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Business Meeting

Southeastern Fishes Council

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Business Meeting

MINUTES

Business Meeting

31st Annual Meeting (2005) • Southeastern Fishes Council

The 2005 meeting of the Southeastern Fishes Council was called to order by chairperson Hank Bart at 4:15 PM on 8 July 2005 at the Marriott Tampa Waterside Hotel and Marina in Tampa, Florida. The meeting was held in conjunction with the 85th annual meeting of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists. Twenty-eight people attended the meeting, including 20 current members, 3 members of the executive committee (Hank-Bair chair elect, Frank Pezold-Treasurer, and Brett Albanese-Secretary), and 5 other people interested in the conservation of Southeastern Fishes. Hank urged the members to check the SFC website often and to respond to SFC emails quickly. He also discussed the possibility of creating an SFC listserv.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Brett indicated that last years minutes were approved electronically and announced that he had SFC buttons and SFC membership forms for anyone interested.

TREASURER'S REPORT

In Kyle Piller's absence, Hank Bart read the Treasurers report aloud. There is a balance of \$10, 718 in the checking account. We currently have 55 members paid in full, but only 2 members are students. There are many additional members on the roles who have not paid dues in a long time. Hank requested that these delinquent members either pay up or ask Kyle to cancel their membership. Hank urged everyone to encourage students to join SFC (see discussion on meeting venue under old business).

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Bernie Kuhajda accepted his nomination for the chair-elect position. Marty O'Connell agreed to serve as editor and will take over as soon as Frank Pezold completes the latest edition of the *Proceedings*. Brett Albanese, Kyle Piller, and Chris Skelton agreed to continue on in the secretary, treasurer, and associate editor positions, respectively.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Frank Pezold reported that one issue of the *Proceedings* came out last year and another issue will be coming out very soon. Frank suggested that all back issues be kept by the Treasurer, since the treasurer is required to collect payment before mailing out back issues. Back issues were not scanned into searchable text PDFs for webposting, as discussed at last year's business meeting. Hank suggested that Kyle Piller may be able to assist Marty O'Connell with scanning. Hank noted that some of the most recent issues of the *Proceedings* have not yet been posted on the website.

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Noel Burkhead announced that he is coordinating a status revision of all North American freshwater fishes for the AFS endangered species committee. A display describing the revision and providing an opportunity for written comments was posted in the hotel. Noel urged all SFC members to comment on any species for which they have expertise.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

Mollie Cashner reported that no resolutions were suggested by the membership during the past year. Bernie Kuhajda then described a proposed subdivision near Birmingham, Alabama that could negatively impact both the rush darter and the vermilion darter. The Jefferson County planning and zoning commission will discuss the proposal during the second week of July. Bernie agreed to draft a resolution immediately, with the hope that a quorum of SFC members could officially pass the resolution before the end of the ASIH meeting. It was later decided that the letter should be emailed to the entire membership.

Someone suggested that the SFC look into a proposed interstate through the Georgia mountains. Following a brief discussion, this person suggested that members from Georgia research the issue further and report back to the SFC.

Whereas Jim Williams is a down to earth fellow due to his affinity for clams and other benthos, he suggested that future resolutions not be phrased in such formal language. Instead, future resolutions will be written in letter format and should contain all of the facts needed to justify an advocacy position approved by the membership. Therefore, be it further resolved, that future resolutions approved by the SFC not be phrased in arcane, legalese language, except in cases where such language would convey a stronger meaning to the target audience.

In order to eliminate an extra step in the resolution process, Hank Bart suggested that the responsibility of creating a resolution should rest with the person who proposed the resolution or an ad-hoc committee comprised of members with expertise in the particular issue. This requires that the resolutions committee be changed to an ad-hoc committee in the SFC constitution. All members in attendance voted.

ELECTIONS

Bernie Kuhajda was elected to the chair-elect position by a unanimous show of hands. Martin O'Connell was then elected to the editor position by a unanimous show of hands.

