



ONCORHYNCHUS

Newsletter of the Alaska Chapter, American Fisheries Society

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An undersized culvert that was carried downstream by the 2006 flood on the Little Tonsina River. Picture from K. Liebich, USFWS.

Opening 70 Miles of Fish Passage on the Little Tonsina River

Katrina Liebich

Greek philosopher Heraclitus once said, “No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man.”

Alaska's rivers are no different. One day, water flow is a trickle, the next a torrent. Rivers reform the landscapes, including jumped banks. Rivers collect rain, last winter's snow, and waters from ancient glaciers warmed by the sun. The dynamics move boulders, downed trees, and dense loads of silt downstream and towards the sea. Elevated streamflow that encounters traditional culverts can blow right through the culverts and can also take out the overlying road.

Failures of road-stream crossings during high flows are violent, forceful events. A culvert is similar to a firehose, focusing water through a directed path, but historical culverts eventually

clog with debris collected from the river banks and floodplain. With a plugged culvert, water overtops and saturates the road until the water pressure crumples the corrugated metal and then moves the road and bank structure downstream in a turbid, angry water whoosh.

This happened on the Little Tonsina River in 2006 when the flood stage overwhelmed an access road in Alaska's Valdez-Cordova Borough—homelands to Ahtna people and an area that Sugpiaq and rural Alaskans depend on for access to hunting and fishing, wild food security, and cultural ties to the land. This is also a major regional access point for the Trans Alaska Pipeline.

The culverts that were ruined and carried downstream on the Little Tonsina through the

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The President's Corner



AFS Alaska Chapter President Megan McPhee, with daughter Phoebe.

Happy New Year! This will be the last President's Corner I write, because at the end of March, we'll be transitioning officers during our Annual Chapter Meeting in Fairbanks. It has been an honor and pleasure to serve as your President for this past year, which definitely could be described as "interesting times" for Alaska's fisheries. We've seen scary-low returns of Chinook and Chum salmon to western Alaska, cancellations of various Bering Sea crab fisheries, and a lawsuit threatening to shut down the Southeast Alaska commercial troll fishery. But amid all the bad news, it is helpful to seek out the good. For that, one needs only to look at the line-up of plenary speakers who are slated for the Annual Meeting in March. We will have Dr. Jessica Black, UAF, who is Gwich'in and hails from Gwichyaa Zhee (Fort Yukon) and Toghoththele (Nenana); she will be speaking about increasing the role of Indigenous knowledge and governance in sustaining Alaska's fisheries. Dr. Schery Umazor, also from UAF, will be talking about opportunities for mariculture in Alaska, and Dr. Katie Howard (ADF&G) and Dr. Vanessa von Biela (USGS) will add their perspectives on how we will move through the recent crises affecting Alaska's fisheries. I am inspired by the work of all of these amazing fisheries researchers and I'm thrilled to see such a diverse and forward-thinking group of role

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Fish Passage, continued

road collapse in 2006 still rest downstream in the riverbed today. Following the catastrophic road failure, an "emergency fix" of similar, undersized design was quickly applied where river met road as a necessary, short-term patch to maintain crucial resource access. However, if we consider this temporary fix to be a permanent solution, those failed, rusty relics offer a preview of inevitable things to come.

Fast forward to 2022. The Little Tonsina flows downstream to the Tonsina River—a class III-IV whitewater river with excellent fishing for Pacific salmon, Dolly Varden, and Arctic Grayling. These waters eventually meet Alaska's Copper River, home to what many people consider one of the world's finest sources of Sockeye and King salmon. But wrapping back to the Little Tonsina, you can sense this river's true potential while looking beyond the current undersized double culverts—gravelly, clean, and cold; perfect conditions for Coho and Chinook salmon. Looking upstream while standing on the road, the water is pooled, a common symptom of a fish passage barrier created by an undersized road-stream crossing and the associated disruption of natural flow. Over 70 miles of glacier-fed salmon nursery habitats extend upstream to the horizon.

Prior to 2022, the prospect of fitting the road with a bridge to accommodate the Little Tonsina and its varied flows attracted attention and funding from multiple state and federal partners—if the past is a forecast of the future, the current, quick-fix, culvert design will not likely survive another 50-year flood event.

