



ONCORHYNCHUS

Newsletter of the Alaska Chapter, American Fisheries Society
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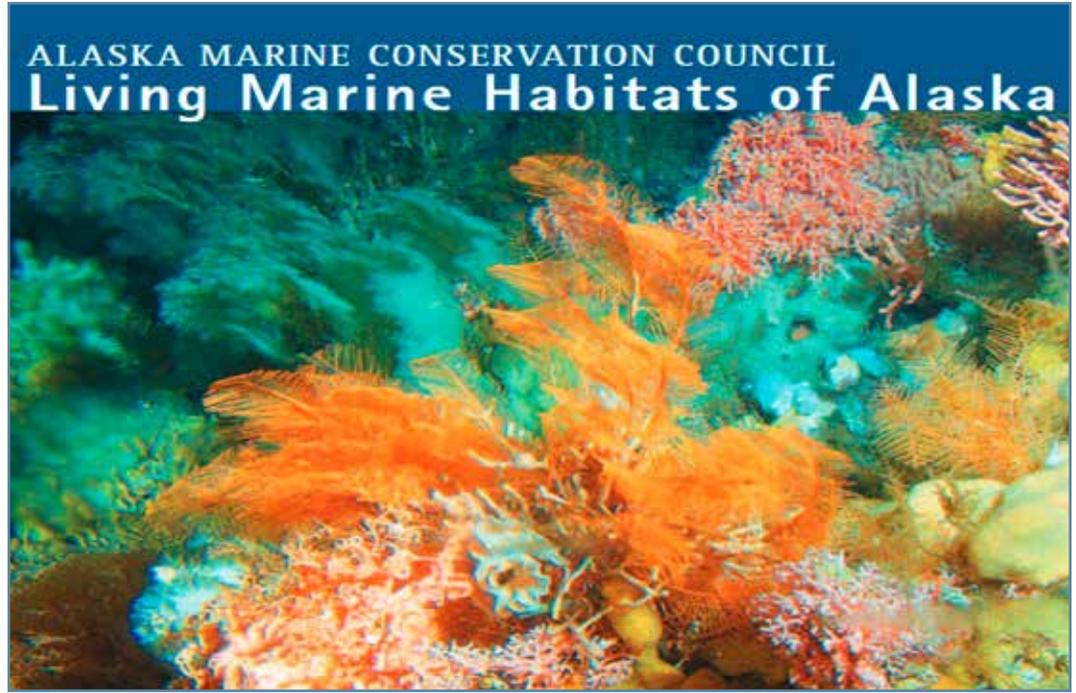
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Cover of *Living Marine Habitats of Alaska* publication co-produced by AMCC and Alaska Sea Grant. Picture by Robert Stone, NOAA.

Making Waves for 24 Years - The Alaska Marine Conservation Council

Theresa Peterson

In 1992, with support from the Alaska Conservation Foundation, Nevette Bowen, a community organizer and fisherman, traveled coastal Alaska to listen to the marine conservation concerns of commercial, recreational, and subsistence harvesters, and coastal residents. A consensus emerged from these coastal voices and with it, the creation of the Alaska Marine Conservation Council (AMCC). In 1994, AMCC was founded as a voice for long-term, community-based marine conservation. Since that time, AMCC has remained steadfast in its commitment to ensuring the role of local coastal residents in decision-making processes, and addressing growing threats to Alaska's marine ecosystems, including high levels of bycatch, destructive fishing practices, and offshore drilling with insufficient consideration of fisheries resources and habitats. The work of AMCC is guided by the core principle that people are part of, and depend on, healthy and diverse marine ecosystems and are responsible for maintaining these ecosystems.

As a commercial harvester and long-time AMCC staff member based out of Kodiak, Alaska, my work

is split between salmon setnetting in the summer and AMCC policy work for the remainder of the year. Working for AMCC provides the opportunity to give back to the marine environment, which has provided so much to me and my family as we recently completed our 37th fishing season in Kodiak. My work aligns with my values around sustainable fisheries and local stewardship.

