

## **North Central Division of the American Fisheries Society Strategic Plan 2016–2019**

The North Central Division (NCD) of the American Fisheries Society (AFS) encompasses 13 chapters and at least 25 student subunits from 16 states and provinces at the time of this plan’s writing. Membership in the Division varies annually between 1,000–1,500 people.

The mission of Divisions within the American Fisheries Society is to advance Society goals by coordinating and complementing Chapter activities related to information exchange, outreach, aquatic stewardship, and governance at a regional level, and to maintain a liaison role with regional resource stakeholders. Divisions serve member needs in large geographic areas by coordinating with provincial and state-level agencies and organizations, and among AFS units, and representing Chapter needs to the AFS leadership (i.e., Society officers, Executive Director, and Society Governing Board members).

The NCD Strategic Plan described here differs from previous plans. The approach and format used to create this document are aligned with the Society’s 2015–2019 Strategic Plan as well as those of many chapters who revised their strategic plans between 2015 and 2016. The goals described below are congruent with the goals of the Society Strategic Plan. In addition, these goals describe the unique contribution of and opportunities within the Division, particularly in their relationships to chapters and subunits and their members who are considered “affiliate members” of the Society (i.e., a member of a local unit but not a dues-paying member to the Society).

Specific strategies listed within this document address one or more of the goals outlined in this plan. The incoming NCD president should review this document when developing the annual plan of work, but specific action may be taken by any NCD Executive Committee officer, standing committee, technical committee, chapter, or subunit to achieve these goals. It is recommended that each of these units track their progress toward achieving those goals in this plan most relevant to that unit.

The challenges faced by fisheries science and management and professional societies that are most relevant to the NCD include:

- Working across various partners (e.g., state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, private industry) to achieve ecosystem-based research and management that also address social and economic concerns.
- The increasing disconnect between society and nature resulting from an increasingly urbanized and electronically-centric society who, as a result, is less likely to engage in environmental issues or participate in outdoor recreation.
- Continued and unforeseen impacts of climate change on various fisheries dynamics and water quality, including, but not limited to: invasive species pervasions, disease emergence, and increased intensity and duration of droughts and flooding events.
- Providing a unique value of membership parallel but distinct from the Society, chapters, or subunits to maintain and enhance membership within the NCD and the Society.

The NCD will support the mission of the Society as well as those of the chapters and subunits within the Division through focused activities under the five goals described below.

### **Goals**

*Some of the following goals come directly from the Society Strategic Plan (Goals I and II). Other goals are carried forth from the previous NCD plan or combine the goals of the Society with those of the NCD (Goals III, IV, and V). The order of these goals does not imply priority.*

**I. Science Goal:** Advance and promote, fisheries, aquaculture, and aquatic sciences.

**II. Education Goal:** Support education and professional development in fisheries, aquaculture, and aquatic sciences.

**III. Value of Membership Goal:** Promote and communicate the value of AFS membership at all levels to fisheries, aquaculture, and aquatic science professionals and students.

**IV. Regional Fisheries Leadership and Governance Goal:** Support AFS members at all organizational levels, including agencies, chapters, and subunits, as they face challenges in managing, conserving, and preserving fisheries and aquatic resources.

**V. Communication Goal:** Disseminate information on fisheries and aquatic sciences; connect chapters and subunits within the Division to each other and the Society.

### **Strategies**

The NCD uses a number of strategies, some based on the Society strategies and others based on the previous Division Strategic Plan, to accomplish these goals. A single strategy may fulfill more than one goal (see *Goal Linkage*). Similarly, various NCD Executive Committee officers and standing and technical committees may address goals individually or collaboratively (see *Committees Responsible*). The NCD President's annual work plan should identify one (or more) strategies on which to focus. *Note:* The following strategies do not necessarily match those of the Society plan as the NCD uses different strategies to meet the five goals above.

1. Organize and sponsor fora to present new findings and exchange ideas.

*Goal Linkage: Science, Education, Value of Membership, Regional Fisheries Leadership and Governance*

*Committees Responsible: Executive, various technical committees*

Suggested actions:

- (a) Provide monetary support to the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference and the Society Annual meeting.
- (b) Promote and support annual Division technical committee events and symposia.
- (c) Promote and support student-centered events and symposia within the Division throughout the year.

Possible metrics:

- (a) Number of NCD-sponsored meetings, workshops, conferences, and symposia with attendee count.
- (b) Results of member satisfaction surveys on questions related to such events.

2. Provide continuing education opportunities with an emphasis on training and courses that are not commonly offered by academic institutions and/or that will be essential tools in the future.

*Goal Linkage: Education, Value of Membership, Regional Fisheries Leadership and Governance*

*Committees Responsible: Continuing Education, various technical committees*

Suggested actions:

- (a) Sponsor workshops that cover a diverse array of topics aimed at improving the skills used by fisheries, aquaculture, and aquatic sciences professionals, particularly those that can be delivered via online media and are not location specific.
- (b) Promote opportunities for continuing education from sponsors outside the NCD, especially those available online.

Possible metrics:

- (a) Number of courses sponsored by the NCD annually with attendee count.
- (b) Results of member satisfaction surveys on questions related to such events.
- (c) Number of courses promoted by the NCD annually.

3. Support current and revive inactive technical committees and assist them in providing education and other benefits to NCD AFS members and AFS affiliate members.

