

DECEMBER 4-7, 2011 | DES MOINES MARRIOTT DOWNTOWN | MIDWEST2011.ORG

# FINAL REPORT

## JANUARY 2012

72<sup>ND</sup> MIDWEST

# FISH & WILDLIFE

CONFERENCE

### HOSTED BY



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES

RECONNECTING PEOPLE WITH  
NATURAL RESOURCES

The 72<sup>nd</sup> Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference was the eighth time that the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and Iowa State University partnered to host this conference. Although contracts with the hotel and convention center were signed more than five years before, planning did not begin in earnest until October 2010. The planning committee consisted of less than 20 individuals who volunteered to help plan this conference on top of their already very heavy workloads. In 14 months time this productive and efficient committee came together as a group only 10 times for 2-3 hours per meeting. There were many curve balls thrown at them and planning was particularly difficult due to widespread budget cuts and travel freezes. The committee handled these obstacles masterfully and what resulted was a seemingly flawless Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference for our attendees.

The theme of our conference, Reconnecting People with Natural Resources, was selected to highlight this important topic. Many attendees commented on the plenary session on Monday morning and how moved they were by the three speakers who were both informative and entertaining. Following the plenary session there were two full days of technical presentations. We divided 200 contributed papers into 21 technical sessions and had 13 high quality symposia with an additional 149 presentations. These talks provided ample opportunity for attendees to learn about the latest advancements in fisheries and wildlife management. In addition to the oral presentations there were 120 posters displayed throughout the conference and authors were present to answer questions and engage in thoughtful conversation during the Tradeshow Social.

In conjunction with the conference, thirty small groups hosted various committee, workgroup, and board meetings to discuss important issues facing fish and wildlife in the Midwest. We did our best to accommodate these groups, but this was no small task given the limited meeting space that was available to us in our venue. There was also plenty of networking opportunities, from the Welcome Social on Sunday night to the Tradeshow Social on Tuesday night and at all the breaks and receptions in between. Two out of five attendees were students and we provided several opportunities for them to learn and network, including a Student-Professional mixer on Monday night.

The individuals on this planning committee can be credited for the success of this conference. Without their hard work, it would not have gone so smoothly. What follows are their detailed accounts of their planning efforts. We hope that you find these notes useful. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact myself or any of the committee chairs.

Sincerely,  
George Scholten  
Steering Committee Chair

## **72<sup>nd</sup> Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference Contacts**

### **Conference Chair:**

George Scholten: [George.Scholten@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:George.Scholten@dnr.iowa.gov) 515-281-8663

### **Program:**

Randy Schultz: [Randy.Schultz@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Randy.Schultz@dnr.iowa.gov) 641-774-2958

Willie Suchy: [Willie.Suchy@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Willie.Suchy@dnr.iowa.gov) 515-281-8660

Rolf Koford: [rkoford@iastate.edu](mailto:rkoford@iastate.edu) 515-294-3057

Jonathan Meerbeek: [Jonathan.Meerbeek@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Jonathan.Meerbeek@dnr.iowa.gov) 712-336-1840

Andy Fowler: [Andy.Fowler@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Andy.Fowler@dnr.iowa.gov) 641-774-2958

### **Plenary:**

Jeff Kopaska: [Jeff.Kopaska@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Jeff.Kopaska@dnr.iowa.gov) 515-432-2823

### **Budget and Finance:**

Martin Konrad: [Martin.Konrad@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Martin.Konrad@dnr.iowa.gov) 515-281-6976

### **Registration:**

Lile Kruger: [Lile.Kruger@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Lile.Kruger@dnr.iowa.gov) 515-432-2823

Stephanie Shepherd: [Stephanie.Shepherd@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Shepherd@dnr.iowa.gov) 515-432-2823

### **Arrangements:**

Kim Bogenschutz: [Kim.Bogenschutz@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Kim.Bogenschutz@dnr.iowa.gov) 515-432-2823

Mark McInroy: [Mark.McInroy@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Mark.McInroy@dnr.iowa.gov) 515-432-2823

Chris Larson: [Chris.Larson@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Chris.Larson@dnr.iowa.gov) 712-769-2587

Mark Flammang: [Mark.Flammang@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Mark.Flammang@dnr.iowa.gov) 641-647-2406

### **Website:**

Jeff Kopaska: [Jeff.Kopaska@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Jeff.Kopaska@dnr.iowa.gov) 515-432-2823

### **Raffle and Paper Judging:**

Chad Dolan: [Chad.Dolan@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Chad.Dolan@dnr.iowa.gov) 319-694-2430

Steve Waters: [Steve.Waters@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Steve.Waters@dnr.iowa.gov) 319-694-2430

Jeff Glaw: [Jeff.Glaw@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Jeff.Glaw@dnr.iowa.gov) 319-293-7185

### **Student Events:**

Donna Muhm: [Donna.Muhm@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Donna.Muhm@dnr.iowa.gov) 712-336-1840

Clay Pierce: [cpierce@iastate.edu](mailto:cpierce@iastate.edu) 515-294-3159

Stephen Dinsmore: [cootjr@iastate.edu](mailto:cootjr@iastate.edu) 515-294-1348

Rebecca Christoffel: [christof@iastate.edu](mailto:christof@iastate.edu) 515-294-7429

### **Volunteers:**

Karen Kinkead: [Karen.Kinkead@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Karen.Kinkead@dnr.iowa.gov) 712-281-4815

**Printing, Media, Marketing:**

Mick Klemesrud:	<a href="mailto:Mick.Klemesrud@dnr.iowa.gov">Mick.Klemesrud@dnr.iowa.gov</a>	515-281-8653
Julie Sparks:	<a href="mailto:Julie.Sparks@dnr.iowa.gov">Julie.Sparks@dnr.iowa.gov</a>	515-281-6159
Katy Reeder:	<a href="mailto:Katy.Reeder@dnr.iowa.gov">Katy.Reeder@dnr.iowa.gov</a>	515-281-8396

**Trade Show and Sponsorship:**

Mike Mason:	<a href="mailto:Mike.Mason@dnr.iowa.gov">Mike.Mason@dnr.iowa.gov</a>	515-281-6072
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**Meeting Minutes and Final Report:**

Kathy Atkinson:	<a href="mailto:Kathryn.Atkinson@dnr.iowa.gov">Kathryn.Atkinson@dnr.iowa.gov</a>	641-357-3517
Wendy Sander:	<a href="mailto:Wendy.Sander@dnr.iowa.gov">Wendy.Sander@dnr.iowa.gov</a>	712-336-1840

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## **Committee: Program**

**Committee Members:** Randall Schultz, Chair  
Willy Suchy; Rolf Koford; Jonathan Meerbeek; Andy Fowler

**Responsibilities:** Produce program for the Conference, which includes both fisheries and wildlife sessions; produce symposia addressing both fisheries and wildlife topics; produce poster sessions.

### **Timeline:**

#### **General Program**

1<sup>st</sup> Call for Abstracts: July 2011  
2<sup>nd</sup> Call for Abstracts: August 2011  
Abstract Deadline: September 2011  
Deadline extended from beginning to mid-October 2011  
Presenters notified October 2011

#### **Symposia**

1<sup>st</sup> Call for Symposia: February 2011  
2<sup>nd</sup> Call for Symposia: March 2011  
Final Call for Symposia: April 2011  
Symposia notification to symposia organizers: May 2011  
Symposia Deadline May 2011

**Accomplishments:** Symposia and Abstract calls were sent to the NCD list serve and list serves of the North Central and Mountain & Plains Sections of The Wildlife Society. Fisheries contacts were easily developed, but the inability to secure the proper contracts for The Wildlife Society necessitated an extension of the deadline to ensure all potential wildlife contacts were made. We also contacted agency Fish and Wildlife Bureau Chiefs to encourage participation by their staff and notified all registrants from the 71<sup>st</sup> Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference to encourage attendance and submissions. Abstract submissions through Oxford Abstracts went well, but generating reports (e.g., symposia abstracts, fish talks, wildlife talks) was difficult. Two problems were evident with abstract submissions. Firstly, many submitters failed to identify their talk was part of a symposium (abstract submitters were asked to type their symposia within a comment box) and secondly, submitters were given the option to choose oral, poster, or either for presentation types. Many abstract submitters chose “either”, which required the program committee to determine which session was most appropriate for them, or place them in the poster session. We contacted only four presenters that we asked to change from oral to poster, or vice-versa, so the “either” category was not needed, and only created more work. It is important to have both fish and wildlife professionals on this committee so appropriate session titles can be developed. Having the program established as early as possible is important, so the program can be placed on the web and presenters can see where and

when their presentation will take place. Otherwise, be prepared for an onslaught of emails from presenters asking about their presentations. We were lucky to have as many proposed symposia as we did (13). However, several organizers either had a hard time finding speakers to fill their half or full day sessions (we had one symposia that went 1 ½ days), or getting their speakers to submit abstracts. This created a bottleneck in producing the program, because we were unsure as to how long the symposia would run. We required symposia organizers to provide their own moderators, but not AV personnel. We had one request for a symposium after the deadline, which we accepted after the organizer provided us with a list of speakers that were committed to attend. Be prepared to communicate with the symposia organizers frequently to keep them on schedule. Oral and poster presentation guidelines were placed on the website to provide guidance to presenters. However, we should have emailed poster presenters the specific directions. This created some misunderstanding on the poster presenter's part as to specific directions on poster set-up. The poster boards were labeled and numbered as to fisheries or wildlife (e.g., F1 – F80; W1 – W40). This corresponded to a sheet that was placed at the front of the poster board aisle. This sheet was also on the website so presenters knew where their poster was to be. Four thumbtacks were present on each poster board as well for each poster. We had 200 contributed presentations for 21 general sessions, 149 presentations for 13 symposia, 80 fisheries posters and 40 wildlife posters.

**Staff Required During Conference:** The Program Chair was available during the Conference to address issues, but by this point issues were minor. A member of the committee was available the first day of the Conference to direct poster presenters to their poster boards.

**Recommendations:** Identify both fish and wildlife contacts early to promote symposia and abstract submissions and work to produce the program for the web as early as possible.

## **Committee: Plenary**

**Committee Members:** Jeff Kopaska, Chair

**Responsibilities:** This committee was charged with finding speakers that would appeal to the broad audience that attends the Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference. It was also important to select speakers that could relate specifically to the conference theme.

**Timeline:** After the conference theme was selected in late 2010, ideas were solicited from the planning committee regarding plenary speakers. The Plenary Committee then identified primary and secondary potential speakers. Initial invitations were extended in January 2011 to Dr. Don Jackson, Richard McCabe, and Mark Duda. Specific topics were suggested to each speaker in the late summer of 2011. The annual awards given by AFS-NCD and TWS-NCS were presented during the plenary. The respective presidents of each of these organizations were contacted two months prior to the meeting to determine the amount of time needed for the awards ceremonies for these groups.

**Accomplishments:** To prepare for the conference, a suite of potential plenary speakers should be identified 18 months in advance. Invitations for plenary speakers should be distributed 18 months in advance, but no later than 12 months in advance. While this conference did not extend invitations that early, our success with soliciting these individuals solely rested on personal relationships between planning committee members and the three plenary speakers. Due to these personal relationships, none of the plenary speakers required an honorarium or speaker fee. They only requested that their expenses be reimbursed, which the conference committee was happy to oblige. Once the slate of plenary speakers is finalized, their names and biographies should be placed on the conference web page. Approximately three to six months prior to the conference, specific topics of interest for the speakers to address should be suggested to the speakers. This will help the speakers focus their talk, and address the specific points of interest to the conference attendees. These topics should be discussed by the planning committee prior to suggesting them to the speakers. Approximately one month prior to the conference, a short biography (1 paragraph) should be prepared for each speaker, and sent to them for their review. This biography will be used to introduce the speaker during the plenary session. About two weeks prior to the conference, a script should be written for the moderator of the plenary session. This script should include recognition of dignitaries; general announcements about the conference, the facilities, et cetera; as well as the biographies to be read for each of the plenary speakers. Do not forget to include 5-10 minutes at the beginning of the session for a "Welcome" message from governor/director/conference chair. During the conference, simply make sure everything is lined up the morning of the plenary session (AV, script, speakers, et cetera).



Suggesting specific topics for the speakers seemed to work well. Hurdles encountered included getting the third speaker to commit (this can be handled by starting the process sooner), making sure the speakers are using the microphones, and not allowing construction in the hotel lobby during the presentations.

**Staff Required During Conference:** 1 or 2 (organizer and moderator)

**Recommendations:** Many individuals with credentials and name recognition that qualify as potential plenary/keynote speakers are scheduled up to 18 months in advance. I recommend that a conference theme be selected at least 18 months in advance, so that potential plenary speakers can be selected and invitations can be extended. I believe that the individuals who declined our invitation to speak would have been more likely to accept had there been greater notice given.

The plenary session was run without a break in 2011. I believe this kept people in the room, and kept attendance high. While there were some complaints about the lack of a break, I think the outcome of high attendance during the session outweighs the minor inconvenience of not having a break. Many positive comments were garnered about the Plenary Session, and many folks indicated it was the best one they had ever attended. I think our speakers were popular with our audience because they spoke from experience, and from the heart. The benefit of having a storyteller as a plenary speaker cannot be overvalued.

Both the NCD and the NCS presidents vastly overestimated the amount of time necessary to distribute their awards. Both said the ceremonies would take 20-30 minutes, while in actuality the combined awards took only 20 minutes. Budget no more than 30 minutes for the awards ceremonies, regardless of what they tell you they need.

Develop a set timeline for the Plenary Session well in advance, and then inform the keynote speakers of how much time they are allotted. Good, experienced speakers will structure their talk to the amount of time you give them. Each of the speakers for this Midwest was told they had 45 minutes for their presentations, and all were nearly exactly on time.

## **Committee: Budget and Finance**

**Committee Chair:** Martin Konrad

**Responsibilities:** The Budget and Finance Committee drafted the conference budget based on expected income (attendance rates, sponsorships, advertisements and donations) and expenses. This draft budget is used to set the registration amount and trade show fee. Managed Conference bank account for the following: trade show, hospitality suite, printing, registration costs (paper, lanyards, flash drive, name badge), Fenske award, Beginning your professional journey workshop, plenary speakers, audio visual services and miscellaneous expenses. Only one person was given authority to manage the Conference bank account. The Conference contracted with the AFS for registration, abstract submission, and web site services (contract available upon request). The Committee will work with AFS to close out the conference expenses.

**Timeline:** A draft budget was provided in July for Committee review. Registration fees were determined in August prior to early September when the Conference began to accept on-line registrations.

**Accomplishments:** Drafted a budget based on two scenarios; a minimum attendance rate and a rate 25% above the minimum. Registration costs were determined before the Conference began taking registration in early September. The budget was revised weekly as income and expenses became known. Expenses were paid as vendor invoices came in. The final conference budget close out with the AFS is expected in January 2012.

**Staff Required During Conference:** There were no staff requirements during the Conference.

**Recommendations:** For past conferences there is a rule of thumb of roughly a 1:1 ratio of presenters to non-presenters. For the 2011 Midwest Conference the number of presenters (435) exceeded non-presenters (403). If possible have the abstract submissions due prior to going live with online registration. Using this ratio will assist in more accurately determining registration fees. Below, for budgeting purposes, is a breakout according to registration type. There should be an incentive for early student registration; the 2011 Conference did not have an incentive. As a result students elected to register on site. This caused problems with not having enough registration packet materials.

Student related expenses were not expected early in the planning stages. These unexpected expenses included; The Fenske award breakfast and ribbons, the Student/Professional mixer and the Beginning your Professional Journey workshop. Planning early for these is a must. Committee chairs need

to contact the NCD is get a commitment to support the Fenske award and chairs should be expected to find sponsors to support the mixer and workshop.

### Registration – preliminary final

Full registration Early Bird - 367 @ \$275

Full registration late fee - 61 @ \$375

Monday - 17 @ \$150

Tuesday - 55 @ \$150

Wednesday - 3 @ \$150

Students - 325 @ \$100

Guests 9 - @ \$50

Cancellations - 2 - \$75.00

### Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference - Registered Attendance Presented Papers, Poster Presentations

Presentations with Abstracts										
			Paid Registered Attendance	Fish	Wildlife	Papers Special	Total	Posters	Grand Total	Ratio Attendance: Presentations
1980	42 <sup>nd</sup>	MN	980	36	43	11 <sup>a</sup>	90	29	119	8.2
1981	43 <sup>rd</sup>	KA	650	59	74	0	133	0	133	4.9
1982	44 <sup>th</sup>	IA	680	59	48	0	107	19	126	5.4
1983	45 <sup>th</sup>	MO	864	44	55	0	114	15	114	7.6
1984	46 <sup>th</sup>	IN	620	39	39	0	78	8	86	7.2
1985	47 <sup>th</sup>	MI	825	47	55	9 <sup>b</sup>	111	13	124	6.6
1986	48 <sup>th</sup>	NE	800	77	64	0	141	18	159	5.0
1987	49 <sup>th</sup>	WI	1,215	87	101	96 <sup>c</sup>	284	10	294	4.1
1988	50 <sup>th</sup>	OH	705	80	54	26 <sup>d</sup>	160	0	160	4.4
1989	51 <sup>st</sup>	IL	863	80	64	8 <sup>e</sup>	152	0	152	5.6
1990	52 <sup>nd</sup>	MN	1,708	101	140 <sup>f</sup>	73 <sup>g</sup>	314	65	379	4.5
1991	53 <sup>rd</sup>	IA	754	73	60	10 <sup>h</sup>	143	21	164	4.6
1992	54 <sup>th</sup>	TOR	1,100	83	75	116 <sup>i</sup>	274	41	315	3.5
1993	55 <sup>th</sup>	MO	1,241	76	107	25 <sup>j</sup>	208	44	252	4.9
1994	56 <sup>th</sup>	IN	957	103	93	0	196	34	230	4.2
1995	57 <sup>th</sup>	MI	1,051	120	112	0	232	40	272	3.9
1996	58 <sup>th</sup>	NE	826 <sup>k</sup>	69	128	0	197	33	230	3.6
1997	59 <sup>th</sup>	WI	1,441	166	169	93 <sup>l</sup>	428	63	491	2.9
1998	60 <sup>th</sup>	OH	900							
1999	61 <sup>st</sup>	IL	1,410					42	395	3.5
2000	62 <sup>nd</sup>	MN	1,658	87	87	189	363	69	432	3.8
2001	63 <sup>rd</sup>	IA	942	109	121	8	238	53	261	3.6
2003	64 <sup>th</sup>	MO	920	132	101	33 <sup>m</sup>	266	67	333	2.8
2004	65 <sup>th</sup>	IN	698	45	70	56	171	36	208	3.4
2005	66 <sup>th</sup>	MI	1003	146	220	44	410	59	469	2.1
2006	67 <sup>th</sup>	NE	772	144	96	12 <sup>n</sup>	252	67	319	2.4
2007	68 <sup>th</sup>	WI	1374	188	166	62	416	138	554	2.5
2008	69 <sup>th</sup>	OH	680				219	114	333	2.0
2009	70 <sup>th</sup>	IL	658				228	88	316	2.1
2010	71 <sup>st</sup>	MN	1199				388	92	480	2.5
2011	72 <sup>nd</sup>	IA	837	99	101	149 <sup>o</sup>	349	120	469	1.8

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a	Urban Fish and Wildlife				
b	Public involvement/nongame			Change in paid registered attendance	
c	Interdisciplinary/computer workshop	MN	1980	(980) to 1990 (1,708)	+74%
d	Education	IA	1982	(680) to 1991 (754)	+11%
e	National Forest Planning	MO	1983	(864) to 1993 (1,241)	+44%
f	Includes 63 nongame papers	ID	1984	(620) to 1994 (950)	+54%
g	GIS workshop, biodiversity, plants	MI	1985	(825) to 1995 (1,051)	+27%
	changing farming practices, enforcement	NE	1986	(800) to 1996 (826)	+3%
h	2020 Vision	WI	1987	(1,215) to 1997 (1,441)	+19%
i	various titles	OH	1988	(705) to 1998 (900)	+22%
j	habitats/human dimensions	IL	1989	(863) to 1999 (1,410)	+63%
k	includes 70 single day registrations	MN	1990	(1,708) to 2000 (1,658)	-3%
l	primarily ecosystem management	IA	1991	(754) to 2001 (942)	+25%
m	Biometrics, Human Dimensions,	MO	1993	(1,241) to 2003 (920)	-26%
	Forest Management, GIS	IN	1994	(957) to 2004 (698)	-27%
n	Social & Economic Values	MI	1995	(1051) to 2005 (1003)	-5%
o	149 presentations were from 13 symposia	NE	1996	(826) to 2006 (772)	-7%
		WI	1997	(1441) to 2007 (1374)	-5%
		OH	1998	(900) to 2008 (680)	-24%
		IL	1999	(1,410) to 2009 (658)	-53%
		MN	2000	(1,658) to 2010 (1199)	-28%
		IA	2001	(942) to 2011 (837)	-11%

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## **Committee: Registration**

**Committee Members:** The Registration Committee for the 2011 Midwest F&W Conference was co-chaired by Lile Kruger and Stephanie Shepherd.