But I am similar to other AMCC members. There is unwavering AMCC support for an ecosystem-based approach to research and marine resource management that incorporates the best science available, experiential knowledge, and the wisdom of tradition. For nearly 25 years, AMCC has actively engaged in the fisheries policy arena, spearheading and supporting numerous initiatives to provide local access, protect habitat, reduce bycatch, and increase understanding of the marine environment.

Early on, AMCC worked with the Unalaska Native Fisherman's Association at the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) to acquire a 2% allocation of the Bering Sea Pacific Cod quota to provide community-based access and promote the use of low impact gears. More

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The President's Corner



Jeff Falke, AFS Alaska Chapter President.

Hello Alaska Chapter AFS members!

As the days get shorter and the air colder here in Fairbanks, my thoughts return to memories of my outdoor adventures this past summer in our wild and beautiful state, both on-the-clock and off, where I studied, taught others about, and generally enjoyed our abundant fisheries resources. I'm also reminded of our responsibilities as stewards of these resources as citizens, professionals, and members of AFS. From our Chapter Procedures Manual, the objectives of the Alaska Chapter are *to promote scientific research and enlightened management of aquatic resources of Alaska for optimum use and enjoyment by the public, and to encourage comprehensive and continuing education for fisheries scientists*. As part of meeting our objectives, one role of the Chapter is to serve as a nexus between the public, fisheries professionals, and policy makers on environmental issues that may impact our aquatic resources.

At our most recent Chapter meeting in Anchorage this past May, a forum was held to identify and discuss emerging environmental concerns regarding Alaska fisheries and aquatic habitats. Over 25 people attended the forum; this is clearly an important topic for our Chapter membership. However, much of the discussion turned toward uncertainty surrounding the procedures for submitting

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Making Waves, continued

recently, Gulf of Alaska jig fishermen worked with AMCC through the NPFMC process to establish a set-aside of rockfish and Pacific Cod quotas for the small-boat jig fleet in Central and Western Alaska. These access initiatives promote the use of a gear type associated with minimal bycatch and habitat disruption while providing much needed entry-level opportunity, which is critical to the sustained health of Alaskan fishing communities. Following the Gulf of Alaska jig set-aside, Kodiak harvesters worked with AMCC to develop the Kodiak Jig Seafoods brand, focusing on local, sustainable seafood. Our efforts aimed to increase the profitability of the artisanal jig fleet and support collaborative marketing. These efforts continue today and focus on connecting community-based harvesters with Alaskan seafood consumers.

Inspired by coastal community concerns throughout Alaska, AMCC has also worked diligently over the years to secure habitat protections. These include 'freezing the footprint' of the bottom trawl fishery in the Aleutian Islands and protecting critical coral habitats. Through this measure, 60% of the fishable grounds were closed to bottom trawling and the Aleutian Islands remarkable coral gardens were protected for generations to come. Our organization also supported the Alaska Board of Fisheries decision to close state waters around Kodiak Island to bottom trawling. To increase understanding of the distinctive habitat features that make up Alaska's complex marine floor, AMCC with Alaska Sea Grant published *Living Marine Habitats of Alaska*

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Founding members of the Alaska Marine Conservation Council. Picture from AMCC.

President's Corner, continued

environmental issues rather than the specific issues. Specifically, it was suggested that the process should be more apparent and transparent – and lack thereof has led to underutilization of this important capacity of the Chapter. In an effort to address these concerns, my goal here is to provide a synopsis of the Chapter's current advocacy policy, and list the procedures through which concerns can be made (i.e., how do we use it?). I'll close by listing some of the questions and ideas presented at the May environmental concerns meeting, and soliciting input from the Chapter on this important topic.

Our Chapter has a specific advocacy policy that is detailed in Appendix C of our Procedures Manual (pages 42-44; https://www.afs-alaska.org/wp-content/uploads/AK_AFS_Procedures_Manual_20111.pdf), which is generally consistent with that of the Parent Society (<https://fisheries.org/policy-media/advocacy-guidelines/>).

