



## AFS Estuaries Section Newsletter Winter 2012

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### SECTION NEWS

#### President's Message

At the very successful AFS Annual Meeting in Seattle last September we held our annual section meeting (minutes are posted on the web site and included in this newsletter), where I took over the Section Presidency from Fred Genthner. Fred did a great job keeping the Estuaries Section on track during 2009-2011, and I appreciate his service.

One of my important jobs as President is to ensure that the Section has a President-Elect and the other required officers. I am happy to announce that Abigail Franklin, our Secretary for the past several years, has agreed to run for the position of President-Elect. Lynn Waterhouse, of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (and one of our 2011 Travel Award winners), has agreed to run for Secretary. Biographical sketches and voting instructions appear on page 3. Despite being pleased that we have great candidates, I am disappointed that I did not get more of a response from Estuaries Section membership to my request for candidates. Maybe someday we will have contested elections....

As you may know, most of the Society's business is carried out between Annual Meetings by the Governing Board and the Management Committee. As Section President, I serve on the Governing Board with other Section Presidents and Division Presidents. I am looking forward to representing the Estuaries Section at the

### Issue Highlights

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#### **OFFICER ELECTIONS**

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February 2012 mid-year Governing Board Meeting. Please let me know if you have any concerns that I should bring to the attention of the Governing Board.

Abigail and I have been working to develop a symposium proposal for the 2012 AFS Annual Meeting in Minnesota. We are looking at presenting results of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act projects that benefitted fish habitat. If you have ideas for symposium proposals or would like to obtain Estuaries Section sponsorship for your symposium proposal, please let me know.

I would like to highlight two members of the Estuaries Section for special recognition. First is Tom Bigford, who has been very supportive of our annual section meeting over the years and recently took action to ensure continued support for the next several years. Tom's administration of the Nancy Foster Habitat Conservation Award continues to ensure that leaders in estuarine and habitat science and management receive the recognition they deserve. Steve Jordan and the Southern Association of Marine Laboratories are also worthy of recognition for their continued support of the Estuaries Section Travel Awards, enabling the Section to fund three times as many awards as it otherwise could fund.

In closing, to quote a great philosopher with whom I share a name, "Excelsior!" and best wishes for a successful and healthy 2012 to you all!

-Lee Benaka, President, Estuaries Section

## **2011 Section Meeting Minutes**

Prepared by Abigail Franklin, Secretary,  
Estuaries Section

The Estuaries Section once again held a joint meeting with the Marine Fisheries Section (MFS). The MFS went first, and during the opening minutes of the MFS meeting, Estuaries Section President Lee Benaka presented the following 2011 Travel Awards:

### *Estuaries Section Award Winner*

- Christina Kennedy, University of Massachusetts

### *Southern Association of Marine Laboratories (SAML) Award Winners*

- Christy Pavel, Savannah State University
- Lynn Waterhouse, Virginia Institute of Marine Science

Lee Benaka began the Estuaries Section meeting at 7:32pm.

### **Agenda Item: Nancy Foster Habitat Conservation Award Update**

Lee read Tom Bigford's remarks regarding the award. Award nominations are open until the end of September 2011. The award will no longer be presented during the Estuaries Section meeting. Instead, it will be presented during a separate event in Washington DC, which will include a lecture. As of early January 2011, the winners had not been announced.

### **Agenda Item: Old Business**

Lee read and directed members to the President's report.

There will be an election this Fall, and he will be recruiting nominees for President-Elect, Treasurer, and Secretary for two-year terms. Lee will be in contact through email and voting will be conducted via email.

### **Agenda Item: Treasurer's Report (see following section for more details)**

Starting Balance \$2,079.71  
Ending Balance \$1,633.75

The Section's main expenses have been student travel awards, refreshments for the annual meeting, and plaques for award winners.

Our main income is from dues and reimbursements from our partners.

Carolyn Griswold asked whether Washington, DC would be a permanent venue for the Nancy Foster Award? Lee replied that Tom Bigford and his colleagues have been rethinking the presentation of the award. The Estuaries Section will still be involved and usually provides reviewers for the award. The Award Committee is trying to focus awards on Marine Habitat work. Past nomination packets have included people who were primarily involved in freshwater habitat work.

### **Agenda Item: President's Remarks**

The Section awarded 3 students with travel awards of \$500 each. The Section has sponsored symposiums but does not often organize symposiums. Lee suggested some topics for symposia and asked for suggestions.

