

Ohio Chapter of the American Fisheries Society Strategic Plan 2015–2019

The American Fisheries Society (Society), established in 1870, is the world’s oldest and largest professional fisheries organization representing 9,000 members worldwide.

The mission of the American Fisheries Society is 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.

The Ohio Chapter of the American Fisheries Society was organized in 1974 and includes about 51 Active Members (members of both the national society and Chapter) and 35 Affiliate Members (Ohio Chapter only).

The mission of the Ohio Chapter of the American Fisheries Society is to promote conservation of fisheries and aquatic resources by providing information, professional services, and opportunities for aquatic stewardship to Ohio’s fisheries professionals, educators, students, and conservationists.

The Strategic Plan for 2015–2019 of the Ohio Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (Chapter or OCAFS) departs from previous plans. First, it aligns directly with the Society plan, building directly among six broad Society goals (see below). Next, the 2015–2019 Chapter Strategic Plan does not specify operational actions but rather specifies strategies that include suggested actions. Each strategy includes linkages to one (or more) of the six goals. Finally, the current strategic plan requires development and implementation of an annual operational plan, proposed by the Chapter President, to accomplish the goals specified herein. However, ultimate responsibility for goal attainment rests with the Chapter standing committees including Fisheries Leadership, Education/Continuing Education, and Value of Membership. The arrangement of the Chapter 2015–2019 Strategic Plan will better identify what the Chapter does best; directly connect to the Society and North Central Division strategic plans; and, facilitate reporting to the Division and the Society.

Conservation and management of fisheries and aquatic resources in Ohio face a number of continuing and new challenges:

- Invasive species, old (Sea Lamprey, dreissenid mussels) and new (Asian carps) threaten sustained production of native and stocked fish.
- Changing environmental drivers, such as climate change and evolving land use practices, affect aquatic resource management by influencing thermal regimes, precipitation patterns, watershed inputs, and harmful algal blooms.
- Declining public participation in outdoor activities present challenges in managing human effects on aquatic ecosystems, generating funding, and advocating management policies.
- As a result of decreased funding, personnel turnover, and a workforce trained in a manner different than that of the past, state resource management agencies will likely face restructuring, a need to continually “do more with less”, and a loss of institutional wisdom.

As a unit of the American Fisheries Society, the Chapter recognizes that it needs to connect local interests and expertise with regional (through the North Central Division), national, and international (through the Society) operations, programs, and opportunities. As such, the Chapter recognizes the need to “do what it does best” to meet Active and Affiliate member needs. In particular, the Chapter will work to continue its efforts towards *Networking*, *Information Dissemination*, and *Supporting Students*.

The Ohio Chapter will help support the mission of the American Fisheries Society and will accomplish its own mission most effectively if each of the Goals described below is met.

Goals

The following goals come directly from the Society Strategic Plan.

Science Goal: Advance and promote fisheries, aquaculture, and aquatic sciences.

Education Goal: Support education and professional development in fisheries, aquaculture, and aquatic sciences.

Communication Goal: Disseminate fisheries science information.

Networking Goal: Provide fora and networks to promote interaction among fisheries professionals and students.

Advocacy Goal: Promote the fisheries profession and support evidence-based decision making for the conservation, development, and wise use of fisheries resources and aquatic ecosystems.

Governance Goal: Practice good governance of the Society and its member units.

Strategies

The Chapter uses a number of strategies, based directly on the Society strategies, to accomplish these goals. Each strategy links explicitly with one (or more) goals (see *Goal linkage*) and identifies which Chapter standing committee bears explicit responsibility for strategy attainment (see *Committees responsible*). The Chapter president’s annual work plan should identify one (or more) strategies on which to focus. *Note:* For each following strategy, the number matches the Society plan. Society strategies 6, 8, and 10 are omitted from the Chapter Strategic Plan due to the current priorities of the Chapter.

