



AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY
ORGANIZED 1870
IDAHO CHAPTER



GILL RAKER GAZETTE

Volume 19, Number 3

December 1999

Mark Gamblin, Editor

Insider Call for Papers

100th Annual Meeting March

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Ted Koch

I find myself just a few months into my tenure as Chapter president reflecting on whether I'm doing the right thing in pushing this Snake River salmon and dams issue. I also wonder what others think of my actions so far as an ExComm member. It seems that a few members are my critics, more are supportive, and most are silent.

Regardless, I know that those who have been my critics have at least been kind enough to treat me with respect and professionalism. But all too often, unfortunately, that is more than I can say for the critics of my critics. This issue has been, and will continue to be around us for a long time, so we'd better learn how to deal with it as professionals in as productive a manner as possible.

I arrived in Idaho as a graduate student at Idaho State University back in 1988, fresh off a project where we were trying to re-create an extinct run of Atlantic Salmon in the Connecticut River. When I met my colleagues in the Idaho Chapter, I asked how the region had the wisdom to keep its salmon runs. The answer I got was essentially, "There hasn't been enough time to kill them all yet." This assessment has proven to be alarmingly true, it seems.

Over these last 11 years for me, I have observed sometimes acrimonious debate over salmon and dams boil within this Chapter. Because of this, when I was serendipitously inserted into a leadership role within the chapter, I decided that I would somehow allow the chapter to collectively decide what its position was on this most important issue, and move on. I did not seek to pass a resolution to have something to waive in decision-makers faces. I was shocked when 92% of my colleagues voted in favor of such a strongly worded statement as we did back in March, saying that dams must go to save salmon.

Since then, as I have continued to learn more, I have been just as surprised at how direct and obvious the evidence seems to be against keeping dams and salmon, too. It's almost as if some of us cannot see the forest for the trees. Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "Science is nothing more than the refinement of everyday thinking." And this quote rings more true to me in my reflections on this issue than any other because it seems that some have known the truth in the chapter's resolution for a long time.

For example, when I was traveling the state as the Idaho Wolf Recovery Project Leader for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I remember speaking to community members in Salmon, Idaho in 1994. The tense discussion shifted from wolves to saving salmon, and person said, "I know we need to get the cows out of the creeks, but why are we wasting our time and money when everybody knows it's the dams?"

At the time, I didn't "know it's the dams." But I believe I know that now. It is particularly interesting that it took the chapter until 1999 to make as clear of a statement on the issue as that Salmon rancher. We're largely there now. But not all of us are there. The vote on the resolution was not 100%. So what to do with those who disagree, or at least are not willing to agree?

I have been quoted in the media on the issue of salmon and dams on a few occasions now, and one quote that is often used is the one where I say, essentially, "We scientists in the majority opinion on this issue owe a debt of gratitude to those scientists who question the majority. If no one was asking questions, it wouldn't be science."

Not only do we owe a debt of gratitude to those in the region who question the need to remove dams because they help keep us honest, but to many of these individuals we owe a debt of gratitude for working hard over the last 30 years to find ways to save salmon with the dams in place. If were not for their hard work, there might not be any salmon left to save.

For these reasons it pains me greatly to hear and see these people get attacked personally, under the guise of science. Some attacks seem to be issued because their research program funding is tied to the existence of the dams. Or perhaps some believe that they've made millions of dollars serving the industries that benefit from those dams. While these criticisms may have a factual basis, and while it's possible they might even be motivating some of those who disagree to not see things as clearly as they should, these criticisms are irrelevant to the scientific debate.

I personally believe that dams must go to save salmon. I disagree with those who say they do not. While there is some uncertainty that dams must go, I believe that uncertainty is small. However, I have yet to debate with a scientist on this issue where I felt he or she was being truly dishonest with me. I've occasionally wondered if they're being dishonest with themselves, but never with me. Because of this fact, I'm willing to go to bat every time for those with whom I disagree, to defend their right to their scientific opinion. And I beseech those who behave otherwise to stop.

Not only is it unprofessional to attack personally the science of those who question the need to remove dams, it's less effective than arguing the facts. Who is capable of listening dispassionately to objective arguments when they're being attacked personally? We must boil down our arguments on this issue to those basic elements where we can all see the core ideas that we eventually choose to believe. If those who disagree with the idea of removing dams are really so biased in their opinion, then it stands to reason that their scientific arguments should be easy to dismiss. I urge all of us to focus our energies in this manner.

Some have criticized their colleagues from their own personal perspective, and for that I have no judgement because it is not my place to say. I realize that many involved in this debate have been injured in their past relationships, or they take the argument of saving salmon personally, and their lashing out is a personal reaction, not a scientific one. If people who work as scientists want to attack someone personally, fine, but don't do it under the veil of science.