#### Symposium Ideas:

- Lee suggested American Reinvestment and Recovery Act projects focused on fish habitat restoration. We could approach the Bioengineering Section about co-sponsoring.
- Larry Miller (Marine Fisheries Section Member) suggested the topic of indicator species that US Fish and Wildlife could monitor for health.
- John Boreman suggested the impact of climate change, specifically the effects of sea level rise on the state of estuaries. NGOs have raised questions about whether estuaries will be lost. John will contact Lee Benaka with ideas.
- Roger Rulifson suggested the effects of hurricanes (nutrient loads, remediation), and specifically fish kills resulting from hurricane Irene.

Lee solicited ideas for involving more people in the Estuaries Section.

John Hoenig asked why there are so few members at the business meeting in Seattle? Desmond Kahn thought perhaps because there are fewer West Coast members.

Abigail Franklin suggested that we should make sure that the Estuaries Section meeting does not conflict with student social.

John Hoenig commented that in the past he felt that there was value in Sections because they gave his students travel money.

Desmond Kahn suggested that if there was a Symposium focused on Puget Sound this year, or whatever area the meeting is held at, that it would attract more members.

Larry Miller commented that on the West Coast, Chapter and Division meetings are more well-attended than on the East Coast. We could look for opportunities to work with them directly.

Desmond Kahn and John Hoenig proposed that for the next meeting we should actively reach out to members of the local Division to collaborate

### Treasurer's Report

Balance on Hand (8/31/2011)

**\$2,079.71**

#### Income

- AFS Section dues \$624.00
  - Reimbursement from Marine Fisheries Section for 2010 Section Meeting: \$494.00
  - SAML Travel Award reimbursement: \$1,000.00
- Total income: \$2,118.00

#### Expenses

- Travel awards for 2011 \$1,500.00
  - Plaques for awards \$ 75.00
  - Catering for section meeting \$ 988.96
- Total expenses: \$2,563.96

Balance on Hand (2/14/03) **\$1,633.75**

–Anthony Overton, Treasurer, Estuaries Section

### OFFICER ELECTIONS

**Abigail Franklin**, our Secretary since 2009, has agreed to run for President-Elect. Abigail currently works as the Anadromous Fish Restoration Project Manager at the Cape Cod Conservation District in Hyannis, MA.

**Lynn Waterhouse** has agreed to run for Secretary. Lynn currently is completing an MS degree in Statistics at Pennsylvania State University. In 2010 she defended her MS degree from Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences in Fisheries Sciences with Dr. John M. Hoenig and Dr. Mary Fabrizio as her co-advisors. In fall of 2012 she will begin her PhD studies in

quantitative fisheries sciences at a University still to be determined. At the 2011 AFS meeting in Seattle, Lynn received the Estuaries Section SAML Travel Award to present at that meeting.

Last but not least, **Anthony Overton**, a professor in the Department of Biology at East Carolina University, has agreed to run once again for Treasurer in the absence of any other nominations. Anthony is awesome, but he deserves a break one of these years, so I hope someone else will give him some competition sometime soon.

You can vote for your officers now at the following link:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MGHFLB3>

Voting will end on Friday, January 20. Thanks, and don't forget to vote!

### FEATURE ARTICLE

#### **NOAA Habitat Blueprint—A Framework to Improve Habitat for Marine Resources and Communities**

by Lee Benaka

Healthy coastal and marine habitat is critical for abundant marine life and sustainable coastal communities. The NOAA Habitat Blueprint (Blueprint) is a living document, created as part of an ongoing dialogue with NOAA scientists, managers, and partners. The Blueprint provides a framework for NOAA to think and act strategically across programs and with partner organizations to address the growing challenge of habitat loss and degradation. This includes anticipating changes to the seascape due to development, climate, and other pressures by finding new ways to address complex pressures on the quality and quantity of habitat.

The Blueprint consists of four main approaches to develop and implement habitat-based solutions to support healthy and productive ecosystems:

1. Implement regional habitat initiatives as immediate opportunities to test habitat-based solutions.
2. Establish geographic priorities to focus long-term habitat science and

conservation efforts.

3. Implement a systematic and strategic approach to habitat science for effective decision-making.
4. Strengthen policy and legislation at the national level to enhance our ability to achieve meaningful change.