Many hands are involved in building a bridge. The Chugach Alaska Corporation entered into a land transfer and right of way agreement that ultimately makes this work possible. Huge partner funding efforts raised several million dollars, including \$1 million from Alaska Department of Transportation and \$1.3 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding. The non-profit partner Copper River Watershed Project has kept communication going among partners and shepherded this project to initiate rehabilitative construction phases. This collaboration, and

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President's Corner, continued

models for our membership. Kudos to Erik Schoen, our incoming president, and his planning committee for lining up such an exciting meeting.

I am very much looking forward to seeing many of you again in person after so many years being apart. I will continue in the Executive Committee as Past-President and in the future, I plan to stay active although also looking forward to one last year of committee work for the Chapter.

See you in Fairbanks! 🐟

Annual Meeting Update

Join us in Fairbanks

Alaska Chapter's 49th Annual Meeting!

Your planning committee continues to work on an engaging, social, and fun meeting March 27–31 at the Westmark Fairbanks Conference Center or online via Zoom.

In-person attendees will experience a week of the socials, networking opportunities, and field trips that we all have been missing.

AFS Alaska Chapter Meeting Schedule at a Glance:

Monday, March 27: Professional Development Workshops: An Introduction to R for Fishery Students and Researchers (Sunday-Monday); Science Communication; Introduction to Fly Tying; Collaborative Approaches to DEI in Fisheries; Welcome Social & Film Festival

Tuesday, March 28: Plenary: Dr. Jessica Black: Indigenizing Salmon Science and Governance: Moving from Theory to Action; Symposia and Contributed Talks; Mentorship Mixer (catered lunch; Affinity Groups; Evening Social

Wednesday, March 29: Plenary: Dr. Schery Umanzor: The Alaska Mariculture Initiative and Opportunities to Leverage Salmon Hatchery Infrastructure; Poster Session and Trade Show; Symposia and Contributed Talks; Past Presidents' Luncheon; Affinity Groups; 5K Spawning Run/Walk; Trivia Night

Thursday, March 30: Plenary: Drs. Katie Howard and Vanessa von Biela: Fables for Fisheries: Lessons for Strategic Approaches to Crisis; Symposia and Contributed Talks; Chapter Business Meeting (catered lunch); Affinity Groups; Banquet and Awards