**Responsibilities:** Responsibilities included managing the registration table at the conference, preparing name badges for conference registrants, constructing registration packets and working with the local Convention & Visitor's Bureau (CVB) to obtain additional information and supplies for those packets. The committee took on the additional task of creating a map of local restaurants for inclusion in the registration packet.

**Timeline:** Online registration was contracted to the AFS. With them handling all money transactions and registration inquiries, the committee's deadlines mostly lay at the end of the conference planning timeframe. Contact with the CVB for maps, city guides, and plastic bags was made early, but materials weren't picked up until the day before the conference. Solicitations for lanyard donations were made early, but ordering of the lanyards took place 2 weeks out. Bids for name badge printing were acquired 3 weeks out and badges were sent to the printer less than 1 week out. Badges were stuffed and alphabetized the night before the conference. Registration packets were stuffed the morning of the conference. Researching and verifying information for the restaurant list and map was completed 1 month out, then spent a month with the graphic designers, and was printed 2 days out. Most printers require more turnaround time; we are fortunate to have an excellent relationship with a small local printer.

**Accomplishments:** In preparation for managing registration at the conference, the registration committee compiled a laptop and printer with the name badge format for printing onsite registrants' badges and a check off list of pre-registrants' names to serve as a double check of which badges had been distributed. By using color coding, this list became instrumental in our ability to identifying special circumstances of different registrants, including who received which type of registration packet, who also needed to pick up their judging packet, and who was pre-authorized to register at a discounted price. The registration packets included all of the attendee's materials and lanyard so that one could be chosen at random from a box, and the name badges in their holders were alphabetized and handed to the attendee separately.

**Staff Required During Conference:** Our registration staff at the conference consisted of 2 individuals, each handling half of the alphabet, to hand out name badges and packets, a representative from AFS processing and charging onsite registrants, and a member of the committee printing onsite registrants' badges and generally overseeing the operation and answering questions. During peak registration times, the individuals doling out badges and packets increased to 2 teams of 2, and during the lightest registration times there were

no additional staff handling this task, and it was covered by the AFS representative and the committee member.

**Recommendations:** The registration table invariably functioned as a catchall location for inquiries from conference attendees, organizers, volunteers, and event staff of the conference's location. For this reason, the committee recommends that in conjunction with the registration table, a conference welcome desk be staffed all hours of the conference to coordinate the answerers with the questioners. In preparation for the deluge of questions that were expected, the registration committee established an Information Table across from registration staffed by members of the CVB to answer questions about local services and tourist opportunities. This was beneficial; however, the majority of inquiries were different than expected. They were very specific to the behind the scenes running of the conference and needed immediate attention. A Welcome Desk adjacent to the registration table would serve well as a location for the coordination of such problem solving.

Online registration closed one week before the conference began. The turnaround time to receive the data from the contractor to get it to the printer took longer than expected with the printer receiving the data with only 3 days to complete the work instead of the entire week. During the last week that online registration was operational, 23 individuals registered, with all but 6 of them registering by the end of Tuesday. This leads us to recommend closing online registration, at minimum, half a week earlier to allow more time to manipulate the data and place orders based on registrant numbers.

In all, attendance to the 2011 Midwest F&W Conference consisted of 716 pre-conference registrants, 28 vendor registrants, 10 Interconference Committee guest registrants, 4 non-conference attending volunteers, and 121 onsite registrants (15 of which were faxed in after online registration closed). From these figures, the supplies of badges, lanyards, and packets projected to be needed was 773 plus 5% for onsite registrants. The 121 onsite registrants that attended is a 15% increase. Consequently, the committee ran out of everything; programs, maps, packets, lanyards, and badge holders. We compensated and made do the best we could, but felt embarrassed to only have photocopied programs to give many registrants. The 15% onsite registrants is a fluke and seems related to the fact that student and one-day registrations did not increase in price after the early bird cutoff date of November 1<sup>st</sup>, but remained the same, through to onsite registration. 50 of the 121 were onsite student registrations and 57 of the 121 were onsite one-day registrations for a total of 107 of the 121. Regardless, the registration committee recommends planning for 10% onsite rather than 5%. We would have been better off having planned for 10%, and the extra 5% more is a difference of less than 50. In such a situation it is better to have too many than not enough.

**Committee Name: Arrangements Committee**

**Committee Members:** Kim Bogenschutz (Chair), Mark Flammang, Mark McInroy, Chris Larson, Julie Sparks

**Responsibilities:** This committee coordinated all meeting logistics with the Marriott Hotel and Polk County Convention Complex (PCCC) including guest room blocks, food and beverage orders, room assignments and set-ups, signage, audio-visual needs, small group meetings, and hospitality room. There were separate subcommittees for audio-visual, small group meeting, and hospitality room arrangements (see following reports).

**Timeline:** Following is a general outline of planning steps for working with the Marriott and the PCCC in 2011 on meeting arrangement details.

- February (10 months prior) – Met with event planners at the Marriott and the PCCC. Got copies of the floor plans, room capacity charts, and events menu from the Marriott and PCCC. Decided on social and break food and beverage options. Prepared a preliminary budget for catering and AV based on an anticipated 600 attendees.
- May (7 months prior) – Received menu proposals from the Marriott based on requested per person budget.
- July (5 months prior) – Provided descriptions of the Sunday evening Welcome to Iowa Social and the Tuesday evening Trade Show Social for the Networking Events tab of the conference website.
- October (6 weeks prior) – Reserved block of rooms at Hotel Fort Des Moines. Emailed contact information for small group meeting organizers to event planner at the Marriott so groups can be billed individually for food and beverages. Provided draft agenda and room assignments to event planners at the Marriott and PCCC. Walked through Marriott and PCCC to determine sign needs.
- November (2 weeks prior) – Provided final catering order, final room assignments and set-ups, and final agenda to the Marriott and PCCC.

**Accomplishments:** Room assignments and set-ups, catering orders and actual use, room reservations, and small group meeting requests for all four days of the conference are detailed in a spreadsheet that is available upon request.

**Staff Required During Conference:** Two staff able to authorize changes should be available during the conference for hotel staff to contact with questions and ideas. These staff should not be assigned other duties that prevent them from being easily found by hotel staff during the paper sessions or other conference events.

**Recommendations:** We were fortunate to have a second hotel on standby after our room block at the Marriott filled. The Hotel Fort Des Moines allowed us to hold a block of rooms at the government rate without penalty if we did not use the entire block. This freed us from having to block a larger number of rooms months in advance and potentially pay for unused rooms. We decided to not supply drink tickets to attendees and instead provided complimentary keg beer, wine, and soda up to a set limit and a cash bar for other drinks. We had to preorder the kegs and had almost half leftover. However, the total cost of the kegs was about the same as what we would have paid the Marriott for individual bottles of beer consumed.

For a complete excel workbook on the 72<sup>nd</sup> Midwest Conference scheduling, catering, small groups, Marriott Hotel and PCCC contracts, etc. please contact [Kim.Bogenschutz@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Kim.Bogenschutz@dnr.iowa.gov).



**Subcommittee Name: Small Group Meetings Arrangements**

**Subcommittee Members:** Mark Flammang

**Responsibilities:** I accommodated room requests for small group meetings, socials, workshops, and other associated group functions at the conference. I scheduled all functions as close to the requested time as possible.

**Timeline:** The major deadline for meeting requests was approximately October 24 to allow me to schedule all meetings and inform organizers prior to program printing (originally scheduled for November 1). However, late accommodations were made for small groups who missed this initial deadline as allowed by the existing schedule.

**Accomplishments:** The online registration on the Conference website that ported requests directly to my email was invaluable. However, more specific choices for AV needs and room setup should be provided in the future. I suggest that AV choices be requested as follows:

- None
- AV Requested
  - Screen
  - Projector
  - Laptop
  - Microphone
    - Wireless
    - Wired
  - Internet
  - Conference call capability
  - Laser pointer
  - Other (please specify)

This would have eliminated miscommunication. I was surprised by the number of people who expected AV that requested “none” or expected AV equipment far beyond the scope of what they requested. If possible, have equipment available to loan to groups.

**Staff Required During Conference:** One staff should be able to handle these arrangements before and during the conference. If additional responsibilities are required, two or more staff may be preferable.

**Recommendations:** Prepare a spreadsheet to record your schedule, and keep it updated. Make sure all small group meeting organizers realize that they are responsible for their own advertisement. If they wish special advertisement, they need to express this to the Committee early and specifically.

**Subcommittee Name: Audio-Visual Arrangements**

**Committee Members:** Mark McInroy

**Responsibilities:**

- 1) Request bids from 3-4 providers for custom audio video service to suit the event. Report best price and service with event committee. Secure the best provider.
- 2) Meet with provider at event site and discuss logistics and details of services.
- 3) Coordinate and confirm the event needs with service provider prior to, and during the event. Coordinate and provide labor and equipment as agreed with service provider.
- 4) Process payment of invoices with event committee treasurer.

**Timeline:**

- 1) March: request bids
- 2) May: secure provider
- 3) Aug: meet on site with provider
- 4) Nov: confirm all needs with provider. Secure added labor and equipment as needed and agreed. Make payment of deposit.
- 5) Dec: make final payment with provider.

**Accomplishments:****Statistics**

- 1) 329 separate talks plus 7 embedded AV files for a total of 336 files.
- 2) 99% success rate with files being where they needed to be; on time; and properly functioning.
  - a. 2 files had to be loaded directly in the session room as result of AV trouble itself.
  - b. 6 files were loaded in the session rooms as result of speaker not pre-loading in the loading room.
  - c. Dubuque (Tue) incorporated a unique schedule unbeknownst to the rest of the conference. As a result, they encountered 4 files that needed to be loaded in the session room at the last minute.
  - d. Polk Convention had 50% files pre-loaded by 730am Tue and these files were delivered on time via portable device. By design, most speakers loaded their files directly in the session rooms without incident.
- 3) Monday 700a had less than 30% of that day's files pre-loaded, and by 1100a still less than 50%. By 100pm about 90% of the days files were pre-loaded and distributed. This one-hour rush of files occurred simultaneously during a three-room reset after the plenary session ended.

- 4) Tue and Wed 800a was prepared with nearly 90% of the days files pre-loaded.
- 5) About 10-15% files were loaded by design and as requested (by 500p the day prior to talk). About 20-30% was loaded within the hour of the talk. About half files were loaded on the day of the talk.
- 6) Heavy Traffic in pre-loading room: 700a-745a. During breaks. 430p-600p. During these flows, we utilized two machines at once to keep the line moving. Most folks were able to load their files as they walked in; some had to wait 2-5 minutes.

### **What went right:**

- 1) Runners and On-Call Labor: Mon Noon hour the labor to reset the plenary rooms into session rooms utilized 2-3 staff dedicated to this effort (in addition to 2 contracted staff). Two Runners (on-call) dedicated to hand deliver last minute files or during technical difficulties. One extra volunteer to assist contractor with tear down and reset during afterhours efforts (small group sessions).
- 2) Three Plans: 1) What we want, 2) What we will accept, 3) What we do to stay alive. Each with contingencies and backup plans. Be sure each person in the effort understands these sets of plans. Expect each plan and contingency to occur. Establish your goals: a) not any talk begins late as result of AV. b) maintain a master copy of files; c) no gear is lost or broken; d) and so on...
- 3) On Time: There were no reports of any session beginning late as a result of AV issues.
- 4) Master Backup of all files: Every file that was provided, including those loaded in the session rooms, was captured into a master file. This file is indexed by last name of the speaker.
- 5) On-site requests: There were a couple small group (afterhours) requests that were accommodated in a timely manner.
- 6) Timeliness: With the exception of Mon evening, not any speaker had to wait more than 5 minutes to pre-load their talk.
- 7) Custom contract Service: Iowa Sound was the lowest bid by \$4000. Every design and request was served without incident and with the highest professional temperament. Any trouble and adjustments were handled with a can-do attitude. There was no surprise in the costs.
- 8) Volunteer AV staff: All had a clear understanding of their actions. On time. Session room staff updating files during breaks to maintain current files in rooms. Sound and lights appropriate per room.
- 9) House Staff: Working relationship with house staff during event. This included programming lights ahead of time and establishing a schedule of each room's needs.
- 10) Announcements to pre-load talks: Prior to each break of the day, attendees were reminded to pre-load their talks. This allowed more even and steady flow of traffic through the loading room.

**What needs improved:**

- 1) Mon Noon hour: Laptop server not big and fast enough to meet demands of deploys. Wireless network and server must be able to distribute GBs of data demanded in minutes.
- 2) Mon end of Day: An announcement was made during the afternoon break to “pre-load your talks”. This resulted in heavy traffic for about 2 hours (430p-630p). This announcement should have also been made prior to the afternoon break as an attempt to distribute the traffic. During this time, folks waited in line up to 10-12 minutes.
- 3) Communication: We utilized a script that would distribute files and also maintain a running backup. The original design was to allow one click to send files to all rooms and backup on server. However, for compatibility reasons, we had to make an adjustment that forced each room to “call for files” in order to receive the most current update. With 99% of files being successfully delivered, obviously this worked fine; however, this created high maintenance communication between AV volunteers in each room. It also risks last second arrivals of files. I would prefer the original design as it has fewer logistics.
- 4) Dedicated Server to accommodate heavy demands of data: The host facility did not accommodate this service for reasons of not having protocol established (never been asked for). One idea is to establish this server access ahead of time; the other option is to include a dedicated server in the plan. For us, at the last minute, we utilized a laptop that functioned fine except for Mon during the noon hour (highest demand volume).
- 5) Dedicated Wireless Network: This must be fast enough to accommodate high demands. 50mbs is not fast enough for Mon during noon hour high demand.

**Staff Required During Conference:**

- 1) Three: Coordinator and two staff to assist with a) reset of rooms; and b) for high flow times of presentation loading; and c) for immediate needs in troubleshooting.

**Recommendations:** please see accomplishments section

**Committee:** Event Staff Apparel (Vests)

**Committee Members:** Mark McInroy

**Responsibilities:**

- 1) Solicit sponsors for blaze orange hunt vests to serve as easily identifiable apparel for event staff. Report sponsor and vest options to event committee.
- 2) Secure quantity of vests with selected sponsor. Coordinate pickup and delivery of vests.
- 3) Request estimates from 2-3 vendors for screen printing. Report options with event committee.
- 4) Coordinate printing, payment, and delivery as needed.

**Timeline:**

- 1) March: solicit vendors
- 2) June: place order
- 3) Aug: screen printing
- 4) Nov: deliver vests to registration team.

**Accomplishments:**

- 1) The vests were highly favored by staff as they can be worn with any clothing and in multiple days.
- 2) The vests were popular with attendees as they were easily identifiable.
- 3) All volunteers had a vest.

**Staff Required During Conference:** (see volunteer committee report as these vests were handed out during the check-in process.)

**Recommendations:** Vendors of apparel make their orders 6-12 months ahead of time. Be sure to begin asking for sponsors of apparel early to avoid surprises or inventory troubles. Screen printing requires 4-6 weeks planning as you will need to obtain a proof of printing prior to placing the order in bulk.

**Subcommittee Name: Hospitality Room Arrangements**

**Subcommittee Members:** Chris Larson (Chair), Kim Bogenschutz, George Scholten

**Responsibilities:**

- Solicit/purchase food, beverage, and materials for each evening. (Expect 50-100 each evening. SEE SUPPLY LIST BELOW.
- Line up volunteers for work shifts. (Open from 5pm to 11 pm or after social with set up from 3-5pm each day)
- Organize materials& set-up the room.

**Timeline:**

- Sent letter to Iowa DNR Fish & Wildlife staff in the spring and mid-summer soliciting snack food items that they would be willing to donate to the hospitality room (SEE EXAMPLE 1 BELOW).
- Sent letter to selected area food & beverage distributors in the spring (SEE EXAMPLE 2 BELOW).

**Accomplishments:**

- Solicited food donations from Iowa DNR staff - received more than enough snack food items for all three nights. We also received a donation of 20 cases of beer from one of the local distributors and 40 packages of microwave popcorn from a popcorn company.
- Lined up volunteers & set work schedules at least one week in advance.
- Made up "Hospitality Room" passes to hand out to: VIPs, vendors, planning committee members, and other volunteer staff.
- Collected and made arrangements to get all donated or purchased items to the hospitality room the day before the conference starts.
- Prepped and organized food and beverage before opening hospitality room.
- Cleaned up and inventoried after each evening.

**Staff Required During Conference: 8 /day**

- 3-5pm – food prep (4 people)
- 5-8pm – bartend (2 people)
- 8-11pm – bartend/clean-up (2 people)

**Recommendations:** Get as many items donated as you can.

- **SUPPLY LIST**

	Cost/night	Total (3 nights)
○ 10 cases beer or 1 keg	\$200	\$600
○ 10 liters pop (variety)	\$15	\$45
○ 1 gallons orange juice	\$3	\$9
○ 3 bottles wine	\$15	\$45
○ 1 bottles bourbon	\$20	\$60
○ 2 bottles whiskey	\$40	\$120
○ 1 bottles vodka	\$20	\$60
○ 1 bottles gin	\$20	\$60
○ 1 bottles rum	\$20	\$60
○ 1 bottle scotch	\$25	\$75
○ 6 Tonic water/club soda	\$10	\$30
○ 10 oz Cups	\$3	\$9
○ 8" plastic plates/silverware	\$3	\$9
○ Ice	\$15	\$45
○ Straws/napkins/tooth picks	\$3	\$9
○ 3 Limes	\$2	\$6
○ Misc.	\$20	\$60
○ Approximate cost	\$435/day	\$1300 (total)
- Hors d'oeuvres (mostly donated)
  - Assortment of donated processed meats/smoked fish/salsa/etc.
  - Cheeses & Assorted chips/crackers/nuts/popcorn
  - Veggies/dip
  - 6 coolers (donated)
  - 2 Can catchers (donated)

### **EXAMPLE 1**

As you are probably aware Iowa is hosting the 2011 Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference this coming December. I have volunteered to take charge of the logistics for the hospitality room and in order to keep cost down I am looking for any possible donations of snack type food items like deer summer sausage, deer sticks, jerky, smoked wild game, homemade salsa, chips, crackers, cheese, deserts etc. The reason I am sending this request out so early is to put a bug in your ear not to clear out the freezer before this fall's hunting season. I will send out another reminder mid-summer.

