

<b>No. 38</b>	<b>Continuing Education Committee</b>	<b>Emmanuel Frimpong / Dan Dauwalter</b>
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TO: **John Boreman**, President  
FROM: Emmanuel Frimpong, Dan Dauwalter, Co-Chairs, Continuing Education Committee; Chris Millard, Member and Chair of CEC Short Course subcommittee  
DATE: 11 August 2013

**I. Motion Report – (2 pages max)**

*Motion 1: Financially support, to the amount of \$2,000, the development of a biannual webinar/short-course series to comply with the AFS Distance Education Plan*

(A) Recommended Motion: Move that the AFS Governing Board support, both administratively and fiscally (up to \$2,000), for the continued development of a biannual webinar/half-day short course series to be implemented by the Continuing Education Committee (Strategic Plan Goal 2, Objective 2.3, Strategy 2 & 3)

(B) Minority View: None

(C) Background for Motion:

The AFS Strategic Plan for 2010-2014 mandates that the Society provide a “wide array of continuing education opportunities using innovative methods to reach the widest possible audience of fisheries professionals” (see Goal 2; Objective 2.3). Until recently, AFS’s distance education opportunities have focused on virtual attendance of existing short courses and workshops offered at annual meetings of the parent society or divisions, where the remote learning experience is a secondary motivation. Thus, achievement of the Strategic Plan goal depends on continuing the development of educational opportunities that explicitly attract remote attendees.

In February 2013, the Continuing Education Committee (CEC) accepted President Boreman’s charge to develop and deliver a pilot short-course webinar to AFS members. With financial support from the Governing Board and administrative assistance from AFS staff, the CEC successfully presented a 4-hour webinar on May 22, 2013 entitled “Power-Based Standardization in Electrofishing”, by Dr. Jim Reynold’s (see CEC’s Year-end report for details). The webinar was attended at no cost by approximately 200 AFS members and was widely praised for the quality of the presentation. This effort had a secondary benefit of helping members feel more engaged in the Society and provided what some described as a “return” on their membership dues.

Given the success of the pilot offering, the CEC proposes to expand this effort to a continuing biannual webinar series to be offered in the fall and spring at no cost to the membership. As such, we respectfully request funding in an amount not to exceed \$2,000 for the 2013/14 program. These funds will be disbursed in equal amounts and will provide instructor compensation (up to \$500), allow for the purchase of a delivery platform (e.g., GoToWebinar; \$400/month for 500 attendees), and allow to cover potentially unforeseen costs. The CEC will endeavor to keep costs at a minimum by identifying instructors willing to teach the short courses gratis and will look for sponsors to defray costs of the webinar.

## **II. Activity report – (5 pages max)**

(A) Summary of Outcomes and Accomplishments Organized by Focus Area in Strategic Plan. Please report accomplishments consistent with Strategic Plan strategies and goals (see [www.fisheries.org](http://www.fisheries.org) for the AFS Strategic Plan).

The Continuing Education Committee pursued its charge for this year by forming six subcommittees. The following were each addressed by a subcommittee:

- 1) finalizing the summary of the continuing education survey, 2) moving the continuing education course database on the AFS website from a beta-testing version to a fully operating version, and 3) beginning to implement the AFS Distance Education Plan by developing a half-day pilot short course relevant to AFS members.

Under the leadership of Chris Millard (Tetra Tech), most progress was made on charge #3 for which a related motion is included in this report. In addition, charge #2 is mostly accomplished. The continuing education course database is functional but needs more frequent updates. Dr. Steve McMullin (Virginia Tech) is leading a subcommittee to complete the analysis of the continuing education survey. Three subcommittees also pursued investigation of available freeware for virtual attendance of CEC courses, possible third-party software for online course delivery, and opportunities for making information about CEC courses more accessible online. These additional activities were in furtherance of our three main charges and remain important to the CEC for the coming year.

The CEC is responsible for approving continuing education courses to be offered at divisional and chapter meetings and other venues (Goal 2, Objective 2.3, Strategy 1 & 2). In the 2012-2013 reporting period, the CEC reviewed five courses for offering at various chapter and divisional meetings and the seven courses listed herein with lead instructors, for offering at the parent meeting in Little Rock, AR. Two of these courses have since been cancelled:

### **Annual Meeting in Little Rock, AR**

- ♦ EPA Clean Water Act §316(b) Existing Facility Rule: Fish and Shellfish Protection at Cooling Water Intakes 101-102 – *Doug Dixon* [Cancelled]
- ♦ AFS Standard Methods for Sampling & Comparing Data w/ North American Standards in [fisheriesstandardsampling.org](http://fisheriesstandardsampling.org) – *Norman Mercado-Silva*

