

The News Reel

The Education Section of the American Fisheries Society Newsletter



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Meet the President Elect



Hi everyone, I'm Rebecca Krogman, a research biologist with Iowa Department of Natural Resources, recent Adjunct Professor at University of Florida, and now agency co-chair on a graduate committee at University of Nebraska - Kearney. My team focuses on large reservoirs and all the fun challenges they pose, conducting special research projects for the fisheries managers that manage our state's aquatic resources. I earned my B. S. from Iowa State University and M.S. from Missis-

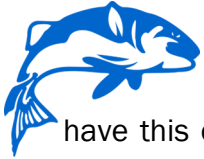
issippi State University.

I am so excited to join the Education Section's Executive Committee, as my position involves a unique connection between academia and agency resource management. I oversee a graduate internship program, in which we employ a student for the duration of their Master's degree, engaging them in an applied research project needed by DNR, and make them a regular member of our team. This program has yielded wonderful employees, but also highlighted the lack of support for students and early career professionals who don't have a large/local university with a Student Subunit.

We are now working to establish a cross-campus Subunit as part of the Iowa Chapter of AFS—a setup that is logistically more complex than a single university-affiliated subunit—in hopes of estab-

lishing a structure that works well in other Chapters. My priority is providing quality research and field experience for students, ensuring they have access to professional development opportunities, while developing skills that are valuable to fisheries management agencies.

I have served AFS as Iowa Chapter President (2022-2023), Fisheries Information and Technology President (2017-2019), NCD Reservoir Technical Committee co-chair and chapter representative (2014-2023), Mississippi State Subunit President (2011-2012), Iowa State Subunit President (2009-2010), and various committee and working groups. I've organized symposia and workshops, and more recently have focused on writing book chapters that will hopefully be used in your classroom. I am thrilled to



President's Note Cont'd



have this opportunity to build on Melissa and Marty's work, developing better educational resources from AFS and supporting students and early career professionals.

-Rebecca

Meet the Ex Comm



Marty Hamel
President
Associate Professor
University of Georgia
hamel@uga.edu



Macey Rowan
Secretary-Treasurer
rowan.maceyj@gmail.com



Melissa Wuellner
Past President
Associate Professor
University of Nebraska
Kearney
wuellnermr@unk.edu



Rebecca Krogman
President-Elect
Research Biologist
Iowa Department of Natural
Resources
rebecca.krogman@gmail.com

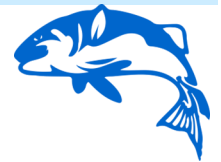
Are you an undergrad planning to attend the annual AFS meeting this year?

[Apply](#) for the SECP Undergraduate Travel Assistance Award—2 undergrads will be selected to receive **\$1000 USD**.

Deadline extended to May 18th!!



Get to Know the 2023 Skinner Award Winners –Then and Now!



The John E. Skinner Memorial Fund was established in memory of former California-Nevada Chapter and AFS Western Division President, John Skinner. The Skinner fund provides travel awards to assist exceptional graduate and undergraduate students to attend the AFS annual meeting. Each year, 10 awardees are chosen based on academic accomplishments, service, and reasons for attending the meeting. In 2023, there were 32 candidates for the Skinner award from 21 universities and 5 different countries, which was the highest number of applications since 2020. However, outside of the recognition and photo op at the section business meeting, most of us do not get to meet (or know we are meeting!) these amazing students and learn about their impressive accomplishments. So, we met up with the 2023 Skinner award winners for an interview in Grand Rapids, and then we checked back in with them in this spring of 2024. Here we provide a summary of each winner's background, research and accomplishments, AFS involvement, and a current update of new jobs, PhD candidacy and moves from some of them!

Lauren Alex

Lauren was an undergraduate at South Dakota State University

when she received her travel award! She studied sport-fish competition in South Dakota glacial lakes. Grand Rapids was her first parent AFS meeting though she was able to attend the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference before. A fellow student at SDSU encouraged Lauren to get involved in the subunit when she was a freshman, and as a sophomore she became the subunit treasurer and is now the VP. Lauren is new to the parent society though. She has enjoyed seeing all the different research, meeting new people, and attending the parent



society meeting has been particularly important to help explore graduate school options. Lauren said being an undergraduate at a parent society meeting was intimidating at first, but she traveled with a group of graduate students who have helped walk her through the meeting and make sure she sees friendly faces. She really enjoyed the mentor-mentee program and got to meet not only her own mentor but those of the graduate students from SDSU who traveled with her. Lauren graduated in December 2023 and is hoping to do a M.S. degree next. Recently she has become very interested in Orange Spotted Sunfish but has also enjoyed the research she has done as an undergraduate learning about interspecies competition, so she is undecided about where she would like to go for her M.S. In the meantime, Lauren just started a summer job working at the USGS Cooperative Fishery Research Unit in Wisconsin as a technician helping out on a variety of research projects in Wisconsin.