1. Organize and sponsor fora to present new findings and exchange ideas.

Goal linkage: Science, Education, Communication, Networking

Committees responsible: Fisheries Leadership, Education/Continuing Education, Value of Membership

Suggested actions:

- (1) Co-sponsor joint meetings with Society Chapters in adjacent states on an every other year basis.
- (2) On alternate years, organize an annual meeting within the state of Ohio to include student and professional presentations and workshops.
- (3) Organize an annual summer meeting to be held at various locations throughout Ohio, regularly accompanied by a fisheries related activity/workshop.

Possible metrics:

- (1) Number of meetings, workshops, conferences, and symposia organized, with attendee count.
- (2) Number of informal gatherings or other networking opportunities organized, with attendee count.
- (3) Results of member satisfaction surveys with Chapter-organized events.

2. Provide continuing education opportunities with an emphasis on training and courses that are not commonly offered by academic institutions and/or that will be essential tools in the future.

Goal Linkage: Education

Committees responsible: Education/Continuing Education

Suggested Actions:

- (1) Sponsor workshops that cover a diverse array of topics aimed at improving the skills used by fisheries professionals.

Possible metrics:

- (1) Sponsor one continuing education workshop at least every other year. Co-sponsored joint meetings with adjacent state Society chapters provide an ideal venue.

3. Develop communication products and publicly accessible information to promote the value of fisheries, aquatic habitat, and fisheries sciences.

Goal Linkage: Education, Advocacy

Committees responsible: Education/Continuing Education

Suggested Actions:

- (1) Partner to provide presentations of information affecting aquatic stewardship as requested at meetings and environmental awareness events.
- (2) Provide outreach in the form of table-top poster displays at environmental awareness events.
- (3) Provide technical demonstrations or workshops at public events as requested by watershed, educational, conservation, or sport groups.
- (4) Participate in “hands on” community service programs with the public that encourage aquatic stewardship and conservation.

Possible metrics:

- (1) Number of presentations given by Chapter members to aquatic stewardship, environmental awareness, citizen sport, or conservation groups.
- (2) Number of fact sheets and other publications distributed to stakeholders.

- (3) Number of educational outreach events in which Chapter members participated by providing electrofishing demonstrations, macroinvertebrate collection methodology, or related activities.
- (4) Number of watershed, lake, or stream clean-up days conducted.

4. Develop relationships, partnerships, and collaborations with other professional societies, conservation organizations, decision makers, and stakeholders to establish and promote mutual goals of fisheries science, education, and stewardship.

Goal Linkage: Communication, Networking

Committees responsible: Education/Continuing Education

Suggested Actions:

- (1) Sponsor programming in cooperation with citizen groups, college/university-based student groups, and watershed groups as well as educational organizations and private industry stakeholders throughout Ohio.

Possible Metrics:

- (1) Number of partners engaged (e.g., angling clubs, Ohio Environmental Council, Teaming with Wildlife, League of Ohio Sportsmen, The Nature Conservancy, etc.).
- (2) Number of cross-promoted activities with student groups.
- (3) Number of cross-promoted community outreach events with watershed groups.
- (4) Number of student organization (High School Envirothon Teams, FFA, etc.) and/or service organization (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc.) opportunities provided.
- (5) Number of private businesses contacted to encourage active partnership with OCAFS.

5. Publish high quality scientific journals, books, and proceedings that present recent advances, reviews and syntheses of fisheries and aquatic science and management.

Goal Linkage: Science

Committees responsible: Fisheries Leadership, Education/Continuing Education

Suggested Actions:

- (1) Contribute funding to Society publications relevant to Ohio fisheries management and aquatic stewardship.
- (2) Provide links to new and relevant Society publications on the OCAFS website.

Possible Metrics:

- (1) Number of publications supported.

7. Provide online resources of value and interest to members and non-members to be the leading source of online fisheries science.

Goal Linkage: Science, Communication

Committees responsible: Fisheries Leadership

Suggested Actions:

- (1) Maintain the Chapter website providing relevant and timely information regarding voting on leadership and issues, meeting and workshop dates, online member and meeting

registration, chapter newsletters, and updates on recent activities such as award winners and meeting highlights.

