

## **CHAPTER BUSINESS PLAN**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

The mission of the Utah Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (Chapter) is to promote conservation, development and wise utilization of aquatic resources in Utah. According to Chapter Bylaws, our mission should reflect the mission of the American Fisheries Society, which is “to improve the conservation and sustainability of fishery resources and aquatic ecosystems by advancing fisheries and aquatic science and promoting the development of fisheries professionals.”

The Chapter has identified a need to develop a formal business plan in order to be a more sustainable organization, foster greater engagement with its members, as well as garner greater support for its actions from Chapter members and their employers. At the March 2012 annual business meeting, Chapter members voted to form a special committee to develop the plan. Members of the special committee included: Craig Walker, Drew Cushing, Krissy Wilson, Michael Slater, Paul Burnett, and Ben Nadolski.

### **B. JUSTIFICATION**

Recent events have highlighted the need to develop a Chapter business plan and enhance support for Chapter actions. Several contributing factors were identified.

- 1) Historically, a majority of annual meeting participants and Chapter members have been employees of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR). Because a large number of Chapter members are UDWR employees, the group is vulnerable to administrative and financial decisions made by UDWR leadership.
- 2) State and federal agency leadership have expressed concerns about the considerable costs continually incurred by supporting employees to attend Chapter and other annual professional meetings. State and federal budgets have tightened considerably and there is greater public scrutiny on expenses generated by large meetings. For example, UDWR leadership has made the Chapter aware that annual meeting costs covered by UDWR need to be reduced. The Chapter recognizes that it is mutually beneficial for both itself and employers of meeting participants to reduce meeting costs.
- 3) Some activities of Chapter members have been perceived as conflicting with the goals of agency employers or politically sensitive.
- 4) Chapter leadership seeks to continue holding meetings at independent, non-agency, meeting locations. Meeting outside workplace environments fosters emotional engagement among Chapter members in open discussions about issues related to fisheries and aquatic species management.

The Chapter serves many functions at the state level, which includes organizing and hosting the Chapter's annual meeting, funding special projects, and providing support to students through scholarships. The annual meeting typically consists of a plenary session, formal presentations by Chapter members in symposia covering broad topics and a platform for Chapter members to network. The annual meeting also serves as the primary fundraising event and primary expense for the Chapter and allows the Chapter to continue to provide assistance to members as noted above.

Annual meetings previous to the 2012 meeting have cost the Chapter between \$6,000-8,000 for an event location, catering, and audio/visual costs. Chapter members or their employers were typically responsible for membership dues, travel, meeting registration, and accommodation (e.g., room and on-site meal) expenses. Given Chapter membership is primarily comprised of state and federal agency employees, whose attendance is supported by their employers, member attendance is often reliant upon agency approval and support. The Chapter has, therefore, recently placed considerable emphasis on redistributing meeting expenses in an effort to increase employer willingness to support employee meeting participation. Cost redistribution efforts undertaken by the Chapter mean that (1) registrants are responsible for membership dues, (2) employers are responsible for registration and per diem costs during travel for each attending employee, and (3) the Chapter covers all food and lodging during annual meetings.

Traditional sources of revenue for annual meetings come from the following sources:

- 1) membership dues,
- 2) in-meeting fundraising proceeds,
- 3) meeting registration,
- 4) periodic hosting of WDAFS to generate revenue (\$15,000 to \$20,000) to subsidize annual Chapter meeting,
- 5) university workshops, and
- 6) agency reimbursement of meeting expenses (e.g., UDWR support of meeting registrants; excluding wage payment during attendance, averaged approximately \$20,000 annually).

Under the new model, funding comes from:

1. increased membership dues (\$5 to \$25),
2. sponsorships from agencies and other organizations that support the Chapter mission,
3. organized event proceeds (e.g., fishing tournament, trap shoot),
4. maximized in-meeting fundraising revenue,

5. selection of meeting location/timing based upon annual budget and projected attendance,
6. meeting registration, and
7. diversified and increased attendance from “nontraditional” participants (e.g., other natural resources professionals, anglers, and vendors).

Under this model, agency reimbursement is limited to registration fees and travel expenses (e.g., mileage). The success of these efforts in offsetting per-individual meeting expenses served as the primary reason for moving forward with development of a more formal business plan for the Chapter that allows for expansion of traditional revenue sources.

### **C. GOAL, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES**

With these considerations in mind, we propose this financial plan to contribute to solving the concerns above and to stabilize and diversify funding for the Chapter. The following goals, objectives, and strategies are organized hierarchically by priority.

**GOAL 1:** Provide the Chapter with direction to broaden funding sources and become a financially stable professional fisheries organization within 5 years; allowing for effective support of the AFS mission in Utah. The objectives are to:

**Objective 1:** Increase annual revenue and develop a consistent and reliable revenue stream

**Strategy 1:** Increase Chapter membership dues as necessary to meet Chapter revenue goals while not overburdening members

**Implementation:** Chapter dues increased from \$5 to \$25 by vote at 2013 annual meeting.

**Strategy 2:** Review and develop vendor registration price points as necessary.

**Implementation:** Vendor registration price points have been reviewed, revised and voted upon for future annual meetings.