Friday, March 31: Field Trips: Ice Fishing and Chena Hot Springs

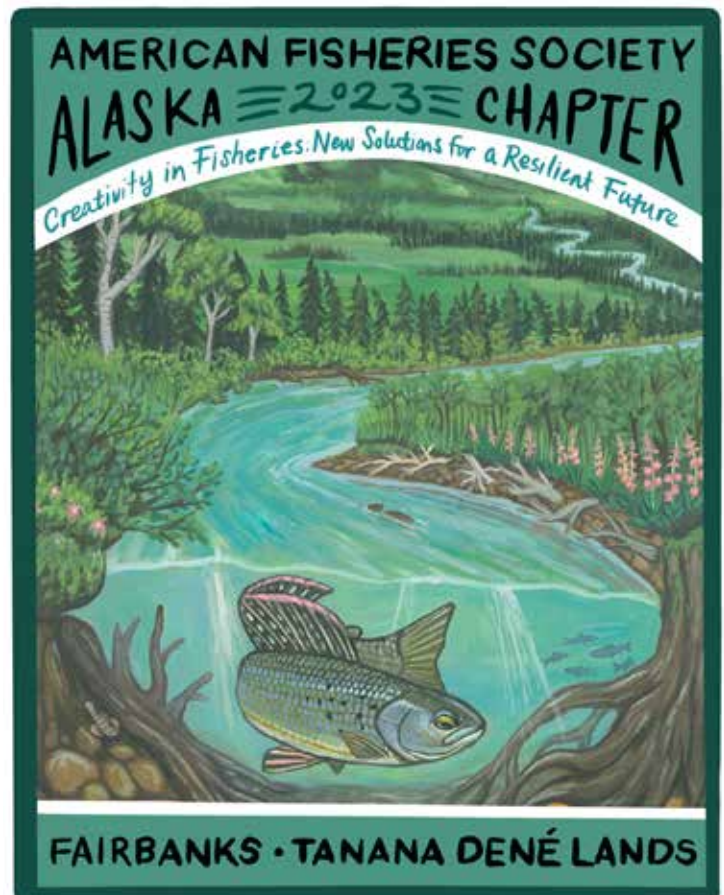
Important Dates

Early Registration: February 17 – March 3

Regular Registration: March 4 – March 17

Late Registration: March 18 onward

Visit our website <https://units.fisheries.org/ak-mtg> for more information, and reach out to Erik Schoen presidentelect@afs-alaska.org with any questions or to get involved. Hope to see you in Fairbanks! 🐟



Graphic by Taylor Cubbage.

Fish Passage, continued



Groundwork began on the Little Tonsina River in 2022 with existing culverts acting as coffer dams for in-channel construction (bed and banks) to take place “in the dry” as much as practicable. Picture from K. Liebich, USFWS.

additional financial and technical support from many partners, will let the Little Tonsina again flow free, as it should, and provide a reliable ribbon of access for hunters, anglers, and infrastructure maintenance in a sparsely roaded area.

Groundbreaking activities in 2022 included clearing and grubbing, creating access lanes, building the platforms that will be the bridge for embankments, and installing rootwads upstream for bank stability and fish habitat. The existing undersized culverts will continue to serve as coffer dams so in-channel construction (including in the riverbed and its banks) can take place “in the dry”—a plus for equipment operation—and water quality issues associated with construction can be minimized. And what of the old culverts downstream? They will be removed in the fall of 2022 by the Alaska-based contractor, a woman-owned small business.

The two lane, 100-foot floodplain-friendly bridge to be installed in 2023 is designed for a 100-year flood and employs the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s comprehensive Alaska design guidelines

for building road-stream crossings that consider fish and flood resiliency.

As climate change continues to disproportionately impact northern locales like Alaska, it is increasingly important to provide salmon unimpeded access to all habitat options. Culverts and bridges designed with flows and fish in mind do this, keeping salmon runs resilient, fisheries stable, and roads reliable for local communities and economies.

The Little Tonsina has the distinct honor of being the first BIL-funded fish passage project to break ground in the United States. The project is one of 40 across the country that received funding in 2022 as part of the five-year \$200 million commitment to removing instream barriers and providing technical assistance under the National Fish Passage Program. However, it follows on the coattails of millions of dollars already invested in fish-friendly roads across Alaska with more to come, including two additional BIL-funded projects in Tyonek and Gustavus that were financially unattainable under previous efforts.

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Fish Passage, continued



View of Alaska's Little Tonsina River from a road to be fitted with a bridge. Arrow shows the old culvert that washed downstream. Picture from K. Liebich, USFWS.

Good work also tends to catalyze funding and momentum to address additional barriers and unstable infrastructure at a watershed level or on nearby tributaries.

Conservation is a team sport. In addition to our dedicated Copper River Watershed staff biologist, Fish Passage Engineer, and Engineer Technician, project partners include Chugach Alaska Corporation, the State of Alaska, Bureau of Land Management, Natural Resource Conservation Service, NOAA Fisheries, Copper River Watershed Project, and The Denali Commission.

With increased flood intensities forecasted, our team of habitat restoration practitioners in the Southern Alaska Fish and Wildlife Field Office is committed to supporting ongoing fish passage

efforts and fish-friendly infrastructure to keep fisheries healthy and communities connected in Alaska's changing environment. Thanks to fish-friendly road standards being adopted at local levels, and major investments in fish passage statewide, a barrier-free Alaska is within reach.

Please contact Anna Senecal (anna_senecal@fws.gov) for more information on this project.