I think Dr. Ted Bjornn's plea for reasoned scientific argument on this issue at our March annual meeting was most timely and most eloquent. What I heard from Ted was a simple request to remain civil and debate ideas, not personalities. While I think we succeeded in heeding Ted's plea at the meeting, my experience is that we often fail in other fora - especially behind closed doors. We would do well to listen more carefully to the wisdom of such patriarchs of our chapter.

UPDATE ON SALMON AND DAMS RESOLUTION

The ExCom suggested I prepare an update on the status of the Snake River salmon and dams resolution that 92% of you voted in favor of adopting at the March, 1999 annual meeting in Boise. In June of this year, the ExCom voted unanimously to adopt the resolution, as directed by the membership vote. We then forwarded the resolution to the Western Division AFS for review and to present it to the membership at the Division annual meeting in Moscow this summer.

At the Division meeting, 72% of the members voted to adopt the resolution. However, at that meeting it became clear to me that the usefulness and appropriateness of having so many members who were so detached from the issue cast such an important vote may not be entirely productive. There were a lot of bad feelings. I also felt we lost an opportunity to educate our fellow Division members on the issue. And had we better educated our colleagues, an informed vote would have been even more supportive of the resolution and more meaningful to the AFS.

Regardless, I recommended against forwarding the resolution to the Parent Society at this year's annual meeting because I worried that doing so would prove to be more divisive than informing and productive. Instead, the ICASF ExComm is considering other methods to get the word out on the science of salmon and dams. One idea suggested to me by our new Executive Director, Dr. Gus Rassam, is to publish the resolution in Fisheries with discussion essays both supporting and opposing the resolution.

Interestingly, the media reported on the passage of the resolution by the ICASF in what I considered to be a favorable manner: they reported the overwhelming support by the scientist members for the resolution, but were careful to include the fact that the resolution does not advocate dam removal. The Lewiston Morning Tribune reported that the ICASF says dams must go to save salmon, but, "that organization - quite professionally - is leaving it to others to decide whether the fish are more valuable than other uses of the river." They added that ICASF gave, "the kindness of candor".

News stories I read all seemed to be careful to include the fact that the ICASF was not advocating dam breaching. Nonetheless, some within the Chapter saw this action as advocacy. Partly in response, I asked Boise State University political science professor John Freemuth to communicate his feelings to the Parent Society, which he did. His statement was that adoption and sharing this resolution did not constitute advocacy because we were not saying that dams should go no matter what.

In developing and presenting the resolution for a vote, the ExCom sought to avoid the advocacy arena altogether, and instead just focus on the question of: do the dams have to go to save salmon? But in reflection, I guess I can see why some members feel adopting this resolution was advocacy, especially after a recent interaction with graduate students (always a dangerous proposition!). Just a couple of weeks ago I participated in a University of Idaho class discussion about the resolution where eight out of nine students concluded from reading the resolution that its adoption constituted "Policy Advocacy". After a class discussion it seemed some students could see that it originally may not have been intended to be advocacy, but without the additional insights, they saw it as advocacy. One simple idea they offered that would have helped avoid seeing it this way was to include a statement that, with this resolution, the ICASF did not advocate dam removal! Things seem so much clearer in hindsight. I felt a little silly claiming to be avoiding advocating for dam removal, yet I failed to see the wisdom in inserting such a simple, direct statement in the resolution.

Some of the students quickly added that they saw nothing wrong with scientists being advocates, and that perhaps AFS should come out advocating for dam removal. This certainly comports with the fact that the first-stated objective in our Constitution directs us to "promote the conservation, development, and wise use of the fisheries". Also, at a recent talk I gave representing the Chapter at Lewis and Clark State College, I received interesting feedback from state and federal political leaders, and a leader of the Pulp and Paper Workers Resource Council. They counseled that the AFS message would be much more effective if it acknowledged and tried to address the social and economic ramifications of the resolution. Is there a professional way for us to do this?

Now I'm not so sure what to think. I don't believe I'm comfortable having the ICASF boldly advocating dam removal because we don't aspire to be a very politically astute organization, and we don't necessarily know what's best for society at large. However, I'm hearing from several respectable sources within and outside of the Chapter that we'd be doing more of a public service if we didn't try to avoid the "A-word" so much.

In summary, the resolution is now a part of the ICASF's and Western Division's position on the issue. I will be working with Gus Rassam and others to include the resolution and essays arguing the resolution in an upcoming issue of Fisheries. After that, I'm not sure where to go next. I would be interested to hear your reflections on whether adopting the resolution constitutes advocacy, and whether we should not try to avoid the "A-word" and just come right out and advocate dam removal, or at least consider and take a position on broader issues than just the science. Please help by offering your opinions and your time and support for action.

2000 ANNUAL MEETING FIRST CALL FOR PAPERS

Brett Roper, President-Elect

2000 Idaho Chapter of the American Fisheries
Society Annual Meeting
and Call For Papers
March 13-15, 2000
Coeur d' Alene Resort, Coeur d' Alene

This year's annual meeting will take place from March 13 until March 15 at the Coeur d' Alene Resort in Coeur d' Alene. The meeting will start at 0900 on the 13th and end at 1200 on the 15th.

