CSA), the Almost Darwin Award, and the Wally Noerenberg Award for Fishery Excellence. I encourage all members to consider deserving individuals and to submit nominations for these awards. Please use the form at <http://www.afs-alaska.org/awards-scholarships> to make your nominations. Award presentations from this call for nominations will occur at the 2015 Annual Meeting. **NOMINATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY JANUARY 31, 2015.**

Nominations for the MSA can be based on an outstanding contribution in any area of Alaska fisheries, including research, management, education, planning, industry, and policy development. Nominations do not have to come from AFS members, nor do nominees need to be active members. The contribution or accomplishment of the candidate must be recent and not the result of many years of effort; recognition of career-long contributions is more appropriate for the Wally Noerenberg Award. The Awards Committee will select winners based on strength of the nomination and the accomplishment.

The CSA was established to award outstanding service to the Alaska Chapter of the American Fisheries Society. These candidates should have been involved in some or all of the following activities: active participation in standing or ad-hoc committees; made important contributions to advance the current objectives, long-term goals or stature of the Chapter and fisheries professionals; contributed a significant amount of time to Chapter activities; improved public awareness of the

Alaska Chapter and Chapter activities; encouraged development of students as fisheries professionals through recruitment and involvement as Chapter members; and recruited fisheries professionals as Chapter members. Submit MSA and CSA award nominations and letters of support for nominations to Theresa Tanner, USFWS, 101 12th Ave, Rm 110; Fairbanks, 99701, 456-0304, [theresa\\_tanner@fws.gov](mailto:theresa_tanner@fws.gov).

The Almost Darwin Award recognizes the most humorous and outrageous fisheries faux pas of any fisheries professional. The nominees must have committed the faux pas within the last calendar year. Please include photos or video along with the story. Submit award nomination stories and photos to Theresa Tanner at the above address.

The Wally Noerenberg Award for Fishery Excellence, the highest award of the Alaska Chapter, is bestowed as a special honor on individuals who have made great and outstanding contributions to Alaska fisheries. This award was established in 1981 by resolution of the membership. The membership has also set, by resolution, specific guidelines for the Wally Noerenberg Award Committee. Nominee contributions may include scientific research; technological development; species and habitat management; innovations in harvesting, processing, or marketing; academic and fishery education; or involvement in national and international affairs affecting Alaska fisheries. Submit Wally Noerenberg Award nominations and letters of support for nominations to Ken Gates, USFWS, Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office, 43655 K-Beach Road, Soldotna, AK 99669, 260-0126, [kenneth\\_gates@fws.gov](mailto:kenneth_gates@fws.gov).

The application form for 2015 Chapter awards is available on-line via the "Awards" link at: <http://www.afs-alaska.org/awards-scholarships>.

## Ladd Macaulay Graduate Fellowship in Salmon Fisheries Research

The Ladd Macaulay Graduate Fellowship in Salmon Fisheries Research is funded through a donation from Douglas Island Pink and Chum, Inc. (DIPAC), a private non-profit salmon enhancement organization based in Juneau, Alaska. The fellowship will support a graduate student fellowship, beginning as early as Fall 2015, for an M. S. in Fisheries at the University of Alaska Fairbanks Juneau Center for Fisheries and Ocean Sciences. Funding is for an incoming (prospective) graduate student and will cover standard graduate stipends, tuition/fees, and health insurance for up to three years; second and third year funding is conditional on successful annual progress.

Applications must be submitted by 5 PM Alaska Time on January 16, 2015. For more information contact Gabrielle Hazelton (907-796-5441, [gdhazelton@alaska.edu](mailto:gdhazelton@alaska.edu)).

## Meetings and Events



### Alaska Marine Science Symposium

January 19–23, 2015: This meeting will be held in Anchorage, AK. For more information, visit <http://amss.nprb.org/>.

### Alaska Forum on the Environment

February 9–13, 2015: This meeting will be held in Anchorage, AK. For more information, visit <http://www.akforum.com/>.



### 26th Northeast Pacific Pink and Chum Salmon Workshop

February 16–19, 2015: This workshop will be held in Richmond, British Columbia. For more information, contact Kathleen Neely, [kathleen.neely@noaa.gov](mailto:kathleen.neely@noaa.gov).

### Effects of Climate Change on the World's Oceans

March 23–27, 2015: This meeting, cosponsored by ICES, PICES, and IOC-UNESCO, will be held in Sao Paulo, Brazil. For more information, go to [secretariat@pices.int](mailto:secretariat@pices.int).



### ComFish Alaska 2015

April 2-4, 2015: This trade show and assorted forums will be held in Kodiak. For more information go to <http://comfishalaska.com/>.



### Flow 2015

April 28–30, 2015: This, the Third International Workshop on Instream Flows, will be held in Portland, Oregon. More information is at <http://www.instreamflowcouncil.org/flow-2015/>.

### Tools and Strategies for Assessment and Management of Data-Limited Fish Stocks

Wakefield May 12–15, 2015: This 30th Lowell Wakefield Fisheries Symposium will be held in Anchorage. More information is at <http://seagrant.uaf.edu/conferences/2015/wakefield-data-limited/>.



### 145th Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society Symposium

August 16–20, 2015: This meeting will be held in Portland, Oregon. For more information, see <http://fisheries.org/afs-2015>.



## 2014 Alaska Chapter Officers

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### Treasurer Lee Ann Gardner

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### Past President Philip Loring

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**Feel free to contact the Executive Committee members.**