- ♦ Integrating Historic and Contemporary Inventory and Monitoring Data with ArcGIS, Python and R for Fisheries Restoration and Habitat Planning – *David Galbraith*
- ♦ Mapping Aquatic Habitat of Inland Freshwater Systems using Side-Scan Sonar – *Thomas Litts & Adam Kaeser*
- ♦ Basic and Intermediate GIS for Fisheries Biologists – *Joanna Whittier*
- ♦ Advanced GIS for Fisheries Biologists – *Joanna Whittier* [Cancelled]
- ♦ Leadership at All Levels in AFS – *Steve L. McMullin*

#### **Chapter/Divisional Programs**

- ♦ Comparing and Selecting Growth Models – *Laura M. Lee*
- ♦ Instream Flow – What it is and why it matters – *Donald J. Orth*
- ♦ Identification of Minnows and Darters of Illinois – *Josh Sherwood*
- ♦ Using “R” Statistical Software for Fisheries Science – *Timothy W. Spier*
- ♦ Alabama Recreational Pond Management Workshops (3#) – *Norman V. Haley*

(B) Recommendations or Suggestions for Future Consideration. Briefly include any suggestions you have for other individuals or units within AFS to respond to your unit’s activities, to provide additional information that your unit needs, to consider future activities that AFS might engage in, or to challenge other units to take on certain initiatives.

An emerging concern among CEC members is the nature of courses we should be reviewing. For example, do extension courses fall under the charge of the CEC? The leadership of the CEC has also received queries about conditions under which the CEC can stop a course from being offered if proposed by an AFS member to be offered at an AFS event. We are in discussion with the CE coordinator (Kathryn Winkler) to try to get authoritative explanations but these discussions will likely continue among the membership of the CEC for some time and may lead to a motion to modify our charge in the future.

#### **Appendix:**

#### **Summary of pilot AFS webinar short course “Power-Based Standardization in Electrofishing” by Dr. Jim Reynolds**

by Chris Millard, Continuing Education Committee, AFS

The last three AFS Presidents (Hubert, Fisher, Boreman) have charged the Continuing Education Committee (CEC) with increasing distance education opportunities for AFS members. In a January 2013 “President’s Hook” article, President John Boreman challenged the CEC to develop distance-learning opportunities for AFS members and suggested offering a pilot short-course as a webinar. In response, the CEC quickly organized a Distance Education Sub-committee (DES), which was charged with securing funding, identifying a topic and instructor, pursuing the proper platform for delivery, and presenting the short-course to the AFS membership. By February 2013, the DES accepted Dr. Jim Reynolds’s (University of Alaska Fairbanks) offer to present “Power-Based Standardization in Electrofishing” and subsequently developed a successful motion to the AFS Governing Board requesting \$1,500 of

financial support. On May 22, 2013 a 4-hour webinar was delivered free-of-charge to approximately 200 AFS members.

The pilot webinar was met with an overwhelmingly positive response from the AFS membership and provided valuable lessons:

#### **Webinar Outcome**

- ◆ Approximately 270 AFS members registered; nearly 200 attendees started the presentation.
- ◆ Non-member registration totaled 267. Non-members were denied access, as the course was a member benefit. However, several non-members renewed memberships to attend.
- ◆ Comments from attendees were favorable. Common themes included appreciation for a “return” on membership dues, feeling more engaged in AFS and requests for future offerings.
- ◆ Expenses totaled \$900, including a \$500 instructor stipend and \$400 GoToWebinar (GTW; <http://www.gotomeeting.com/fec/webinar>) 1-month license (up to 500 attendees).

#### **Lessons Learned/Recommendations**

- ◆ The webinar was well-received by the AFS membership and served to attract new/renewing members. The DES recommends biannual offerings (spring and fall) to be organized by CEC/DES.
- ◆ Projected costs of a biannual webinar series should not exceed \$1,800 (\$400 GTW fee and up to \$500 instructor stipend per webinar). However, if necessary, file sharing for the exchange of course materials may add \$30/webinar (Citrix ShareFile; <http://www.sharefile.com/>).
- ◆ Expenses can be reduced by presenting less intensive webinars (e.g., <4hrs), thus decreasing the instructor stipend, or limiting attendance (< 100) to decrease the webinar fee to \$99. Given the popularity of the program, the latter is not recommended.
- ◆ DES was unable to use the existing AFS GTW account due to its limited capacity (100 attendees) and inability to be upgraded (increased rate: \$499/yr to ~\$1800/yr). DES recommends establishing a GTW account as needed at a cost of \$400/month (i.e., per webinar).
- ◆ The CEC/DES, AFS Membership Committee, and AFS HQ should discuss opportunities to grow the AFS membership. DES can provide insights from comments received from affiliate and former AFS members, which included confusion and complaints about the membership.
- ◆ DES received invaluable assistance from AFS staff and would like to acknowledge the efforts and cooperation of Eva Przygodzki, Denise Spencer, and Shawn Johnston. AFS staff involvement in future webinars can likely be limited to advertising (through email distribution) and member status verification. Registration and communication with attendees will be accomplished independent of AFS by the CEC using GTW.