Gill Raker Gazette

Newsletter of the Idaho Chapter of the American Fisheries Society

Volume 45, Issue 3 November 2026 Editor: Mike Peterson

President's Message-Leading at all levels

In its basic definition, leading simply means providing direction and guidance or exercising leadership, and of course, there are other definitions, such as coming or ranking first, but more on that later.

I challenge us all to lead and be leaders when it comes to fisheries, no matter what stage we are at in our careers. Whether you are leading a fisheries or aquaculture project or policy, taking someone fishing for the first time (or the hundredth), showing someone how cool caddisfly casings are, or explaining the intricacies of a legal sturgeon fishing rig and why it is important for conservation, you are leading and guiding our profession.

You are all entrusted members of our American Fisheries Society and leaders in the promotion of fisheries resources. As fisheries and natural resource professionals, we have the honor of representing and advancing the science of aquatic resources. We have the privilege of mentoring and guiding future professionals.

As students, we have the excitement and curiosity to learn and explore the challenges and demands of our natural resources, pursue careers that suit our interests and talents, and lead the next generation. One thing we all have in common, regardless of our career stage, is the ability to lead and showcase the exhilaration of pursuing a mighty gamefish or describing the science behind the remarkable aquatic biodiversity around us.

We all get to lead and tell the story of why fisheries matter to people outside our profession, and we should do so at every opportunity. Whenever you can, take someone fishing!

And speaking of leading, we have an amazing opportunity to lead and share our science and information with our wildlife colleagues at our upcoming Joint Annual Meeting with The Wildlife Society, and I hope you read all about it in the next few pages. It is going to be a great meeting!



Tom and his son Dylan, fishing for rainbows on the South Fork Boise River.

I would be remiss in this message about leading if I did not give a huge shout-out to both BYU-Idaho and ISU for earning first and second place, respectively, in the recent Freshwater Frenzy Competition. Kudos to both institutions for their dedicated leadership and fishing prowess!

Continue to lead those around you with your passion, knowledge, and fisheries values. Lead at the level you are at.

Tom Bassista, ICAFS President, tom.bassista@idfg.idaho.gov

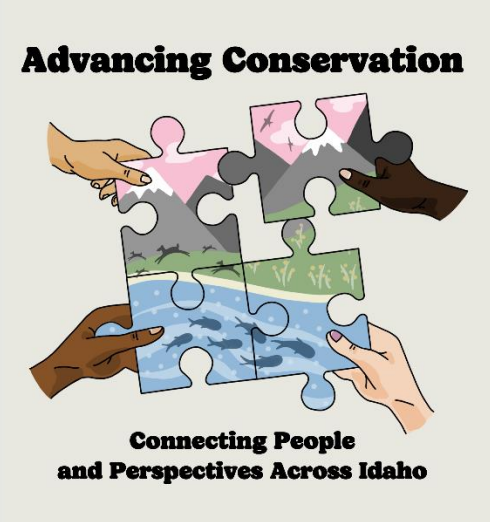


Announcing the 2027 Joint ICAFS & ICTWS

2027 Joint ICAFS & ICTWS Annual Meeting
February 22-25 at the Boise Centre in Boise, ID
Abstract Submission is now open
Hotel booking is now available

Plenary Theme

The theme of the 2027 joint annual meeting is "***Advancing Conservation: Connecting People and Perspectives Across Idaho***". Idaho's natural resources are valued and enjoyed by a wide variety of user groups, each bringing different perspectives and priorities. Understanding these perspectives and learning effective communication strategies can help foster collaboration and advance conservation efforts across the state. Our plenary speakers will offer thoughtful discussions that explore the experiences, perspectives, and priorities of different user groups and how enhanced communication can help connect people and advance conservation in Idaho.



Venue and Loding

The meeting will take place in the Boise Centre West, located in beautiful downtown Boise, ID. A block of rooms is being held at the Hampton Inn, conveniently located one block from the Boise Centre, until January 31, 2027. A standard rate of $176 for two Queen beds or $199 for one King bed will be offered to meeting attendees three days before and three days after the meeting if attendees want to extend their time in Boise. Reservations can be made by calling the hotel directly at 208-331-1900 and share that you are with the "American Fisheries Society – Joint Annual Meeting" to receive the discounted rate or can book online via this link. By booking within the hotel room block, you are supporting comped rooms that will be distributed evenly among our student sub-units.

Abstract Submission

Abstracts are now being accepted for the 2027 Joint Annual Meeting. Submit your poster or oral presentation abstract here. In addition to contributed sessions, there are eight symposia that all oral presenters are encouraged to consider if their abstract aligns with a session topic. These symposia are open to submissions from all meeting participants, and presenters do not need to be invited to submit. To view a full list of symposia, please follow this link.