Examples of actions that may be taken by the Chapter to provide information for resolution of a given aquatic habitat or fisheries issue include:

- Provide written comments, recommendations, or letters to public or private policy bodies.
- Draft and publish Chapter resolutions.
- Prepare position or policy papers.
- Testify at public hearings, legislative committee meetings, scientific meetings, or other forums.
- Prepare media releases or letters to printed media editors.
- Sponsor workshops or symposia.
- Prepare and file amicus curiae or other briefs in legal proceedings.

The first critical part of this policy is *criteria* required for the Chapter to advocate on a particular issue, which are as follows:

- The issue is pertinent to conservation of aquatic resources and habitats.
- The issue is supported by 2/3 of the Chapter's membership or by unanimous consensus of the Executive Committee (ExComm). If conflicts of interest arise among members of the ExComm, then a unanimous vote will comprise 2/3 of the Chapter ExComm.
- The Chapter can provide relevant, science-based information to help resolve the issue.
- Minority opinions are solicited and included

in the advocacy materials released to the public.

- The Chapter commits to maintain involvement in the issue until it is resolved.

The second important piece is *procedures* through which issues submitted for consideration from external (e.g., the public or non-members) or internal (Chapter members) sources are evaluated. How does a Chapter member or Chapter committee submit an issue? Typically this is done through a written Request for Action to be submitted to the Environmental Concerns Committee (ECC), an ad hoc on-going committee of the Alaska Chapter established by the ExComm to provide coordinated technical and policy analysis and Chapter input and comments on environmental issues that affect Alaska's fishery resources. This request should include:

- A description of the issue of concern.
- Scientific information that describes how aquatic resources will be affected by the identified issue of concern.
- The action requested of the Chapter.
- A list of individuals or organizations, including addresses and phones/faxes to whom the requested Chapter action is to be directed.
- A list of resources the Chapter can bring to help resolve the issue.
- A minority viewpoint on the issue.
- The date by which the Chapter advocacy action must occur to be effective.

If full Chapter membership review is warranted, the ECC publishes the Request for Action in the next *Oncorhynchus* newsletter and distributes the Request for Action to all members, along with a questionnaire requesting comments and recommendations by a specific date; or takes a phone poll of a random sample of members. Comments received are compiled by the original proposer of the ExComm. If necessary, a revised Request for Action is prepared based upon review comments received. Another review process may be required before action can be taken. A 2/3 membership majority is required to take the proposed action.

In some cases, deadlines associated with comments on environmental impact statements (EIS) or legislative actions preclude using the

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President's Corner, continued

resolution process with full membership approval. In such cases, the ECC can fast-track a Chapter statement on an issue via the following process:

- An issue is raised by an ECC member or Chapter member at large. The proposer must also provide a draft statement and supporting materials. The ECC Chair refers the draft statement to ECC members for review.
- The ECC Chair consolidates comments and redrafts or assigns ECC members, or non-Chapter members with appropriate expertise, to redraft the statement accordingly. The revised statement is sent back to the ECC for approval.
- The ECC statement, if approved, is sent to the ExComm for approval. If approved by the ExComm, the statement is sent out under the Chapter President's signature.

If the ExComm determines the Request for Action is not consistent with Chapter policy, the request may be denied. If the ECC or ExComm feel the Request for Action requires modification before undergoing further review, either committee may work with the originator to modify the request. For any Request for Action that is denied, a written statement will be issued to the proposer explaining the denial.

A few other ideas and concerns were brought up at the May 2018 forum regarding the process through which issues are identified and the procedures that occur once an issue has been submitted. In no particular order were:

- How can the ECC better tap into our Chapter's expertise on specific subject matter? How does the Chapter and the ECC know who has expertise or interest in specific topics? One idea proposed was to compile a database of Chapter members' expertise and interests. Such a compilation would make the job of the ECC easier when specific topics – about which the committee may or may not have expertise – are raised.
- How can the Chapter best reach out to the

public and broader professional arenas to let them know the Chapter's ability to advocate? Op-ed's in newspapers?