### **EXAMPLE 2**

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is sponsoring the 72nd Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference (MFWC) on December 4-7, 2011, at the Des Moines Marriott Downtown, Des Moines, IA. About 800 fisheries, wildlife, and natural resources professionals are expected to attend including managers, culturists, researchers, and students from across the Midwest U.S. and Ontario. The meeting, which was first held in 1935, is one of the largest gatherings of outdoor professionals that compose the American Fisheries

Society (AFS), The Wildlife Society (TWS), and many other fine professional organizations. The AFS was founded in 1870 and TWS in 1937. Both are not-for-profit management, scientific, and educational organizations, who in combination have tens of thousands of members consisting of a myriad of international fish and wildlife professionals. The AFS is the oldest and largest organization dedicated to strengthening the fisheries profession, advancing fisheries management/science, and conserving fisheries resources. TWS members are dedicated to sustainable management of wildlife resources and their habitats, and believe that wildlife is basic to the maintenance of a human culture that provides quality living. The missions of the AFS and TWS, respectively, are 1) 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, and 2) to enhance the ability of wildlife professionals to conserve diversity, sustain productivity, and ensure responsible use of wildlife resources for the benefit of society. The vast majority of membership and conference attendees are avid fishers, hunters, and are also active in other outdoor uses.

The purpose of this letter is to request your support for the MFWC Hospitality Room. Many of the volunteer staff and other VIPs will be taking a break from the conference to do some networking and relaxing in this room. Your donation is tax deductible.

Recognition of your support will be gratefully acknowledged during the MFWC. The donor company/organization for each item will be identified at the conference; moreover, you will be mentioned in the official program, and also in the newsletters of the Iowa Chapter of the AFS & TWS.

Ways to donate include beverage or food contributions for the hospitality room (hours will be 5pm to 11pm Sun. – Tues.). All donations greater than \$75.00 may be accompanied by a literature display at no additional charge. We thank you for your assistance and concern about the future of our fish and wildlife resources. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (phone #) or e-mail address .

Thank you for your support!



## **Committee: Web site and liaison with conference manager**

**Committee Members:** Jeff Kopaska, Chair

**Responsibilities:** Coordinate all activities related to the web site, and serve as liaison between AFS and the Midwest Planning Committee. As AFS liaison, I was also involved with the abstract submission software, and the registration submission software provided by AFS.

**Timeline:** A request for proposals in regard to conference management was issued in the fall of 2010. Following the selection of AFS to serve as conference manager, contracts were finalized and signed, and the web site was brought online in December 2010, prior to the 2010 Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference. Website updates were made periodically, and much valuable information was provided via the site. In May 2011 online requests for small group meetings and workshops were made available. In June, online registration for continuing education workshops were made available, and a new PayPal component was added to ease the financial aspect of continuing education classes. Abstract submissions were made available online in July, and abstract submission was closed in September. Online event registration became available in August, and online registration was closed at the end of November. Final details involved in conference preparation were handled with the conference manager in the time leading up to the conference, and contractual obligations were finalized immediately following the conference.

**Accomplishments:** To prepare for the conference, I reviewed the contract that Minnesota had in place with AFS, and prepared an RFP based on that contract. I also reviewed the final reports for previous conferences, as well as the website for the Minnesota conference. These documents served as templates for the work I accomplished. After the contract was agreed to with AFS, I served as liaison with that organization, which required periodic communication with AFS staff. This was facilitated by my strong working relationship with AFS due to my position on the AFS Governing Board. Web site updates were quite easy, once I learned to make explicit requests. If I gave precise instructions regarding the updates I was requesting, everything proceeded quickly and effortlessly.

**Staff Required During Conference:** no staff required at conference

### **Recommendations:**

Start early - a conference theme should be decided upon 18-24 months in advance, and a conference manager should be retained no less than 18 months in advance.

If you are using an external contractor to host and develop the web site, provide explicit directions about what you want. Doing so will provide the expected results.

I would recommend using an external contractor on the web site. I personally would not have had the time to deal with it myself.

Getting the abstract submission software and the conference registration software set up and implemented on the web site took longer than expected. Start those processes 2-3 months prior to the time you expect to have these services available.

Minnesota suggested utilizing Oxford Abstracts for program printing and organizing (this is an option available with their contract). I would agree. Internal efforts regarding program preparation took too long and the final product was sub-par.

Utilize AFS-NCD for PayPal and Continuing Education courses. All the groundwork has been completed.

Use web forms to handle small meeting and workshop requests (>60 of these).

## **Committee: Raffle**

**Committee Members:** Both Iowa Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (IAFS) and Wildlife Society (TWS) members including Chad Dolan (IDNR Fisheries Bureau, Co-Chair), Jeff Glaw (IDNR Wildlife Bureau, Co-Chair), and Steve Waters (IDNR Fisheries Bureau). There were numerous others that provided a great deal of help to make the raffle a success such as Stephanie Shepherd, Katy Reeder, Jim Wahl, Paul Sleeper, Melanie Harkness, Ken Snyder, Karen Osterkamp, Kathy Atkinson, Wendy Sander, Allen Patillo, and numerous student membership of both Iowa State University's AFS Student Subunit and Fish & Wildlife Biology Club.

**Responsibilities:** The responsibilities of the Raffle Committee included compiling addresses of potential prize donors, collection of prizes (via donation request letters and personal contacts), raffle set-up and organization, developing a raffle table work schedule, ticket pricing, ticket selling, drawing winning numbers, projecting/posting winning numbers, prize distribution, and clean-up.

**Timeline:** Work began on the raffle in June 2011. A list of addresses for various fishing, hunting, outdoor companies, etc., were compiled. A donation request letter was drafted to send to the companies on the aforementioned address list. The donation request letter provided background on the Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference, dates of the upcoming meeting, a request for merchandise, information on how raffle profits would be used, an offer for potential donors to send advertising materials, the Federal I.D. number for the Iowa Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (for tax purposes for the donating companies), and the address where donations could be sent. Approximately 160 letters were sent to companies during the initial mailing. A second mailing of 50 letters was sent in early October 2011. Only about 50 companies responded, and approximately 30 of those donated merchandise. Poor economic times may have played into the lack of donations. Those companies that did donate merchandise provided high quality items and established an excellent framework of prizes to build upon. IAFS and TWS volunteers also made personal contact with some companies regarding prize donations. The Raffle Committee was provided \$500 from each IAFS and TWS to spend on raffle expenses and additional prizes (to make up any deficits after prize collection via donation request letters). Paint buckets (for ticket collection), index cards, and tape were critical items for raffle table set-up. It was useful to have a lap-top, printer, and paper available to make signage as needed. A cash box and small fire-safe were necessary for money collection and storage. The IAFS and TWS challenged the AFS Student Subunit and Fish & Wildlife Biology Club to acquire 50 prizes via personal contact with local businesses in the Des Moines and Ames areas.

Two tiers of raffle tickets (blue and red) were offered. Blue tickets were sold for general raffle items (low and intermediate value prizes) at 6 for \$5.00, 13 for \$10.00, and 30 for \$20.00. Red raffle tickets were sold for high value items at 1 for \$5.00, 3 for \$10.00, and 7 for \$20.00. A mini-raffle was held at the Sunday night Opening Social. Nine items of low- to intermediate value and one item of relatively high value were raffled. Only blue tickets were sold at the mini-raffle. Tickets sales were offered for about 1.5 hours. Winners were announced out loud and then posted on the announcement board near the registration desk. Tickets sales were offered at the raffle table during Trade Show hours on Monday and Tuesday.

The raffle committee was also responsible for designing and ordering conference t-shirts and can koozies. Two-hundred t-shirts of various colors were ordered (moss green, ash grey, tan, blaze orange). The t-shirts cost the committee about \$8.00 a piece and can koozies \$1.50 a piece. The conference t-shirts featured the conference logo and logos of the IAFS and TWS. The can koozies only featured the latter logos so that they could be sold at future professional society Chapter meetings. Raffle table staffs put can koozie ticket packages together and walked amongst meeting attendees on Monday evening in order to spur ticket sales. These packages included a can koozie, nine blue tickets, and one red ticket for \$20.00 (some can koozies were stuffed with more red tickets to provide incentive for the \$20.00 gamble). Initially, the t-shirts were sold to meeting attendees for \$15.00. Three red tickets were also packaged with the t-shirts and sold for \$20.00 to meeting attendees on Tuesday. Both the can koozie and t-shirt package could be purchased for \$30.00. On Wednesday morning, t-shirt prices were lowered to \$10.00. Can koozies (as a single item) were sold to meeting patrons for \$3.00.

The winning raffle numbers were drawn at 7 pm on Tuesday night at the Trade Show Social. The winning numbers were entered into tables created in PowerPoint and projected onto a screen. Winning tickets were taped to prizes. Winners were told to refrain from picking up prizes until the drawing was completed. Instead, winners were allowed to pick up prizes after the drawing and on Wednesday morning during prize distribution hours (which mirrored Trade Show hours). Prizes and winning numbers were entered into an Excel spreadsheet, sorted by ticket number, and then posted on the announcement board near the registration desk for meeting attendees to peruse at their leisure.

**Accomplishments:** Gross profit from the Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference Raffle was ~\$6700. After raffle expenses, both the IAFS and TWS netted over \$2000 each to use for chapter expenses, student travel grants, student scholarships, and fish and wildlife habitat projects. The IAFS and TWS will determine what portion of raffle profits to share with the student groups based on the criteria mentioned above.

**Staff Required During Conference:** A call for volunteers from both the IAFS and TWS was made in order to fill one-hour time slots to staff the raffle table during trade show hours. Twenty-five volunteers were needed in order to maintain at least two staffs at the raffle table during each hour the raffle table was open for ticket sales. The IAFS and TWS also worked closely with the Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference Coordinator to adjust the registration fee for Iowa State University students (from \$100 to \$25) so that more students would attend and help with the raffle. In lieu of the reduced registration fee, students were asked to work two hours per day of meeting attendance at the raffle table and they were not permitted to attend the socials (unless they paid the full \$100 fee). Many of the students were only able to attend for a day so this offer worked out well for most involved. Both the Iowa State AFS Student Subunit and Fish & Wildlife Biology Club were promised a portion of the raffle profits in exchange for the time spent tending to the raffle table throughout the meeting and prior prize collection. Both subunits were allowed to sell their own t-shirts and posters at the raffle table to increase their Chapter budgets. All raffle table volunteers were asked to wear a blaze orange conference t-shirts to make themselves identifiable.

**Recommendations:** The raffle went very smooth overall. One thing that needs to be considered is the need for a microphone at the Opening Social should you have a mini-raffle at that event. This luxury was not available to us, so thankfully, we had a volunteer available with a loud voice that announced the winners. This worked well enough, but a microphone would have made this task easier. I would not allow any of the raffle winners to pick up prizes during the drawing. Time taken to distribute the prizes during the raffle drawing will cause inefficiencies. Projecting the winners via PowerPoint and later posting the winners (sorted by ticket number) on the announcement board worked very well. Can koozies (as a single item) were not a hot seller given many vendors throughout the trade show were giving this item away for free. The can koozies sold much better when packaged with raffle tickets. The Raffle Committee stipulated that all prizes must be picked up by winners prior to meeting conclusion or forfeit their prize. Given individuals from all over the Midwest attended this conference it was thought that shipping charges could quickly accumulate without such a rule in place.

## **Committee: Student Paper Judging Committee**

**Committee Members:** The Student Paper Judging Committee was composed of the Presidents of the Iowa Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (IAFS) and the Wildlife Society (TWS): Chad Dolan (IDNR Fisheries Bureau, Co-Chair) and Jeff Glaw (IDNR Wildlife Bureau, Co-Chair). Andy Fowler (IAFS Past President) provided technical assistance in regards to entry of score sheet data.

**Responsibilities:** The responsibilities of the Student Paper Judging Committee included compiling a list of judges (by calling for volunteers from within the state as well as at-large), scheduling all volunteers to judge a number of paper and posters, writing all critical paper/poster information on judging score sheets, stuffing paper/poster judging packets, insuring that all judges received their paper judging packets, and dealing with scheduling conflicts that arose throughout the conference due to various reasons.

**Timeline:** Work began on the student paper judging schedule the last week of October 2011. The schedule could not be started until the program for the 72<sup>nd</sup> Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference was completed. The Student Paper Judging Committee met once a week for the first few weeks after scheduling began and then two times a week thereafter. A call for judges within the state was extended first, and then a call to meeting attendees at-large later. The at-large meeting registrants indicated an interest in paper judging when they electronically registered for the conference. All volunteers were asked to indicate their availability according to blocks of time (i.e., Monday afternoon, Tuesday morning, Tuesday afternoon, Wednesday morning, and Posters). All moderators and AV people were expected to judge at least a portion of the papers in which they were already attending. A paper judging schedule was developed in an Excel spreadsheet. This schedule was organized by day, session, and time. Four judges were scheduled to score each paper or poster. This insured that even if a judge dropped out, a good number still remained to score a paper/poster. The student paper judging schedule was completed at week's end prior to the start of the meeting. Judges were instructed by email to pick up their judging packets and they were also provided all necessary directions regarding their judging duties.

**Accomplishments and Recommendations:** The IAFS Past President, Andy Fowler, created an online paper/poster judging data sheet for entry of paper/poster scores. Student paper judges were asked to turn in their completed data sheets to the registration desk throughout the meeting (i.e., don't stockpile score sheets until meetings end). A receptacle was placed at the registration desk for collection of completed score sheets. Registration desk staffs entered paper/poster scores at their leisure. Scores will be analyzed later and winners notified via email.

During the conference, it was critical that all members of the Student Paper Judging Committee made themselves available in case scheduling problems arose. The Committee's cell phone numbers were made available to student paper/poster judges. The Student Paper/Poster Judging Committee had extra judging criteria forms as well as paper and poster score sheets on hand in case extra were needed or if judges misplaced their original forms.

Creating the Student Paper/Poster Judging Schedule took a substantial amount of time. This task cannot be completed in a few hours time. It will literally take weeks. Paper/poster judging ran very smoothly, but there are a few ways to make this process more efficient. Acquire the list of paper/poster judging volunteers acquired via electronic registration a.s.a.p. Also, make contact with potential in-state judges early. Inquire with both in-state and out-of-state judges at the same time. It may be beneficial to start the scheduling process on October 1, if possible. It may be a good idea to increase the size of the Student Paper Judging Committee by two individuals. Two additional committee members would allow the workload on any single individual (especially the workload of the co-chairs) to be lessened. Check with the Program Chair frequently regarding any changes to the conference program that may develop after scheduling has commenced. It will be critical to account for changes to the program, in terms of impacts to the judging schedule, as they happen. Try to complete the paper/poster judging schedule a few days prior to the end of the week prior to the commencement of the conference (this may not be possible given circumstances that may develop). Work with registration desk staffs to determine the most efficient way to distribute judging packets. The staffs will likely need to ask each registrant if they are a paper/poster judge (staffs may need to check names on alphabetized packets to make certain as not all judges read the final email or remembered they volunteered). It was also helpful to place a reminder to volunteers (to pick up their judging packets) on the announcement board near the registration desk. Be prepared to find new judges as the final set of volunteers inevitably develop conflicts that prohibit them from completing their duties (this will happen). A good way to find new judges is by asking individuals that are reading the contributed posters to volunteer.

**Committee:                      Student Events**

**Committee Chair:** Donna Hanen Muhm, 122 252<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Spirit Lake IA 51360; 712.336.1840, [donna.muhm@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:donna.muhm@dnr.iowa.gov)

**Committee Members:** Rebecca Christoffel, Iowa State University, [christof@iastate.edu](mailto:christof@iastate.edu)  
Stephen Dinsmore, Iowa State University, [cootjr@iastate.edu](mailto:cootjr@iastate.edu)

**Responsibilities:** Our committee was tasked with organizing, coordinating, and executing events for the benefit of student attendees. One of these events, the Janice Lee Fenske Award Memorial Breakfast, is mandated by the Michigan Chapters of the American Fisheries Society and The Wildlife Society. We therefore chose to provide three events. A brief summary of these events is listed here, including a timeline for each, how the event was planned and executed, and recommendations for future events. Additional information, including letters, forms, and handouts for these three student events can be found in Appendix I.

Student vents included:

- Beginning Your Professional Journey Workshop
- Janice Lee Fenske Memorial Award Breakfast
- Student/Professional Social/Networking Event

***Beginning Your Professional Journey Workshop*** is an all-day workshop targeted toward undergraduate students and perhaps beginning graduate students. There are sessions on resume preparation and professional correspondence, interviewing skills, networking, professionalism, and panel discussions with both academicians and field employers. The workshop is informative and well-presented, and was well-attended. Food for a morning and afternoon break was provided, as well as a boxed lunch. Professional participants were encouraged to sit with students during the lunch break for networking opportunities, and to interact with students throughout the day. Students receive a notebook filled with helpful information, business cards to hand out to professionals throughout the conference, and the book **The AFS Guide to Fisheries Employment** by David Hewitt et al. Rebecca Christoffel, Iowa State University, is the main organizer of this event, and we were fortunate enough to have her on our committee. Mike Pagel, Career Services at UW Stevens Point is the major presenter, with Jim Schneider of Michigan State University the third partner.



Key Activites	Timeframe/Deadline
1. Discuss the possibility of the workshop and funding (partial or full) with the conference Steering Committee	Summer
2. If approved as a Workshop, contact Rebecca Christoffel, Iowa State University ( <a href="mailto:christof@iastate.edu">christof@iastate.edu</a> ) to see if she and other past presenters/organizers (Mike Pagel, UWSP and Jim Schneider Michigan State University) are willing to participate	Summer
3. If 1 and 2 above are approved, place information about the workshop on the website (see example below)	Summer during website development
4. Place a workshop check box on the registration page of the conference website ( <b>limit of 50 students</b> ). Ideally, students should pay for the workshop as part of the registration but <b>it is critical that the registration information be forwarded to Rebecca as students enroll!</b>	Summer during website & registration form development
5. Secure a room for the Workshop which will be held at <b>8:30 am until 4:30 pm on Sunday</b> at the beginning of the Conference. Tables should be round with six chairs per table, and enough to accommodate all attendees. A projector, screen, podium, and microphone should be included. Seating at the tables should be one professional, 5 students. A rectangular table with two chairs will be set up either immediately outside the door of the room or just inside the entrance (preferred) for registration and handing out of materials. It would be a good idea to have a laptop and printer available for students who registered late or whose information was not received.	Work with the Workshop Coordinator/Arrangements Committee to secure a room reservation during the summer or early fall.
6. Students will be charged approximately \$25.00 to attend. This does not cover the expenses of the workshop! The workshop organizers should not have to be fundraisers too – this duty should fall to the Student Events chair. Donations were very difficult to come by in 2011 – the Steering Committee should be aware that there are costs involved and decide if this will be	Summer and fall

funded fully in the event that funds are not secured from outside sources.	
7. Announce workshop via University posting, letters to TWS and AFS student subunits and advisors, officers, etc. (see sample below)	Done by Rebecca Christoffel, early fall
8. Develop an EXCEL spreadsheet listing the attendees and provide to Rebecca if conference registration has not done so	After early registration closes
9. Workshop materials purchased and put together	Coordinated by Rebecca
10. Workshop agenda (sample below)	Provided by Rebecca
11. Determine food items to be ordered. Typically a morning break is provided with either breakfast breads (muffins, bagels) or pastries and coffee/tea/juice. Boxed lunches that can be eaten at the tables work best, with a variety of sandwiches, fruit, chips, bottled water, cookies, and a salad item work the best. An afternoon break with iced tea/lemonade/cookies/brownies or similar is also provided. Depending on the venue, this bill can be quite expensive.	Obtain menus with price quotes in early fall so that when final registrations are made the food can be ordered. Rebecca will let you know if there are special needs (vegetarian, allergies, etc.)
12. Line up additional volunteers to help. Each panel needs 3 to 4 professionals (academia/field) and there should be one professional at each table of 5 students	Recruit from people already attending workshop from steering committee/other state employees attending
13. Email letter to attendees	Done by Rebecca
14. Photographer – if photos are being taken at the conference, it would be nice to get a few photos of the workshop for the website. We forgot to do this in 2011	Check with Steering committee to line up this service. Usually a state employee is assigned
15. Workshop follow-up surveys are collected and compiled (see below). Usually a newsletter article is provided to TWS/AFS	Done by Rebecca

**Challenges:** It is critical that registration information be forwarded to Rebecca in a timely manner so that materials are adequate for all attendees. Having some spare packets and spare nametags/business cards available with a laptop and printer would be a big help. Having more than enough volunteers available ensures that if presenters are detained or unable to attend at the last minute, the workshop can still be conducted.