Katrina Liebich is a Public Affairs Specialist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. She has a B.S. in Biology from Virginia Tech and an M.S. and Ph.D. in Fisheries from Michigan State University. Katrina has also held positions as the Service's Alaska Fisheries Outreach Coordinator and Alaska Digital Media Manager, and is co-host of the award-winning Fish of the Week! and program lead for the Anchorage urban fishing program and Alaska Youth Fish and Wildlife Club. 🐟

David W. Wiswar, Alaska Chapter Past President, Passes

David Wiswar died on November 11, 2022, (Veteran's Day) after a valiant battle with pancreatic cancer. Born in 1949, David grew up in Elmhurst, Queens and West Islip, Long Island, New York. David came to Alaska in January 1969, served in the U.S. Air Force during 1969–1974, then received a B.S. from the University of Alaska Anchorage in 1975.

During 1977–1979, David studied seabird feeding ecology in the western Gulf of Alaska. From 1979 to 1983, he lived in Corvallis, Oregon, taking stream and wetland ecology courses from Oregon State University while working seasonally for the U.S. Forest Service to inventory salmon habitat. David was also seasonally employed with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to study salmon escapement and lake productivity while taking more stream and wetland ecology courses at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

During 1983–2006, David was a fishery biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Fisheries Resource Office in Fairbanks. For eight of those years, David conducted fisheries investigations on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge 1002 Area streams, nearshore marine waters, and lagoons. He participated in a U.S./Canada study of Dolly Varden in the transboundary Firth River, and supervised salmon escapement projects on Yukon River drainage tributaries (Gisasa, Henshaw, Kateel, and South Fork Koyukuk rivers). He served on the Joint Technical Committee for the U.S./Canada Yukon River Panel reviewing scientific proposals for restoration and enhancement funds. David's skill at operating small watercraft was enlisted on projects to capture oiled sea otters after the 1989 *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. He discovered part of the job was to help dip-netting highly agitated 35-kg sea otters into a small skiff and put them into dog kennels for transport to cleaning stations. Quite an experience for a fish squeezer!

David was an American Fisheries Society Alaska Chapter member since 1984, making presentations at several Chapter meetings, the Northeast Pacific Pink and Chum Salmon Workshop, and other venues. He shared his



The 2002 AFS Alaska Chapter Executive Committee showing (from left) David Wiswar, Carol Ann Woody, Carol Kerkvliet, Tim Joyce, and Alisa Abookire (Bob Ourso was not present). Photo by R. Brown.

knowledge and stories with audiences from grade schoolers to professionals, always with the enduring brand of humor he carried from his youth. As Chapter President, he oversaw the 2002 Girdwood meeting, and he also served as Chapter Secretary from 1997 to 1999.

David retired from the USFWS in 2006, but continued his educational interests, pursuing a master's degree in UAF's Northern Studies Program focusing on northern and polar history by taking courses, researching historical accounts, attending many presentations, and sharing information and stories with friends. In 2010, he presented "Commercial Bowhead Whaling in the Eastern Beaufort Sea, 1889–1911" to the Alaska Historical Society in Fairbanks. In September 2022, David was inducted into the Pioneers of Alaska, an honorary fraternal organization whose mission is to collect and preserve the history of Alaska.

David enjoyed traveling, experiencing new environments, and making friends from one coast to the other of Alaska and throughout the lower 48 states. He could also often be seen happily riding his bicycle around Fairbanks in the summer.

He is survived by his son, Walter Wiswar of Fairbanks, AK and daughter, Serena Wiswar Gil (David) of Las Cruces, NM; his sisters, Karen Cook (Rene) of Houston, TX and Susan Dougherty of Lincoln, NE; his nieces, Anga Smith (Ryan) of Omaha, NE, Ariana Cook (Branden Kosch) of Dallas, TX, Avalon Rehn of Los Angeles, CA; and nephew, David Cook of San Francisco, CA. 🐾

Student Subunit Happenings

Jonah Bacon, Student Subunit Representatives

For students in Alaska, there are two major happenings I hope to keep you informed on: (1) the upcoming Alaska Chapter AFS Meeting/Conference and opportunities there, and (2) the upcoming Student Subunit Retreat.

26th Annual Student Symposium 2023

The 26th Annual Student Symposium will take place on Friday, February 24. Students will use the Symposium to practice their presentation skills (and presentation for the upcoming Chapter Meeting), receive feedback from professionals and faculty, and network with students, faculty, community members, and industry professionals.