- (2) Maintain an up-to-date contact list of email addresses of all Chapter members.

Possible Metrics:

- (1) Update the website within 30 days of meetings.
- (2) Log the number of visits to the Chapter website.

9. Use innovative techniques such as surveys, focus groups, social media, and other means, to determine and respond to the needs, interests, and opinions of Society members.

Goal Linkage: Governance

Committees responsible: Value of Membership

Suggested Actions:

- (1) Periodically implement surveys to evaluate Chapter member needs, interests, and opinions.

Possible Metrics:

- (1) Summary of survey responses received.

11. Enhance participation of students and professionals at all levels of the Society to assure member recruitment, retention, and leadership development into the future.

Goal Linkage: Governance

Committees responsible: Fisheries Leadership

Suggested Actions:

- (1) Sponsor student fora to promote networking among research professionals
- (2) Directly invite students to present at annual winter meetings.
- (3) Partner with Ohio Academy of Science to increase student engagement.
- (4) Coordinate meeting logistics with student subunit(s).

Possible Metrics:

- (1) Number of student presentations at Chapter-sponsored meetings and conferences.
- (2) Name and project title of OCAFS-Ohio Academy of Science Partnership Award winner.
- (3) Number of activities co-sponsored with student subunits.

12. Promote ethnic, socio-economic, generational, and disciplinary diversity within the Society and the fisheries profession.

Goal Linkage: Governance

Committees responsible: Value of Membership

Suggested Actions:

- (1) Encourage fisheries professionals outside of the Division of Wildlife to become active in the Chapter.

- (2) Directly engage Chapter student subunit(s) to cultivate future generations of fisheries scientists.
- (3) Occasionally collaborate with related professional organizations (e.g., lake management, restoration ecology, etc.) to promote stewardship of fisheries and aquatic resources.

Possible Metrics:

- (1) Recruit at least one member to each committee from outside the Division of Wildlife.
- (2) Recruit at least one member serving to the governing board from outside the Division of Wildlife.
- (3) Increase the number and diversity of nominees for elected positions within the Chapter.
- (4) Number of students active and recruited to membership in the student subunit(s).
- (5) Number of collaborative events with other professional organizations.

13. Recognize and acknowledge the achievements and contributions of members and partners through awards, special conference sessions, and other activities.

Goal Linkage: Science

Committees responsible: Fisheries Leadership

Suggested Actions:

- (1) Annually award one student travel grant (Joan Duffy Award) to the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference.
- (2) Annually sponsor the Milt Austin Aquatic Sciences Awards at the Ohio Academy of Science State Science Day.
- (3) Annually award two students with the Ohio Aquatic Scholarship, paying for their enrollment in the Fisheries Techniques workshop held at the Ohio State University's biological station at Stone Laboratory.
- (4) Annually provide the past president with a framed AFS certificate of appreciation.

Possible Metrics:

- (1) Number of award applications received.

14. Hold elections and convene regular meetings of elected officers to plan activities that advance the mission of the Society and provide sound financial management of assets, revenue, and expenses.

Goal Linkage: Governance

Committees responsible: Value of Membership, Fisheries Leadership

Suggested Actions:

- (1) Conduct annual elections prior to the annual winter general membership meeting.
- (2) Hold Governing Board meetings in spring and fall quarters, between membership meetings in winter and summer.
- (3) Evaluate current budget and account balance.

Possible Metrics:

- (1) Meeting minutes.

- (2) Proportion of society membership participating in annual elections.
- (3) Account balance.

15. Periodically review constitution, bylaws, and procedures manual and revise using appropriate procedures as necessary.

Goal Linkage: Governance

Committees responsible: Fisheries Leadership, Value of Membership

Suggested Actions:

- (1) Every five years, review and revise the OCAFS strategic plan. Standing committees will review strategies relevant to their committees and determine necessary updates or changes.

Possible Metrics:

- (1) Completion of revised strategic plan in a five year timeframe.