**Strategy 3:** Increase sponsorship.

**Implementation:** Convene a Sponsorship committee overseen by Past President. The responsibility of this committee will be to contact potential sponsors, apply for grants, and maintain a list of those efforts. See Section 3.D. Committees.

**Strategy 4:** Hold fishing tournaments and/or other fundraiser(s) which can either be held within the annual meeting or at another time during the year.

**Implementation:** Begin hosting events outside of annual meeting. Such as fishing tournaments, kid fish events, spawning runs. Look to partner with other organizations.

**Strategy 5:** Auction conservation permits through organizations such as the Mule Deer Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, etc. Deadline to apply for these permits is September 1<sup>st</sup> annually.

**Implementation:** Obtain conservation permits and work with existing contacts to have these permits auctioned at their events. Proceeds from the sale of permits, at least for the first two years, should be used to fund the purchase of future permits.

**Strategy 6:** Broaden fundraising opportunities to non-members

**Implementation:** Research internet fundraising for large items (e.g. a boat) that would be available to an audience larger than Chapter members. Host events, e.g., trap shoot, tournaments, kid's fishing events, fun runs, barbeques, workshops throughout the year that are open to an audience larger than our current membership.

**Objective 2:** Increase stability of Chapter finances

**Strategy 1:** Develop and convene a Sponsorship Committee overseen by Past President that operates year-round. See Section 3.D. Committees.

**Implementation:** In addition to being willing to participate on this committee, members of this committee should have good negotiating skills and personality traits that allow them to be successful soliciting sponsorship donations. As chairperson, the Past President, will identify and approach Chapter members that will comprise a successful Sponsorship committee.

**Strategy 2:** Archive sponsor, donor, and other fundraising information in a format that aids in year-to-year planning and accommodates leadership turnover (i.e., a format that includes information pertaining to application deadlines, previous requests/awards, donor contact information, etc.).

**Implementation:** Chapter member Calvin Black has completed a tremendous amount of work towards developing a fundraising/sponsorship database.

**Implementation:** The Vice President and Past President will update the fundraising and sponsorship database annually.

**Strategy 3:** Convene roundtable discussions with surrounding chapters to better outline Chapter fundraising and sponsorship strategy.

**Implementation:** Contact chapters who are known to conduct successful fundraising (Texas, Idaho, Oregon) and solicit advice and expertise for use in our fundraising strategies.

**Strategy 4:** Increase consistency and efficiency of annual meeting and Chapter success through development of documentation showing timing of duties and tasks related to meeting planning.

**Implementation:** Complete Section 5. Annual Meeting Guidance of this Procedures Manual.

**Strategy 5:** Develop targeted savings; maintaining a balance that allows for one full year of Chapter operation (\$34,000) by 2018 and two full years by 2023 to ensure Chapter functionality in the event of economic downturn or revenue shortfalls.

**Implementation:** Chapter Treasurer has developed an “average” budget that will generate a goal operating budget. See Section 4.D. Chapter Business Plan Model Annual Budget below.

**Implementation:** Make long term investments (e.g., WDAFS endowment fund, multiple CDs that mature at varying times) to attain the targeted savings in the identified timeframe.

**Strategy 6:** Budget for Chapter donations to other chapters, the Division, non-profits, and charitable organizations.

**Implementation:** The budget for donations to non-profit and charitable funds was set at \$500 during the 2014 FY and will be revisited once Strategy 5 has been met.

**GOAL 2:** Increase financial and emotional engagement among Chapter members to develop long-term support of Chapter mission.

**Objective 1:** Improve interaction and communication among members and between the Chapter and Society and the membership.

**Strategy 1:** Revive Lateral Line with quarterly issues written by the Newsletter editor and edited by EXCOM. Have specific formats and specific responsibilities for each quarter’s issue.

**Implementation:** Quarterly issues will be published January 15<sup>th</sup>, April 15<sup>th</sup>, July 15<sup>th</sup>, and October 15<sup>th</sup>. The first issue of the revived Lateral Line was July 15, 2014.

**Implementation:** Chapter member Jackie Watson has developed a format with standard items for inclusion in each issue. The format is intended to be a guideline for each issue and can be adjusted as needed. See Section 3.E. Newsletter.

**Strategy 2:** Ensure that website presence and social media outreach effort are maintained and managed by filling Communications Officer position. See Section 3.C. Communications Officer.

**Implementation:** David Tinsley has acted as the Communications Officer since 2013.

**Implementation:** Chapter website was converted to Society server in March 2015 to ensure consistency with other chapters and to decrease annual costs.

**Strategy 3:** Provide evidence to members that Chapter revenue is being used effectively to achieve Chapter goals.

**Implementation:** Present budget information in Lateral Line and at annual meeting. Highlight expenditures on scholarships and direct member benefits.