OLD BUSINESS

Hank Bark was not able to receive funding for the SFC education initiative he discussed at last year's business meeting. The goal of the initiative is to integrate rare fishes into educational programs for elementary and high-school students. Hank will continue to pursue funding for the initiative, possibly in joint cooperation with the Southeast Aquatic Resource Partnership (SARP).

Several members expressed that our highly variable meeting venue has prevented us from meeting our goal of engaging students and agency personnel in the SFC. One solution to this problem is to meet with the Southern Division American Fisheries Society each year, regardless of where ASIH is meeting. If we stick to our regular schedule of alternating between ASB and SDAFS, except when ASIH meets in the South, five years will elapse between SFC-SDAFS meetings. The next meeting of the SDAFS will be in San Antonio Texas. Hank noted that there is nothing to prevent us from attending both ASIH and SDAFS, since the SDAFS meeting occurs in the spring and the ASIH meeting occurs in the summer. Brett Albanese offered that we should sponsor some sort of visible event at the SDAFS meeting every year, which may include a social event, a symposium, or at the very least, a business meeting. Steve Ross requested that we pass any changes to the meeting venue by the entire membership via email, because of the strongly held views on the subject. Hank agreed to draft a proposal and circulate it to the membership.

Steve Walsh proposed that SFC help support student lodging costs to the SDAFS meeting next year. Frank Pezold added that any award programs for students be published in *Copeia* and *Fisheries*, among other outlets. After several minutes of meandering diatribes, Mollie Cashner silenced the room with a clear-cut and economically viable proposal for student travel awards. Mollie proposed that \$250.00 travel awards be offered to students traveling to the Southern Division American Fisheries Society meeting. Winners will be selected by random

draw, to avoid the need for judging papers. Non-members would be required to purchase a student membership in order to get their name in the raffle, which would insure growth in student membership and offset the cost of the award program. Everyone thought Mollie's proposal should be pursued. Since we voted on a similar proposal at last year's meeting, Hank indicated that we did not need to vote on it again. Hank indicated that he would ask Kyle to identify the number of awards that we can offer next year.

Finally, Hank indicated that he and Kyle are investigating the feasibility of using Paypal to collect membership fees. This would cut down on Kyle Piller's time traveling back and forth to the bank.

NEW BUSINESS

Noel Burkhead, incoming chair, discussed his goal of increasing interactions between the Southeastern Fishes Council and southeastern DNR agencies. He proposed an alliance with the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP) as one strategy for achieving this goal, as many southeastern DNR agencies have appointed high-level decision makers to the SARP initiative. Noel believes that we can offer SARP our expertise on southeastern fishes. In return, we may have important influence on the type of projects pursued by SARP. As an additional step, Brett Albanese suggested that we get at least one person from each state agency to appoint a representative to the Southeastern Fishes Council.

At the conclusion of the meeting, outgoing chair Hank Bart urged everyone to attend the next meeting of the SDAFS, whether or not we decide to hold our official business meeting there. The meeting was officially adjourned shortly after 6:00 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
Brett Albanese, Secretary*

MINUTES**Business Meeting****32nd Annual Meeting (2006) • Southeastern Fishes Council**

The 2006 meeting of the Southeastern Fishes Council was called to order by Chair-elect Bernard Kuhajda at 4:05 PM on 14 July 2006 at the Sheraton Hotel in New Orleans, LA. The meeting was held in conjunction with the 86th annual meeting of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists. Twenty members were in attendance, plus at least three others who came in late.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary Brett Albanese was not able to attend but

sent hard-copies of the minutes from the 2005 meeting. Motion was made and seconded to approve minutes and minutes were approved by voice-vote.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Kyle Piller distributed and explained financial report. SFC expended more funds than received over the past year. Checking account balance is \$10425.85 as of 15 June 2006. As of the meeting, SFC had 51 members with current dues paid, including 6 student members.