If anyone has any questions please contact Rebekah Horn, ICAFS President-Elect (rhorn@critfc.org) or Brandon Flack, ICTWS President-Elect (brandon.flack@idfg.idaho.gov).



ICAFS/TWS 2027 Workshops

Riverscape Health Principles for Restoration Planning and Monitoring

Instructors: A number of professionals from multiple agencies

Full day: 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Attendance Cap: 50

Riverscapes are made up of connected floodplain and channel habitats that collectively make up valley bottoms. Valley bottoms are low gradient surfaces that are subject to reworking by current fluvial processes. Valley bottoms have high aquatic habitat value and represent the maximum area that can be influenced by any riverscape restoration project. Key riverscape health principles include 1) freedom for channels to move laterally and connect with adjacent floodplains, 2) functioning flow, sediment, and vegetation regimes, and 3) channel and floodplain structural elements that promote flow, sediment, and vegetation diversity. This workshop will explore these principles in detail and illustrate their importance to aquatic habitat restoration planning and monitoring.

Facing Tough Terrain: Facilitation as Leadership

Instructor: Maggie Chumbley – Lead Better Groups Inc.

Full day: 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Attendance Cap: 40

When the path forward is clear, facilitating a group is mostly about sticking to an agenda. When the path forward is unknown, without precedent, or lacking a clear pattern, leading a group becomes a space for discovery. In conditions of uncertainty and complexity, facilitation becomes leadership, and that is where it offers its greatest value. Fish and wildlife work is full of chronic, recurring challenges that don't resolve into clean answers: competing priorities, long timelines, shifting partners and stakeholders, and persistent uncertainty.

This workshop frames facilitation as a leadership practice suited to the terrain we navigate, especially where there is low certainty and low agreement about how to proceed. Participants will explore key principles for working with complexity, along with practical structures for applying them in meetings and collaborative efforts, from interagency working groups to public engagement and recovery planning.

Introduction to Decision Analysis

Instructor: Matt Falcy – University of Idaho

Half day: 8:00 – 12:00 PM **OR** Full day: 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

(attendees have the option to attend only the morning session or attend the full day)

Attendance Cap: 50

The first half of the workshop will include instructor presentations about core concepts of decision analysis. This will be formatted as an open Q&A + participant commentary. Core concepts include (i) risk analysis with single and multiple objectives, (ii) the quantification of the value of new information, (iii) demo of a Bayesian belief network for capturing and analyzing a decision problem. The second half of the workshop will include a step-by-step demonstration on how to construct a Bayesian belief network with free software (Netica) and explanation of R code to compute the value of new information. Participants should bring a computer to the second half. Previous exposure to decision analysis is not required.

This workshop will be offered in a modular format where all participants who attend the morning session can optionally return after lunch for a second half-day of offering a hands-on lab in which they build and solve small decision problems with a computer.



ICAFS/TWS 2027 Workshops-continued

"I saw an octopus in the Snake River!" A Guide to Conversing with the Public in Unplanned, Informal Situations about Fish & Wildlife Management

Instructors: Jamie Utz and David Bernasconi – Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Half day: 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Attendance Cap: 50

Fish and wildlife biologists have interesting jobs that look very different from many other career paths. Revealing to a stranger that you're a biologist can lead to further questions and discussion; the resulting interaction is often unpredictable and might turn into a funny, serious, political, or even hostile interaction. Many of us admittedly prefer the company of animals to people, so these unplanned encounters can be intimidating. People vary widely in how comfortable they are with spontaneous phone calls or face-to-face conversations, especially when emotions run high or the topic is controversial. Combine that with someone who knows little about your work, or who arrives with misinformation, and a casual conversation can quickly become a high-stakes communication situation.
This workshop will focus on practical ways to communicate fish and wildlife science and management in informal settings, primarily with people who don't have a science background. The goal is to give attendees adaptable tools that build confidence and reduce friction during unplanned conversations. Ultimately, this will help biologists show up as trustworthy, approachable sources of information that reflect scientific career fields in a positive light.