**Strategy 4:** Continue to recognize and award member contributions to the fisheries profession.

**Implementation:** Highlight member accomplishments (e.g. recognizing awards, publications, awesome work) in Lateral Line and through other venues.

**Objective 2:** Organize annual meeting and activities in a way that facilitates participation and interaction among all disciplines of fisheries and aquatic resource professionals and non-traditional fisheries stakeholders.

**Strategy 1:** Develop annual meeting and chapter activities in a manner that encourages membership involvement.

**Implementation:** Conduct a post-meeting survey to membership asking for comments, what they liked, what they didn't like, ideas for future meetings, ask if they are interested in participating or helping with AFS activities.

**Implementation:** Tailor meeting announcements, activities, and post-meeting feedback to encourage student involvement (e.g., 2014 Professional Networking Opportunity and follow up).

**Strategy 2:** Develop sessions that foster presentation of information on a topic from diverse viewpoints (e.g., researchers, managers, fish culturists, non-profits, municipalities, anglers).

**Implementation:** Develop balanced meeting agenda and as necessary, contact targeted speakers to encourage presentation of information on specific topics.

**Strategy 3:** Host meeting and non-meeting activities that are available to all members throughout the year.

**Strategy 4:** Provide updates and/or conduct field tours that showcase professional/non-professional collaborative fisheries management and/or conservation successes (e.g., habitat restoration, access enhancement, fish passage).

**Strategy 5:** Develop activities that are inclusive of non-professional meeting participants (e.g., derbies, tournaments, tackle demonstrations, habitat tour).

**Strategy 6:** Provide continuing education opportunities that address the use of new technologies/methods pertinent to Utah fisheries.

**Objective 3:** Provide financial and professional support to Chapter members.

**Strategy 1:** Provide evidence to members that Chapter revenue is being used effectively to achieve Chapter goals.

**Implementation:** Invest annually in scholarships, Western Division endowment fund and project/research grants once our financial goals have been met.

**Strategy 2:** Highlight importance of AFS to members.

**Implementation:** Encourage Chapter members to become professionally certified through the Society.

**Implementation:** Encourage Chapter members to apply for Division support for professional certification.

**Implementation:** Once Chapter finances are stable, fund one fisheries professional certification each year.

**Strategy 3:** Continue to recognize and award contributions to the fisheries profession.

**Implementation:** Solicit nominations and give awards to members who contribute to the profession. See Section 3.E. Awards for details on various Chapter awards.

**Implementation:** Highlight member accomplishments (e.g. recognizing awards, publications, awesome work) in Lateral Line and through other venues.

**Implementation:** Highlight significant regional contributions at the Division level.

**Implementation:** Encourage members to nominate peers for Division level awards.

**Strategy 4:** Advance professional development of our members.

**Implementation:** Once financially stable, be able to fund travel for plenary speakers, organize professional development workshops, support member attendance at trainings, workshops, AFS meetings, and fund professional certification.

**Implementation:** Utilize Western Division support for travel to meetings and for professional fisheries certification funding.

**Strategy 5:** Support student subunits

**Implementation:** Provide an EXCOM liaison, help fund activities, help students travel to professional meetings, and award scholarships.

**Implementation:** Chapter sponsors student subunits up to \$500, contingent upon annual meeting participation.



## D. MODEL ANNUAL BUDGET

A model annual budget has been developed to help guide implementation of this Chapter Business Plan. The purpose of this budget is to illustrate generic Chapter income and expenses based on Chapter operations in previous years and should be used as a guideline for the development of an annual budget. An actual annual budget is to be developed and voted upon by the EXCOM, as per Chapter Bylaws, during annual meeting planning and preparation. As per Chapter Bylaws the EXCOM is allowed discretionary spending for annual meeting costs and travel. Chapter expenses greater than \$500 and not related to annual meeting costs or travel reimbursements must be voted upon by the general membership.

<b>INCOME (Total)</b>	<b>\$35,000-\$47,000</b>
Membership Dues*	\$2,500
Meeting Registration**	\$11,500
Minimum Sponsorship	\$15,000-\$25,000
Minimum Fundraising Proceeds***	\$6,000-\$8,000
<b>EXPENSES (Total)</b>	<b>\$34,000-\$47,000</b>
Meeting Space/Hospitality/Programs	\$22,000-\$35,000
Misc/Giveaways****	\$2,000
Awards/Student Sub-Unit Support	\$1,000
Fundraising	\$2,000
Scholarships/W.D. Endowment/Special Projects	\$5,000
Electronic Media/123 Signup/Square Up	\$500
EXCOM Meetings and Travel	\$1,000
Charitable donations	\$500

\*Membership dues: \$25/member with a goal of 100 or more members = \$2500

\*\*Meeting registration based upon the following suggested prices and goals, rounded up: \$75/member (\$7500); \$125/non-members (\$3125); \$25/students (\$500); \$50 non-member students (\$250)

\*\*\*Annual fundraising includes in-meeting activity, fishing tournaments, fun runs, trap shoot, etc.

\*\*\*\*Miscellaneous/giveaway expense does not exceed the previous year's collected membership dues.