- How can we as a Chapter better communicate the processes and procedures through which issues are submitted and decided upon? Highlight more in the Chapter *Oncorhynchus* newsletter (e.g., this piece), website, social media, etc.
- How can the Chapter present current issues that are under consideration? Create an "advocacy corner" on the website?
- How can the Chapter better include students in this process? Target students to provide opportunities to initiate and review submissions?
- Should the Chapter host quarterly/bi-annual "listening calls" to solicit information on current issues of concern with our membership? It was fairly clear that some people that attended the forum had come with specific issues for consideration by the group, but we didn't have the time (the meeting was only an hour) to do so.

I believe that the general issue of our Chapter advocacy process, transparency, and the questions listed above, are very important. As such, I plan to address these questions through discussion at our annual AK Chapter ExComm retreat in December. In the meantime, I encourage you to provide feedback directly to me (afs.alaska.president@gmail.com) with your thoughts, ideas, and questions. Because these issues are important to our membership, I plan to initiate another environmental concerns issues and policy meeting at our next annual meeting in Sitka in March. Hope to see you there!

Tight lines, Jeff Falke

P.S. Thanks to Aaron Martin for arranging the May 2018 Environmental Concerns meeting, and to Mary Beth Loewen for taking such detailed notes at the meeting! 🙏

2019 AFS Alaska Chapter Annual Meeting

Set aside March 19–21, 2019, for the 45th annual meeting of the American Fisheries Society Alaska Chapter. This year's meeting will be held in Sitka, Alaska, with the theme "Headwaters to Oceans, Connecting Alaska's Fisheries." Calls for symposia and abstracts will be coming out soon and we encourage you to begin developing ideas. If you have suggestions or comments on sessions or continuing education opportunities, contact program chair Joel Markis at afs.alaska.presidentelect@gmail.com. 🙏

Making Waves, continued

showcasing the unique characteristics of Alaskan waters (<http://nsgd.gso.uri.edu/aku/akuh03002.pdf>). Through photographs and text, the publication features some of the many living seafloor habitats found off the coast of Alaska, and provides a glimpse into the deep diversity of the North Pacific and Bering Sea ecosystems. To bring greater understanding of some of the remarkable and unique features of different fish species, AMCC launched an educational effort on conservation and management of long-lived rockfishes to stimulate discussion among harvesters, scientists, and fishery managers. For example, some female rockfish may not spawn until 25 years old, and reproductive efforts at an older age are often associated with greater offspring survival. Rockfish live a long time, 100 to 200 years old in some species, and continue to spawn into old age. The ecological strategy is to continue reproducing for many years in order to include the optimal year(s) for survival of the young. But being slow growing, late maturing, and long-lived, rockfish are very vulnerable to overfishing. Facilitating understanding of the complex nature of these species fosters a medium where information is shared among recreational, commercial, and subsistence harvesters, scientists, and other stakeholders, generating support for measures to protect rockfish from overfishing.

The grassroots advocacy work of AMCC strives to ensure that fisheries management and other uses of the ocean prioritize the long-term health of marine ecosystems. In a sense, the community members who got together to establish the group were advocating for fisheries management which embraces ecosystems-based fishery management in advocating for policies that protect habitat, minimize waste, and prevent overfishing.

Ecosystem-based fishery management (EBFM) attempts to account for the fact that fish and harvesters are just two components in a large, interconnected marine system. Under an ecosystem approach, fishery managers look beyond the status of a single species and incorporate other ecosystem considerations into the decision-making processes, such as predator-prey relationships, habitat protections, changing ocean and climate conditions, and the dependence of coastal communities; this is the vision of fishery management that coastal Alaskans have been encouraging for years.

Looking forward, the voices of coastal Alaskans, with support of grassroots organizations such as

AMCC, will continue to help shape healthy marine ecosystems. At present, the NPFMC is developing a progressive Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan (<https://www.npfmc.org/bsfep/>). This plan will help guide and benefit the decision-making process for policies and fishery management in the Bering Sea. A notable component includes the use of traditional and local knowledge



as an element of ecosystem science in a

framework for the strategic planning necessary to prioritize fishery, habitat, and ecosystem research, modeling, and survey needs. The North Pacific is a remarkable marine environment and forward thinking management plans help to increase the likelihood that the waters of the North Pacific remain robust and resilient.

