

# THE ANGLER

NEWSLETTER OF THE COLORADO/WYOMING  
CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY

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SUMMER 2024 | VOLUME 47 | NUMBER 2  
EDITED BY BEN FELT & KENDALL BAKICH

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## 2024 Annual Meeting Recap

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# THE VENT

## Steve Gale

We are excited to welcome Tawni Riepe to our Chapter's Executive Committee as our new Secretary/Treasurer for the upcoming year. In addition, a heartfelt thank you goes to Ashley Ficke for her valuable service on the Excom Board!

Do you still feel connected to your fellow CO/WY Chapter members after our annual meeting in Laramie? I hope your answer is "Yes," but if you're like me and finding it challenging to maintain that connection, you are not alone. After the meeting, I was riding the connection wave, but now find myself stuck in stagnant waters. As summer heats up, we're all swamped with work, we are outside hiking to headwater streams, pulling gill nets on mountain lakes, surveying rivers for the next great restoration project, keeping AIS out, or raising fish for the next generation of anglers. With so much going on, it is easy to lose touch with our CO/WY AFS Chapter peers. This is not surprising, as it is difficult enough to stay connected to your family and good friends! During my term as Past-President, I aim to improve how we stay connected throughout the year. I intend to explore options like creating an online community platform, such as Slack, or organizing regular meet-ups, similar to the one we had at New Belgium Brewery a few years ago. Let's work together to stay engaged and supportive of one another even when we're not face-to-face! If you have ideas on how our Chapter can enhance our sense of connectedness, please reach out to me at [cowy.afs.pastpres@gmail.com](mailto:cowy.afs.pastpres@gmail.com).

One great way to stay connected is by getting involved with the Chapter. Our Chapter President, Stev, is currently planning the next Western Division AFS meeting, which our Chapter will host in Denver in May 2025. We need your help to make this event a success! Although we have fantastic committees and dedicated members, we're looking for more volunteers to ensure everything goes smoothly. For more information on how you can get involved, please refer to the CALL FOR HELP section on page 3.



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# SAVE THE DATE!

## 2025 WESTERN DIVISION MEETING HOSTED BY CO/WY CHAPTER



MAY 11 - MAY 15, 2025  
WESTMINSTER, CO

HELP NEEDED FOR PLANNING MEETING: CONTACT ESTEVAN VIGIL AT  
[COWY.AFS.PRES.@GMAIL.COM](mailto:COWY.AFS.PRES.@GMAIL.COM) IF INTERESTED!



# 2024 BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

Official Business of the  
Colorado/Wyoming Chapter of AFS

**February 29, 2024**

- The Business Meeting was called to order at 12:00pm by Chapter President, Steve Gale. Over 37 members were present and a quorum (1/5 of 185 total members) was determined to be present. Beth Bear, Chapter Secretary/Treasurer, was appointed as the meeting Parliamentarian.
- No changes or additions were suggested to the agenda. Motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Ashley Ficke, second by Stephen Siddons. Motion passed by majority vote of members.
- Western Division AFS members, Laura Burckhardt and Meredith Journey gave a presentation on general information and on the benefits of WDAFS. There are 6 elected officers and every Chapter president serves on WDAFS Excom. Many CO-WY Chapter members are active in WDAFS. They are currently planning the Student Colloquium for end May/early June and are looking for ideas on a location.
- Steve gave a State of the Chapter address and indicated that the state of the Chapter is strong. 219 people registered for the meeting with over 80 students and 27 young professionals. 43 talks and 13 posters were given at the meeting. The meeting was one of the largest hosted in Wyoming.
- Beth gave the Secretary/Treasurer Report on the state of the Chapter finances.
  - WDAFS Investment Fund Balance = \$88,104
  - Current Checking Balance = \$23,242
  - 2024 Meeting Projected Income: \$36,568 (Includes donations of \$9,800 and ~ \$5,000 from raffle)
  - 2024 Meeting Remaining Expenses: \$30,944
  - Chapter Expenses (travel, mentoring, Excom): \$15,000
  - Total Expenses = \$45,944
  - Total Income = \$59,810 (meeting income plus current checking balance)
  - Total Expenses = \$45,944 (meeting expenses plus remaining Chapter expenses)
  - Checking Account Balance = \$13,868
  - Balance including WD: \$101,971
- The 2026 Chapter meeting is planned for the week of February 16, 2026 in Laramie, WY.