*Goal Linkage: Education, Value of Membership, Regional Fisheries Leadership and Governance*

*Committees Responsible: Executive, various technical committees*

Suggested actions:

- (c) Provide monetary or other support (e.g., advertising on NCD AFS webpage) to symposia or other special events or products (e.g., books) organized by technical committees.
- (d) Connect technical committees with each other to co-organize or co-sponsor symposia and other special events or products.
- (e) Update contact information for technical committee chairs annually and communicate with them at least once per quarter.

Possible metrics:

- (a) Annual number of active technical committees and their events or products.
- (b) Up-to-date technical committee leadership information on the NCD AFS webpage.

4. Develop communication products and publicly accessible information to promote the value of fisheries, aquatic habitat, and fisheries sciences.

*Goal Linkage: Science, Communication*

*Committees Responsible: Resolutions, Communications, various technical committees*

Suggested actions:

- (a) Provide technical demonstrations or workshops at public events as requested by watershed, educational, conservation, or sport groups.
- (b) Promote technical information on the NCD website.

Possible metrics:

- (a) Number of public events that include NCD participation with attendee count.
- (b) Number of new pages of technical information on NCD website and technical committee webpages with associated “hit” counts.

5. Develop communication products to connect chapters, subunits, and the Division to the Society.

*Goal Linkage: Value of Membership, Regional Fisheries Leadership and Governance*

*Committees Responsible: Executive, Communications*

Suggested actions:

- (a) Align the NCD website, listserv, and newsletter to provide cohesive communications and effectively target members with information most relevant to them.
- (b) Continually explore and leverage new communications tools.

Possible metrics:

- (a) Number of hits on NCD website annually.
- (b) Number of listserv posts annually.
- (c) Number of newsletter contributions annually.
- (d) Number of new communications tools tested and used annually.

6. Enhance participation of students and professionals at all Society levels to assure membership recruitment, retention, and leadership development into the future.

*Goal Linkage: Value of Membership*

*Committees Responsible: Executive, Student Affairs, Continuing Education, Membership, various technical committees*

Suggested actions:

- (a) Sponsor student-centered activities at the annual Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference and within the Division when possible.
- (b) Develop travel awards for professionals to attend the annual Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference.

- (c) Partner with local chapters and subunits to enhance the annual Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference.

Possible metrics:

- (a) Number of student-centered activities sponsored at the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference with attendee count.
- (b) Number of professionals supported by the NCD to attend the annual Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference.
- (c) Other quantifications of NCD participation at the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference.

7. Promote ethnic, socio-economic, generational, and disciplinary diversity within the Society and fisheries profession.

*Goal Linkage: Value of Membership, Regional Fisheries Leadership and Governance*

*Committees Responsible: Student Affairs, Membership, various technical committees*

Suggested actions:

- (a) Organize interdisciplinary symposia at the annual Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference.
- (b) Directly engage chapters and subunits to cultivate future generations of fisheries scientists.
- (c) Develop meaningful collaborations and co-sponsored activities with the North Central and Central Plains and Mountains sections of The Wildlife Society at the annual Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference.
- (d) Develop new occasional collaborations with related professional organizations to promote fisheries and aquatic resources.

Possible metrics:

- (a) Number of interdisciplinary symposia organized annually with attendee count.
- (b) Number of chapters and subunits engaged in training future generations.
- (c) Number of collaborative events with The Wildlife Society at the annual Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference with attendee counts.
- (d) Number of collaborations with other professional organizations.

8. Recognize and acknowledge the achievements of members and partners through special awards, special conference sessions, and other activities.

*Goal Linkage: Value of Membership, Regional Fisheries Leadership and Governance*

*Committees Responsible: Executive, Awards*

Suggested actions:

- (a) Continue to award the annual Division awards with at least one winner in every category.
- (b) Consider renaming annual awards after leading fisheries professionals from the Division.
- (c) Award one Joan Duffy Student Travel Award from each chapter in the Division annually.
- (d) Advertise winners on the NCD website, the NCD newsletter, the Society newsletter, and *Fisheries*.

Possible metrics:

- (a) Number of applications received for NCD awards annually.
- (b) Number of awards given by the NCD and the total amount of money awarded.
- (c) Number of pages or articles written on the NCD award winners and the associated measures of “hits” or reads.

9. Hold elections and convene regular meetings of elected officers to plan activities that advance the mission of the Society and provide sound financial management of assets, revenue, and expenses.

*Goal Linkage: Regional Fisheries Leadership and Governance*

*Committees Responsible: Executive, Auditing*

Suggested actions:

- (a) Conduct annual elections no later than March 30 annually.
- (b) Hold monthly call with the Executive Committee and quarterly calls with NCD leadership (chapter and subunit presidents and standing and technical committee chairs).
- (c) Evaluate annual operating budget.
- (d) Audit revenues and expenditures annually.

Possible metrics:

- (a) Number of conference calls held annually with attendee count.
- (b) Proportion of NCD members participating in annual elections.
- (c) Annual account balance.

10. Periodically review constitution, bylaws, and procedures manual and revise using appropriate procedures as necessary.

*Goal Linkage: Regional Fisheries Leadership and Governance*

*Committees Responsible: Executive*

Suggested actions:

- (a) Review and revise the NCD Strategic Plan every 3–5 years in alignment with the Society Strategic Plan. Standing committees will review strategies relevant to their committees and determine necessary updates or changes.
- (b) Review and revise the NCD bylaws and procedures annually and update when necessary.

Possible metrics:

- (a) Completion of a revised NCD Strategic Plan in a timely fashion.
- (b) Number of revisions of NCD bylaws and procedures.