**Budgetary Projections:**

<b>Workshop Expenses</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Supplies (binders, pages, nametags, copying, business cards, books from AFS, etc.)	\$650.00
Speaker fees (travel expenses), Mike Pagel	\$750.00
Food, A/V	\$2000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3400.00</b>
<b>Workshop Income</b>	<b>Received</b>
Student registrations (40 @ \$25.00 ea)	\$1000.00
MFWC Steering Committee commitment	<b>(approximately) \$2400.00</b>

**Summary:** The workshop seems to be a popular event and the students appreciate the information they receive. Rebecca does the lion's share of work for this event but the student events committee is needed to serve on the discussion panels, acquire the room and meals, help with registration, network with students, and any other tasks as needed. Committee members should plan to be at the workshop all day and be prepared to step in if required. Rebecca may also ask for help with preparations. ***Fund-raise if possible!***

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***The Janice Lee Fenske Memorial Award Breakfast*** honors the 25 finalists (including 2 winners) for the Janice Lee Fenske Memorial Award, which is a \$500 scholarship to one fisheries and one wildlife student. It offers them the opportunity to network with visiting dignitaries and upper-level state and federal agency personnel as well as be recognized for their accomplishments. The breakfast is typically held the Monday morning before the plenary session and 25 professional guests are invited to attend as well as the 25 finalists. Professionals are asked to share a brief biographical sketch that is forwarded to the students in advance of the breakfast so that they may identify those with whom they wish to network. A Fenske Memorial Award committee receives the applications, scores them, and selects the winners. They then provide a representative to present the awards at the breakfast.

Contact information:

Jessica Mistak, Northern Lake Michigan Supervisor  
DNR Fisheries Division  
6833 US Highway 2, 41, and M35  
Gladstone MI 49837  
906-786-2351 x127

[mistakj@michigan.gov](mailto:mistakj@michigan.gov)

Michigan AFS website has a Fenske Award informational page at  
[http://www.fisheries.org/units/miafs/jfenske\\_award.html](http://www.fisheries.org/units/miafs/jfenske_award.html)

Contact Jessica when a Student Events Chair is identified and provide her with contact information.

Key Activities	Time Frame
1. Work with the North Central Division, the Host State Chapter, and the Michigan Chapter of AFS and the Host State and Michigan Chapters of TWS to coordinate plans for the Fenske Memorial Award ceremony. If able, the Midwest Steering Committee should subsidize the expenses associated with the breakfast either through meeting proceeds or direct sponsorship. The North Central Division of AFS is committed to funding up to \$500 for the breakfast if needed, and the North Central Division of TWS may be able to provide support. <b>NOTE: TWS STATED IN 2011 THAT THEY WOULD NO LONGER ASSIST IN FUNDING THE BREAKFAST.</b>	January-November
2. Begin logistical planning for the Award ceremony (time, date, location), order 25 “Fenske Award Finalist” and 2 “Fenske Award Winner” ribbons for name tags, plan for posters, room reservation, menu, seating, and photographer. Note: Plan to hold the one hour breakfast on Monday morning prior to the plenary session. Seating should be for 50, preferably round tables to facilitate networking/discussion. Will also need to reserve a lectern/podium and microphone.	January-June
3. Advertise the Fenske Memorial Award ceremony on the conference website and via other outlets to begin general solicitation of student applications (see below). Directed outreach to AFS and TWS listserves and to Midwest universities with fisheries and wildlife programs	June for website, September-October for directed outreach
4. Invite up to 25 fisheries and wildlife management leaders from your host state and compile their biographical information for distribution to the student finalists (see below for 2011 list). Be sure to include host chapter presidents of AFS and TWS, as well as Michigan AFS and TWS presidents, and one representative of the Fenske Award Committee.	September-October Don't delay, people can be bad about responding!
5. Provide list of Award winners and finalists to conference registration packet assemblers so that ribbons may be attached to nametags. All 25 finalists should have “finalist” ribbons, and the winner ribbons will be given out at the ceremony	September-October
6. Distribute bios of invited natural resource	Late November

leaders/professionals to finalists so they may get a head start on the networking aspect of the breakfast	
7. Oversee, welcome, and introduce attendees. Coordinate duties with Fenske Award Committee representative as far as award presentation/photography. A representative from the Michigan chapters of AFS and TWS along with representatives from host chapter AFS and TWS should be on hand to present the cash awards (checks).	Day of breakfast
8. Place posters in the main conference area to celebrate the Fenske Memorial Award. We printed the winning essays onto posters, placed the photos of the winners from the breakfast on the posters, and announced the winners at the plenary session. Also place a list of finalists with winners	Day of breakfast

**Challenges/Recommendations:** Fenske mandates that we have enough professionals to match the number of finalists. (25 of each). Some of the professionals did not reply in time to let us know they were coming and they sent their bios in late. For the student's benefit, we send the bios of the attending professionals to them before the event so that they may know who they need to network with during the breakfast.

Some of the local chapter members present the checks to the winners and their names need to be included in the program. The chair of the student events committee is required to create the program for the breakfast, and late submissions require much unnecessary last-minute scrambling to get things done. Fenske does the rest of the work such as selecting the finalists, judging the papers, and choosing the winners. Our Communications Bureau took pictures at the event and we were able to print out a poster with the winners' photos and the essays they wrote. These photos are forwarded to the Fenske Committee for their website. This was well-received.

The Fenske Breakfast and students events are costly. The award is a scholarship of \$500 for one fisheries and one wildlife student. The award itself is covered jointly by the Michigan chapters of the AFS and TWS and the host chapters of the same. The breakfast itself was covered by a \$500 donation from each of the North Central division/section of these organizations, plus a \$250 donation from a corporate sponsor. The NCS of TWS says that it will no longer support the Fenske Award in the future. Fundraising for the breakfast itself this year only generated the \$250 corporate sponsorship. The Wildlife Society donated some funds but said they will not do it again. NCD gave \$500 and one corporate sponsor gave \$250. The breakfast cost \$2,000 for 50 people.

**The Student/Professional Social/Networking Event** is held on Monday evening and gives students an opportunity to network with professionals of like interest in a relaxed atmosphere. Students may use the business cards they received at the BYPJ workshop to introduce themselves to professionals. A color-coded system allows students to identify those professionals who share interests or similar career goals. Sandwiches, snacks, beer, and a cash bar were served.

The Student-Professional Mixer was listed in the program under “Socials” as follows:

MONDAY  
**Student-Professional Mixer**  
 7-9 PM  
 Iowa Ballroom, Marriott

Students, here’s a great opportunity to meet with professionals who are interested in you and your future! Students will be able to meet with representatives from state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, private industry and academia. The professionals who attend this event are eager to meet and provide guidance and camaraderie with students attending the conference. Students can learn valuable information regarding career opportunities, internships, graduate school opportunities, and advice on how to stand out from the rest of the crowd. Beverages and light snacks will be served.

<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
1. Discuss the student/professional mixer and funding for all student events with the Conference Steering Committee. Try to come to an agreement on the level of spending beforehand. This mixer provided finger sandwiches, beer, snacks, and a cash bar with a budget of around \$5200. Previous mixers provided students with an entire meal before allowing professionals to join them and spent around \$15,000.	Spring and summer
2. Place text on the Student/Professional mixer on the conference website.	Summer
3. Depending upon Steering Committee support, potentially work with other groups for funding such as AFS and TWS at the state and division/section levels, private corporations, etc.	Summer and fall
4. Secure a large room for 400-600+ attendees for the mixer with tables set up for easy access. A table set up outside the entrance allows the entrants to be color-coded before	Summer and fall

entry, and can be manned by as few as two people. The 2011 Midwest registered over 400 students.	
5. Work with hotel staff on food/drink prices for the food and beverages agreed upon. Ask for alternative prices if the number of attendees goes beyond the estimated number.	Summer and fall
6. Provide hotel staff the estimated number of attendees. In 2011 there was some confusion about whether or not all professionals were invited, as in the registration material there was a question about being a mentor. IF YOU DO NOT INTEND TO OFFER STUDENT/PROFESSIONAL MENTORING, DO NOT ADD THIS QUESTION TO YOUR REGISTRATION PACKAGE. We intended all professionals to attend; either way, professionals should be ENCOURAGED to attend to make this a successful event for students.	At end of pre-registration period
7. Ask for committee members or volunteers to “register” people as they enter the mixer.	Summer and early fall
8. Immediately prior to conference, send reminder emails to those who have volunteered to help	About a month prior to conference
9. Color coding labels – we used ¾” diameter colored self-adhesive dots placed on nametags at “registration” to distinguish between fisheries and wildlife professionals and students. Other colors were worn by professionals to exhibit their professional affiliation. We had four colors but needed more, and these additional dots needed to be larger. The categories included state government, federal government, private industry, NGO, and academia. Alternatively, white dots could be used with either an “F” or a “W” printed on them to free up more colors for occupational status. “Keys” to the color codes were placed on tables in the mixer (card stock, 5” by 7”) so that students did not have to memorize the coding system.	Purchase these materials and construct the “keys” before event

### **Challenges/Recommendations:**

In previous years, conference steering committees chose to do more student events. Based on projections of attendance, we pared ours down to three. In retrospect, we had more students attend than we had anticipated, but some of them paid only a daily rate, which did not require a penalty for late registration. My guess is that student involvement will only continue to increase, and each committee must decide if they wish to increase the daily fee

for students and how many events geared toward students they would like to provide.

The student/professional mixer is an area where expansion is definitely possible. Other conferences have combined this with one-on-one mentoring, resume/cover letter review and assistance, and have provided an entire meal for students before allowing the professionals to interact with them. This decision is entirely up to each committee.

Our immediate predecessor declared this to be the most important student event of the conference. It is relatively easy to plan and conduct, and when it works the way it is supposed to work, great things can happen. It is usually held the Monday night of the conference, and those students who attended the BYPJ workshop will have received business cards to hand out and instructions on how to network with the professionals. In the past, stations have been set up around the room where students could go to meet those employed by state government, federal government, etc., but just having them mingle was very successful in 2011. Since there were so many in attendance, mingling was probably the only method that would be effective.

This event can be made even more successful by a little pre-planning and having more information available on the website for students. Suggesting that they bring their own business cards if they do not plan to attend the workshop, explaining the color-coded system, and posting the “Sage Advice and Frequently Asked Questions for students attending a Professional Workshop” (see below) on the web would help them prepare for networking opportunities. We had some confusion about whether or not professionals had to sign up to attend, so be sure to **ENCOURAGE PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT!** The professionals that attended our mixer were inundated with questions from students. The mixer was scheduled to end at 9:00 PM, and the hotel ended up asking everyone to leave at around 10:30 because they were still mingling. We had lots of positive comments.



## **Committee: Volunteers**

**Committee Members:** Karen Kinhead (DNR Wildlife Bureau) Chair  
Assisted with Fisheries staff assignments by George Scholten (Conference Chair and DNR Fisheries Bureau Supervisor). Karen worked closely with (i.e. pestered incessantly the last week before the conference) Randy Schultz (Program Chair) to confirm room assignments and gather information.

**Responsibilities:** This committee was responsible for organizing spreadsheets of information as to what volunteers were needed by the other committees, in what room, for what task, at what times.

**Timeline:** May – became Chair of this committee (no one else had stepped up)

- Requested other committee chairs start sending me information about what tasks they needed volunteers to do.
- Discussed with Planning Committee the need to separate tasks that are typically the responsibility of the State TWS and AFS Chapters & passed on the responsibility for gathering their volunteers back to the chapters.

June – Created Excel spreadsheets to begin tracking time and day needs

August – Send first e-mail to staff & others known to be interested in attending with lists of tasks and requests for filling those tasks

Sept – Nov – continued to compile information

2 weeks prior to conference – assigned moderators & AV operators

Daily until conference ended – made adjustments to schedule and replaced missing people as needed.

## **Accomplishments:**

1. What did you do to prepare for the conference? See timeline above
2. What did you do during the conference? I checked in volunteers, distributed the vests and additional information as needed (speaker biographies, instructions on working AV equipment, etc)
3. What worked well?
  - a. The vests – we provided each conference volunteer with a bright orange vest. Volunteers were asked to wear the vests even when they were not ‘on-duty’. We received many compliments as to how easy it was to find someone to ask questions about the conference.
  - b. We maintained lists of time/task/room assignments for Conference Volunteers AND for AFS/TWS Volunteers.
  - c. The excel spreadsheet made it easy to see if one person was double booked at a given time for the Conference duties – I did not get the AFS/TWS assignments in time to ensure there wasn’t any overlap.
  - d. We decided that AFS/TWS would be in charge of 2 items associated with the Conference (The Raffle – since funds raised go to those organizations and not the Conference; and the Student

Paper/Poster Judging since those awards are administered by the Chapters). We have a substantial amount of overlap between the Chapters and the DNR.

- i. To assist with the student judging, we requested that each moderator and AV operator also judge the student papers in their sections on behalf of AFS/TWS.
- e. The Volunteers which the Conference Committee (i.e. this committee) assigned were as follows:
  - i. Program Moderators – 40 volunteers with vests
  - ii. AV Operators – 40 volunteers with vests + 3 volunteers manning various shifts in the Presentation Loading Room (1 volunteer ALWAYS in that room 7AM to 7PM)
  - iii. Packet Stuffing – 8 volunteers no vests
  - iv. Registration Desk – 15 shifts with vests, mostly manned full time by our secretarial staff, with 3 other volunteers working 1-2 short shifts
  - v. Tradeshow Security – 11 shifts and 15 volunteers with vests (this was overnight security to reduce costs of hiring a guard).
  - vi. Hospitality Room – 32 shifts no vests
  - vii. Raffle – all assignments handled by AFS/TWS as all proceeds went to AFS/TWS. No vests
  - viii. Socials – no volunteers requested (no games or drink tickets)
  - ix. Transportation – one person picked up a plenary speaker
  - x. Volunteer committee – chair and 1 other person traded manning the volunteer check in station which was in the presentation loading room.
  - xi. Paper/poster – Assigned by AFS/TWS - judges picked up their papers at the Registration Desk
- 4. What hurdles did you encounter?
  - a. We had one symposium organizer listed as a moderator whom we thought might not show up. I had someone assigned as a back up moderator and extra copies of speaker bios for him (the organizer DID show).
  - b. I did not collect cell phone numbers for all volunteers, so when I needed to fill a shift during the conference (a few folks did not attend due to emergencies), I could only rely on people whose numbers I already knew.
  - c. We expected each DNR staff member to work at least 2 Conference Shifts and had planned for 80 volunteers when we ordered the vests. We actually had 86 volunteers that needed vests (not including the hospitality room, packet stuffing, raffle, or paper judging). So order extra.

**Staff Required During Conference:**

By Committee:

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Number time slots</b>	<b>Number of people</b>
Program Moderators	40	37
Presentation Loading	6	3
AV Operators	40	32
Packet Stuffing	1	8
Registration Desk	9	7
Tradeshow Security	11	8
Hospitality	32	10
Socials	0	0
Volunteer committee	6	2

By Organization:

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Number volunteers</b>	<b>Number of Shifts Worked</b>
DNR	71	130
Unknown (Symposia Organizers)	2	2
Iowa State University	7	7
NGO (TNC & Audubon)	2	2
USFWS & USGS	2	3
Other Universities	2	2
Total	86	141

**Recommendations:**

1. What was important?
  - a. Being organized
  - b. Being flexible and able to make changes at the last minute
2. What would you do differently?
  - a. Have a cell phone number for each volunteer on your list
  - b. Make each DNR employee (of hosting state) send an email to the volunteer chair stating that they have registered. We required each DNR staff member to work as a volunteer – but I didn't get a list of attendees until just a few days before the conference.
3. Other thoughts?
  - a. Biographies for the moderators to use to introduce the speakers should include the time of the talk, the full name of the presenter, and then whatever information was provided.
  - b. Order extra hats/vests/shirts – we had people asking to purchase vests and volunteers that were not allowed to get vests because they volunteered for a less visible committee (packet stuffing, hospitality room, etc).

- c. We assigned people to moderate the contributed sessions and work AV for all sessions and symposia. We allowed Symposia organizers to name their moderators – most chose themselves. We did allow folks to tell us they would like to be a moderator or AV operator, but made the assignments as to which sessions ourselves (Karen for Wildlife Sessions and George for Fisheries Sessions).
- d. I've attached examples of schedules and handouts. If you'd like the actual excel file I used, please contact me at [Karen.kinthead@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Karen.kinthead@dnr.iowa.gov)

**EXAMPLE 1** (email sent to staff requesting volunteers)

Hi –

You are listed as someone who is expected to attend the Midwest meeting and has expressed interest in volunteering. I have been asked about what the volunteer jobs will be at the Midwest meeting. I've listed the basic categories below. Once we have the program of when the talks/sessions are, I'll get out a formal request to start really recruiting/assigning people. DNR staff have been asked to work 2 shifts each. Depending on student involvement, DNR staff may need to work 3 shifts. ISU folks – if you want me to come speak about the Midwest at some student clubs, let me know.

1. Stuffing registration packets (currently scheduled for Sunday morning, will probably overlap some with registration booth set up)
2. Registration desk – set up, manning, and take down (administrative assistants taking most of these shifts, but may need a few more on certain days)
3. Assisting presenters with loading their talks (all loaded in one room (not loaded in the session rooms)) onto computer system
4. Hospitality room – set up (get ice, cut sausage, etc), clean up, etc
5. Exhibit hall security – 2 shifts each night (5 pm – 1 am, 1 am – 8 am)
6. Each session room will have 2 'volunteers' – one is the moderator and one is to work the lights/ be the gopher if something breaks/is needed.
7. Raffle – sell tickets and run raffle drawing (this will be organized by AFS/TWS – if interested contact Chapter presidents)
8. Socials/mixers – currently no volunteers requested, but may need a few people to hand out cards
9. May or may not need someone to drive plenary speakers to/from airport

That's the list. Some shifts are as short as 2 hours (hospitality room, raffle drawing), others as long as 8 (exhibit hall security and some registration desk shifts). Sessions will last about 4 hours I think.

Please let me know if you have a task you would like to sign up for. Some things I can go ahead and give times/room numbers for, others I need to wait to see what the session program will be. I have a few names for some committees already (specifically registration and hospitality room), but it wouldn't hurt to confirm with me!

Thanks!

## EXAMPLE 2

### Guidelines for Moderators

72<sup>nd</sup> Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference

Thank you for agreeing to be a session moderator at the Conference. Your contribution will be an important part of making the Conference a success. As a moderator, you are responsible for ensuring that:

Your session's speakers have received and understand the "Guidelines for Oral Presentations" – basically the time limits on the presentations.

The speakers are introduced to the audience

Each presentation in your session **STARTS AND ENDS ON TIME**

The audience interacts with the speakers.