All students (undergraduate, M.S., and Ph.D.) from CFOS (all departments) are invited to present. The Symposium allows students to present their research, regardless of where they are within the timeframe of their study, with a long-talk option (12-minute talk + 3 minutes for questions) and a short-talk option (5-minute talk + 3 minutes for questions).

Presentations will take place in a hybrid in-person/virtual format, with an option to give a live, in-person presentation in Juneau and Fairbanks (streamed online), or a pre-recorded presentation. There will still be a live Q&A following the recorded talks. Volunteer judges

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AFS Alaska Chapter Student Representative, Jonah Bacon.

Happy New Year to you and all your important fishes! This winter brings many exciting opportunities for Alaska AFS students. First, though, let's offer our congratulations to those people who have completed their degrees and moved forward from "student" status:

Jacob Cohen (M.S. in Oceanography) – "Shifts in microbial community composition during the 2019 Pacific Marine Heatwave in the Northern Gulf of Alaska"

Kari Fenski (Ph.D. in Fisheries) – "Implications of spatial population dynamics for abundance estimation and catch apportionment of Alaska Sablefish (*Anoplopoma fimbria*)"

Elizabeth (Liza) Hasan (M.S. in Marine Biology) – "Species distribution modeling of Northern Sea Otters (*Enhydra lutris kenyoni*) in a data-limited ecosystem"

Drew Porter (M.S. in Marine Biology) – "Acute toxicity of copper to three species of Pacific salmon in water with low hardness and low dissolved organic carbon"

Christopher Sergeant (Ph.D. in Fisheries) – "Freshwater pressures on Pacific salmon in the coastal watersheds of Alaska"

Lauren Sutton (Ph.D. in Marine Biology) – "Drivers of functional ecology of the Alaskan Arctic epibenthos"

Michelle Trifari (M.S. in Marine Biology) – "Compound-specific stable isotopes of amino acids reveal the influence of trophic level and primary production sources on mercury concentrations in fishes from the Aleutian Islands, Alaska"

Brian Ulaski (Ph.D. in Marine Biology) – "Seaweeds across ecosystem boundaries: from habitat formation to harvest implications"

Alexis Walker (Ph.D. in Marine Biology) – "Exploring the North American Arctic benthos: community structure and oil degradation potential of sediment bacteria and archaea"

Kortney Birch (B.S. in Fisheries and Ocean Sciences with a concentration in Ocean Sciences)

Student Subunit Happenings, continued

will provide constructive critiques and scoring of student talks to improve student presentation skills and also to award winners for each presentation category (long and short talks). Judges, and general audience attendees who submit feedback for student talks will be entered into a raffle for various prizes made by Alaskan artists. Of course, this wouldn't be possible without the efforts of the Symposium Planning Committee: Anna Medina (avmedina3@alaska.edu), Cameron Jardell (cpjardell@alaska.edu), Will Samuel (wtsamuel@alaska.edu), or Matt Cheng (lhcheng@alaska.edu).

Chapter Meeting Travel Awards

Travel awards are available for students to attend the Alaska Chapter Meeting/Conference in Fairbanks during March 27–31, as well as to the Student Retreat. Travel award funding is available to cover the costs of flights, lodging, and/or meeting registration. In order to be eligible to receive travel award funding, students must: (1) be enrolled as a full-time student in the Spring 2023 semester, (2) be a member (in good standing) of the American Fisheries Society - Alaska Chapter, (3) be available to volunteer during the conference, and (4) demonstrate financial need. If a student is requesting flight and/or lodging financial assistance, we are asking that the student volunteer 12 hours of time to the meeting, with at least 6 hours of volunteer time during the week of the meeting. If a student is only requesting meeting registration financial assistance (i.e., they have their own travel assistance or live local to Fairbanks), we are asking that the student volunteer 6 hours of time to the meeting, with at least 3 hours of volunteer time during the week of the meeting. Additional criteria that will be considered when determining travel awards will include whether a student plans to present research at the conference, whether the student has demonstrated involvement in the Student Subunit/Chapter/Society, whether a student identifies as part of an underrepresented identity within fisheries, and whether a student is volunteering with the conference. A Google form will be shared at a later date via email for students to apply for Travel Award funding and will also be linked on the meeting website.



