

**Equal Opportunities Section, American Fisheries Society
Reflections on the Annual Meeting in Madison
from 2004 Travel Award Recipients**

Excerpt from 2004 Travel Award Recipients

For more information, see: www.fisheries.org/eos

Summer Burdick, , North Carolina State University, M.S.

My experience at the Madison AFS meeting was incredible! When you attend a meeting like that you understand that you are not working alone, but rather you are a part of a larger network of professional fisheries scientists. I had the opportunity to meet inspiring people in Madison; people who affirmed my efforts have been worthwhile.

There was Mamie Parker who was able to jerk tears from my eyes when she spoke at the equal opportunities luncheon and told us about the struggles she faced on the road to her success. Then there were countless presentations by respected biologists and ecologists, which gave me ideas and inspiration. I left Madison with a whole list of new heroes and I had the comforting feeling that our aquatic resources were in good hands.



All the experiences I had in Madison wouldn't have been possible if I hadn't received help from the Equal Opportunities Section of AFS. Thank you!

N. Elizabeth Heitman, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, M.S.

I greatly appreciated the opportunity to attend the annual AFS meeting in Madison, Wisconsin to present the results of my master's research. Without the EOS travel grant, my attendance at the meeting was questionable. At the meeting, I networked with other professionals who had similar research interests, and renewed some old friendships. The EOS travel award provides future fisheries professionals such as me a chance to travel to the meeting and open doors.



Taconya D. Piper, Auburn University, PhD

My experience at this year's meeting was phenomenal. I have been attending AFS meetings since 1999 and every year the meetings continue to exceed my expectations. Every year I stand amazed at the caliber of science that is presented and the interest the society takes in students and education. As a direct result of funding from the EOS, I was not only able to attend the meeting, but I was able to network with other professionals in government, academia, and private industry. I was also able to reacquaint myself with people I have met through attendance at previous AFS meetings.

Attendance at this meeting has enhanced my professional career in many ways. I was able to discuss aspects of my research with others and receive positive feedback and much needed encouragement. I was also compelled to take a deeper look at the legacy of Aldo Leopold and then to look at my pursuit of success in a much broader sense.



I would not have been able to attend this year's meeting without the support from the EOS. I am very appreciative of section's efforts to expand interest in the work of the Society and fisheries to a more diverse group of people. There is power in diversity and AFS and the EOS are well on their way.



Nicole White, Northern Michigan University, MS

The travel award I received helped make my trip to the AFS conference in Madison financially possible. This was my first Society meeting and I saw a few old faces but many new ones. I met many people who were students like me and a lot more that were already in the profession. I thoroughly enjoyed the presentations and opportunities to view others work through the poster sessions. I was able to gain exposure to other disciplines and network with many people. The meeting was very valuable to me and I hope to attend future meetings and stay involved with AFS.

Phoebe T Smith, University of Connecticut, Ph.D.



My attendance at this year's meeting was more crucial than I could have imagined, and I absolutely would not have been able to attend without the financial assistance of EOS.

Thanks to the contacts I made at this year's meeting I have been invited to visit a lab to discuss a postdoctoral position, and I am also considering an internship with another party to occupy the interim before I finish my dissertation. If I had not received financial assistance from EOS, I would not have these opportunities.

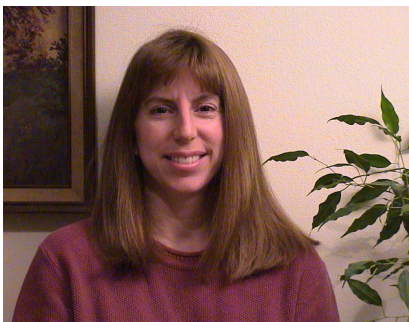
Ashwin Sreenivasan, Northern Michigan University, B.S.

The travel award was definitely very helpful to me in getting to the conference and presenting my work, as well as understanding the work of other researchers in the field. Attending this conference also helped me greatly in developing contacts with other researchers. Once again, thank you for the award.



Mary Williams, University of Minnesota, Ph.D. program

My attendance at the 2004 American Fisheries Society meeting assisted my professional development in several important ways. First, I was able to present part of my graduate research as an oral presentation to a group of my peers. I also chaired my session. This not only gave me valuable experience for improving my public speaking skills, but I also received very good feedback and suggestions regarding my research from several of the questions and comments at the end of my talk. Through the talks in my sessions and in other sessions that I attended, I was also able to learn about similar research in my field and current research efforts in other fields.



During the course of the meeting, I was also able to network with other professionals that I would otherwise have no contact with as a student. Discussions with these various individuals taught me a great deal about what folks are doing inside and outside of academia and what career options I might have upon graduation. In the plenary sessions, I learned a good deal about Aldo Leopold and his legacies. I was and still am motivated by those talks to think more about the human-land-aquatic system links more closely in my personal life as well as my career.

As an unfunded graduate student, the EOS Travel Award not only made my trip to this conference possible, but it has added breadth and depth to my personal and professional life as well!