Regarding the first approach above, NOAA currently is implementing regional habitat initiatives to explore new collaborative approaches to improve habitat, inform future actions, and build the case for future funding. These initiatives, listed below, will preserve or improve habitat conditions within a defined geographic area to address specific challenges to living marine resources:

- Northeast—Deep-sea coral conservation
- Chesapeake Bay—Tributary-based oyster restoration
- Southeast—Charleston Harbor watershed habitat conservation and restoration
- Southwest—Southern California Bight habitat assessment
- Northwest—Puget Sound habitat initiative
- Alaska—Cook Inlet habitat conservation strategy
- Pacific Islands—Conservation strategies for Guam development.

Regarding the second approach concerning the establishment of geographic priorities to focus habitat conservation efforts, NOAA will identify priority habitat areas such as areas of convergence from overlaying important habitats for harvested species, endangered and threatened species, and habitats at risk. NOAA also will define habitat conditions that are needed to support rebuilt fisheries and recovered species and inform management actions in the priority areas. In addition, NOAA will implement habitat-based strategies using all available programs, authorities, partnerships, and tools to achieve desired habitat conditions. Finally, NOAA will show progress and share lessons learned for improving the habitat condition in these areas by evaluating results and relaying the economic and socio-cultural benefits of habitat.

As part of the Blueprint, NOAA also plans to implement recommendations from the NOAA Fisheries Habitat Assessment Improvement Plan, including:

- Conduct habitat assessments, develop habitat characteristic maps, and produce data products for designating essential fish habitat and conserving and managing habitat for priority species.
- Improve harvested and protected species stock assessments and fishery-independent surveys using habitat information to increase precision of biomass estimates.
- Increase the habitat component in tools such as Integrated Ecosystem Assessments and Coastal and Marine Spatial Plans to foster better decision-making for coastal and marine human activities and natural resources.

Finally, NOAA will attempt to strengthen policy and legislation to enhance habitat conservation in the following ways:

- Revising the NOAA Fisheries Habitat Policy to institutionalize the Habitat Blueprint.
- Exploring new habitat policy innovations such as opportunities for payment for ecosystem services.
- Considering opportunities for regulatory reform such as revising or making better use of existing Magnuson-Stevens Act and Endangered Species Act authorities to provide science-based habitat information needed for ecosystem-based management.
- Investigating the development of new overarching legislation that provides a strong mandate for habitat conservation.

For further information on the Blueprint, please contact Helen MacMillan in the NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation ([helen.mcmillan@noaa.gov](mailto:helen.mcmillan@noaa.gov)).

## MEETINGS

### **6<sup>th</sup> World Fisheries Congress Edinburgh, Scotland May 7-11, 2012**

The 2012 World Fisheries Congress provides an international forum for global experts in the science of sustainable fisheries, global industry leaders, policy makers, and key influencers who are committed in finding a solution to the current challenges in fisheries.

The early-bird registration fee is available until January 27, 2012.

For more information, please visit:  
<http://www.6thwfc2012.com/>

### **142<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN August 19-23, 2012**

The meeting focus is Fisheries Networks: Building Ecological, Social and Professional Relationships. Conference attendees will have the opportunity to network with fisheries professionals and students, stay current on the latest in fisheries science, and enjoy the sights and scenes of the Twin Cities and beyond.

Proposals for symposia are due January 13, 2012.

For more information, please visit:  
<http://www.afs2012.org/>

### **6<sup>th</sup> National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration Tampa, FL September 20-24, 2012**

Restore America's Estuaries' 6th National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat

Restoration is the only national conference focused on the goals and practices of coastal and estuarine habitat restoration. Estuaries and coasts are an important part of America's economy, history, and living culture. The five-day Conference will explore the state-of-the-art in all aspects and scales of restoration, and will be comprised of field sessions, plenary sessions, expert presentations, special evening events, workshops, a poster hall, and the nation's only Restoration Exposition.

Proposals for sessions, presentations, and posters are due February 1, 2012.

For more information, visit:  
<http://www.estuaries.org/conference/>

## OTHER NEWS

### **Hutton Junior Fisheries Biology Program**

The Hutton is an educational program for high school students designed to develop interest in a career in fisheries among groups underrepresented in the fisheries profession, including minorities and women. AFS encourages its members to consider mentoring a student during the summer of 2012. Mentor and student applications are due to AFS by February 15, 2012

For information on how you can get involved, go to:  
<http://www.fisheries.org/afs/hutton>

AFS Job Center Online (and other employment resources):  
<http://www.fisheries.org/afs/jobpage.php>

Renew your AFS Membership online at:  
<http://www.fisheries.org/afs/membership>