For those of you who haven't been here before the setting for this year's conference is a world class resort located on the shore of Lake Coeur d' Alene.

Talks for this meeting will cover a wide range of topics but currently the plenary session is planning to address populations and threats to adfluvial, fluvial and resident native fish species.

Whichever your preferred technique, please submit abstracts electronically either as plain text or WordPerfect format attachments to an e-mail, or on disk by mail.

Lodging

The resort has a block of 75 rooms available for each night from March 12 until March 14. Because the Coeur d' Alene Resort was willing to offer government rates (\$59 a night) it is imperative you make your reservations early. Currently the Resort is willing guarantee these rates only until February 2, 2000. To Make reservations call (800) 688-5253 and identify that you are associated with the Idaho Chapter of the American Fisheries Society. If you have any

questions please call me at: w(208)765-7488 or h(208)664-9688.

The January 2000 newsletter will contain a pre-registration form for early sign up for the meeting along with additional details.

EXCOM MEETING

Jeff Dillon

The ExCom met on October 25, 1999 at the McCall Fish and Game office. We spent some time discussing the upcoming annual meeting theme, topics for the plenary session, and possible panel participants. Note the announcement and call for papers in this issue, and look for more annual meeting details in the next newsletter. Rumor has it that Rick Wilkinson has flamed out after an exceptional run as funding committee chair. Ted has recruited a replacement in Kevin Meyer and Tony Lamansky (see their first committee report in this issue). Thanks to Kevin and Tony for taking over this important assignment. We agreed that travel to National should be funded for the Chapter president-elect rather than president (the president becomes past-president at the time of the National meeting). Ted will attend National 2000, but Brett will forgo in 2001 and let Mark attend as president-elect. Dave Hogen gave an update of Palouse Unit fund raising and volunteer activities.

We also continued discussions on salmon, dams and the Chapter resolution. The focus was on ensuring clear and adequate representation of Idaho Chapter views to parent society leadership. Ted has been asked by several groups to comment on salmon and dams, and has done so on his personal time. ExCom agreed that it is appropriate for Ted to speak as ICAFS President on behalf of the Chapter for issues related to the resolution. The ExCom will meet again January.

ICAFS EXCOM

President Ted Koch	PHONE: (W) 378-5293 E-mail: ted_koch@mail.fws.gov
President Elect Brett Roper	PHONE: (W) 765-7223 (H) 765-7488 E-mail: broper/r1_ipnf@fs.fed.us
Vice President Mark Gamblin	PHONE: (W) 525-7290 (H) 524-1012 FAX: 523-7604 E-mail: mgamblin@idfg.state.id.us
Secretary / Treasurer Jeff Dillon	PHONE: (W) 525-7290 (H) 523-6340 FAX: 523-7604 E-mail: jdillon@idfg.state.id.us
Nominations Chair Terry Marrett	Phone: (W) 387-1328 (H) Fax: E-mail: trmarret@usgs.gov
Past President Cindy Deacon- Williams	Phone: (W) 939-8697 (H) 939-0975 Fax: 939-4086 E-mail: cdwill@cyberhighway.net

NOMINATIONS....

Terry Marrett

Nominations are open for the position of Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer, and Nominations Chair. The Secretary/Treasurer and Nominations Chair officers are both one-year commitments. The Vice President position is a four year commitment, moving up the ranks to President Elect, President, and finally, Past President. If

you are interested in running for office, or know someone who is, please contact me. Elections will be held at the annual meeting.

SECRETARY-TREASURERS REPORT

Jeff Dillon

First of all, a big thanks to past secretary-treasurer Fred Partridge for taking time to go over the books with me prior to the October ExCom meeting. Fred did a great job putting and keeping things in order, which has made the transition easy so far.

1999 Annual Meeting - Revenue from registration fees totaled \$10,800 and net from the raffle and auction was \$4,766 for a total of \$15,566. Meeting costs including room rentals, snacks and the banquet were \$11,750. So, the Chapter cleared a little over \$3,800 to apply to future projects and activities.

As of August 31 (last available printout), ICAFS assets include two certificates of deposit totaling \$3,379.30 plus \$7,838.79 in checking, for a total of \$11,218.09. Approximately \$5,700 of this has been committed, but not paid, for items such as a Tomelleri westslope cutthroat original (for future fund raising), riparian committee brochures and Endowment 2000. Brett Roper has also put down a \$500 deposit towards accommodations for the 2000 Chapter meeting.

ANNUAL AWARDS NOMINATIONS

Cindy Deacon-Williams

This is the first call for award nominations. If you know of a chapter member who has gone beyond normal expectations, write a brief accounting and submit it to Cindy Deacon-Williams before January 15, 2000.

Awards can recognize a one time contribution, or