

Narrative of contributions:

We are honored to nominate Joe Conroy for the Ohio Chapter of the American Fisheries Society's first Meritorious Service Award. Joe has been a member of the American Fisheries Society for over 15 years and has served the American Fisheries Society at the State, Division, and Parent Society levels in many different capacities. At the state level Joe has served as President of the Ohio Chapter from 2012–2013 and continues to help plan annual meetings by serving on various committees. Joe has been particularly involved in planning and executing inter-state Chapter meetings between Ohio and West Virginia (2012), Ohio and Pennsylvania (2015) and Ohio and Indiana (2017) AFS chapters. Joe's leadership and experience continue to be invaluable to the Ohio Chapter of the American Fisheries Society. At the Division level Joe served as North Central Division (NCD) Vice President (2019-2020), President (2020–2021), and Past President (2021-2022). During his time in NCD governance, Joe was instrumental in refreshing and reconnecting NCD committees and governing structures and improving communication between the Division, state chapters, and subunits. Joe co-chaired the 2010 Strategic Plan Revision Committee for the North Central Division (NCD) and helped re-activate the Reservoir Technical Committee, which he currently serves as Ohio's representative. Joe also served as the Plenary Committee Chair for the 79th Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference in Cleveland, OH during 2019. At the Society level, Joe served on the AFS Nominating Committee (2021-2023), helping to identify candidates for AFS leadership. Currently, Joe serves as a chair of the Strategic Evaluation and Positioning Committee. Additionally, Joe was the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award, an award that "recognizes outstanding contributions of time and energy for special projects or activities by AFS members", in 2021. Joe frequently contributes to American Fisheries Society Annual Meetings, serving on Program Committees for the 150th Virtual Meeting (2020), 151st Meeting (2021, Baltimore, MD), 153rd Meeting (Grand Rapids, MI) and the 155th Meeting (San Antonio, TX). Joe's service and contributions to AFS at all levels a lasting impact. Simply put, the American Fisheries Society functions better for its members thanks to Joe's dedication and skill for strategic planning and organizing.

Beyond his service to AFS, Joe has made lasting contributions to limnology and fisheries science throughout his career. Joe has conducted and contributed to research on the ecology of Lake Erie and reservoirs, management of recreational fisheries, and sampling methods of warmwater sport fishes. Joe has authored or coauthored nearly 50 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters improving the understanding of aquatic ecology and fisheries in Ohio and beyond. We cannot think of a better candidate for this award, as Joe continues to serve the Society at various levels while contributing to the field of fisheries.

Biographical sketch:

Joe Conroy graduated from The Ohio State University (OSU) with Bachelor of Science degrees (2001), a Master of Science degree (2005), and Doctor of Philosophy degree (2007). As a graduate student at Ohio State, Joe conducted research that advanced the understanding of the roles of nutrient inputs and invasive species to Lake Erie food webs. After graduating, Joe was a post-doctoral researcher at OSU (2007–2009). In this role, Joe created a classification system for Ohio reservoirs to streamline research and management efforts. He began working for the Ohio

Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife (ODNR-DOW) in 2010 as a Fisheries Biologist at the Inland Fisheries Research Unit and in 2018, he was promoted to Fisheries Supervisor of the Inland Fisheries Research Unit. Working as a research biologist for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife (ODNR-DOW), Joe coordinated reservoir sport fish population assessments and research, served as a liaison to various sponsored research projects, and coordinated ODNR-DOW's Inland Management System, a state-wide, standardized approach to collecting, storing, and sharing fisheries data. As a supervisor, he guides fisheries research and serves as a mentor to biologists, technicians, and undergraduate researchers. Most recently, Joe has devoted considerable effort to managing and updating the Ohio Fisheries Information system, the ODNR-DOW's database for storing fisheries data, and helped develop visualizations to display ODNR-DOW's fisheries data through the Data Ohio Portal, ensuring that Ohio's fisheries data provide maximum benefit for both fisheries managers and anglers.