#### Before the meeting:

Make sure you have received your session's details from Randy Schultz ([Randy.Schultz@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Randy.Schultz@dnr.iowa.gov)). Please print and bring this information with you. It should have included: Title & date of the session; and **then IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE**: Speaker name, presentation title, and speaker biography.

You will have **15 seconds ONLY** to introduce each talk. You may need to re-write the biographies to only include pertinent information (name, title/status, affiliation, talk title). Be sure to do this prior to the session start.

Please confirm this order with the printed Program.

Review the Guidelines for Oral Presentations. If you have any questions, contact Randy Schultz PRIOR to the conference.

Speakers have 15-16 minutes for their presentations and 3-4 minutes for questions. (A few presentations may be 40 minutes in length, be sure to review your list).

Decide what signals you will use to warn speakers how much time they have left. Keeping speakers on schedule is THE MOST important task you have during your session. You could use hand signals, index cards, or standing up. Be consistent. If you choose to use cards, please bring them with you. Some ideas:

Stand up at your seat (sit to the side of the room) at 15 minutes, move to the stage/side of podium at 17 minutes, lights come on (& talk turns off) at 18 minutes (via AV operator).

Yellow card at 15 minutes, red card at 17 minutes, stand up (& lights on) at 18 minutes, talk off at 18.5 minutes.

Make sure you have a watch that shows the correct time.

At the meeting:

Be in your assigned Session Room **30 minutes PRIOR** to the start of your session.

Coordinate with your assigned AV person to ensure you both have the **same time on your watches & that this time matches that in the AV room** and understand the signals you will use to let speakers know their time is ending. If you will be handling microphone duties, be sure you understand how to operate it.

Meet with each presenter to ensure:

you know the correct pronunciation of their name

that they know the **signals you will use** to give them the warning on the amount of time they have left (**see #5 above**)

**that they know the AV operator will turn the lights on and the presentation off two minutes before the scheduled end of their time slot to allow the next talk to be loaded while the current speaker answers questions.**

The audience may be hesitant to begin asking questions. Be prepared to ask the first question if no one else does. You may need to 'prime the pump' for audience questions and dialogue.

**DOUBLE check the time on your watch.** It is critical that talks start and stop on schedule to allow audience members to jump between sessions.

During the Session:

It is very important that the session starts on time. You should introduce yourself and make a few introductory comments a few minutes **BEFORE** the start of the session and just before introducing the first speaker. You should be able to introduce yourself and the session in less than 1 minute. If there are general conference announcements to be made, do so just 1-2 minutes before the start of your session and then repeat them at the start of the break period.

Start each presentation **ON TIME** and introduce the speaker.

Speaker introductions should be brief (<15 seconds). The introductions should include only the speaker's name, title/status (student, professor, research biologist, etc), affiliation (agency, university, company, etc), and title of presentation. If a speaker has a title slide listing co-authors, it is not necessary to verbally list them, but you may check with each speaker's preference on this.

**Signal speakers when their presentation has reached 15 minutes and again at 17 minutes.**

**If the presentation reaches 18 minutes, signal the AV operator to turn on the lights and turn off the presentation.**

As moderator, YOU, not the speaker, should recognize questions from the audience. If necessary, ask one or two questions to encourage the audience to join the dialogue.

Keep track of the time used for questions and stop when appropriate. **Do not cut into the next speaker's time.** A common complaint of meeting attendees traveling between sessions is that sessions are not kept on time.

Lead the audience in applause at the conclusion of the **questions.**

Between presentations, direct the audience to any vacant seats up front.

Do **NOT** start another talk until its scheduled time. If a talk finishes early and there are no more questions, tell the audience that you will wait until the scheduled time to start the next presentation.

Do not reschedule any presentations. If there is a no-show or a cancellation, you must still stay on schedule, even if you have a 20 minute slot without a talk.

Make closing remarks and repeat announcements at the end of the session as appropriate. For example, thank the audience for attending and remind them of the starting time for the afternoon sessions or the evening conference wide social.



### **EXAMPLE 3**

#### **General Information for All Volunteers**

Please wear your orange vest as much as possible, not just when you are officially serving in your assigned tasks. This will allow people to recognize local staff to ask questions. Please keep the skywalk map from your registration packet with you at all times. Most questions will probably be 'where is X to eat?'

General answers to most questions:

The concierge desk in the Marriott lobby is open 5 AM to 11:30 PM daily and offers restaurant referrals and transportation assistance.

The Local Services and Tourism Opportunities Information Table on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor will be staffed Monday & Tuesday between 7 AM and 6 PM.

If you do not know the answer to questions about Des Moines, bank/ATM locations, services, dining, directions, parking, museums, shopping, tourism opportunities, etc, direct attendees to the Information Table on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor across from the registration desk.

See back of this page for phone numbers.

## **Committee: Printing, Media, Marketing**

**Committee Members:** Mick Klemesrud, Julie Sparks, Kati Bainter  
Katy Reeder (part of this committee but worked on marketing)

**Responsibilities:** Work with the Steering committee on the creation of a Logo and theme; create and print the Program-at-a-glance (PAAG); create and print all signs for outside conference rooms (stating presentation times, presenter, and title); work with Program Committee on material for program (including presenter information and poster titles and presenters); work with Facility Administration committee on necessary signage for conference rooms and information in the PAAG (What presentations would be where); work with Exhibit Committee on material for PAAG (Exhibit map and Exhibitor names); work with Conference Chairs on material for PAAG (Sponsors names and dollar amounts), create large sponsor boards to be placed by the registration table; order ribbons for nametags.

### **Timeline:**

#### **13 months before the conference:**

Provide a *Save the Date* postcard to be distributed to those attending the previous conference

- **12 months before the conference**

Develop a conference logo

Provide electronic promotion – Powerpoint slide - that can be shown during the current conference promoting the following conference

- **5 months before the conference**

Work with a printer to develop a timeline for the printed materials. Make sure to have quantity estimates, delivery info, and product specs

- **3 Months before the conference**

Send deadlines for the call for posters, abstracts and papers based on the printer guidelines

- **2 Months before the conference**

Send a reminder that time is running out and posters, abstracts and papers must be submitted.

Begin assembling the program

Identify signs necessary for the conference, e.g.: Registration, Hospitality, Trade Show, etc.

- **1 Month before the conference**

Assemble posters, abstracts and papers for website and memory sticks

Finalize and assemble program

- **1 Week before the conference**

- Print programs

- Print signs

- Print daily schedule for each room

**Accomplishments:** Met our obligations with the exception creating a large sponsor board for the registration table (we did a banner for the atrium) and ordering ribbons for nametags.

**Staff Required During Conference:** In addition to Julie and Mick, graphic design needs were met using Kati Bainter

**Recommendations:** The program was the most difficult because of an extended deadline and schedule changes that invariably occur. Would like to see a length limit for presentation titles to ease layout of the program. Also, it is important to keep consistent time frames for all presentations and symposia, not just for laying out the program, but for attendees and presenters who might be changing rooms between presentations. The program should be finalized and posted online at least one month prior to the conference. We did not accomplish this and spent considerable time fielding calls and emails about the program from presenters and others who were making travel plans. Many attendees needed the program to apply for out of state travel. Additionally, posting it online early would give presenters an opportunity to review the program for conflicts so the Program Committee would have time to make adjustments before the program is printed. The schedule posters outside each room were printed in house (half-day on each sheet) and each room padded together so they could be torn off after each half-day's presentations were done.

## **Committee: Marketing**

**Committee Members:** Katy Reeder

**Responsibilities:** Ensuring that potential attendees and presenters (with a focus on Midwestern members of the American Fisheries Society and The Wildlife Society) received notices regarding the calls for symposia, paper and poster abstracts, registration and other pertinent information. (It should be noted that, because we contracted with AFS for conference management, much of the circulation of announcements about the conference to AFS members was handled by them and was therefore not undertaken by this committee.)

### **Timeline:**

- February: Circulate calls for Symposia to Fish and Wildlife Chiefs, TWS North Central Section (NCS) and Central Mountains and Plains Section (CMPS) listserves and/or state chapter presidents, parent societies, and previous conference's registrants
- Late July/August: Circulate calls for abstracts to the same audiences listed above as well as to all Midwestern Fish and Wildlife Biology Club presidents and advisors
- Early September: Circulate calls for small group meeting requests (included Ollie Torgerson of MAFWA on this email, in case any MAFWA committees wanted to meet during conference)
- Mid September: Circulate announcement that registration is open for Continuing Education Workshops
- September: Circulate announcement that registration is open for conference
- October: Send periodic reminders about registration for conference, Continuing Ed workshops, hotel booking information, and the approaching earlybird registration deadline
- November: Notify potential registrants of earlybird registration deadline, hotel booking deadline for conference rate, and continuing ed workshop registration deadline

**Accomplishments:** This is pretty much outlined above in the timeline section.

**Staff Required During Conference:** By the time of the conference, the responsibilities of this committee had been completed.

**Recommendations:** Initially, this committee's duties fell to the program chair. It became apparent that this saddled one person with too much responsibility and others on the program committee could circulate the announcements, so we shifted the duty to a new "marketing committee" in August.

This committee's work is not very time consuming after the initial research needed to ensure that the contacts are still up to date and that all the relevant audiences are being reached. We had a few initial hiccups with understanding how AFS's NCD and TWS's NCS and CMPS operate differently (TWS does not have one central listserve that will reach all Midwestern members) but once the distribution lists were created, the process was pretty smooth. Feel free to contact Katy Reeder [Katy.Reeder@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Katy.Reeder@dnr.iowa.gov) if you have any questions.

## **Committee: Trade Show**

**Committee members:** Mike Mason

**Responsibilities:** Obtaining a decorator for exhibit hall and selling booth space to vendors. Also worked with poster paper chairs on poster board numbers and placement.

**Timeline and Accomplishments:** Had planned on 30 booths. Contract with Marriott Hotel was for 30 booths with Marriott receiving \$100 for each booth plus \$100 clean-up fee. Marriott cost was \$3,100. In hindsight we should have had a lower booth number similar to the Freeman contract. Contract for booths decorating was with Freeman Decorating. Contract was for a 20 booth minimum at \$42.50 per booth and \$250 labor charge for setting up on Sunday. Additional booths were \$42.50.

Booth Package from Freeman:

- 8' high back drape and 3' side drape
- (1) 7" x 44" identification sign with booth number
- (1) 8' skirted table
- (2) folding chairs
- (1) wastebasket

The contract also included at no charge the lighted registration counters and associated draped work tables. Poster boards were also in this contract at \$35 each. Electrical was handled by the Marriott directly with the vendors.

Besides the list of vendors that showed at the previous Midwest Conferences, I assembled a list of possible vendors from several sources and maintained these on an excel spreadsheet which I have forwarded to Kansas and Cindy Delaney. On the web I looked at vendors that attended past AFS and TWS annual meetings and their subunits; AFWA and regional associations: MAFWA, SEAFWA, NAFWA, WAFWA; and other shows like ICAST, SHOTSHOW, WAS AQUACULTURE, etc.

Started sending first emails in October 2010 to those vendors identified early and continued as I acquired more names. First email was simple:

*Iowa is host for the 72<sup>nd</sup> Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference to be held Dec 4-7, 2011 at the Des Moines Marriott Downtown Hotel. If you are interested in opportunities to exhibit, advertise in conference materials, provide promotional or raffle items, or become a conference sponsor, please let me know. We are still in the early planning stages and would like to include you in this event. Please contact me so I can be sure you receive information to make this conference rewarding for both you and the attendees. Thanks!*

I received 26 responses back from this initial email and I let these folks know I would send them additional information as our planning of the meeting continued.

Beginning in April, 2011, I sent a second round of emails with more information including forms to send back if a vendor wanted to reserve a spot. Booth space pricing was set at \$700 commercial and \$350 nonprofit/gov't. I required a 50% deposit to reserve a spot and all fees were due by October 15, 2011. Any cancellations between August 15 and before Oct 15 would receive a 50% refund. No refunds after October 15. I only had one cancelation before Oct 15 and they opted to pay for an ad with the money that they had sent us. The third round of emails went out in mid-August to potential vendors. A fourth round went out the beginning of October with OCT 15 DEADLINE – 72<sup>nd</sup> Midwest as the subject line. Most vendors seemed to wait under September or October to sign contracts.

One problem I encountered was the trade show exhibit hall was also where the poster papers would be displayed. We had a larger number of poster papers which meant greater space needed to be allocated for them. I decided to reduce the number of booths from 30 to 25, thinking I would be lucky to get 25 in this economy. We did have 25 vendors display and I did turn down 1 vendor who called 2 weeks before the conference.

The coffee/pop breaks were held in the exhibit hall as well as a trade show social on Tuesday evening. The exhibit hall was open Monday 12 PM-5 PM, Tuesday 9:30 AM -8 PM, and Wed 8 AM-11:30 AM.

**Committee: Advertising**

**Committee members:** Mike Mason

**Responsibilities:** Finding advertisers and working with the Printing, Media and Marketing committee.

**Accomplishments:** This was the first time we placed advertising in the program. We hoped that the ad receipts would pay for the program and that vendors who normally would not attend would see this as an opportunity and that vendors attending would also utilize ads to promote their products. Sponsors (\$250 and up) were also given ad space. Up to \$1000 were given a  $\frac{1}{4}$  page and over \$1000  $\frac{1}{2}$  page.

Pricing for black and white ads were:

Full page (7" wide x 9" tall): \$300

$\frac{1}{2}$  page vertical (7" wide x 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ " tall): \$200

$\frac{1}{4}$  page (3 $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide x 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ " tall): \$100

The program ended up with following ads:

2 -Full page

3 -  $\frac{1}{2}$  page vertical

7 - $\frac{1}{4}$  page

Not counting any dollars from our 3 major sponsors, ad revenue was:

Only ad = \$1200

Sponsor ads who donated up to \$1,000 = \$1,500

**Total \$2,700**



**Committee: Sponsorship**

**Committee members:** Mike Mason

**Responsibility:** Finding sponsors.

We offered several levels of sponsorship but had little success in getting sponsors over \$2,500.

**MAJOR CONFERENCE SPONSOR (\$5,000 and up)**

- Invitation to address conference attendees at Plenary
- Full page ad in conference program
- Logo placement at conference and web site link
- Double booth space at exhibitor/trade show, if desired
- 3 conference registrations
- Your insert in attendee bag

**SUNDAY NIGHT WELCOME SPONSOR (\$3,000 - \$4,999)**

- Invitation to address conference attendees at Welcome Social
- 1/2 page ad in conference program
- Logo placement at conference and web site link
- Single booth space at exhibitor/trade show, if desired
- 2 conference registrations
- Your insert in attendee bag

**MONDAY STUDENT SOCIAL SPONSOR (\$2,000 - \$2,999)**

- Invitation to address students at Student Social
- 1/2 page ad in conference program
- Logo placement at conference and web site link
- Single booth space at exhibitor/trade show, if desired
- 1 conference registration
- Your insert in attendee bag

**TUESDAY SOCIAL SPONSOR (\$2,000 - \$2,999)**

- Invitation to address conference at Tuesday Social
- 1/2 page ad in conference program
- Logo placement at conference and web site link
- Single booth space at exhibitor/trade show, if desired
- 1 conference registration
- Your insert in attendee bag

**BREAK SPONSOR (\$1,000 and up)**

- 1/4 page ad in conference program
- Logo placement at conference
- Your insert in attendee bag

## CONFERENCE CONTRIBUTOR (\$250 and up)

Logo placement at conference and conference program

The largest sponsor (Kalkomey-\$3,000) contacted me as I did not send them any information initially. The two other large sponsors (Dow AgroSciences-\$2,500 and Active Network-\$1,800) were from email contacts that I had sent out. In addition, one local beer distributor gave us \$500 cash and \$500 in product for the hospitality room. RBFF gave a \$500 donation and Casey's and Smith Root each gave \$250. A total of \$8,800 cash was received from sponsors. Scheel's supplied \$500 worth of orange hunting vests used to identify conference workers. The NRCS Credit Union provided name badge holders and lanyards with their name on them for free.

We did produce a welcome banner that was hung in the lobby entrance of the Marriott that had the 3 major sponsors' logos on them.

## APPENDIX I

### Supplemental Information for Student Events Committee

#### **WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENT EXAMPLE:**

**[<http://midwest2012.org>]**

#### *Beginning Your Professional Journey*

A full-day workshop for undergraduate students

Are you trying to figure out the requirements and best way to apply to graduate school, or what types of positions employers have for new graduates and what they're looking for in future employees? Are you eager to prepare for those inevitable interview questions such as "Why should we hire you for this position?" If so, 'Beginning Your Professional Journey' is the workshop for you! Four sessions will include Resumes and Professional Correspondence, Academic and Employer Panels, Networking, and Interview Skills. Participants will receive binders full of resource materials for future use. And for those who register for the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference, there will be ample opportunity to (1) learn about ongoing research in fisheries and wildlife as you listen to talks given by professionals and students and (2) practice your newly-acquired skills during the conference socials and several other events.

Previous participants gave the workshop an overwhelming "thumbs up"! From a student participant, *"It was the most informative workshop I have attended. It is nice to not have anything else to worry about. The 1 hour, 30 minute workshops you get at school just don't cut it!"*

The workshop will be held on Sunday, [insert date] from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., and is limited to the first 50 pre-paid registrants. Workshop cost (including breaks, lunch, and a binder stuffed with relevant resources) is only \$25.00! \*\*NOTE: Registration for the conference is NOT included in this fee. To register for the workshop, [follow these instructions]. To do so for the conference, please do so at [conference website address] under the REGISTRATION tab.

Questions? Contact co-organizers Rebecca Christoffel ([christof@iastate.edu](mailto:christof@iastate.edu)) or Jim Schneider ([schne181@msu.edu](mailto:schne181@msu.edu)). We look forward to seeing you in Kansas City!

Other student events at the conference are detailed under the STUDENT EVENTS tab at [insert conference website].

***[INSERT CONFERENCE LOGO HERE]***

***BEGINNING YOUR PROFESSIONAL JOURNEY***  
**(Sample) Agenda for [insert date here]**

8:00 - 8:30	Registration
8:30 - 8:45	Welcome and introduction ( <i>Rebecca Christoffel</i> , Iowa State University)
8:45 - 9:15	How to Cut Your Journey Short ( <i>Jim Schneider</i> , Michigan State University)
9:15 - 10:30	Preparing Your Resume and other Professional Correspondence ( <i>Jim Schneider</i> , Michigan State University)
10:30 - 10:45	BREAK
10:45 - 12:00	Academic and Employer Panels
12:00 - 1:15	LUNCH
1:15 - 2:30	Interviewing ( <i>Rebecca Christoffel</i> , Iowa State University)
2:30 - 2:45	BREAK
2:45 - 3:45	Networking ( <i>Rebecca Christoffel</i> , Iowa State University)
3:45 - 4:15	Professionalism ( <i>Gary Potts</i> , IL Department of Natural Resources)
4:15 - 4:30	Wrap-up and Evaluations ( <i>Rebecca Christoffel</i> , Iowa State University)

# BEGINNING YOUR PROFESSIONAL JOURNEY

## WORKSHOP REGISTRATION

[Insert date, logo and location here]

Note: This registration form is for Sunday's workshop only. You will need to register separately if you plan to attend the conference. Questions? Call Rebecca at 515.294.7429.

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: (as you would like it to appear on your name tag):

\_\_\_\_\_

We will be contacting you for additional information prior to the workshop. Please be certain that the information that you have provided above is accurate and complete, so that we can be sure to have all of your personalized materials ready for you at the workshop.

[insert instructions for submission]

Register for the conference at [insert conference website here]

## 2011 Beginning your Professional Journey Participant Evaluations

1. Was your presence and participation at the workshop worth the time and money that you invested in it?

Yes	32
No	1
Yes and No	1
Somewhat	1

1b. Why or why not?