Use of Innovative Technologies for Movement Monitoring

Instructors: Nick Porter – Biomark, Joel Yelich – Vence, and William Blake – American Bird Conservancy

Half day: 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Attendance Cap: 50

This workshop will introduce students to innovative technologies used to monitor fish, wildlife, and livestock. Participants will explore a range of tracking tools, statistical methods, and data interpretation techniques used in research and management. Industry experts will lead sessions on RFID/PIT tagging (Biomark), virtual fencing (Vence), and Motus radio telemetry, highlighting how each technology can be used to address research questions. Students will learn about these tools, engage with industry professionals, and explore how data generated through these technologies can be interpreted and applied to scientific research, wildlife conservation, and livestock management.

eDNA and Stable Isotopes: Tools for Fisheries and Wildlife Management

Instructors: Caren Goldberg – USGS and Dr. Linda Reynard – Boise State University

Half day: 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Attendance Cap: 50

Both eDNA and stable isotopes are modern, advanced methods for answering ecological questions of management relevance and are likely underutilized in the fish and wildlife communities. In this workshop, we will cover current and potential applications of environmental DNA (eDNA) analysis for fish and wildlife management, aquatic and terrestrial sample collection methods, and the different ways to get samples analyzed. In addition, we will discuss eDNA data interpretation and uncertainty, and how eDNA efforts can complement other tools. We will also cover the current state of the art for stable isotope analysis in ecology. What are stable isotopes? How do they vary in plants, animals, and the environment? How can they be used as an ecological tool? Topics covered will include: trophic ecology, animal migration, isoscapes, sampling considerations, and models (Bayesian (dietary) isotopic mixing models, isotopic niche spaces). Attendees will leave with a deeper understanding of how these tools can be used and the steps required to collect samples, have them analyzed by labs, and how to interpret the results.



ICAFS/TWS 2027 Workshops-continued

Aquaculture Tools for Fisheries Management

Instructors: Various hatchery personnel from around the state

Half day: 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Attendance Cap: 50

This workshop will provide insight and exposure to the tools and techniques that hatchery professionals use to improve post-release success and monitoring of hatchery fish. Topics will include fish tagging and marking, genetic monitoring, broodstock management and manipulation, and database management to support research, monitoring, and evaluation.

2027 ICAFS Awards
Call for nominations

Outstanding commitment to the chapter and profession should be recognized, and ICAFS has maintained a strong tradition of recognizing our colleagues at the annual meeting for their over-the-top efforts to further our Mission (About us). Please consider nominating a deserving colleague for an award. A list of past recipients may be found on the Chapter's website (Past Award Recipients). Nominations must be submitted by January 8, 2027, except for the R.L. Wallace Award which must be submitted by December 18, 2026.

Lifetime Achievement Award

This award, the most prestigious granted by the Idaho Chapter, recognizes those who have made significant and sustained contributions to advance the mission of the Chapter by promoting sound fisheries and aquatic science, implementing effective management programs, or fostering the development of fisheries professionals. Nominees must be retired or within five years of retirement to be eligible. Chapter members may submit nominations to the ICAFS Past President (joe.kozfkay@idfg.idaho.gov).

Distinguished Service Award

This award is granted to individuals who have made a significant contribution to further the mission of the Chapter by serving on the Executive Committee or as Committee Chairs. Award recipients are selected by the Executive Committee.

Outstanding Professional Award

The Outstanding Professional Award is granted to individuals who have made a significant contribution in furthering the mission of the Idaho Chapter by exhibiting outstanding performance and is specific to work completed outside the Chapter. Chapter members may submit nominations to the ICAFS Past President (joe.kozfkay@idfg.idaho.gov).



2027 ICAFS Awards call for nominations-continued

Richard L. Wallace Native Fish Conservationist of the Year Award

This Native Fish Committee-sponsored award was created in 2004 and is presented to an individual, group, or organization for outstanding achievement in native fish conservation in Idaho. The physical award is a beautiful hand-carved version of a fish species that is a meaningful representation of the recipient's work. Chapter members may submit nominations to Native Fish Committee Co-chairs (Dan Kenney, cuttquest10@gmail.com; Cynthia Nau, cynthia.nau@idfg.idaho.gov; Jeff Strait, jeff.strait@idfg.idaho.gov).

Outstanding Mentor Award

The Outstanding Mentor Award is sponsored by the Mentoring Committee. This award was created by the Palouse Unit in 2006. Since 2007, the award has been administered by the Chapter's Mentoring Committee. The award is presented annually to an individual who has shown substantial devotion to mentoring fisheries students or professionals in Idaho. The recipients are selected by the Mentoring Committee co-chairs. Chapter members may submit nominations to mentoring@idahoafs.org.

Outstanding Early Career Professional Award

The Outstanding Early Career Professional Award is also sponsored by the Mentoring Committee and is intended to celebrate exceptional work in early career professionals. To be eligible, professionals must be within five years post-graduation and be working at any level in the fisheries profession including culturist, technician, or biologist, among others. Nominations should be sent to the Mentoring Committee co-chairs at mentoring@idahoafs.org.