No fisheries discussion would be complete without tying it all back to the Magnuson Stevens Fishery and Conservation and Management Act (MSA [also designated as MSFCMA]), which was initially signed into law in 1976 and marked the beginning of federal fisheries management in the Exclusive Economic Zone from 3-200 miles. The MSA established eight Regional Fishery Management Councils to help develop regulatory measures for fisheries in U.S. waters of federal jurisdiction. Fisheries regulations forwarded by the regional councils are typically (though not always) adopted by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce and as federal fisheries regulations implemented by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

There have been several reauthorizations since the MSA was established over 40 years ago, and AMCC has brought harvesters and coastal residents to Washington, D.C., to bring the voices of those that use and live adjacent to the marine resources to decision-makers. The MSA has been

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Making Waves, continued

a critical tool in rebuilding America’s fisheries and supporting coastal fishing communities. The MSA is currently up for reauthorization and AMCC has been working with a network of fishing organizations around the nation with common goals: maintain strong science to guide decisions, strengthen at-sea and dockside monitoring and accountability, strengthen coastal community protections, reduce bycatch, incorporate ecosystem considerations, and support the next generation of harvesters. It is encouraging to work with conservation-minded stakeholders around the U.S. that seek to strengthen the MSA and are committed to the long-term health of the marine environment.

In Alaska, our relationship with the marine environment runs deep. In our next 25 years, AMCC will continue to work to ensure that this connection remains strong, embedded in sound science and incorporating lasting cultural traditions. For more information about the Alaska Marine Conservation Council, please visit www.akmarine.org.

Theresa has worked with AMCC for 14 years and is an active fisherwoman and long-time resident of Kodiak, home to the nation’s largest fishing fleet. Fishing is a family business for Theresa and her husband Charlie and their three children.

A tireless advocate for local harvesters and processors, Theresa supports many aspects of AMCC’s Working Waterfronts and Fisheries Conservation programs and is active in community fisheries at a variety of levels. She currently serves as one of 11 voting members on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.



Theresa Peterson setnetting in Alitak Bay. Photo by Marvin Agnot.

Molly Ahlgren Scholarship Award 2018 Recipient

Keenan Sanderson

This time last year, I had no idea what I wanted to do for a career, primarily because I did not see myself as a successful individual. I have decent grades and a dash of experience in a handful of different sectors in fisheries in Alaska, but up to that point I had no sense of direction. I came across this scholarship and applied because I needed

assistance financing my education. A little over a month later I received the news that I was the Molly Algren Memorial Scholarship recipient. Personally speaking, most of the hype from the scholarships and grants that I have received in the past ebbed a few days after the announcement; this time it was different. By the time spring semester rolled around, word had gotten out that I was to be the recipient of the scholarship. I had both friends and strangers email and congratulate me in person on this accomplishment. To my surprise, even several faculty members that I had never met went out of their way to congratulate me. These individuals wasted no time telling me all about Molly and how inspirational she was to everyone around her. When I went to Anchorage for the Western Division meeting in May, I was completely overwhelmed by the recognition that I received. I could tell that Molly had touched so many people’s lives in just about every way imaginable. I am truly honored to be at least a small part of her legacy.

As far as my legacy goes, I am still not sure what direction I want to take. After I graduate



Keenan Sanderson receiving the Molly Ahlgren Scholarship Award from Ray Hander. Photo by Randy Brown.

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Student Subunit Happenings



UAF AFS members Donald Arthur, Kyle Gatt, Caitlin Forester, Marta Ree, Katja Berghaus, and Eric Walther fished for Coho Salmon in the Chulitna River drainage in September. Photo from Justin Priest.

Justin Priest, Student Subunit Representative

The summer has turned to fall, which means that most students have returned from field work across the state. Alaska Chapter students had a productive season of fieldwork. Some of the interesting projects this summer included studying how stress hormones can quantify post-release survival of Pacific Halibut (Anita Kroska), rearing wild-caught juvenile Broad Whitefish in laboratory settings to determine bioenergetic responses under climate change scenarios (Duncan Green), and exploring how nearshore ecological niches vary in the presence of Sea Otters (Wendel Raymond).