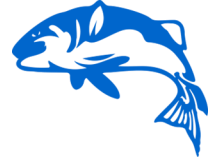
Aaron Bunch Working in the fisheries profession 12 years prior, Aaron recently finished his doctorate at Clemson University (May 2024). His dissertation focused on evaluating novel approaches for improving anadromous fish passage in coastal rivers. Aaron completed his undergraduate degree at North Carolina State University and his masters degree at the University of Florida. The focus of Aaron's masters was on fish community composition, habitat, and water quality on two large south Florida lakes. After completing his masters, Aaron worked on the trophic dynamics of large lakes in North Carolina, and then took a position in Arizona to study native and nonnative fishes of the Grand Canyon. Later, he became the tidal rivers project leader for Virginia working on various coastal fisheries including native diadromous species and non-native species within the Chesapeake Bay. Aaron has been heavily involved with AFS at various levels since first attending NC State in 2001. AFS has led him to many job opportunities, leadership positions, and a large, connected network. When the pandemic hit in spring 2020, he coordinated the first AFS virtual meeting in which earned him the AFS Distinguished Service Award and helped plan the AFS Virtual Annual Meeting that fall. Currently, Aaron is searching for a tenure-track faculty opportunity to embark on an academic career, leveraging his broad experience to teach students from diverse backgrounds.



Asha Ajmani Asha is a PhD candidate at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst where she is working with Indigenous communities on subsistence and cultural fish resources. Asha is doing research in the Gwich'in Settlement Area in the NWT on broad whitefish where she is examining migration and life history patterns, heavy metals in fish tissue and water, and impacts of climate change may have on the fishery. She also works with the Wampanoag Tribe on Martha's Vineyard studying river herring movement and migration. Asha did her M.S. research in British Columbia where she contracted a boat from local First Nations fishers. After her degree Asha worked with the Passamaquoddy Tribe in Maine, before returning to school for her Ph.D. Asha's experience working with indigenous communities made her want to pursue work that included their traditional knowledge alongside western science. When she worked for the Passamaquoddy Tribe Asha first joined the Atlantic international chapter of AFS and attended a conference in New Brunswick. Asha became more involved as a student and is now very active in the Equal Opportunities Section. Asha is passionate about elevating voices of underrepresented membership, noting how important doing so is for recruiting more diverse membership and encouraging this to be prioritized within AFS. While she is still finishing up her PhD, Asha is also now the Tribal Engagement Coordinator for the Northeast Regional Ocean Council, where she works to elevate Tribal voices within the coastal and ocean community.