Aquatic Habitat Award

This award, created in 2006, is sponsored by the Aquatic Habitat Committee and is presented to an individual or group that has made significant contributions to the field of fish habitat restoration and enhancement in Idaho. The recipients are selected from nominations submitted by Chapter members. Nominations should be submitted to the committee co-chairs (Eric Berntsen, eberntsen@kalispeltribe.com; Stephanie Hallock, stephanie.hallock@cdatribe-nsn.gov).

Excellence in Aquaculture Award

This award is sponsored by the Aquaculture Committee. It was created in 2008 and is presented annually to an individual or group for outstanding achievement in the field of aquaculture or aquaculture-related research. The recipients are selected from nominations submitted by Chapter members to committee co-chairs (Brian Michaels, brian@kootenai.org; Melissa Wagner, mdwagner@csi.edu; Tyson Fehringer, ty-son.fehringer@idfg.idaho.gov).

Nomination format

Nominations should be submitted via email as an attached digital document to the appropriate Chapter representative as indicated above. Documents should include the targeted award, the name(s) of the nominee(s), the name(s) of the nominator(s), submission date, and a no more than 1000-word summary of accomplishments relating to the ICAFS Mission and the respective award. Self-nominations are accepted.

Don't get too busy to nominate someone worthy of these awards! Great work is being done.



ICAFS Scholarships

ICAFS annually awards the following four scholarships for students attending Idaho schools:

Idaho High School Student Scholarship - $750
Idaho Undergraduate Student Scholarship - $1500
Douglas J. Megargle Memorial Scholarship - $4000
Susan B. Martin Mentoring Scholarship - $4000

Scholarship applications will be accepted from December 1 through January 31 and will be awarded at the 2027 annual meeting. Please see the memorial scholarship tributes in this newsletter. More information and application materials are available on the Chapter website https://www.idahoafs.org/scholarships.php. Please note that revised application instructions will be posted by 12/01/2026. Also please help us promote a fair and neutral selection by considering the referenced document in the scholarship recommendation form instructions.

Grants

ICAFS has a long history of promoting aquatic education efforts. In 2013, ICAFS formally established an Aquatic Education/Trout-in-the-Classroom Grant. These $50-1,250 grants are available to Idaho teachers to assist with aquatic education efforts, including the Trout-in-the-Classroom program or other activities. The number of grants awarded annually is dependent on available funding and need. Please pass the word to educators!

For more information regarding grants and scholarships contact Public Education Committee Co-chairs Lauri Monnot at (208) 373-0203 or lauri.monnot@deq.idaho.gov, or Sean Wilson at (208) 770-3761 or sean.wilson@idfg.idaho.gov and please visit this link.

Douglas J. Megargle Memorial Scholarship (1966-2019)



This scholarship is in memory of Douglas (Doug) J. Megargle who was a successful fisheries professional for 22 years with Idaho Department of Fish and Game in both research and management. Doug was an enthusiastic member of the American Fisheries Society, attending nearly every Idaho Chapter meeting during his professional career. Doug's enthusiasm for the profession was infectious, and one of his greatest passions was mentoring young professionals as they began their fisheries careers, steering them as often as possible toward graduate school and AFS membership and involvement. Doug died in an automobile accident on May 14, 2019, while on duty. This memorial scholarship is intended to honor Doug's legacy of promoting the development of young fishery professionals and will be awarded annually to a graduate student attending or affiliated with a student subunit at any school in Idaho. This scholarship was created by generous donations from the Megargle family and the Idaho Chapter. Please see a tribute to Doug.



Susan B. Martin Memorial Scholarship (1951-2008)



This scholarship is in memory of Susan B. Martin who served as the first female president of the Idaho Chapter (1986-1987) and who was also a successful scientist and natural resource manager. Her career as a scientist involved time with the U.S. Forest Service Intermountain Research Station - Boise laboratory, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, and 20 years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Susan was dedicated to the conservation and protection of fish, wildlife and plants, and consistently emphasized the need for more discussion by all interested parties to reach resolution on highlighted issues. Over the course of her life, she had a tremendous impact on the management of natural resources and an important influence on the development of many natural resource professionals. To learn more about her life and impact please read a tribute to Susan. Susan passed away at the age of 57 on September 15, 2008, in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, after a two-year battle with cancer. This scholarship, which was first awarded in 2009, is intended to continue Susan's legacy of fostering the development of fish and aquatic professionals and is awarded annually to a graduate student attending any school in Idaho. This scholarship is funded by an endowment which was created with contributions from the Martin family and the Idaho Chapter.

