



*From the Desk of the NCD President
Ramblings by Sandy*

December 2016

Greetings, NCD!

Hello all,

November has flown by and I hope you all had a joyful and safe Thanksgiving. I know for many of us November serves as a month where we give thanks and reflect on the many good things in our lives. I also know that many of us are nervous for what the future holds for the protection of our natural resources and other changes that may come.

One thing that I am thankful for was an amazing and brave opinion piece written by Jesse Trushenski, the AFS First Vice President, about post-election perspectives on diversity. The election did not create a diversity issue but it did highlight, what many of us already knew, that sexism and discrimination are still a very real problem.

I personally have experienced sexism and discrimination throughout my career. Some instances are likely unintended and subtle while others are obvious. I will be honest... it is frustrating and emotionally draining. I often wondered what I should tell women considering a profession in fisheries. Do I warn them that this is part of the deal or hope that they will be spared? Even if you are spared there is always the obvious that you are a minority. My career has entailed meetings of a male to female ratio of 10 to 1... sometimes even worse.

I sympathize with students who want to enter into the fisheries profession who are not Caucasian or male. So how do we become more inclusive? I think AFS has taken several positive steps but I think the burden lies mostly on us as professionals, supervisors, and mentors. Sexism and discrimination must be called out all levels despite the risk of creating some uncomfortable situations with coworkers. Sometimes just saying "hey, you are being very unprofessional and I don't appreciate it" is, more often than not, enough to make someone stop and think about what they are saying.

Regardless of the setting, the burden most often lies with those who make up the majority of this, or any, profession. Would you want your daughters or granddaughters to enter into this profession? Do you feel they would be treated with respect and given the same opportunities as your sons? Be conscious and aware of your biases and prejudice... two things we all have. Finally, when faced with sexism or discrimination, either as a recipient or a witness, step up and be the catalyst for change.

Until next month,

Sandy