### For the participant who indicated “no”:

Since I am in graduate school, most of the presentation materials were geared for undergraduate students, which I completely understand (I am just being honest). If I were still an undergraduate, this would be beneficial.

### For the participant who indicated “yes” and “no”:

I think having different levels of workshops would be ideal. Some of the people here are beyond much of the material being presented.

### For the participant who indicated “somewhat”:

If I was a freshman it would be more beneficial, but I had already sought out this information. But it was still great information!

### For the participants who indicated “yes”:

It got me focused on what I need to do to prepare for the steps following my undergraduate graduation this spring.

I really liked hearing first hand experience from educators and employers in the field.

A lot of good advice and information available.

I learned a lot and met new people

The workshop really got me thinking about the next step in my career and put into perspective the steps I need to take to accomplish my goals.

My resume is 100 times better now and networking skills hopefully improved.

This information about resumes, cover letters, and networking was very beneficial and should help tremendously in my future career.

I found it really useful and extremely helpful to determine what to do to get my foot in the door.

I have learned a ton of information about what I need to do in order to start my career.

The information and presenters are priceless not to mention the food was great.

It was, not only because I learned valuable information but also had the chance to meet influential people and expand my network!

Appreciated advice on graduate school, especially process and etiquette of contacting advisors!

It provided a lot of information about starting my career and how I can be successful.

There was a lot of good information about the job process from many different professionals.

It was a good refresher and I learned a couple of new things.

I met so many people who will help me network as well as receive many tips.  
 I learned important skills to carry through my professional journey.  
 It helped me to build my resume' and interviewing.  
 I learned a lot more than anticipated.  
 I learned a lot of good techniques, and a ton of motivation.  
 The lessons on graduate schools were great. The products were also good.  
 I learned a lot of information of resumes and cover letters that I did not know.  
 I learned more about how to write a better resume and cover letter. I also learned a lot about networking.  
 I feel that I am much more prepared for setting up a resume and preparing for an interview.  
 I think so because it clarified a lot of things I was a little shady on.  
 I need work on my resume  
 Learned a lot and know to top of resume to make it tip top.  
 I'm relatively new to the Fisheries and Wildlife discipline so this workshop was a helpful introduction.  
 Got some good information on resume, networked!  
 I now know what to do at a conference! I also feel like I gained a lot of insight into the field of wildlife biology.  
 The workshop was informative, engaging, and confidence-building. I especially enjoyed the networking opportunities and chances to meet fellow students.  
 I feel more prepared to network with professionals and it made me think more about what I really want as a career and the determination I need to achieve it.

2a. What was the **most useful** session or interaction you had at the workshop? These are listed in rank order.

Academic Panel	15
Employer Panel	8
Professional Correspondence	8
Networking	7
Interviewing	2
10 Ways to Cut your Journey Short	1
Professionalism	1

**Note:** Some participants circled more than one session as *most important*. Total number of sessions selected was 42.

2b. Please explain.

For individuals who indicated **Academic Panel**:

There was a lot of things I didn't know about grad school that I do now.  
 I enjoyed hearing first-hand what professors and employers want.  
 From undergrad point of view, I would have benefited most from that one.  
 The employer and academic panel helped the most because they gave me insight from the people I will be working with in the future.  
 This is my second workshop and had specific grad school questions answered.  
 Same as 1b, appreciated real-world opinions. Also liked having a chance to interact with panelists at lunch!

I would have liked to hear much more about the process of applying to and attending graduate school.  
Covered the most relevant information on my next step.  
The next step I intend on completing is graduate school and this discussion gave me things to think about.  
Lots of information on the graduate school process.  
I think this because it taught me that I don't need to be perfect, just myself.  
Having a good deal of resume and interviewing experience, it was most helpful to learn what prospective employers look for.  
These gave a great description of what these folks are looking for in an employee.  
It was helpful to hear about the demands and realities of the Fisheries & Wildlife profession from employers and professors.

For individuals who indicated **Employer Panel**:

I enjoyed hearing first-hand what professionals and employers want.  
The employer and academic panel helped the most because they gave me insight from the people I will be working with in the future.  
I believe these were the best because the panel gave great insight and the networking gave good ways and ideas to interact with professionals.  
This section was where I had the most questions and after the session I feel like I'm ready to begin.  
I would have liked to hear much more about the process of applying to and attending graduate school.  
I enjoyed hearing about each of their careers and how they got there.  
These gave a great description of what these folks are looking for in an employee.  
It was helpful to hear about the demands and realities of the Fisheries & Wildlife profession from employers and professors.

For individuals who indicated **Professional Correspondence**:

The information presented seemed unlike that that would be attainable anywhere else.  
Going over natural resources resumes, CVs and cover letters really cleared up many questions.  
Liked the integrity, ethics and reflection parts  
I felt as if I hadn't heard about most of this before and it will be useful to me in the near future.  
I wondered about organization of my resume.  
Needed resume help

For individuals who indicated **Networking**:

Emphasized how important it is to meet people and add them to your network. Also even though a person you meet isn't in your specific interest, it's key to keep in mind they know people.  
Networking or how to network is not always covered at these types of events and I found it useful to see a discussion on it.  
Enjoyed the networking - nice to know how I'm supposed to approach professionals at the mixers.  
I'm pretty shy and get nervous when meeting new people so I needed it.  
Never realized the importance as I do now  
This session gave me more confidence for speaking with professionals.  
I believe these were the best because the panel gave great insight and the networking gave good ways



and ideas to interact with professionals.

For individuals who indicated **Interviewing:**

This is where I feel that I lack the most.

My communication skills and interviewing skills are limited, and this workshop will help me improve.

For the individual who indicated **10 Ways to Cut your Journey Short:**

I feel they were all helpful but the “10 steps” was something I never thought of.

For the individual who indicated **Professionalism:**

Liked the integrity, ethics and reflection parts.

3a. Were there enough opportunities for you to interact with workshop professionals?

Yes                      29

No                        6

3b. Please explain.

For the participants who indicated “yes”:

The breaks were a good opportunity to catch people.

I felt that there was sufficient time for questions and a great response to questions by the people at the workshop.

We had breaks and lunch when we could ask questions.

I only really talked to K.C. but he had a lot of good things to say.

There was just enough to introduce myself to them and want me to find them again tonight.

There were enough breaks to interact if I wanted to do so.

There was plenty of time during the breaks, not to mention the social afterwards.

The breaks provided a lot of time to interact.

Lots of question opportunities and time at the breaks to speak

I took the breaks to meet them

The breaks provided a chance to talk to the professionals one-on-one.

The breaks provided just enough time to interact concisely.

With the breaks, we were able to socialize.

I was able to talk with those that I really wanted to.

I got to talk to everyone I wanted to.

The professionals were very open to any question.

Lunch was a good time for that.

The time flew by so you know you were learning.

During breaks and lunch we had a good deal of time to talk with professionals.

I did good, but maybe a bit ??

Breaks and lunch offered time to meet with professionals and ask them critical questions about their careers.

For the participants who indicated “no”:

I wish there was more time to ask questions and socialize with afterwards.  
Some seemed to not want to converse with students; others were flooded with questions.  
Everything seemed a little rushed.  
Would have liked a lot longer to interact with panelists.  
We were behind so not that much time. Breaks were too short to talk and use restroom.  
I was able to talk with those that I really wanted to.  
Because we were absent

4a. What was the **least useful** session or interaction you had at the workshop?

10 Ways to Cut your Journey Short	19
Professionalism	13
Networking	2

4b. Please explain.

For individuals who indicated **10 Ways to Cut your Journey Short**:

It was interesting but many things were things I already knew  
There was really no point to the discussion as it is mostly common sense knowledge and it is incorporated into the other topics.  
All 10 ways I already knew not to do.  
I thought that was mostly common sense, if you were here, you are probably already past these things.  
It was just for fun (which is needed) but pretty basic.  
Most of it seemed like common sense.  
It was good to touch on but as a senior, I found myself knowing most of the information.  
I am already a semi-professional and this doesn't really pertain to me since I can't do anything about grades and such anymore.  
This section made me more nervous about beginning my career, and also didn't seem to flow with the rest.  
I have already had a lot of instruction, experience and advice on how to act, what to say, etc.  
Although humorous, I did not feel like I learned that much from this presentation.  
I felt it was unnecessary to discuss what not to do - time could have been better spent teaching us what to do.  
It at least seemed obvious.  
Many of the 10 ways seemed obvious.  
It seemed common sense.  
These I felt were all fairly obvious.  
The "things to avoid" were obvious. It would have been more effective to turn the sentiments around to positive ones.

For individuals who indicated **Professionalism**:

Nothing useful to me. I have no way to really apply these concepts, did not need to take 45 minutes.  
 A great deal of the information was covered in other sections of the workshop.  
 Harder to find an immediate take-away from this session, didn't seem entirely useful at this point.  
 Felt like most topics were already covered in other presentations.  
 There was a lot of long quotes. It also probably did not help that it was the last session of a full day.  
 Hard to follow, at end of day  
 I was bored. Too many words per slide to read.  
 I felt I understood this before the meeting.  
 Seemed to be common knowledge.  
 I feel that this is the least since it was covered throughout the entire day.  
 I felt it was slightly subjective and covered many points previously discussed.  
 A little dull, not so applicable to learners.  
 The presentation was very general and had a lot of sweeping and emotionally provoking quotes but very little substance.

For individuals who indicated **Networking**:

It was a little redundant at this point.  
 I have worked on these skills my whole life.

5a. Would you recommend this workshop to a friend?

Yes (unconditionally)	33
Yes (conditionally)	2

5b. Why or why not?

For the participants who **unconditionally** indicated "yes":

It is a great educational tool in preparing for the future and the handout book is very handy.  
 Very useful for bettering my interaction skills, which will help me and others go farther in our careers.  
 It was a good experience and a great introduction into seeing into what to look forward to in the future.  
 It was very useful and fun.  
 Only if just starting out on "the journey" ; as a senior, I feel as though this would have helped me more last year, or sophomore year.  
 It is extremely important to keep this information in mind, especially early on in one's academic career.  
 I feel like I'm more prepared for the future.  
 The experience and information is unlike any other.  
 It was well worth the money and time.  
 It will help them to think of things they may have never thought of.  
 This workshop gives each attendee a significant advantage when applying for positions throughout the natural resources community.  
 Insightful and intuitive

It is a good resource for several steps of your professional journey and can apply to students and graduates at multiple experience levels.

Because it is a very valuable learning experience in which I've learned a lot.

I learned a lot.

Depending on their experience in the professional and job world.

There are skills you need.

The topics discussed by these professionals are important to pursuing a career in this field.

Very useful information right out of college

Overall it was very helpful and enlightening.

Learn what you have to do to be a professional, more than just a good resume and correct interview technique.

Lots of info to gain as a student.

It was a great way to learn a lot of information.

It was a useful workshop. I learned a lot.

It is well worth the time and money if you are serious about this field.

The workshop provided very valuable information about being a young professional.

It's useful. Especially if you are still in school at an undergraduate level.

Very useful

It is a good source of information for any student looking to succeed in this field that might otherwise be difficult to find.

Get good experience, meet people.

Helpful, engaging, networking opportunities

This workshop puts you in the mindset of professionalism and helps you focus on why you are here.

#### For the participants who **conditionally** indicated “yes”:

If it was their first time going to such a conference.

If in undergrad, yes. If not, no.

6. Please use this space to share any other comments that you think would help in improving participants' experiences at future workshops.

Thank you for all your time and energy in this workshop. I really appreciate it!

I think this workshop was well-rounded. Very nicely put together!

I liked the workshop; the only thing I would add is maybe more employers and academics to the panels.

A section for hands on resume editing would have been very useful.

More interactive experiences; more time for questions with professionals; possibly short mock interviews. Thank you for everything you have presented and your time!

Maybe separate the undergraduates from the graduate students, so you can gear the workshop more specifically with their next career step. Because I'm a sophomore and I don't feel like I was ready to talk about permanent job qualifications and tips.

It would have been nice to have more time to question the professionals, seemed to run out of time.

Had a great time. Thank you for the experience!

I enjoyed everything and felt like all speakers were willing to share. I would like to thank all of you for

your time and advice; it meant a lot to me.

This workshop was very helpful and I hope that it can be done in the future.

I like presentations with pictures. Some presentations didn't have many pictures.

Maybe having an even broader background of professionals.

Thank you very much.

I thought it was very well-planned.

Possibly bump it up a day as many students made long drive before and are tired, or make it a wee bit shorter.

Very helpful, but would appreciate more practice in mingling.

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ANNOUNCEMENT FOR WEBSITE:

**20XX Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference**  
**Janice Lee Fenske Memorial Award for Outstanding Students**

**Date and time**  
**Location**

The North Central Division, **Host State** Chapter, and Michigan Chapter of the American Fisheries Society and the **Host State** Chapter and Michigan Chapters of The Wildlife Society, in cooperation with the Steering Committee for the 20XX Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference, are pleased to accept applications from students for the *Janice Lee Fenske Memorial Award*. Up to 25 outstanding students majoring in fisheries or wildlife management will be selected, formally recognized for their achievements, and invited to attend an exclusive breakfast held during the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference in honor of the late Janice Lee Fenske. The breakfast will provide a unique opportunity for students to meet and closely network with many fish and wildlife leaders from around the region.

Undergraduate and graduate students who plan to attend the Conference are encouraged to apply. Student finalists will be selected based on academic ability and scholarly achievements. Two of the student finalists, one majoring in fisheries management and one majoring in wildlife management, will be presented with a Fenske Memorial Award that includes a scholarship of \$500. The two winners of the Fenske Memorial Award will be selected based on the characteristics that made Jan a remarkable fisheries biologist, including enthusiasm to protect fisheries and wildlife resources through management activities, selflessness and motivation to teach others, interest in professional involvement, and integrity, positive attitude, and compassion.

To apply, please submit a resume including your GPA, two letters of recommendation from academic advisors or professionals in fisheries or wildlife management, and a cover letter including future career goals and reasons for attending the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference to:

**Jessica Mistak**

Jessica Mistak, Northern Lake Michigan Supervisor  
DNR Fisheries Division  
6833 US Highway 2, 41, and M35  
Gladstone, MI 49837  
908.786.2351 x127  
906.786.1300 FAX  
Email: [mistakj@michigan.gov](mailto:mistakj@michigan.gov)

- **PROVIDE A LINK TO THE APPLICATION ON THIS DOCUMENT**
- **PLACE A LINK ON THE WEBSITE TO GO TO THE MICHIGAN CHAPTER AFS PAGE WITH JANICE FENSKE BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**
- **FILL IN THE HIGHLIGHTED BLANKS WITH YOUR INFORMATION.**

**Deadline for submission is October 15<sup>th</sup>.** Email submissions are preferred, although mail or fax submittals will be accepted. Student applicants selected as finalists will be notified by November 20<sup>th</sup>.

## INVITATION TO FENSKE BREAKFAST - EXAMPLE

*Place conference logo here*

November 20, 20XX

Dear Colleague,

The Steering Committee for the 20XX Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference cordially invites you to attend the Janice Lee Fenske Memorial Award Breakfast on Monday, **date** at 7:00 a.m. The event will bring together 25 outstanding fisheries and wildlife management students with well-established fisheries and wildlife professionals in an intimate atmosphere. As an attendee, you will have the opportunity to meet some of the top students in fisheries and wildlife management in the Midwest, as they will have the opportunity to learn about the field from your experiences. The highlight of the event will be the selection of two Fenske Memorial Award winners, one majoring in fisheries management and one majoring in wildlife management, who embody the characteristics that made Jan Fenske a remarkable fisheries biologist. The Fenske Memorial Award winners will each receive a \$500 scholarship in honor of their achievements.

The Fenske Award honors Jan Fenske, a long-time Michigan Department of Natural Resources fisheries biologist, who passed away in March of 2005. Jan exemplified the best characteristics of a fisheries biologist with her commitment to the resource, her personal character and integrity, her drive to mentor, and her involvement in professional societies. It is hoped that the Fenske Memorial Award will create an incentive for outstanding students to become engaged in their profession by providing them an opportunity to network with leaders in fisheries and wildlife management.

We hope that you will join us in this celebration of the very best students in fisheries and wildlife management and use this unique opportunity to network with these future professionals. A response by November 16, 20XX to **student events chair contact information** regarding your attendance would be greatly appreciated. If you do plan to attend, please submit a short biographical sketch with your response so that we may share it with the students.

Please join us for a great breakfast, lively conversation and an exciting start to the 20XX Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference!

Sincerely,

**Your name(s) here**

Student Events Co-Chairs  
20XX Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference

*Put website of conference here*

### **2011 Janice Fenske Breakfast Attendees**

Kim Bogenschutz	Midwest Steering Committee	Steering Committee Arrangements Committee Chair
Rebecca Christoffel	Iowa State University	Student Events Committee
Dave Clapp	Michigan Chapter of AFS	President
Chuck Corell	IA Department of Natural Resources	Division Administrator, Conservation & Recreation
Steve Dinsmore	Iowa State University	Student Events Committee
Chad Dolan	Host State Chapter of AFS	President
Bill Fisher	AFS	
Dale Garner	IA Department of Natural Resources	Bureau Chief, Wildlife
Jeff Glaw	Host State Chapter of TWS	President
Jason Goeckler	AFS NCD	Secretary/Treasurer
Don Jackson	AFS	Past President
Jeff Kopaska	IDNR	Plenary Committee Chair
Roger Lande	IA Department of Natural Resources	Director
Joe Larscheid	IA Department of Natural Resources	Bureau Chief, Fisheries
Donna Muhm	Midwest Steering Committee	Student Events Chair
Clay Pierce	Iowa State University	Continuing Education Director
Gus Rassam	AFS	
Jim Schneider	Michigan Chapter of TWS	President
George Scholten	Midwest Steering Committee	Steering Committee Chair
Randy Schultz	North Central Division of AFS	President
Don Sparling	North Central Section of TWS	President
Seth Swafford	USDA/APHIS Wildlife Services	State Director
Darryl Walter	TWS	Regional
Gary Whelan	Jan Fenske Memorial Award	Fenske Award Committee
Gwen White	AFS NCD	President

**NOTE:** The corporate sponsor for the breakfast was also invited to send a representative, but they never did respond to any attempts at contacting them. Other potential sponsors were also invited but failed to respond.

- Immediately following is the program given to the speakers/presenters so that they know what to do at the breakfast.
- Following that is the program for all participants, printed and placed on the tables.
- Finally, the biographical sketches of the professionals attending, which was sent out to the student finalists before the Conference.