Will Samuel, M.S. student in Fisheries at UAF Fairbanks, shows an Arctic Grayling caught in Interior Alaska.

Chapter Meeting Engagement Opportunities

During the Annual Meeting, there will be multiple opportunities for students to engage with professionals, grow their skills, and present their research. Professional development courses will be offered on Sunday and Monday (March 26–27) with subjects in science communication and data analysis in R. On Tuesday, March 28, there will be a catered Mentorship Mixer lunch with students and industry professionals. To present research, students have the opportunity of a poster session Wednesday morning and/or technical sessions throughout Tuesday through Thursday to present either 5- or 12-minute talks. Throughout the meeting week, there will be Affinity Group mixers during coffee/lunch breaks for individuals to connect with others of similar identities. There will also be many social events to network among professionals, including a film festival on Monday evening and casual socials on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. A formal banquet will be held Thursday evening, where awards for best student talks and posters will be bestowed. Friday will be a fun day filled with field trips.

Chapter Meeting Volunteer Opportunities

Students have played a large role in helping put on the Alaska Chapter's Annual Meetings/Conferences in past years, and we hope to continue

Continued on next page

Student Subunit Happenings, continued

that tradition for this year's event! In addition, volunteering time is a way for students to have their meeting registration costs completely covered and/or enhance their Travel Award application.

Prior to the meeting, students can solicit silent auction donations from businesses. These solicitations can be done for businesses throughout the state and are usually done over email. Proceeds from the silent auction directly go to support Travel Awards for the students, so please assist with this worthy cause! If students are interested in volunteering with the silent auction donation solicitations, please contact me (student@afs-alaska.org) as soon as possible!

Additionally, members of the Planning Committee are asking for assistance from students with a variety of different tasks. These volunteer opportunities are occurring both before and during the week of the meeting. Working the registration table and/or any of these other meeting-related events will increase your exposure as a student and help immensely with networking! Student volunteer opportunities PRIOR to the week of the meeting include:

1. **Website and Event platform** – help with web design for the meeting website and/or social media posts

2. **Program Book** – assist with assembling meeting program book (most work will be in early March after abstracts are due)

3. **Indigenous inclusion / Tribal liason** – reach out to Tribal organizations, encourage participation in the meeting, and help make the meeting inclusive

Student volunteer opportunities DURING the week of the meeting include:

1. **Affinity Groups** (throughout meeting week) – Affinity groups will include: BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color), LGBTQIA2S+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Two-spirit +), Disability, First Generation College Students (Past and Present), Dependent Caregivers, and Women and Underrepresented Genders. We need one student for each affinity group for a ~1 hour time commitment. Please contact Cheryl Barnes (deic@afs-alaska.org) directly to volunteer to help with an affinity group.

2. **Registration Desk Coordinator** (throughout meeting week) – coordinate student volunteers so there is always one person at the registration desk

3. **Registration Desk** (throughout meeting week, 1 hour time blocks) – sit at the registration desk, communicate with meeting attendees, and help individuals register for the meeting

4. **Professional Development** (Sunday, March 26, and Monday, March 27) – help setup the classroom and make sure the instructor is set for the day, disseminate and collect evaluations at the end of the classes

5. **Welcome Social / Film Fest** (Monday evening, March 2) – help setup A/V for the Film Festival and drinks/hors d'oeuvres

6. **Banquet** (Thursday evening, March 30) – various small tasks related to the Banquet and coordination with the Westmark Hotel

7. **Spawning Run / Walk 5K** (TBD) – specific tasks undetermined at the moment, but likely helping with the logistics and operation of the fun run/walk

8. **Awards** (throughout meeting week) – help to make sure judges have paper copies of score sheets for student talks, help tabulate scores and determine student winners (it would be best if this student is not presenting or participating in the competition)

9. **Field Trips** (Thursday evening, March 30, and Friday, March 31) – set up ice fishing spot Thursday evening, then help with a 4–6 hour ice fishing excursion Friday

If students are interested in volunteering in any of these capacities, please contact me!