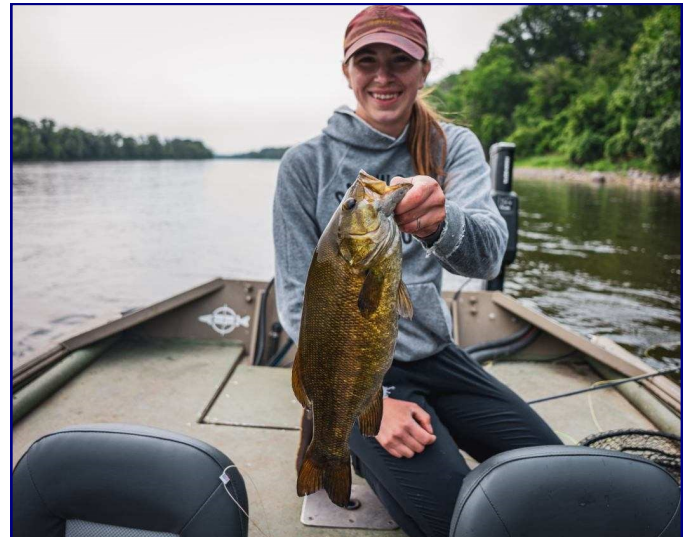
Tanya Fendler



Tanya is currently a Ph.D. student at Southern Illinois University where she is studying movement and resource use of invasive Bighead Carp in Illinois and Wabash river systems. Tanya knew she wanted to do aquatic research early on and earned her B.S. at M.S. from the University of Windsor. After that she worked as a research technician studying Lake Sturgeon and invasive species ecology and enjoyed it so much that she decided to do a PhD so she could pursue a research career. Tanya knew about AFS for a while but did not become a member of the parent society until 2021 when her advisor sent her to Baltimore. She appreciated the networking opportunities at the meeting. On her advisor's recommendation Tanya also became involved in the SIU student subunit for which she is now the 2022-23 VP. Currently Tanya is the president of the AFS SIU Student Subunit (Fall 2023 - Spring 2024). She is also an editor of the Education Section newsletter! She passed her comprehensive exam in December 2023 and is hoping to graduate by summer 2025. She is looking forward to the hunt for a post-doc position in invasion ecology, spatial ecology, or fisheries biology.

Maddie Lewis

Maddie is a PhD student at Iowa State University where she is working on a project on walleye and musky population dynamics and responses to barriers to minimize reservoir escapement. She did her B.S. at the University of Montana and M.S. at Montana State University where she conducted research on juvenile bull trout outmigration dynamics. Maddie first got exposure to AFS through the Montana chapter when her advisor encouraged her to attend a chapter annual meeting to present a poster on her undergraduate brook trout research. Maddie became involved with the Montana State student subunit and served as the VP during her M.S., and she has been continuing to attend chapter and regional AFS meetings for the last 5-6 years. Maddie's favorite part of AFS meetings, especially when first starting out, is to see all the different research projects being undertaken and to get a better feel for what's involved in project development. She also enjoys networking and being inspired by fellow fish scientists. Maddie is hoping to finish her degree in summer 2025. As of Grand Rapids, her goal was to work at a state or federal agency research biology studying sportfish in the upper Midwest. While Maddie is still working on her PhD, but she is now the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Large Reservoir Fisheries Research Biologist. She is looking forward to continuing to work with managers to conduct applied research and plans to stay involved with AFS throughout her career.



Maddy Siller

Maddy is currently a M.S. student at SDSU where she is looking at long term agency data on lake characteristics and their effect on stocking success. She completed her undergraduate degree at Kansas State University followed by a summer internship at the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks doing mussel surveys then went right into her M.S. Maddy gained experience as a research lab technician at K-state and attended subunit meetings, eventually becoming the subunit president and joining the KS state chapter. She currently serves as a grad student mentor for the SDSU subunit. Maddy would like to see a first timer friendly symposium at the parent society meeting to help take some of the pressure off from new presenters. At Grand Rapids, she really liked the student activities, especially the coffee hour, and has enjoyed meeting other students and early career professionals and seeing the variety of interests and job fields. Maddy hopes to finish her master's next May and is considering getting my PhD. She got involved with the NCD SECPAC shortly after the AFS meeting last year and recently became the co-chair of the Continuing Education Sub-Committee for that group. After grad school Maddy would like to do something in conservation biology, maybe related to climate change and/or T&E species. She's not sure whether this might be at an agency, NGO, or something else. She realizes lots depends on what positions are available when she graduates!