EDITORS REPORT

Marty O'Connell reported he had now recovered from Katrina sufficiently to move ahead as new Editor of the Proceedings. Regional reports for 2006 had not yet been called for; there was one paper in the review process for the next Proceedings volume.

OLD BUSINESS

Bernie Kuhajda reported on his trip to Washington DC as a representative of SFC and ASIH to meet with Senate Aids regarding proposed revisions to the Endangered Species Act (ESA). SFC signed on to a joint statement by several scientific societies opposing moves by Congress to alter the ESA. On short notice, Bernie went to DC with representatives from two other organizations (World Wildlife Fund and Environmental Defense Council) and met with about 40 Senate Aids regarding issues with ESA legislation. In addition to giving SFC a voice in legislation that could weaken species conservation, the trip provided Bernie the opportunity to buy a suit jacket (not charged to SFC), and Bernie reported that he is ready to serve again in this capacity as necessary.

NEW BUSINESS

Changes to Constitution and Bylaws Article VI.

Chair Noel Burkhead has proposed changing Article VI to allow changes to Constitution and Bylaws at the annual business meeting or by email. Noel's proposed change to text of the Article was discussed and modified to stipulate a 10-day period for accepting votes by email and that proposed changes voted on by email would require approval by a two-thirds majority of the members responding. The revised text for Article VI read as follows:

“Changes to the Constitution and Bylaws can be made at annual business meeting or by email. Proposed changes to the constitution at the annual business meeting must be voted on by members, and passed if two-thirds of the members present at the meeting support the change. Changes made by email must be voted on by the current membership of the society at the time of the vote, and passed by two-thirds majority vote of the members voting by email. Notification and proposed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws should be submitted for consideration by the Constitution Committee during the normal nine month school year (members may be out of the country for extended periods during the summer). The announced voting time will be a 10-day period stipulated in a 30-day notification of a proposed change to the Constitution and Bylaws, which will be sent by the Constitution Committee to the membership.”

Motion to accept these changes was made and seconded, and approved by a voice vote.

The Meeting Venue Issue and Noel's Plan X (APPENDED).

Bernie reviewed the perennially recurring issue of the most effective venue for holding the SFC annual meeting (i.e., this really belongs under “Old business”) and the reasoning behind last year's business meeting decision to meet with the Southern Division of the American Fisheries Society (SDAFS). Bernie then outlined a proposal by Chair Noel Burkhead, Plan X: adopt the Desert Fishes Council (DFC) model and hold the SFC annual meeting independently of other organizations. Considerable discussion ensued addressing questions such as whether SFC would attract members and partners (agencies, NGO's) to yet another annual meeting. Bernie also presented Brian Wagner's email response “Why go to Plan X when we haven't even given Plan W a chance?” (APPENDED), which passionately argued that SFC should adopt a broad view of what constitutes the “southeast” and continue with its decision to meet with SDAFS. Jim Williams presented some of the history of DFC, including how DFC decided to meet independently in Death Valley at NPS facilities on the cheap (no catering, minimal registration fee). Jim discussed the format of DFC meetings consisting of State reports, federal agency reports, and technical reports and suggested that if SFC followed this model, we might similarly devote the 1st day of the meeting to reports from states and agencies and the 2nd day to technical papers. Jim stressed his belief that a key to DFC's success has been always holding the meeting at the same time each year (e.g., the Thursday and Friday in the week before Thanksgiving), so no one has to think about when or where the meeting will be – simple scheduling that even fish-heads can handle.