Student Subunit Retreat

The AFS Student Subunit at the University of Alaska Fairbanks is sponsoring a Student Retreat from Friday, March 24 through Monday, March 27, which is the weekend immediately prior to the Alaska Chapter Annual Meeting/Conference. The Student Retreat will be held at the Twin Bears Camp, where students will have time to socialize, relax, recreate (ski, snowshoe, ice fish), go on field trips (Chena Hot Springs, Fairbanks, aurora viewing), practice and get peer feedback on their AFS presentations, and spend a weekend together.

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Student Subunit Happenings, continued

The Student Retreat is open to all AFS student members (undergraduate and graduate students!). Please contact Garrett Dunne (Subunit President; gddunne@alaska.edu) or myself (student@afs-alaska.org) with further questions or to get involved. Further details, specifics, and communications regarding the Retreat will be published on the meeting website as well as via email.

Western Division Opportunities

Additionally, there are opportunities for students to participate in Western Division AFS activities.

The Western Division AFS Annual Meeting will be hosted by the Idaho Chapter in Boise, May 8–11, 2023. The AFS Western Division has applications open for Small Project Grants (deadline February 1), WDAFS Annual Meeting Travel Grants (February 24), Award Nominations (February 24), Graduate-level Scholarships (February 24), Riparian Challenge Award (February 24), and Aquatic Film and Photo Festival (March 15).

More information on criteria, deadlines, and submittals is available at www.wdafs.org. 

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEIC) for the Alaska Chapter of the American Fisheries Society is excited to announce several opportunities at the upcoming meeting in Fairbanks. We hope that you will take advantage of one or more of these! Questions and comments can be directed to deic@afs-alaska.org.

Workshop: Collaborative Approaches to DEI in Fisheries

Monday, March 27, This workshop will focus on recruitment, retention, and promotion processes for Alaska fisheries professions, providing an opportunity for people from around the state to discuss efforts that are and are not working in terms of advancing DEI. A major workshop goal is to promote collaboration among institutions and strengthen agency efforts to increase access to fisheries professions across Alaska. Discussions will be facilitated by G2 Diversified Services with financial support from Alaska Sea Grant, Remote attendance will be available, and AFS membership is not required.

Community Building Events at the AK AFS Meeting in Fairbanks

Please join us for one or more of the following events in Fairbanks—all of which are intended to increase diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging within the AK Chapter! Other meeting details can be found at <https://afs-alaska.org/>

Mentorship Mixer, Tue, Mar 28, Lunch provided, but registration required

This in person event, co-hosted by the CFOS student group, will provide an opportunity for attendees to discuss a number of topics. Mentorship benefits people at every career stage, so all participants are encouraged to share their experiences and learn from others. Informal conversations may center around professional development, career advancement, and/or STEM involvement. Organizers will provide prompts, but participants are encouraged to discuss anything of interest.

Affinity Groups

Affinity groups provide safe spaces for people who identify with underrepresented and/or historically marginalized groups to gather, build community, and bolster a sense of belonging. There are in-person coffee break events in Fairbanks, as well as a remote option on Tuesday. Participants must identify as a member of an affinity group that you are in or intend to join.

Tuesday, March 28

AM Coffee Break—BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color)

PM Coffee Break—LGBTQIA2S+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/ Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Two-spirit +)

PM Coffee Break (remote option)—All affinity groups listed here.

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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, continued

Wednesday, March 29

AM Coffee Break—People with Disabilities (including physical conditions, neurodivergence, mood disorders, and chronic illness)

PM Coffee Break—First Generation College Students (Past & Present)

Thursday, March 30

AM Coffee Break—Dependent Caregivers

PM Coffee Break—Women and Underrepresented Genders

Friday, March 31

Breakfast (provided)—Allyship Discussion (in-person only)

Want to keep refining your skills as an ally? Join us for an informal discussion about how we can work together to more effectively support those with underrepresented and/or historically marginalized identities in fisheries. Everyone is welcome, but note that these discussions are not intended to serve as a professional training. This is simply an opportunity for participants to learn from each other.