## JANICE LEE FENSKE MEMORIAL AWARD BREAKFAST PROGRAM

**Monday, December 3, 2011 \* 7:00 – 8:15 AM**

**Lobby, Polk County Convention Complex \* Des Moines, Iowa**

7:00 – 7:05	Welcome and Acknowledgement of Sponsors	<i>Donna Muhm</i> , Midwest Steering Committee
7:05 – 7:10	The Fenske Award – Its Purpose and the Meaning of the Breakfast	<i>Gary Whelan</i> , Fenske Award Committee
7:10 – 7:15	Introduction of Students and Resource Professionals	<i>Gary Whelan</i> , Fenske Award Committee
7:15 – 7:45	<b>BREAKFAST</b>	
7:45 – 7:50	Recognition of Award Winners: Fisheries Award	<i>Gary Whelan</i> , Fenske Award Committee <i>Gary will read announcement of Fisheries award winner and ask student to come forward along with Midwest and MI and IA AFS Chapter representatives</i> <i>Donna Muhm</i> , Midwest Steering Committee <i>Will present plaque</i> <i>Dave Clapp</i> , Michigan AFS Chapter <i>Chad Dolan</i> , Iowa AFS Chapter <i>Dave and Chad will present checks to Fisheries award winner, Gary will take photo</i>
	Recognition of Award Winners: Wildlife Award	<i>Gary Whelan</i> , Fenske Award Committee <i>Donna Muhm</i> , Midwest Steering Committee <i>Jim Schneider</i> , Michigan TWS Chapter <i>Jeff Glaw/Stephanie Shepherd</i> , Iowa TWS Chapter
7:50 – 7:55	Recognition of Fisheries Award Finalists	<i>Gary Whelan</i> , Fenske Award Committee <i>Donna Muhm</i> , Midwest Steering Committee
7:55 – 8:00	Recognition of Wildlife Award Finalists	<i>Gary Whelan</i> , Fenske Award Committee <i>Donna Muhm</i> , Midwest Steering Committee
8:15	Adjourn	

# 72<sup>ND</sup> MIDWEST **FISH & WILDLIFE** CONFERENCE

RECONNECTING PEOPLE WITH  
NATURAL RESOURCES

## **JANICE LEE FENSKE MEMORIAL AWARD BREAKFAST PROGRAM**

**Monday, December 5, 2011 \* 7:00 – 8:15 AM**

**Lobby, Polk County Convention Complex \* Des Moines, Iowa**

7:00 – 7:05	Welcome and Acknowledgement of Sponsors	<i>Donna Muhm</i> , Midwest Steering Committee
7:05 – 7:10	The Fenske Award – Its Purpose and the Meaning of the Breakfast	<i>Gary Whelan</i> , Fenske Award Committee
7:10 – 7:15	Introduction of Students and Resource Professionals	<i>Gary Whelan</i> , Fenske Award Committee
7:15 – 7:45	<b>BREAKFAST</b>	
7:45 – 7:50	Recognition of Award Winners: Fisheries Award	<i>Gary Whelan</i> , Fenske Award Committee <i>Donna Muhm</i> , Midwest Steering Committee <i>Dave Clapp</i> , Michigan AFS Chapter <i>Chad Dolan</i> , Iowa AFS Chapter
	Recognition of Award Winners: Wildlife Award	<i>Gary Whelan</i> , Fenske Award Committee <i>Donna Muhm</i> , Midwest Steering Committee <i>Jim Schneider</i> , Michigan TWS Chapter <i>Jeff Glaw/Stephanie Shepherd</i> , Iowa TWS Chapter
7:50 – 7:55	Recognition of Fisheries Award Finalists	<i>Gary Whelan</i> , Fenske Award Committee <i>Donna Muhm</i> , Midwest Steering Committee
7:55 – 8:00	Recognition of Wildlife Award Finalists	<i>Gary Whelan</i> , Fenske Award Committee <i>Donna Muhm</i> , Midwest Steering Committee
8:15	Adjourn	

Name	Current Position	Biographical Information	Contact Information
Kim Bogenschutz	Aquatic Nuisance Species Coordinator Iowa Department of Natural Resources	Kim received a BA in Biology from Gustavus Adolphus College (St. Peter, Minnesota) and an MS in Fisheries Science from South Dakota State University. She has worked as a Fisheries Management Specialist for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, a Fish and Wildlife Biologist for the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, an Ecologist for the Iowa Department of Transportation, the Environmental Review Coordinator for the Iowa DNR, and a Wildlife Diversity Biologist for the Iowa DNR. Since 2000, she has been the Aquatic Nuisance Species Program Coordinator for the Iowa DNR. Kim is vice-chair of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Invasive Species Committee, past chair of the Mississippi River Basin Panel on ANS, and a member of the Missouri River ANS Work Group, Introduced Fish Section of the American Fisheries Society, Midwest Invasive Plant Network, and Aquatic Plant Management Society.	<a href="mailto:kim.bogenschutz@dnr.iowa.gov">kim.bogenschutz@dnr.iowa.gov</a> 515-432-2823 x103
Rebecca Christoffel	Assistant Professor, Department of Natural Resource Ecology & Management Iowa State University	Rebecca is an assistant professor in the Department of Natural Resource Ecology & Management at Iowa State University. She serves as wildlife faculty for Iowa State University Extension and has statewide responsibilities. Rebecca received BS and MS degrees in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Her doctoral work, which focused on social carrying capacity of snakes, was completed at Michigan State University in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. Prior to her move to Iowa, Rebecca was employed as a project manager and human dimensions specialist by D. J. Case & Associates, a communications consulting firm which specializes in natural resource issues. Rebecca is a former Fenske Award winner.	<a href="mailto:christof@iastate.edu">christof@iastate.edu</a> 515-294-7429
David Clapp	Research Biologist Michigan Department of Natural Resources	I am a Research Biologist with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), and manager of the Department's Charlevoix Fisheries Research Station on Lake Michigan. I received my undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan in 1986, and my Masters degree from U of M in 1988. I've worked at the Charlevoix Station for the past 15 years, and have been directly involved in fisheries research for more than 25 years. I currently serve as one of the MDNR representatives to the Lake Michigan Technical Committee. I'm attending the Fenske Award Breakfast as a representative of the Michigan Chapter of the American Fisheries Society and of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Division. I worked with Jan Fenske when I was a graduate student in the 1980's, and again when she served as acting station manager at the MDNR Charlevoix Station. It was a pleasure and privilege to work closely with Jan – she was a great role model and a wonderful person.	<a href="mailto:clappd@michigan.gov">clappd@michigan.gov</a> 231-547-2914

Name	Current Position	Biographical Information	Contact Information
Chuck Corell	Conservation & Recreation Division Administrator Iowa Department of Natural Resources	<p>The Conservation and Recreation Division includes six bureaus: Fisheries, Forestry, Land and Waters, Law Enforcement, State Parks, and Wildlife. Chuck earned a Bachelor of Science from Iowa State University in 1982 majoring in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology. He started his career as a park ranger for the Cass County Conservation Board in the mid-1980s and also served as conservation director of the Audubon County Conservation Board in the late 1980s.</p> <p>In 1990, Chuck started with the Iowa DNR working in the Spencer Field Office until 1998 when he became supervisor of the DNR's Atlantic Field Office. He was a supervisor for the Department's Air Quality Bureau until 2003 when he took the position of Chief of the Water Quality Bureau. Chuck lives in Urbandale with his wife and two children and enjoys hunting, fishing, and camping in his spare time. A lifelong hunter and angler, he has served Pheasants Forever as a board member and habitat committee chairman for Audubon County and as the president of the Clay County Pheasants Forever Chapter from 1993-1998.</p>	<a href="mailto:chuck.corell@dnr.iowa.gov">chuck.corell@dnr.iowa.gov</a> 515-281-5529
Steven Dinsmore	Associate Professor, Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management Iowa State University	<p>Stephen J. Dinsmore is an Associate Professor (Wildlife Ecologist) in the Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management at Iowa State University, where he has been employed since 2005. He received degrees from Iowa State University (BS, Fisheries and Wildlife Biology, 1990), North Carolina State University (MS, Zoology, 1994), and Colorado State University (PhD., Fishery and Wildlife Biology, 2001) and was previously employed as an Assistant Professor (Avian Ecologist) at Mississippi State University (2001-2005). Throughout his undergraduate and graduate education, he was interested in quantitative ecology and the application of contemporary statistical tools to wildlife-related questions. His graduate work with two species of shorebirds included the estimation of vital rates such as annual survival, estimating annual population size and trend, and modeling reproductive success. His broad research interests are in the areas of avian ecology and population biology. Recently, he has focused on topics such as avian nest survival modeling, survival estimation and sampling techniques, and he currently supervises four graduate students working in these areas.</p>	<a href="mailto:cootjr@iastate.edu">cootjr@iastate.edu</a> 515-294-1348

<b>Name</b>	<b>Current Position</b>	<b>Biographical Information</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
<b>Chad Dolan</b>	District Fisheries Management Biologist Iowa Department of Natural Resources	Chad Dolan received his BS from the University of Wisconsin at La Crosse in 1994 and his MS from Mississippi State University in 2001. He has been a fisheries intern, a fisheries creel clerk, a fisheries technician, and a fisheries research biologist at the USGS Fisheries Research Center in La Crosse, Wisconsin, at the INHS Lake Michigan Biological Station, the INHS Great Rivers Field Station, and the INHS Springfield Office. His professional interests include fish management issues, electrofishing, turtles, and aquatic invasive species.	<a href="mailto:chad.dolan@dnr.iowa.gov">chad.dolan@dnr.iowa.gov</a> 319-694-2430
<b>Bill Fisher</b>	President, American Fisheries Society Associate Professor, Department of Natural Resources, Cornell University Leader, New York Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit	William L. Fisher is the President of the American Fisheries Society. He is a research fishery biologist and leader of the New York Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit and an associate professor in the Department of Natural Resources at Cornell University. He received his BA in 1976 from the University of Louisville, his MA in 1979 from DePauw University, and PhD. from the University of Louisville in 1987. He served as a water quality biologist with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (1979-1980), stream ecologist with the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service at Auburn University (1989-1991), and assistant leader of the Oklahoma Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit at Oklahoma State University (1991-2008). His research focuses on applications of geographic information systems in fisheries, management of recreational fisheries, conservation of rare and declining fishes, and sustainable water resources management. He has advised or co-advised over 20 graduate students, authored or co-authored over 70 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, and co-edited the AFS book titled <b>Geographic Information Systems in Fisheries</b> in 2004. He is an AFS-Certified Fisheries Professional.	<a href="mailto:wlf9@cornell.edu">wlf9@cornell.edu</a> 607-255-2839
<b>Dale Garner</b>	Wildlife Bureau Chief Iowa Department of Natural Resources	Dr. Dale L. Garner is a native of Wisconsin where as a young boy he spent much of his spare time hunting, trapping and fishing in the woods, fields, streams, and lakes. Pursuing his wildlife dreams, he earned his Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Management at Humboldt State University in Arcata, California in 1984. After working in California and Nevada for several years on endangered species, he pursued graduate school. He earned his Master of Science degree in 1989 and a PhD. In 1994 from State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse, New York. Both of these graduate degrees dealt with moose. He began working for the Iowa DNR as a research biologist in 1995 and became Chief of Wildlife in 2004. Dr. Garner has worked on a variety of wildlife from mice to moose and has been recognized for his expertise on wildlife diseases.	<a href="mailto:dale.garner@dnr.iowa.gov">dale.garner@dnr.iowa.gov</a> 515-281-6156

Name	Current Position	Biographical Information	Contact Information
Jennifer Filipiak	Director of Conservation Science The Nature Conservancy	<p>Jen was born in Chicago, IL and raised in the western suburbs. With an interest in the natural world sparked by her bow-hunting father, Jen left the city for an undergraduate education in biology from Northern Michigan University, in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, followed by a Master's degree in wildlife ecology at Southern Illinois University's Cooperative Wildlife Research Lab. The focus of her research was white-tailed deer ecology in the forest-prairie transition zone of Minnesota. Jen moved back to Chicago and worked for a consulting firm, learning the complicated environmental regulatory world of the Chicago metro area. The knowledge gained working with a variety of clients and agencies, coupled with her deer experience led her to a position with the Lake County Forest Preserve District, managing deer and working with urban wildlife management issues. At the Forest Preserves, Jen had the opportunity to work on a variety of wildlife and habitat issues, gaining experience with watershed planning, woodland, savanna and wetland restoration projects and working with multiple natural resource and conservation organizations under the auspices of the Chicago Wilderness coalition. This partnership focus became a favorite part of Jen's career at the Forest Preserve and is what led her interest in working with The Nature Conservancy, where she started in 2007.</p> <p>Jen is an avid cyclist and backpacker. She also loves to travel, having traveled extensively in Latin America, including a 3 month volunteer position surveying mammals in the Peruvian rainforest. Jen and her husband, Pete, live in Des Moines.</p>	<a href="mailto:jfilipiak@tnc.org">jfilipiak@tnc.org</a> 515-868-1331
Jeff Glaw	Wildlife Management Biologist Manager of the Sugema Wildlife Unit  Iowa Department of Natural Resources President  Iowa Chapter of The Wildlife Society	<p>Born and raised in Parkersburg, Iowa, Jeff graduated from Wartburg College with a BA in Biology and a minor in Education in 1985. He began his career with the Iowa DNR in 1985 as a Natural Resources Technician I. He was promoted to Natural Resources Technician II in 1999 and to Wildlife Management Biologist in 2007. Jeff manages the Sugema Wildlife Unit in southeast Iowa and is currently the President of the Iowa Chapter of The Wildlife Society.</p>	<a href="mailto:jeffglaw@gmail.com">jeffglaw@gmail.com</a> 319-361-1032

Name	Current Position	Biographical Information	Contact Information
Jason Goeckler	Environmental Scientist Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Secretary/Treasurer North Central Division of the American Fisheries Society	<p>Jason Goeckler is an Environmental Scientist with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism. After the discovery of zebra mussels in Kansas, Jason led the group that drafted the <i>Kansas Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan</i>. The 2005 Plan approved by the Kansas Governor has led to his current work to implement the ANS plan for Kansas.</p> <p>In his capacity as Kansas Aquatic Nuisance Species Program Coordinator, Jason serves on several state, regional, and national coordinating groups. He has recently completed a term as co-chair of the Mississippi River Basin Panel on ANS and previously served as Vice-Chair of the Western Regional Panel on ANS. An active member of the American Fisheries Society, Jason has been an officer at the sub-unit, state chapter, and divisional level. He currently serves as the Secretary-Treasurer of the North Central Division. His professional philosophy is to balance natural resource protection with human benefits. This philosophy has led him to form strong partnerships for the development of science-based recommendations to benefit fisheries management. Using his biological training in addition to becoming a certified Human Dimension Specialist, Jason has a broad perspective that enables him to address many issues facing natural resources today.</p>	<a href="mailto:jgoeckler@yahoo.com">jgoeckler@yahoo.com</a> 620-342-0658
Don Jackson	Sharp Distinguished Professor of Fisheries Mississippi State University Past-President American Fisheries Society	<p>Dr. Donald Jackson is the Sharp Distinguished Professor of Fisheries at Mississippi State University and Past President of the American Fisheries Society. He has been at Mississippi State University for 25 years. His research focus is small-scale fisheries, particularly in rivers and near-shore marine environments. A native of Arkansas, Dr. Jackson received his BS and MS degrees in zoology from the University of Arkansas and a PhD. In fisheries from Auburn University. He served two years on the faculty of the National University of Malaysia as a U. S. Peace Corps Volunteer, attended Lexington Theological Seminary (Kentucky), and taught fisheries and ecology courses one year on a post-doctoral assignment with the faculty of the University of Alaska before accepting his position with Mississippi State University. He has directed 17 MS theses and 10 PhD. Dissertations. His passions are duck hunting and creek fishing.</p>	<a href="mailto:djackson@CFR.MsState.Edu">djackson@CFR.MsState.Edu</a> 662-325-7493



Name	Current Position	Biographical Information	Contact Information
Jeff Kopaska	Fisheries Biometrician Iowa Department of Natural Resources Immediate Past-President AFS Fisheries Information and Technology Section	<p>Jeff Kopaska is a graduate of Iowa State University and is the fisheries biometrician for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. He has been involved in the American Fisheries Society (AFS) since 1993, and served on the AFS-NCD Student Affairs Committee while in graduate school. He is the immediate past-president of the AFS Fisheries Information and Technology Section, and as such served the Society on the Governing Board. He is on the Steering Committee for the 2011 Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference, and is an active member of the Iowa Chapter of AFS and the Water Quality Section. As an employee of Iowa DNR Fisheries, his areas of responsibility include overseeing most technology-related efforts undertaken. He recently spearheaded an effort to develop an online fishing tournament registration and reporting system, which Iowa looks forward to sharing with any other interested states. He maintains the website, develops and modifies software as needed, acquires tools to assist staff in their data inventory and analysis activities, and assists fisheries staff use of data in a comprehensive approach to resource management. To that end, Iowa has developed fisheries data systems that provide public access via the internet to various types of fishery data. Much of the river and stream data is available via the Iowa Rivers Information System, Lake fish survey data, as well as water quality data and other lake management information. Further development of these systems is ongoing, and much of this work is done collaboratively across the North Central Division via the Multi-state Aquatic Resources Information System.</p>	<p><a href="mailto:jeff.kopaska@dnr.iowa.gov">jeff.kopaska@dnr.iowa.gov</a>            515-432-2823 x109</p> <p><a href="http://www.fishdata.org">www.fishdata.org</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.iowadnr.gov/fishing.aspx">http://www.iowadnr.gov/fishing.aspx</a></p> <p><a href="http://maps.gis.iastate.edu/iris/">http://maps.gis.iastate.edu/iris/</a></p> <p><a href="http://limnology.eeob.iastate.edu/lakereport/fishhome.aspx">http://limnology.eeob.iastate.edu/lakereport/fishhome.aspx</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.marisdata.org">www.marisdata.org</a></p>
Roger Lande	Director Iowa Department of Natural Resources	<p>Roger Lande was appointed by Governor Branstad as the Director of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Lande has long been active in protecting and preserving Iowa's natural resources as a hunter and fisherman. Roger was an Eagle Scout, and as a youth, active in Scout and Izaak Walton League projects to protect the soil, air, woods, and water. Roger, an attorney from Muscatine, Iowa is a former chair of the Iowa Association of Business of Industry, served as Honorary Consul of Canada to Iowa and served as the president of the Iowa Bar Association from 1981-1982.</p> <p>Roger received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of Iowa and graduated with distinction from the University of Iowa College of Law in 1961. He also served on the Greater Muscatine Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors from 1990-2005, served on the Board of Regents from 1996-2001 and is a member of Rotary International and Thirty-Three Club. He is a pilot, scuba diver, and raises Black Labradors.</p>	<p><a href="mailto:roger.lande@dnr.iowa.gov">roger.lande@dnr.iowa.gov</a>            515-281-5742</p>



<b>Name</b>	<b>Current Position</b>	<b>Biographical Information</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
<b>Joe Larscheid</b>	Fisheries Bureau Chief Iowa Department of Natural Resources	Joe received his BS in Wildlife Conservation and Management, Aquatic Option from the University of Wyoming in Laramie in May of 1988. His MS in Zoology and Physiology, with an Emphasis in Fisheries Management, was earned from the University of Wyoming, Laramie in 1990. The title of his thesis is “Differentiation of three strains of rainbow trout using scale pattern analysis”. He came to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources as a fisheries research biologist in June of 1990, was promoted to Fisheries Research Section Supervisor in August of 2008, and then promoted to Fisheries Bureau Chief in May of 2009. Joe has a wide range of professional interests including statistical analysis.	<a href="mailto:joe.larscheid@dnr.iowa.gov">joe.larscheid@dnr.iowa.gov</a> 515-281-8663
<b>Donna Muhm</b>	Fish Culture Biologist Iowa Department of Natural Resources Secretary NCD Walleye Technical Committee Student Events Chair 2011 Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference	Donna is a native of central Iowa and received her BS in Animal Ecology with a Fisheries Option and Chemistry minor from Iowa State University. Her fisheries career began with the Iowa DNR as a technician at the Rathbun Fish Hatchery. From there she spent eleven years working as a Research Biologist/Biochemist with Pure Fishing, Inc. before returning to the DNR as manager of the Spirit Lake Hatchery in 1999. Donna is an active member of the American Fisheries Society, having served as state Chapter president, Chair of the NCD Walleye Technical Committee, Secretary/Treasurer of the Fish Culture Section, and is currently the Secretary of the NCD Walleye Technical Committee. She also serves on the Technical Committee for Research of the North Central Regional Aquaculture Center (NCRAC). Donna is the team leader for the Fisheries Bureau Temporary Employee Selection Committee, which hires temporary fisheries employees statewide each year, and is the student events chair for the 2011 Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference.	<a href="mailto:donna.muhm@dnr.iowa.gov">donna.muhm@dnr.iowa.gov</a> 712-336-1840
<b>Clay Pierce</b>	Assistant Leader – Fisheries Iowa Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit Iowa State University	Clay Pierce is the Assistant Leader for Fisheries of the Iowa Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Iowa State University. He supervises graduate students and does aquatic ecology and fisheries research in the lakes, rivers, and streams of Iowa. He teaches courses in Stream Ecology and Fisheries Science. Clay is a native of Minnesota, and received his Bachelors degree at Mankato State University, his Masters degree at the University of Kentucky, and his PhD. At the University of Maryland. He was a post-doctoral researcher at McGill University and an assistant professor at Eastern Illinois University before assuming his present position in 1993.	<a href="mailto:cpierce@iastate.edu">cpierce@iastate.edu</a> 515-294-3159