- The 2025 Chapter Meeting will be a joint meeting with WDAFS May 11-15, 2025 in Westminster, CO. The meeting will be planned and operated in a manner consistent with CO-WY Annual Meetings. The primary role of the WDAFS is to assist CO-WY AFS by providing financial backing, raising funds, encouraging WDAFS members to attend the meeting, offering travel scholarships, as well as personnel to assist with the planning process. The WDAFS will assist the CO-WY Chapter with preparing a meeting budget by August 2024. CO-WY will receive all income and pay all expenses related to the meeting. Fundraising for the meeting shall be the responsibility of both WDAFS and CO-WY AFS. Net Revenue shall be apportioned between the WDAFS and CO-WY AFS as follows: Split 50:50 for the first \$10,000; split 40:60 in excess of \$10,000.
- A draft FY25 was presented which included estimated 2025 meeting income of \$202,000; expenses about \$148,000- profit of \$54,000 between WDAFS and CO-WY AFS. \$31,400 could be estimated profit for the Chapter.
- Student Sub-Unit Reports
  - Colorado State University: Attendance at meetings is up with increased engagement from undergrads. Derby planned for the spring and tiger musky stocking project on College Lake. Getting tax situation sorted out and will be under Chapter tax exemption moving forward.
  - Colorado Mesa: Currently 34 members in subunit. They have been focused on career development for members including two job fairs and workshops on writing resumes, cover letters, and navigating USAjobs for applying to positions.
  - University of Wyoming: Attendance numbers have increased. The subunit is focused on connecting with people through engagement with Wyoming Game and Fish and creating more volunteer opportunities for undergrads. They did have ice derby planned but ice conditions did not allow so planning some sort of event in May.
  - Western Colorado University: The subunit currently has 12 members. They have 11 members at the meeting with 2 of them presenting. Their subunit has had viewings of documentaries as activities. They are looking into some fundraising ideas and potentially getting a scholarship started through the university.
- Committee Reports
  - Chapter Archives: The Chapter's Archive Committee files and organizes the records of the Chapter as outlined in the Chapter's Procedural Manual. The Committee provided digital files and hard copies of the Chapter's Proceedings from the virtual 2021 and 2022 Annual Meetings, as well as the hybrid virtual-in person 2023 Annual Meeting, to the libraries at the University of Wyoming, Colorado State University, Colorado Mesa University, and Western Colorado University. Library contacts at each university were also updated in the process. The Committee opted to include the next "Chapter History" lesson in the summer 2024 edition of The Angler rather than the January 2024 edition, as was originally planned. The January newsletter typically includes information and details regarding the Chapter's 2024 Annual Meeting, and was already slated to contain all of this material in addition to other articles. Delaying the history brief for future editions is a better game plan.

- Committee Reports (Chapter Archives, cont.)
  - The Committee worked with Chapter President Steve Gale and Dirk Miller of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to create a poster celebrating former WGFD employee and long-time AFS and Chapter member, Bob Wiley, who passed away in 2020. His AFS accomplishments were highlighted in the poster which will accompany a cookie break honoring Bob during the Chapter's 2024 Annual Meeting. The Committee would like to work with the ExCom to further investigate how to maintain the Chapter's records in the future. This conversation will likely take some time, and likely would be best handled during the next ExCom meeting following the 2024 Annual Business Meeting of the Chapter. Additionally, the Committee would like to visit with Chapter members regarding a virtual location (Chapter website?) to post appropriate Chapter records, and what information Chapter members would like to have access to beyond materials documenting Chapter business, (ExCom meeting agendas, minutes, and budgets), award recipients, committee participants, Annual Meeting Proceedings, and editions of The Angler. The Committee can survey members at a later date to seek their input. The Committee appreciates the 2023-2024 ExCom's continued efforts to provide the Committee with relevant materials throughout the year that should be maintained within the Chapter's archives.
- Continuing Education: The Continuing Education committee would like to report that we had a successful C.E. class to kick off the 2024 meeting. Despite harsh travel conditions that made it difficult for some to attend the class, we had 63 participants. The class was entitled "Applications of eDNA in Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences" and was put on by four excellent instructors: Dr. Melanie Murphy and Dr. Lusha Tronstad from University of Wyoming and Boyd Wright and Ryan Fitzpatrick from Colorado Parks and Wildlife. The C.E. Committee would like to thank the instructors, all the attendees, and recognize all the support we got from chapter leadership and other members of the ExComm in putting on the class.
- Membership: Chapter Membership remains relatively steady. Starting back in October 2015, the Membership Committee began a more deliberate effort to track trends in membership for the Chapter by annually requesting a member list from the parent society and summarizing trends in membership data. We now have eight data sets to assess and track trends in membership: October 2015, January 2016, December 2016, January 2020, February 2021, February 2022, February 2023, and February 2024. Like evaluating fish populations, this dataset has become more enlightening as we continue to compile membership trend data and increase our data set/sample size. Total membership increased from 197 members in October 2015 to 225 in January 2016, then down to 200 members in December of 2016, then up to 222 members in January 2020, and then down to 205 members in February 2021, and then dropped to 191 in February 2022 and then up to 226 in February 2023, and currently at 185 dues paying members as of February 10, 2024. Membership is averaging 206 members since 2015. Numbers of individuals affiliating with the CO/WY Chapter is somewhat variable (342 based on 2023 data) and the 107 non dues paying members are excluded from total membership counts. Any National AFS member can sign up as a CO/WY Chapter member free of charge by simply checking a box on their national AFS membership registration (Unlike some Chapters, ours has no additional dues/fees). Colorado has consistently accounted for roughly 70% of total chapter membership, while the majority of the remaining percentage are WY members. The Chapter does routinely have affiliated members from several other states and, on occasion, from other countries.

