

No. 44	Meetings Oversight Committee	Maureen Walsh
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TO: John Boreman, AFS President
FROM: Maureen Walsh, Chair, Meetings Oversight
DATE: 11 August 2013

- I. Motion Report: none at this time, motion proposed for consideration to evaluate cost analysis options for meeting planners was approved at mid-year governing board meeting.
- II. Activity Report

This committee consists of the following members: Darryl Bowman (AR), Patrick Cooney (NC), Cari-Ann Hayer (SD), Liz Mamer (ID), Loren Miller (MN), Randy Jackson (NY), Donna Parrish (VT), and Neil Ward (OR).

The activities of the MOC apply broadly to many of the objectives of the AFS Strategic plan, but those mentioned below apply most to objectives 2.3 and 3.4 regarding innovative ideas for continuing education and fisheries science transfer, and 3.1, responding to needs of members. Meetings at all levels within AFS exist to serve the members and facilitate information transfer, so keeping the meetings evolving to best suit member needs is mandatory.

Our charges for this year were as follows:

1. *Continue to work on development of virtual attendance at meetings. The Electronic Services Advisory Board (ESAB) has been charged with addressing the topic of virtual meetings. I ask that your committee provide someone to serve as the MOC liaison with the ESAB (Jeff Kopaska, Chair) for this topic.*

Maureen was the 2013 liaison to the ESAB and assisted chair Jeff Kopaska with their charges to evaluate the AFS website and video meeting software.

Additionally, although MOC involvement on the VMA topic was limited for this year in our charges, it seemed clear from speaking with Jeff that ESAB was not evaluating VMA in the context of Annual Meetings. So, on our November 2012 conference call, MOC members discussed the topic of virtual meeting attendance at annual meetings in some detail, with relevant correspondence provided in the mid-year report.

I suggest that if expanding VMA at Annual Meetings is still a topic of interest that a separate task group be set up to determine how to move forward on this. From speaking with Little Rock planners in the first half of the year, clearly aspects of VMA are being implemented at the 2013 meeting and advances are

still ongoing that MOC is not necessarily involved with, so it might be better to clearly define the goals and structure for VMA at Annual Meetings in the near and longer term future.

2. *Develop procedures for organizing symposia at the annual meeting: Please provide the AFS Governing Board with recommendations for organizing symposia at future meetings in time for the upcoming mid-year meeting, 1-2 March 2013. Also, contact Steve Lochmann to see if there is still opportunity to provide input for the 2013 meeting in Little Rock.*

Most of this information is carried over from the mid-year report as the 2013 symposia planning and implementation is still ongoing. We suggest that the MOC chair be included in post-meeting debriefings/conference calls or copied on relevant reports as long as that is agreeable with the conference organizers. The immediate post-meeting thoughts on how things can be improved are often not conveyed to the MOC; I found it very helpful to be looped in to the 2012 Meeting Report at the very beginning.

I had originally thought we would be updating an existing document of Symposia Organizing Guidelines, but although it is stated in past MOC reports that a list of symposium guidelines was going to be submitted, we've not been able to locate such a document. It was not provided to AFS 2012 planners, who were the first to implement the new more open symposia model. I did not find a set of symposium guidelines in the most recent Procedures Manual provided by President Boreman.

Regarding symposia submission guidelines, we recommend continuing the approach developed by AFS 2012 planners that is being continued for this year in Little Rock. This approach allows any member to submit an abstract for consideration in accepted symposia, even if they were not originally contacted by a symposia organizer for inclusion. This model has been received positively by AFS members, and makes symposia both more inclusive and more diverse.

Program chairs for Little Rock used the model from St. Paul and currently have a Feb 1 notice of acceptance for symposia and a March 15 abstract deadline. It will be important that the AFS web site and listserv advertise the symposia right away so members will be informed of opportunities.

Since this will be the second year of implementing this type of symposia submission process, we propose to evaluate the timelines and specifics after the 2013 program is in place, to get feedback from planners. At this time, they seemed comfortable with their schedule and being able to plan both symposia and contributed paper programs with the current time table.