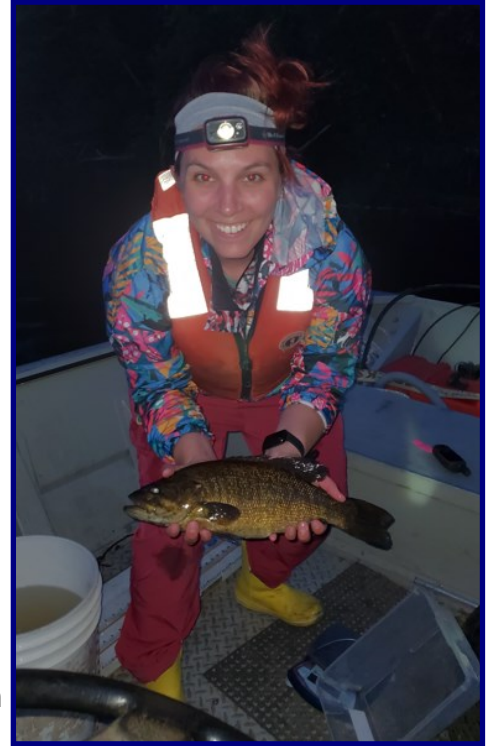
David Smith

David has belonged to AFS since 2011 when he was an undergraduate in the subunit at Auburn. After completing his undergraduate degree, David explored his interests through a variety of jobs. He stayed an AFS member during this time and that connection was usually how he found these jobs. David went to Louisiana State University for his M.S. degree and then became a biologist at Texas Parks and Wildlife in Tyler, TX. During his time as a biologist David became active with the TX state chapter. He moved back to LSU in fall 2023 to begin a Ph.D. working on angler survey techniques. David belongs to AFS because he feels it is the best way to stay connected in the fisheries world and it helps him find people with similar research interests. David chairs the Angler Survey Committee for AFS and has leveraged society connections to get partners from state management agencies who work with creel and angler surveys to build a community of practice for angler surveys. David is not sure about his final career goal but is thinking maybe a federal agency. However, he is also considering getting some teaching experience during Ph.D. to see if that is an appealing path. After completing his PhD, David hopes to continue conducting fisheries research that feeds into management and policy. Since the Annual Meeting, David has remained active leading the Angler Survey Committee while working on his PhD research focusing on optimizing creel estimations and developing best practices for creel and angler surveys.



Rylee Smith

Rylee has been a member of AFS since 2021, coinciding with the beginning of her Ph.D. studies. Her involvement with AFS started through participation in the University of Maine student subunit, where she quickly became engaged, initially serving as Secretary for two years before assuming the role of President. She says that experience has been immensely rewarding, providing opportunities to connect with fellow fisheries enthusiasts, share knowledge, and contribute to the vibrant fisheries community at the university. Attending parent AFS meetings has been particularly enriching, offering valuable networking opportunities and insights into cutting-edge research in the field. Rylee holds a Master's degree in Natural Resources and completed dual Bachelor's degrees in Microbiology and Zoology. Her current research at the Ph.D. level focuses on wildlife ecology, specifically investigating predation and competition dynamics between nonnative and native species. With aspirations to pursue a career in academia, she is actively working towards becoming a professor upon the completion of her studies. Since last fall, she has been preparing for her comprehensive exams and working through her analysis and writing phases of her research projects.



Josh Stafford

Josh is a M.S. student at Mississippi State University where he used telemetry to study Silver Carp use of a water control structure in the Mississippi Delta using telemetry. He defended his thesis in February 2024 and will officially graduate this semester. Josh completed his undergraduate degree in 2015 then held a variety of seasonal jobs ranging from Idaho and California where he worked with salmon to Tennessee where he did some reservoir work. Josh's career aspiration at the time of the Grand Rapids meeting was a federal job in the southeastern US, but acknowledged he still liked working with salmonids so was keeping his options open.



Josh knew about AFS as undergrad but there was not a subunit at his college, so he did not become involved with the society until during his M.S. Thereafter he decided to take on leadership role and became the Mississippi State University subunit president. Through this experience Josh has enjoyed reaching out to undergraduates who are not sure how to get into the fisheries field or how to get experience. He's coordinated bringing in agency professionals to do workshops (e.g. tagging workshop, electrofishing) for his subunit and helped connect students with biologists to get field experience, and Josh also enjoys organizing community outreach events. Josh would like to continue to stay involved with AFS after he graduates. He values the networking opportunities at meetings and getting to meet people in person who he worked with but had only met virtually before the meeting. Josh is currently working with the USFWS out of Tupelo, MS.

Logan Zebro

Logan did his undergrad at SDSU then worked for a little while for Wisconsin DNR in both the fish management and research sections. Logan recently defended his M.S. thesis at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. His thesis research was on a Nebraska reservoir evaluating the influence of stocking and introduced alewives on Walleye recruitment. Logan did not get involved in AFS until the end of his undergrad, but jumped in during graduate school when several mentors nudged him into AFS involvement. He served as the chair for the NCD Walleye Tech Committee, he is currently the NCD representative to the SECP subsection and involved in the NCD student and early career professional affairs committee. Logan sees one of the biggest benefits of AFS involvement being all the people you get to meet and networking with both professionals and the peers he will be working with for the rest of his career. These connections are great and his favorite part of being involved in AFS. Following his M.S. Logan will be returning to SDSU to pursue his PhD. His PhD work will be focused on fish movement in the Illinois and Missouri river systems. Logan hopes to work as a researcher with a state or federal agency following his PhD and hopes to have an opportunity to mentor undergraduate and graduate students as well.