Pebble Mine

On January 31, the EPA finalized its determination to restrict the use of certain waters in Alaska's Bristol Bay watershed as disposal sites for discharge of dredged or fill material in association with mining the Pebble deposit. This follows two decades of mine plans, comment periods, and fish studies. The Alaska Chapter engaged in this process numerous times, and applauds the response to EPA's veto from the parent society: "Salmon across the nation are sliding towards extinction due to pollution, habitat loss, and warming waters, yet Bristol Bay is one of the few places where salmon continue to thrive," said AFS Executive Director, Douglas Austen. "EPA's decision to use its Clean Water Act authority to preserve the last healthy wild salmon runs in the country and their untouched habitat is the right decision."

Tongass Roadless Rule

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced on January 25 a restoration of roadless protections to 9.37 million acres of the Tongass National Forest—a decision supported by the Alaska Chapter in our January 2022 comment letter.

In Other News ...

Tribal members and high school students get free registration! Contact presidentelect@afs-alaska.org for more information.

The Chapter is considering providing subsidized childcare for conference attendees if there is enough interest. If you are potentially interested, please complete a 3 minute survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SNDQKB5>.

We look forward to connecting with you soon!

Cheryl Barnes, she | they (DEIC Chair)

Sara Gilk-Baumer, she | her

Katie Russell, she | her

Keenan Sanderson, he | him

Erik Schoen, he | him (AK AFS Executive Committee Liaison)

Madeline Lee, she | her (AK AFS Student Subunit Liaison) 🐾

Back issues of *Oncorhynchus*
can be found online

<http://www.afs-alaska.org/newsletter>

Environmental Concerns Corner

Recovering America's Wildlife Act

Unfortunately, the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (H.R.2773/S.2372) did not get passed in the last days of the 117th Congress, despite strong bipartisan support and encouragement from businesses, scientists, conservation groups, and agencies. Keep an eye out for future opportunities to communicate to our Alaska delegation about this important legislation.

Join us for an Environmental Concerns Committee meeting in Fairbanks! We look forward to an in-person discussion about the issues on your mind and ways that the Alaska Chapter can engage to provide coordinated technical and policy analysis and Chapter input and comments on environmental issues that affect Alaska's fishery resources.

If you have an issue in your region or related to your fisheries work where the Chapter could be impactful, please reach out to Sue Mauger (pastpresident@afs-alaska.org) and Joel Markis (jamarkis@alaska.edu). As chairs of the Environmental Concerns Committee, we want to bring our Chapter into conversations where our expertise has the greatest value. 🐾

Meetings and Events

AFS Alaska Student Symposium

February 24, 2023. This symposium will be a combineate hybrid and in-person in Juneau and Fairbanks. For more information, contact Will Samuel at wtsamuel@alaska.edu.



American Fisheries Society Alaska Chapter Annual Meeting

March 27–31, 2023. The 49th annual meeting of the AFS Alaska Chapter will be in Fairbanks, AK. More information will be posted at <https://afs-alaska.org/>.



American Fisheries Society Western Division Annual Meeting

May 7–11, 2023. The next AFS Western Division meeting will be in Boise, ID. More information will be posted at <https://wdaafs.org/meetings/annual-meeting/>.



AFS Code of Conduct

The Ethics and Professional Conduct Committee (EPCC) of the American Fisheries Society has developed a code of conduct for our meetings and AFS-sponsored functions, whether virtual or in person. This brief document is available at <https://fisheries.org/about/governance/afs-meetings-code-of-conduct/>. Please read through this document to ensure that we are collectively working to build awareness of this policy to ensure that all AFS-related gatherings are a respectful and inclusive experience for everyone. If you have questions, reach out directly to the EPCC Chair Brian Missildine for support at brian.missildine@dfw.wa.gov.



Fish of the Week!

Join us every Monday for our Fish of the Week podcast! We get to know all the fish — how they live in Alaska, what habitats they use, what they eat, and where they go and why. Everything you need to know to appreciate and conserve these fish and be a successful angler.

[*We've got lots of fish stories.*](#)

ONCORHYNCHUS

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