One item that should be considered, are “non-traditional” symposia. AFS 2012 meeting planners were approached to have facilitated discussions lasting multiple time slots during the course of a symposium, making it almost more like a workshop. The current call states "All symposium presenters are expected to deliver PowerPoint presentations." It might be helpful to clarify a position on what exactly a symposium is and what is allowed during the allotted time, or alternately, it could be left up to each individual Program Committee to make those judgments.

I believe we can have this task completed reasonably quickly after the Little Rock meeting and be connected with Quebec City planning group for 2014.

3. *Provide recommendations for alternative ways to plan and organize the Society's Annual Meeting. I would like the MOC to craft a motion for the upcoming mid-year meeting of the Governing Board (1-2 March 2013) to hire a meeting planner to handle non-program related logistics for future AFS annual meetings. As background for that motion, the MOC should list proposed duties of the planner, including timelines for major milestones that need to be met each year.*

At midyear we proposed the following motion, which was approved:

We propose that AFS proceed with formal cost analysis of options and hire a meeting planner to run non-program aspects of the 2016 AFS Annual Meeting.

Using the AFS Procedures Manual, MOC member input, and information from Michelle Horton (ESA meeting planner) we evaluated tasks associated with hosting an Annual Meeting and drafted a preliminary list of suggested tasks for a meeting planner versus AFS staff and volunteers. It seemed that some non-program meeting tasks are still more appropriate for AFS to handle rather than a meeting planner, so we recommend the GB discuss these tasks further and refine the duties of a meeting planner before soliciting bids for a cost analysis.

I spoke with Michelle Horton in detail about her duties as well as those of society staff and members in their meeting planning model, and she also provided me with several relevant documents including definitions of roles and a timetable for tasks in the year before a meeting occurs. I can provide a summary of our conversation and other documents if the GB would like more information toward hiring dedicated staff for meeting planning now or in the future.

Suggested Tasks for a Meeting Planner:

1. Site selection and suitability analysis: address items such as availability and price of air transportation, anticipated costs of hotel and meeting rooms, cost of services and amenities, entertainment options, expected climate and

- weather conditions, and various other information. Likely work with executive director and an AFS Meetings representative from Time and Place or MOC.
2. Local arrangements: Venue contract negotiation for conference (rooms, A/V, breaks, lodging, and on site social events), off site social events, catering, and entertainment.
 3. Budgeting
 4. Publicity, media relations, and communications
 5. Meeting website: provide information and photographs as needed to AFS webmaster
 6. Online pre-registration
 7. Contracting with abstract submission site
 8. Room assignments for program, meetings, workshops, etc.
 9. Volunteer coordination: Students and theoretically some local chapter members from the selected site will need to be allocated to many duties during the course of the meeting
 10. Implementing activities such as spawning run, field trips/tours

Suggested Tasks for AFS volunteers or staff:

1. Finding program chair, committee chairs, and committee members to run the scientific program including plenary session, contributed papers and posters, and symposia papers and posters.
2. Setting deadlines and writing/submitting calls for papers in Fisheries
3. Update and maintain website for meeting
4. Fundraising, trade show, and raffle
5. Continuing education
6. Student activities and best paper/poster symposium
7. Local host committee to provide suggestions for field trips, venues for social events, location for spawning run, write up on area for publicity.

Because a host was found for the 2016 meeting, and it seems likely that bids will be submitted for 2017, the MOC is not sure how the GB would like to proceed on this initiative.

4. *Additional ongoing tasks:* During the first half of the year, members noted that it was difficult for us to get information about past meetings readily, and we were not sure if all the closing reports from past meetings were warehoused someplace easily accessible. We were not sure if recommendations that were made in these reports from year to year were being evaluated, or if they were being lost in the reports just transferring to the next year's meeting planners. We will continue a task of working with Shawn Johnston to try to assemble relevant reports and meeting data in one place, as well as try to create a history of MOC recommendations and follow through.