Best Student Paper & Poster Competition



*Looking to communicate your research to a wide audience?
Looking for important accolades to improve your resume?
Interested in winning money (\$450)?*

We look forward to reviewing your applications. If you have questions, please contact your 2024 BSP co-chairs:

Rebecca Krogman (rebecca.krogman@gmail.com)
Vaskar Nepal (v-nepal@wiu.edu)
Dan Shoup (Daniel.shoup@okstate.edu)
Kyle Hartman (Kyle.Hartman@mail.wvu.edu)

What? The Best Student Paper & Poster (BSP) competition is a Society-level award sponsored by the Education Section of the AFS. A panel of judges evaluates pre-recorded talks **before** the meeting so that winners can be announced at the 154th annual meeting in Honolulu, HI.

Who? Undergraduate and graduate students that would like to present projects at or nearing completion. All students or recent graduates (<1 year post-graduation) presenting at the meeting are eligible.

Where? The BSP award is in conjunction with the AFS annual meeting in Honolulu, HI. Students who submit a regular abstract to participate in **any** meeting symposium can then apply for consideration as Best Student Paper or Poster. The application process is easy!

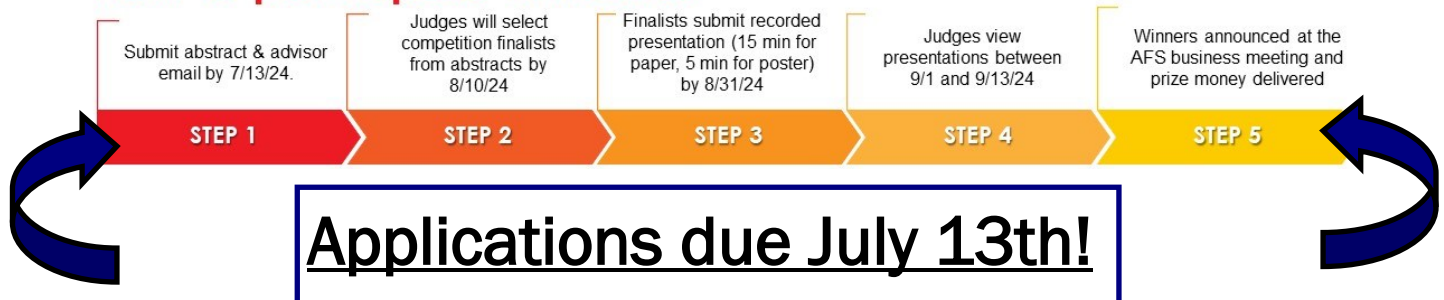
How?

- Submit your paper/poster to the meeting as you normally would.
- Oral presenters must submit an **extended abstract** through the Education Section's online application form. Poster presenters need only submit their regular abstract through the same form.
- Oral and poster presenters must have their major advisor email to indicate the study is at a stage appropriate for this award (at, nearing, or recently [<1 year] completed)
- Finalists will be asked to pre-record presentations for judging; 15 minutes for paper and 5 min for poster

When? Applications must be submitted through the Education Section's online application form by **July 13, 2024**.

For more information, including abstract examples, go to the "Best Student Presentation and Poster Awards" page: <https://education.fisheries.org/awards/best-student-presentation-and-poster/>

How to participate in the BSP





In the Spotlight: South Dakota State University Subunit



Submitted by Sarah Hayden

The South Dakota State University American Fisheries Society Student Subunit had an incredible presence in campus activity over the past year. In January, 4 undergraduate members had the



opportunity to present research at the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference (left). At the conference, the subunit raised over \$4,000 through a raffle and silent auction, and are planning to use this money to fund an educational field activity workshop in Missouri next fall!

The subunit has also organized some other

very fun activities in the past year! Field experience opportunities were always a hit, and club members had the opportunity to get experience working seines, backpack electrofishing, small bodied fish identification, and working fyke nets. The club also has many outdoor recreational activities, including cookouts, fishing days, and field trips! The last field trip of the year was to Gavin's Point Fish Hatchery, where we toured the behind-the-scenes of the hatchery and aquarium. (right)



During the winter months, when it is too cold for a field activity, the club spends time learning from guest speakers about a variety of topics like research to boat repair. We also do indoor-labs, such as fish tagging (left), otolith removal and aging, and invertebrate ID.