The AFS Alaska Chapter congratulates the following Alaskan students on defending or graduating recently: Stephanie Meggers (M.S., UAF) – “Factors influencing Chinook Salmon spawning distribution in the Togiak River, Alaska;” Marguerite Tibbles (M.S., UAF) – “The seasonal dynamics of coastal Arctic lagoons in Northwest Alaska;” Aaron Bland (M.S., UAF) – “Spatial trends and environmental drivers of epibenthic shelf community structure across the Aleutian Islands;” Aileen Nimick (M.S., APU) – “Modelling fishing gear to address ‘more than minimal and not temporary’ fishing effects to essential fish habitat;” and Mabel Baldwin (M.S., APU) – “Acoustic assessment of natural and mining-induced benthic features in turbid, shallow waters.” Good job on your hard work and best wishes on your next adventures!

The 2018 AFS Western Division Student Colloquium will be held November 15–18

in Corbett, Oregon, along the Columbia River. This event will be co-hosted by Oregon State University and Mt. Hood Community College student subunits. Along with student presentations about various subjects, there will also be a workshop on creating engaging infographics as well as a field trip to a local hatchery. The AFS

Alaska Chapter will provide travel funding for one or two students. If you are interested in attending while representing our Chapter, contact me at afs.alaska.studentsubunit@gmail.com 🐟

Heather Brandon appointed Alaska Sea Grant Director

The University of Alaska Fairbanks selected Heather Brandon as Alaska Sea Grant’s new director. Brandon has been an environmental policy leader experienced in fisheries issues ranging from Alaska to the Arctic and Russian Far East. Before joining Alaska Sea Grant, Brandon was a foreign affairs specialist for NOAA’s Office of International Affairs and



Seafood Inspection, and has also worked for the World Wildlife Fund, Juneau Economic Development Council, Pacific Fishery Management Council, and Alaska Department of Fish and Game, as well as serving on the U.S. Department of Commerce Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee. She has a master’s degree in marine affairs from the University of Washington and a bachelor’s degree in biology from the University of Oregon. 🐟

New Alaska Sea Grant director Heather Brandon. Photo from UAF Sea Grant.

Molly Ahlgren Scholarship, continued

this upcoming spring, I plan to lend my time and knowledge to a research project either in Washington or New England before I continue onto graduate school in order to continue my education. Generally speaking, I am interested in studying Sablefish, Pacific Halibut, and salmon ecology. Regardless of what I do or where I end up, I want to make a difference like Molly did for

so many people. I want to make a difference in the world of fisheries. I want to be a role model for young people and encourage them to go out and explore the mysteries of this world, especially the every expanding fisheries field. To sum this all up, I'd like to thank Molly Ahlgren for briefly putting me in the spotlight and encouraging me to keep moving forward. 🗨️



2018 WDAFS Student Colloquium

November 15–18, 2018: This meeting will be held in Corbett, OR. For more information, go to <https://wdafs.org/2018/10/14/2018-student-colloquium/>.

Alaska Marine Science Symposium

January 28–February 1, 2019: This symposium will be held in Anchorage. For more information, go to <https://www.alaskamarinescience.org/>.



Alaska Forum on the Environment

February 11–15, 2019: This meeting will be held in Anchorage, AK. For more information, visit <http://www.akforum.com/>.



AFS Alaska Chapter Annual Meeting

March 19–21, 2019: This meeting will be held in Sitka, AK. For more information, contact Joel Markis at jamarkis@alaska.edu.



Meetings and Events

Eleventh International Conference on Climate Change: Impacts & Responses

April 16–17, 2019: This meeting will be held in Washington, D.C. For more information, go to <http://on-climate.com/2019-conference>.



Collaborative Fisheries Research

May 7–10, 2019: This symposium in the Lowell Wakefield Fisheries Symposium series will be held in Anchorage, AK. More information is at <https://alaskaseagrant.org/event/wakefield-fisheries-symposium-2019/>. 🗨️



ONCORHYNCHUS

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Deadline for materials for the next issue of *Oncorhynchus* is December 10.

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Feel free to contact the Executive Committee members.