Additional discussion addressed the phenomenon of diluted SFC attendance when we meet with national organizations and the need to focus on the southeast. Bernie noted that ASIH will not meet in the Southeast (according to common definitions) for the next 5 years; SDAFS will meet in Memphis, TN 2007 and Wheeling WV in 2008, raising again the question of what constitutes the Southeast and whether it includes WV. Other issues raised included: out-of-state travel problems for State biologists, and whether going to a meeting other than SDAFS would be more difficult; whether we collectively have the time to attend another meeting; the fact that considerably more funding is available for endangered fish research and conservation in the SW than in the SE; whether we have a group of dedicated individuals that can attend an independent SFC meeting; and the effect on graduate student involvement. Throughout, Jim continued with impassioned pleas for Plan X. Mary Freeman noted that Jim is retired and might have a more expansive view of time availability, and suggestively asked who is going to organize this meeting? Jim noted that if we do move to our own independent meeting, maybe some of the NGO's and agencies that have become interested in Southeastern aquatics

would help support the meeting. For example, a location like Chattanooga could be good, and we might seek with from TN Aquarium Research folks.

It was noted that meeting with SDAFS will only work well if SFC folks are on the AFS Planning Committee to set up a symposium; it will not work if we just have a business meeting because we will be overshadowed by the larger meeting (as at ASIH).

It was agreed that to follow-up on Plan X, we need a Committee to make a decision as to meeting site within 90 days. We also need a Program Committee. It was asked whether we were tied to Spring meetings, and Jim suggested late October, or November timing. Mel Warren proposed that the Executive Committee should appoint a committee to consider all issues and make a recommendation to the membership. Bernie called for a show of hands to see how members in attendance felt about options. Steve Ross, who has defected to the west, opined that it would be a major change for SFC to move to DFC model. Steve noted that DFC has strong graduate student participation (in what is now a 3-day meeting) and SFC could use some of our funds to support student participation in our meetings. Steve noted that the DFC model allows for strong interactions, and that it takes awhile to get to that point; DFC was helped along with crisis over the Devil's Hole pupfish. More discussion revolved around whether we can do a lot of work (as needed to interact effectively with SDAFS), or a lot more work (as needed to have our own meeting); the costs of meeting with SDAFS; the value of small meetings; where our decision to meet independently might leave the SE Division-ASIH; the possibility of providing some sort of support for graduate students; and whether we should go back to meeting with ASB.

A show of hands gave the following counts of those who:

Preferred to meet with SDAFS or some other large organization :1

Favored SFC meeting on our own : 8

Were confused: about 12.

Jim Williams moved the discussion forward by volunteering to organize and make all arrangements for first two SFC meetings if we decide to go it on our own. A motion was made to table details until the Executive Committee can consider the issues, report back to the membership and ask for a decision. Motion was 2nd, and approved. It was noted that the Committee should review whether we can have a symposium at SDAFS in 2007.

Web-page revisions: Noel has provided a detailed proposal (In Plan X, Appended) for making fish images, underwater videos and an updated, downloadable list of Southeastern fishes, organized by drainage available on the website and Joe Tomelleri offered to provide lo-resolution images also. Meeting attendants broadly agreed that these are great ideas and Steve Ross noted he would be willing to post his images. Bernie asked for volunteers to begin forming a Committee to make this happen (and need to move forward with getting .pdfs of all Proceedings on the website). Jake Schaefer volunteered to start the process of revising the web-page; Bernie will advise Noel to contact Jake directly at Jake.Schaefer@usm.edu.

New membership issue: SFC needs a membership committee that will harass members to get their graduate students and colleagues to join. Discussion included: that we need to make it very clear what one gets by joining; that we could roll membership dues into registration if we meet independently; that a better website will improve our visibility; that a list-serve could be helpful in engaging members. Pam Schofield raised the issue of the Wild Turkey – perhaps we need to use alcohol to reward those who bring in members/students? Hank Bart volunteered to chair a Membership Committee.

Other new business: what to do with checking account funds? After some discussion on possible restrictions imposed by our non-profit status, Kyle agreed to bug Steve Ross and Mel Warren for advice on managing SFC funds to return some interest.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 PM.

*Respectfully submitted,
Mary Freeman (standing in for
Secretary Brett Albanese).*