

PRESIDENT'S BLOG, APRIL 2023

AFS CHAPTER MEETINGS

One of the duties/honors of being the North Central Division (NCD) President is attending numerous chapter meetings. We strive at the NCD Executive Committee to attend as many of these as possible to bring updates from the Division and Parent Society and to engage with Chapters' members. We were able to have some sort of representation at all but Ontario and Missouri's Chapter meetings this year and will strive to attend those two chapters next year if possible.



Chapter meetings are likely the place that most AFS members interact with the society the most, as it is difficult to get approval to travel to meetings out of state for many agency staff. The State Chapter meeting provides a venue for networking, reconnecting with old friends, and staying current on the science that is often the most relevant to their work because presentations are mainly on local resources and issues. I was impressed at the quality of the talks I saw at all of the chapter meetings I attended, and it speaks to the great science that is happening throughout the NCD.

One important thing that also happens at Chapter meetings is recognizing the achievements of members. I was able to witness this at several meetings, where important projects and career contributions were recognized and appreciated. It was obvious for many of the winners how meaningful it was to be recognized by their peers for their work. The Iowa Chapter also made a point to recognize the contributions of an early career professional as part of their awards, rather than just awarding people at the end of their careers.

The second thing that impressed me is how Chapters continue to work to engage with students. I saw great student/mentor events at multiple meetings, poster sessions to encourage conversation between professionals and the poster authors who were often attending an AFS meeting for the first time, and active student subunits running raffles and t-shirt sales to raise funds for student attendance at meetings. I am looking forward to receiving my Iowa Darter t-shirt in the mail soon!

Kudos to all of you Chapter members who work behind the scenes to make these meetings happen, whether that is front and center organizing the program to behind the scenes working with caterers or handling online registrations. You probably are not able to fully appreciate just how important your work is to keeping AFS a vibrant organization!



Kevin Irons (center of left photo) and Bob Summerfelt (center of right photo) were recognized for their outstanding career contributions at their respective chapter meetings of Illinois and Iowa.



Respectfully submitted,

Brian Nerbonne