Future AFS Meeting



For more information,

American Fisheries Society 157th Annual Meeting – Pittsburgh, September 26-30, 2027



Student Spotlight-BYU-Idaho Subunit

Rose Chandler is a senior at BYU-Idaho and is the current president of the BYU-Idaho Student Subunit. At the end of her sophomore year, Rose was offered a bio-aide position at the McCall Fish Hatchery. This position changed Rose's trajectory in the fisheries profession. Under the mentorship of the incredible staff at the McCall Hatchery, Rose developed a great passion for aquaculture and fish in general, a passion that she happily shared with the visitors to the hatchery. This past summer, Rose worked at the Niagara Springs Fish Hatchery where she had a chance to learn about new species including the White Sturgeon. She is currently working on a project investigating the effects of incubation temperature on the hatch rate of sturgeon eggs; check out her poster at the ICAFS meeting in Boise! As subunit president, Rose continues to share her passion for fish with her peers by creating opportunities for students to get hands-on training with basic fisheries skills, to network with fish biologists in Idaho, and to learn more about aquaculture as a valuable fisheries tool. Rose will graduate with her undergraduate degree in 2027 and is planning on pursuing a career in aquaculture in Idaho.



BYU-Idaho Subunit

The BYU-Idaho subunit of the American Fisheries Society has done lots of activities. We had a meeting introducing AFS talking about what it is and how students could get involved in it and the opportunities that come with being in the subunit. We also did an introduction to electroshocking activity that gave students the opportunity to learn and practice the skills needed to electrofish. We then worked on organizing and placing new fish that our professor collected on his sabbatical in our fish collection. We did 2 fishing activities while we were involved in the Freshwater Frenzy Competition. We ended up winning the Fishing competition and celebrated that while also learning and practicing T-bar anchor and Pit tagging on Brook Trout. We also had the opportunity to have some of student participate in St Anthony canal fish salvage.





Student Spotlight-Palouse Subunit



Adie Wimer

Adie is in her final year of completing her B.S. in Fisheries Science with a minor in Wildlife Science at the University of Idaho. She has been an active member of the Palouse Unit of the American Fisheries Society (PUAFS) for four years and currently serves as Secretary for the 2026–2027 academic year. Adie is always eager to take advantage of opportunities through AFS, including participating in Sturgeon sampling and visiting the steelhead weir. Adie has completed two field seasons with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game in the Magic Valley region, where she gained valuable experience in fisheries surveys, leadership, and collaboration with other professionals. Her fieldwork included high-mountain lake population surveys, lowland lake surveys, and mark-recapture surveys throughout the region. She also works part-time as a teaching assistant for Dr. Kennedy at the University of Idaho, helping students with fieldwork and sampling activities outside the classroom.

Outside of academics and fisheries, Adie competes on the University of Idaho Track and Field team and enjoys taking advantage of Idaho's outdoor recreation opportunities, including hunting, fishing, and hiking. After graduating this spring, she plans to work as a fisheries technician for several months before pursuing graduate school to earn her M.S. in Fisheries Sciences.

Palouse Subunit



The students at the Palouse AFS subunit are currently tackling the fall semester and have remained actively engaged in monthly meetings and field trip opportunities. This semester, the subunit has had the pleasure of hosting several guest speakers who have shared valuable research findings along with their management implications. In early October, five of our students traveled to Lake Pend Orielle to assist the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) with Lake Trout suppression netting efforts, while seven of our students joined IDFG crews in Hells Canyon to assist with Sturgeon hook-and-line sampling. The remainder of our fall semester will include additional guest speakers and preparations for the annual ICAFS meeting in February 2027.



Executive Committee Contacts



President
Tom Bassista
tom.bassista@idfg.idaho.gov



President-Elect
Rebekah Horn
president-elect@idahoafs.org



Vice President
Mike Peterson
mike.peterson@idfg.idaho.gov



Past President
Joe Kozfkay
joe.kozfkay@idfg.idaho.gov



Treasurer
Audrey Harris
audrey.harris@idfg.idaho.gov



Secretary
Darcy McCarrick
darcy.mccarrick@idfg.idaho.gov



Nominations Chair
Melissa Wagner
mdwagner@csi.edu



BYU-I Student Unit President
Rose Chandler
rosealenechandler05@gmail.com



Palouse Student Unit President
Darby McMartin
dmcmartin@uidaho.edu



Portneuf Student Unit President
Anna Reside
annareside@isu.edu