Don't miss out in Honolulu...

Views on Undergraduate Curriculum in Fisheries

The Education Section and the National Association of University Fisheries and Wildlife Programs are co-hosting a symposium entitled, "Views on Undergraduate Curriculum in Fisheries". We are looking for a diverse set of speakers from state, federal, provincial, and tribal agencies, NGOs, the private sector, and recent graduates (Early Career Professionals) to contribute to this important symposium. The goal of our session is to determine if undergraduate and graduate fisheries curricula are equipping our students with the needs and desires of various employers. Contributed talks will discuss whether recent graduates possess knowledge, skills, and experience that are deemed necessary for success from respective employers. Discussion on curricula adjustments within the context of AFS certification is welcomed. Information will be shared in a variety of formats, including traditional 20-minute talks, lightning talks, and roundtable or panel discussions. If you would like to contribute to this session (or know of someone who may be a good fit), please contact me at your earliest convenience. Alternatively, you may select our symposium when submitting your abstract at the AFS meeting homepage. Thank you for your consideration.

Abstract: Recent reviews suggest that undergraduate curricula in fisheries programs will need to adapt to produce students with the knowledge, competencies, and skills needed to promote management, conservation, and sustainability of fisheries resources through the work of state, federal, provincial and tribal agencies, NGOs, and the private sector. Undergraduate curricula are constrained by a 120-credit hour limit, requiring careful consideration of curriculum components and their integration with graduate curricula. This symposium will bring together representatives from the public sector, private sector, tribes, NGOs, universities, and AFS to discuss critical knowledge, competencies, and skills that should be addressed in the fisheries undergraduate and graduate curricula and in continuing education for agency employees. We will include graduate students and early career professionals in the discussion.



Organizer: Melissa Wuellner, University of Nebraska at Kearney, wuellnermr@unk.edu

Co-organizers: Marty Hamel, Joel Snodgrass, Selina Heppell, John Carroll

Supported by: AFS Education Section; National Association of University Fish and Wildlife Programs



Don't miss out in Honolulu...

Catch the Wave: Building Foundations for Success in Fisheries Careers



In collaboration with the Student & Early Career Professionals Subsection of The Education Section of The American Fisheries Society, our symposium focuses on empowering early career professionals (ECPs) in fisheries. Seasoned fisheries professionals will present on vital skills like effective communication, adaptability, leadership, and resilience, essential for ECPs to thrive in the dynamic fisheries landscape.

Attendees can anticipate practical insights and strategies for networking, time management, and conflict resolution. The session extends beyond skill development to showcase diverse career paths in academia, industry, consulting, government, and non-governmental organizations. Distinguished ECPs from these sectors will share experiences, advice, and recommendations, fostering a valuable learning experience. The symposium encourages active engagement, offering an open forum for students and ECPs to interact with speakers. Join us for this collaborative effort to navigate early career success in the vibrant field of fisheries. Supported by the Student & Early Career Professionals Subsection of The Education Section of The American Fisheries Society.

Organizer: Carrienne Pershyn, Student and Early Career Professionals Subsection, President-Elect, cpershyn@ausableriver.org

LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS



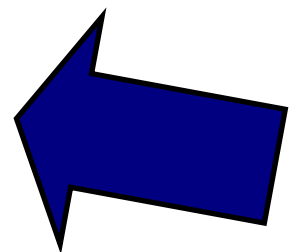
The Education Section is looking for three new leaders in two of our committees:

Best Student Poster/Presentation Award

Excellence in Fisheries Education Award

If you are interested, please email

Melissa Wuellner, wuellnermr@unk.edu.



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education.fisheries.org

Meet the Editors



Hadley Boehm

University of Missouri,
School of Natural Resources
hibhr5@mail.missouri.edu



Matea Djokic

University of California, Irvine,
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
djokicm@uci.edu

Contact us anytime
with suggestions or
submission ideas!



Tanya Fendler

Southern Illinois University—
Carbondale
Center for Fisheries, Aquacul-
ture, and Aquatic Sciences
Tanya.fendler@siu.edu

Attention students and newer AFS members! If you are interested in becoming involved in the ES, but not sure where to start or don't want to over-commit—editing the newsletter is a great way to learn about the section and get to know a little more about the parent society. We (the editors) work as a team and share duties of putting together each issue.

We welcome any level of interest and involvement/commitment!