- **Awards:** During the banquet we will be presenting the Outstanding Mentor Award and the Award of Excellence. There were no nominations this year for the Max Award of Merit or the Leaky Boot Award. Travis would like to thank the members of this committee, Dan Brauch, Chance Kirkeeng, Diana Miller, and Stev Vigil for their continued dedication to this committee, and thank all those who submitted award nominations. We will be rolling out an online award submission form soon that will streamline the process and allow members to nominate throughout the year, not just two months before the meeting. We are hoping this will solicit more nominations.
- **Aquaculture:** the Committee has been working on understanding how to increase attendance by those in the culture division at AFS meeting. They are currently working to survey CPW culture section to gain more information.
- **DEI:** The DEI Committee would like to thank everyone who participated in the 1st CO/WY Women in Fisheries social and attended the showing and discussion for Picture a Scientist. We welcome any feedback about these events and how the DEI Committee can continue to best support our membership. We have created a couple of surveys that will be shared with all members which will anonymously collect feedback. We would also like to thank the ExComm for their work on our proposed committee status change from a Special to a Standing Committee. Our committee would like to continue building on our accomplishments from the last year and welcome any who would like to join us. Please reach out if interested in joining our committee.
- **Fundraising:** A total of \$9,800 was raised for the 2024 Colorado/Wyoming AFS meeting. Colorado Parks and Wildlife and GEI Consultants donated at the Cutthroat Trout level (> \$2,000), The Association for Fish and Wildlife Agencies and Wildland Hydrology donated at the Sauger level (> \$1,000), and Oregon RFID donated at the Orangethroat Darter level (up to \$999). We greatly appreciate all of our donors to this year's meeting.
- **Mentoring:** The mentoring committee paired up five mentees with mentors for the 2023 mentoring program, bringing the total to 38 successful pairings since the program started in 2014. Three mentees were from Colorado and two mentees were from Wyoming. They were paired with an Aquatic Animal Health Manager, Aquatic Habitat Biologist, Statewide Fisheries Biologist, and pair of Graduate Students. Mentors offered diverse opportunities this year and mentees traveled to assist with field work, which included activities such as tagging fish, building an exclosure fence for a BDA project, assisting with inspections at hatcheries, and assisting with research on a beetle project. Additionally, mentors were able to help with career guidance such as job application preparation and review. Applications for mentors and mentees for the 2024 mentoring program are open until March 31st! Applications can be found on the CO/WY AFS webpage under the mentoring program tab under resources tab. Thanks to everyone who continues to help and volunteer as mentors.
- **Paper/Poster Judging:** Had a good response from judges this year and were able to make sure every paper and poster that wanted to was judged. The Committee conducted a survey to look at any obstacles for members to judging and the primary reason was that people attending the meeting did not want to miss seeing other talks while judging.
- **Student Liaison:** Thank you to Tawni for all of her work with the student subunits

# Congratulations!

## 2024 Award Winners

Award of Excellence:  
Harry Crockett



Outstanding Mentor Award  
Tawni Riepe



Past President:  
Ashley Ficke



# Congratulations!

## 2024 Award Winners

Best Professional Paper: Kevin Rogers      Best Student Paper: Niall Clancy      Best Informational Paper: Paul Gerrity



Best Professional Poster: Andrew Daley

Best Student Poster: Noel Clark



## Looking for Winners!



*As many of you are currently waist-deep in the waters of Colorado and Wyoming, you probably aren't thinking about the upcoming 2025 CO-WY AFS meeting. But please take a moment, between the fish and the bugs and the sunscreen, to look around and acknowledge your hard-working colleagues. Then make a mental note of those who are deserving of recognition with one of the Chapter awards and remember to contact Travis Neebling, Awards Committee Chair, this fall to submit a nomination.*



## CO/WY AFS 2024 Executive Committee



|                              |               |                            |
|------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| <b>President</b>             | Estevan Vigil | estevan.vigilafs@gmail.com |
| <b>Vice President</b>        | Beth Bear     | beth.bear@wyo.gov          |
| <b>Secretary - Treasurer</b> | Tawni Riepe   | tawni.riepe@state.co.us    |
| <b>Past President</b>        | Steve Gale    | steve.gale@wyo.gov         |