



From the Desk of the AFS-NCD President

“Musings by Melissa”

January 2016

Happy New Year! I hope you all enjoyed the holidays and spent many great hours with family and friends.

Now that January is here, the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference is just a few short weeks away. Will you be traveling to Grand Rapids for great science, continuous learning, and catching up with friends? There’s still time to register and book your hotel!

The conference organizers have worked hard to plan another fantastic event! I’ve been checking out the conference website (<http://www.midwestfw.org/>) to plan my time. The six **continuing education opportunities** on Sunday cover a variety of topics, including effective communication, leadership, and bioenergetics. Special thanks to the NCD Continuing Education committee for organizing the bioenergetics workshop. *There’s still time to register.* Students – there’s even a workshop designed to get you started on your professional path. Check it out!

On Sunday afternoon, I’ll be making the rounds to the **Technical Committee meetings** before leading the NCD Executive Committee meeting. If you haven’t been to a tech committee meeting before or it’s been a while since you’ve attended, I highly recommend going to at least one. These are some of our most active groups within the NCD, and these meetings are a great way to share information between states and provinces in the NCD.

All of the meetings will wrap up before the **Welcome Reception** on Sunday evening. And if you’re still going strong after that, you can stick around for the after party until 11:00!

Monday kicks into full swing with remarks from Michigan’s Lieutenant Governor Brian Calley and the first plenary speaker and author, **Randy Olson**. The NCD will present our awards at the end of the plenary, including the Outstanding Chapters (Large and Small), Outstanding Student Subunit, Best Communications, and Meritorious Service. We’ll also recognize our Joan Duffy Award winners. Stick around for the Fenske Award announcement, too. These winners are top notch!

I’m looking forward to having lunch with the NCD past presidents and attending the various concurrent sessions on Monday. One of the things I’ve always enjoyed about the Midwest meeting is the variety of subjects during the sessions. I’ll even catch a couple of mammalian, avian, or herp talks to learn something new from time to time.

Make sure to schedule in the **NCD Business Meeting from 3:00 – 4:30 pm** on that day. AFS President Ron Essig and Executive Director Doug Austen will be our guests to give us updates on Society business. Division President-Elect Sandy Clark-Kolacks and I will update you on the direction of the NCD for the next year and recognize the service of our Past President Vince Travnicek and outgoing Secretary-Treasurer Andy Jansen. We'll be sure to wrap up our business in time for the **Student-Mentor Social at 4:30 pm**. After that social comes the **reception at the Grand Rapids Museum**, which will include distinguished guests, unique musical entertainment, games and prizes, and, of course, food and beverage.

Unfortunately, my time at the Midwest will be short this year, and I'll be flying out on Tuesday (teaching duty calls!). But don't miss the **plenary sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday** plus many more concurrent sessions. If you work in reservoir systems, check out Tuesday's session on this topic lead by our newest NCD Technical Committee – the *Reservoir Technical Committee* – chaired by Joe Conroy and Rebecca Krogman. That group will hold their first business meeting following the conclusion of the session. Tuesday's trade show and poster social and Wednesday's session of "Ignite" talks look like fun, too!

Hope to see you all in Grand Rapids for a great Midwest conference experience! Special recognition goes out to the conference co-chairs Gary Whelan and Doug Reeves and their team of volunteers and committee chairs for their many, many hours of planning and organizing this event. Travel safe and see you all soon!

Cheers,

*Melissa*