<b>Name</b>	<b>Current Position</b>	<b>Biographical Information</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
<b>Gus Rassam</b>	Executive Director American Fisheries Society	Dr. Gus Rassam has been the Executive Director of AFS since 1999. Previous to that he had executive experience with several scientific societies in the Washington, DC area. He has a PhD. In geoscience from the University of Minnesota and an MS from Miami University in Ohio.	<a href="mailto:grassam@fisheries.org">grassam@fisheries.org</a> 301-897-8616 x208
<b>Jim Schneider</b>	Academic Advisor Michigan State University	Jim Schneider is a Certified Wildlife Biologist, Past-President of the Michigan Chapter of The Wildlife Society and the Academic Advisor for all undergraduates majoring in Fisheries and Wildlife in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife at Michigan State University. Jim is Faculty Advisor for the MSU Fisheries and Wildlife Club, has served numerous leadership roles with the Michigan Chapter of The Wildlife Society, and has also been active with other conservation organizations, particularly the Ruffed Grouse Society, Pheasants Forever and the National Wild Turkey Federation. Jim also serves as an instructor for the Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow Program. Jim is an avid birder, hunter, and fisher.	<a href="mailto:schne181@anr.msu.edu">schne181@anr.msu.edu</a> 517-353-2979
<b>George Scholten</b>	Fisheries Research Supervisor Iowa Department of Natural Resources	George Scholten has been the Research Section Supervisor in the Fisheries Bureau of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources since November 2009. He received his BS degree from South Dakota State University and his MS from Tennessee Tech University. Prior to starting with the Iowa DNR, he coordinated the Large River, Reservoir, and Commercial Fisheries programs for the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency in Nashville, Tennessee. He serves on several regional and AFS committees and is currently the Chair of the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association's Paddlefish-Sturgeon Committee.	<a href="mailto:george.scholten@dnr.iowa.gov">george.scholten@dnr.iowa.gov</a> 615-781-6574
<b>Randy Schultz</b>	Fisheries Research Biologist Iowa Department of Natural Resources	Randy Schultz leads the Iowa DNR's large impoundment research team. Randy has held this position for 8 years, previously working for Kansas Wildlife and Parks in the same capacity and as their urban biologist in Wichita. Randy is active in AFS activities, serving as Chapter President, Centrarchid and Walleye Technical Committee Chair, NCD Secretary/Treasurer and immediate Past President.	<a href="mailto:randy.schultz@dnr.iowa.gov">randy.schultz@dnr.iowa.gov</a> 641-774-2958

Name	Current Position	Biographical Information	Contact Information
<b>Stephanie Shepherd</b>	Biologist, Wildlife Diversity Program Iowa Department of Natural Resources	A native of Virginia, Stephanie received a BS in Biology from the University of Richmond in 1995. She has a Master of Science in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from Iowa State University performing a research project focused on the evaluation of restored prairies using the butterfly community as an index. In her 15 year career as a wildlifer, she's worked primarily for state wildlife agencies in Virginia, Missouri, and is currently a biologist with the Iowa DNR's Wildlife Diversity program where she has a variety of duties all related to conservation of Iowa's non-game wildlife. Her primary interests are in restoration ecology and conservation biology.	<a href="mailto:stephanie.shepherd@dnr.iowa.gov">stephanie.shepherd@dnr.iowa.gov</a> 515-432-2823
<b>Don Sparling</b>	Associate Professor, Zoology Associate Director Cooperative Wildlife Research Laboratory Southern Illinois University President, North Central Section The Wildlife Society	Dr. Don Sparling is currently an associate professor in Zoology and associate director of the Cooperative Wildlife Research Laboratory, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale IL. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees at SIU about the time that reptiles evolved feathers and received his PhD. at the University of North Dakota where he studied behavioral interactions between sharp-tailed grouse and greater prairie chickens; as a side study he examined the effects of frostbite on field researchers in mid March. From 1982 to 2004 Dr. Sparling was employed by the U. S. Department of the Interior first as a statistician and then as a research wildlife biologist. Most of his research at that time was on environmental contaminants and their effects on birds and herps. In 2004, after having his fill of federal bureaucracy, Dr. Sparling took early retirement to take a position at his alma mater where he now teaches the ins and outs of bureaucracy as well as animal behavior and wildlife toxicology. Current interests are ecotoxicology of amphibians & reptiles & grassland bird ecology.	<a href="mailto:dsparl@siu.edu">dsparl@siu.edu</a> 618-453-6949
<b>Seth Swafford</b>	State Director Missouri and Iowa USDA Wildlife Services Program	Seth R. Swafford is the current State Director for the Missouri and Iowa USDA Wildlife Services Program. Seth graduated from Mississippi State University with a Master of Science degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science and is a certified wildlife biologist based on The Wildlife Society's qualifications. Prior to serving as the State Director, Seth was the Assistant National Coordinator for USDA Wildlife Services National Wildlife Disease Program in Colorado and a staff officer at their Headquarters Office located outside of Washington, DC. His background includes experience with aquatic rodents, waterfowl management, migratory bird depredation, and wildlife diseases. His personal interests include spring turkey hunting, scuba diving, and working with livestock such as horses and cattle.	<a href="mailto:seth.swafford@aphis.usda.gov">seth.swafford@aphis.usda.gov</a> 573-449-3033 x15

Name	Current Position	Biographical Information	Contact Information
Darryl Walter	Director of Marketing and Conferences The Wildlife Society	Darryl Walter joined The Wildlife Society as Director of Membership Marketing and Conferences in August 2008. Darryl is a seasoned strategist with a record of success in association marketing, including 5 ½ years with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). His experience including membership recruitment and retention, direct mail, e-marketing, branding, and creative development. Darryl's previous professional experience includes the position of Circulation Marketing Manager for USA TODAY and Database Manager at Special Olympics, International. A graduate of Kent State University, Darryl lives in Bethesda, MD with his wife and three children.	<a href="mailto:DWalter@wildlife.org">DWalter@wildlife.org</a> 301-897-9770
Gary Whelan	Program Manager, Fisheries Division Michigan Department of Natural Resources	Education – University of Wyoming - B.S. in Fisheries Management, 1979 University of Missouri - M.S. in Fisheries Management, 1983 I have worked as a fisheries biologist for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for over 24 years and prior to that worked as a research biologist for Michigan State University for 4 1/2 years. Currently, I am a Program Manager for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources - Fisheries Division, responsible for all operational aspects of the fish production system for the state including fish health, the Tribal Coordination Unit, the Aquatic Species and Regulatory Affairs Unit, and the Habitat Management Unit. One of my other staff duties is handling emergency response issues for Fisheries Division. In addition to my state duties, I have been involved with the National Fish Habitat Action Plan for the last 6 years, initially one of the Core Team that wrote the Plan and for the last 4 years, as the Co-Chair of the Board's Science and Data Committee directly responsible for the National Fish Habitat Assessment. I have enjoyed a diverse AFS experience including being President of the Fisheries Information and Technology and Fisheries History Sections, Chair of the Board of Professional Certification, and a member of the Fenske Fellowship Committee. Currently, I am the President-Elect of the North Central Division of AFS. Other stops on my professional journey include the Chair of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission – Great Lakes Fish Health Committee and President of the Instream Flow Council. While my educational training is as a stream ecologist, I have been blessed with a wonderfully diverse career that has ranged from studying fish parasite ecology to understanding stream functioning to analyzing hydropower impacts to examining fish habitat on a national scale to managing a complex fish production system for the State of Michigan.	<a href="mailto:whelang@michigan.gov">whelang@michigan.gov</a> 517-373-6948

Name	Current Position	Biographical Information	Contact Information
Gwen White	Project Manager D.J. Case & Associates President AFS North Central Division	Gwen White served in the U. S. Peace Corps' aquaculture program in Honduras, has a PhD. From the University of Minnesota, an MS from the University of Maryland, and has worked 12 years with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. Gwen is currently a project manager with DJ Case & Associates, a communications firm specializing in natural resource conservation issues. Topics she enjoys exploring area watershed management, invasive species control, land use policy, coral reefs, professional diversity, running effective meetings, and aquatic stewardship education. Actively engaged in the American Fisheries Society (AFS) as a Board Member for over a decade, she is currently serving as AFS North Central Division President.	<a href="mailto:gwen@djcase.com">gwen@djcase.com</a> 317-281-9445

## **Sage Advice and Frequently Asked Questions for Students Attending a Professional Conference**

*Compiled by John Loegering ([jloegeri@umn.edu](mailto:jloegeri@umn.edu)), University of Minnesota; Rebecca Christoffel ([christof@iastate.edu](mailto:christof@iastate.edu)), Iowa State University; and Jim Schneider ([schne181@anr.msu.edu](mailto:schne181@anr.msu.edu)), Michigan State University.*

As faculty advisors, we are often asked by students what to expect at a professional conference. Here is our best attempt to summarize the most common and obvious questions. Professional meetings are HUGE career opportunities for students. They are intense. It is best to prepare and hang on for the ride.

**First and foremost, why are you going? To learn? To network? To connect with employers? To connect with other students? To party your brains out?** If you could do it at home, save yourself the money and stay home. You are there to learn – so learn at every opportunity. This will be intense! You should MEET as many people as you can. Network! The natural resource profession is smaller than you think and the relationships you form now will help you in the future. You never know who will be your next employer, colleague, or field house roommate. Be sure to meet as many other students as possible, and also meet other faculty, agency personnel, resource managers, etc. Carry a notebook and discretely record the names and affiliation of everyone you meet (you'll start to forget after meeting 50 people).

### **What to bring?**

- **Business cards.** Professionally printed, or you can make you own, or use Avery cards and format them on your computer. Avery and other paper suppliers make this easy to self design and printing cards 10 to a page (e.g. Avery Templates 8871 and 8873). MS Word also has a template; or you can also get ready-made templates from the Microsoft website or see <http://www.avery.com>.
- **Updated resume.** You should have a copy or 3 on hand just in case you bump into a potential employer. This is the ONE AND ONLY CASE when it is a good idea to place your photo on the front page, top right or left simply to really drive your image into this professional's mind. **ONLY** do this when you are physically handing a resume to someone who is the direct user (i.e., have 2 versions on hand to distribute as needed).
- **Notepad/pen** for notes (good talks, contacts, potential employers, etc.). Also keep a small notebook or pad of paper with you at all times. Write down the name and affiliation of EVERY professional you meet. You never know when you will need to speak to them again.

**Introductions.** Faculty, professional society officers, and professional colleagues all generally will be more than happy to provide a student with an introduction to any of the resource professionals we know, and many that we

do not. Conferences are bust times for everyone so you want to be clear, direct, and leave a lasting impression. Know why you want to meet and be direct. For example, “Good evening Dr. Johnson, it is a pleasure to meet you. I am John Smith, a senior at the University of Minnesota, Crookston and am interested in working with the Minnesota DNR this summer. Do you have any advice?” Be direct but somewhat more subtle than “Hi, do you have a job for me this summer?” ASK for someone’s business card if you will want/need to contact them, otherwise, record their name and agency and find them on the web. Always accompany introductions with a firm handshake.

**Handshakes** are always firm and offered regularly.

All professionals should be addressed as Dr. or Mr. “Johnson”. Use Dr. if you don’t know for sure as it is easier to err on the side of overly-formal and then change as appropriate rather than attempt to recover from a too familiar social gaff. This is especially true of female professionals.

**Professional behavior** – You will have the opportunity to meet and make an impression on many colleagues, employers, advisors, etc. Assure these are positive and that your advisors and home institution would be proud of you as a representative. Greet others warmly, smile a lot, be direct, look folks in the eye (you can look at your shoes when you put them on in the morning), demonstrate pride in your accomplishments and what you have to offer employers, and reserve boasting for the liars contest in the bar. Your behavior directly reflects on you, your home institution, and on your faculty advisors. Advisors certainly do hear about some of the good and all of the bad impressions that you make. Your positive impressions reflect well on you; negative impressions generally reflect on your academic advisor and institution. Thus, you may be asked to leave immediately and return to campus at your own expense for unprofessional behavior. Also, remember that if your attendance is sponsored by your home institution, their policies are in effect (e.g. regarding alcohol consumption, etc.).

**Appropriate attire** for students at a professional conference is business casual. If you happen to be making a presentation (poster or oral), attending the banquet, or accepting an award, you will want to “gussie” up for the event. During the remainder of the conference, you’ll find that people generally wear business casual. Jeans may be acceptable in some instances, but you certainly won’t miss with casual dress pants and a button-down blouse or shirt. Field clothes are appropriate for field trips. Do leave your rock band and beer t-shirts at home. A special note on hats – they are safety equipment for personal protection from the sun and rain. If you are indoors, you do not need one.

**What about missing classes?**

If you are missing class, contact all of your instructors as soon as you think you might be going! Do this both via email AND in person during office hours or after class. Most instructors are accommodating for professional meeting attendance. Be sure to discuss what content you will be missing and what consequences there would be if you missed a week of classes. Contact your instructors again 2 weeks before the event to remind them of your planned absence. Ensure that you get all your assignments done and handed in to the instructor BEFORE YOU LEAVE. Have a colleague take notes for you during your absence. Follow up with instructors after returning to assure all is well.

### **What happens at the conference?? What is a typical conference timetable?**

1. Arrive. Register for the conference, check into the hotel
2. Review the materials in the conference packet. Separate into the “leave in my room” and “carry with me” piles.
3. Review the scheduled scientific presentations in the poster, symposia, and contributed sessions. Plan what talks & posters you will see and plan your movements among the various rooms (for conferences with concurrent sessions). Do this the first day then STICK to your plan. It is all too easy to see 5 talks and then wander aimlessly.
4. Look at the map of the conference center, scope out the layout so you can find the rooms you will be dashing among to see different talks. Do this before you need to change rooms in a crowded hallway.
5. Use breakfast, lunch, and dinner as opportunities to network. This is where you build relationships!
6. Network and socialize in the evenings, but DO get some sleep. Snoring in a session leaves a lasting impression that you do not want!
7. Concurrent session rooms can often be very, very warm. Resist the urge to take a nap, It looks really bad and does not convey your professionalism or employability for you or anyone else at your institution.
8. Remember to eat well – 4 days on high carbohydrate, high fat restaurant food will leave you sleepy and senseless.

### **How do I go about meeting the people that might hire me as an employee or take me on as a graduate student?**

If you want to meet a successful professional, be sure to make it worth their while. Ask them specific questions about their presentation or about their current research interests. Be prepared to tell them what interests you.

- As an exercise, discuss with your fellow students the topic of “What part of the profession or field are you interested in? What specialty most appeals to you?” Work on a <2 sentence response to the “What interests you in the field” question.



There are several opportunities to meet professionals at the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference. Come to the all-day student workshop on Sunday entitled “*Beginning Your Professional Journey*”, where you’ll learn about networking and where many professionals will be helping out for the day. Students will have breaks and lunch with the professionals and will have one on one interaction with them throughout the day.

Attend the Sunday evening networking event. Beforehand, you might read over your program and abstracts of presenters whom you would like to meet. Then, seek those people out and introduce yourself and ask them about their work – everyone loves to talk about themselves!

Come to the Monday night student/professional mixer! Employers and academics from throughout the region will be on hand to talk with students about potential positions either in the workforce or as graduate students. Be sure to bring multiple copies of your resume and business cards to leave with people.

**OK, now I’ve talked with the person, but I need to move on. How do I gracefully extricate myself? How long should I talk with any one individual?**

Once you have attentively listened to the person and have asked them your questions of interest, and are ready to move on, there are several tactics that can be used to close the conversation. For example:

“Dr. White, it was fascinating talking with you. I look forward to your presentation on Tuesday. Thanks for taking time to tell me about opportunities in your lab. Here’s my card. Please contact me if you receive funding for the project that we discussed!”, and with that, you give Dr. White your card and move on to the next person with whom you wish to speak.

If you don’t necessarily want to follow up with the person in the future, you might use the excuse that you want to refresh your drink, or look at your watch and exclaim that you need to move along to meet with a friend or other acquaintance, etc.

You want to make several connections at the conference, as do the professionals who will be in attendance. A good rule of thumb in terms of time might be as long as it takes to gather the desired information, but probably no longer than about ten minutes, unless you’ve been asked to join the individual for a meal or to be introduced to his or her colleagues.

The key is to remember that being at a conference is a little like being on one “very long” job interview. You must be on your best behavior the entire time. This does not only include the conference venue. These same individuals may be at the restaurant or bar that you and your friends decide to visit on any given

evening. The while time you are at a conference, you are being evaluated as a potential employee or graduate student. You might not want your potential future graduate advisor to witness your dance with the bar stool or your karaoke performance.

**How do I leave information about myself with people that I'm either interested in working under as a student or as an employee?**

It is not too early to have a business card to distribute at meetings. Here are a couple of pointers regarding business cards. You probably don't want to be distributing a business card on which you have listed your [hotmama@yahoo.com](mailto:hotmama@yahoo.com) account. If you have a web page listed, be sure that you feel that you are presented in a professional manner on that web page. You are making a "professional" contact, not a personal contact. Do you really want the Chief of the state Wildlife Division to see you snorting beer out your nose? Think beforehand about the information that you are providing and what a potential employer will view on your web page.

**I don't know that I want to volunteer at the conference, even if I get a discounted rate. It is really worth it?**

YES! ESPECIALLY if you are uncomfortable stepping out and introducing yourself at mixers, you might find that volunteering is a wonderful way to meet professionals and to make a very positive first impression. They will notice that you ARE a volunteer and are helping to make the conference a success. You'll need to gather information from them if you are moderating a session, and by doing so, will start to get to know those professionals. It will be easier to talk with them when you meet them again, either at the current conference or in the future.

**How about my body piercings and tattoos?**

Tattoos and body piercings have gained incredible popularity in the past 10-15 years. However, at a conference or at any sort of a professional function, the safe bet is to leave your tongue or nose ring at home and conceal rather than emphasize tattoos. Many of the professionals with whom you may work may not be as enamored of the piercings or tattoos as you are and you may cheat yourself out of opportunities by displaying piercings or tattoos.

**Should I attend the business meeting of my professional society (e. g. TWS or AFS)? I am just a student after all.**

There's no better way to send the right signal that you're serious about your chosen profession than to get involved as a student in your local and/or regional TWS or AFS chapter. Volunteering for anything as a student is greatly appreciated by professional societies and is a FABULOUS way to meet the professionals with whom you would like to work or learn from. It also gets you on a professional's radar screen because you have a role in the local or regional chapter.

**What your Faculty Advisors NEED to know if you are part of a student group (e.g. student chapter).**

If something happens that will involve external entities (hotel staff, EMS, conference organizers, police, etc.), alert your faculty advisor immediately. They do not want to be surprised – it would be much better coming from you rather than the authorities.

**Most importantly, have fun!** Smile a lot! Meet lots of people!