



President's Message, *Greg Whitledge*

Dear fellow ILAFS members,

I hope that your summer was enjoyable, whether conducting field work or taking the opportunity for some much-needed vacation time. I attended the National AFS meeting in Atlantic City, NJ in August, where Illinois was well represented (see newsletter article on the 2018 AFS meeting), as has typically been the case in recent years. I heard anecdotal reports of some winners and some losers at the casinos in Atlantic City, although I think many of us who attended the meeting were wise enough to save our money for better opportunities, such as the raffle at the annual IL AFS meeting (or maybe that new piece of fishing tackle that we just can't live without).

There has been a mixed bag of good and bad news regarding policy issues over the past few months. Although Recovering America's Wildlife Act bills (which would authorize up to \$1.3 billion annually for state fish and wildlife agencies to implement Wildlife Action Plans) have

been introduced in the U.S. House and Senate with bipartisan sponsorship (<https://fisheries.org/recovering-americas-wildlife-act/>), there are still significant threats to the 2015 Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) Rule (<https://fisheries.org/category/news/policy-news/wotus/>). Also, Superior National Forest lands that drain toward the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in northern Minnesota will soon be available for mining proposals again (<http://queticosuperior.org/blog/trump-administration-re-opens-boundary-waters-watershed-mining>). AFS has stated its support for the Recovering America's Wildlife Act and opposition to repeal or replacement of the WOTUS Rule. Visit the policy tab on the AFS website for updates on these and other important issues.

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Chapter Objectives:

- Promotes training of fisheries professionals.
- Provides education outreach to the citizens of Illinois.
- Fosters research in fisheries and aquatic sciences.
- Provides sound fisheries policy information.
- Enhances communication and synergistic relationships amongst fisheries professionals.

Chapter Officers and Chairpersons

President: Greg Whitlege

President-Elect: Phil Willink

Secretary: Blake Ruebush

Treasurer: Rich Lewis

Past President: Steve Pescitelli

Excom Members at Large: Karen Rivera/Kevin Irons

Committee Chairpersons:

Archival: Nathan Grider

Arrangements: Steve Pescitelli

Awards: Steve Pescitelli

Continuing Education: Ben Lubinski

Environmental Concerns: Karen Rivera/
Randy Sauer

IL Environmental Council: Diane Shasteen

IL Wildlife Action Team: Trent Thomas

Membership: Josh Sherwood

Newsletter: Brian Metzke/Jason DeBoer

Raffle: Rebekah Anderson

Resolutions: Rob Hilsabeck

Student Concerns: Dan Grigas

Student Subunits:

Eastern Illinois: Hanna Kruckman

Southern Illinois: Alex Loubere

University of Illinois: David Boggs

Western Illinois: Eli Lampo

Website: Brian Metzke

NCD Committee Reports Representatives:

Centrarchid: Josh Sherwood

Esocid: Rob Colombo

Ictalurid: Jeremy Tiemann

Rivers and Streams: Trent Thomas/Steve Pescitelli

Walleye: Jason DeBoer/Mike Garthaus



Illinois Council
Trout Unlimited



If you or someone you know is interested in supporting our organization, please contact the membership committee chairman, Josh Sherwood (jsherwo2@illinois.edu), for more information.

President's Message, cont'd, *Greg Whitledge*

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Planning is underway for the 57th Annual IL AFS Chapter meeting, to be held February 26-28, 2019 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Champaign. Thanks to IL AFS Past-Presidents Jim Lamer and Jeremy Tiemann for working to secure a venue for the 2019 meeting.

Planning has also begun for hosting the 2020 Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference (tentatively scheduled for Jan. 26-29, 2020 in Springfield); thanks to Ann Holtrop (IDNR) for her leadership on the planning team. More information and opportunities to assist with these meetings to follow as the dates draw closer.

I have also been working on a proposal for a new award to support student attendance at continuing education workshops, such as those held in conjunction with the national AFS meeting, and will be discussing my ideas with the rest of the IL AFS Chapter leadership this fall. And speaking of awards, it's never too early to start considering persons who you would like to nominate for the Stephen A. Forbes Fisheries Excellence Award or the Illinois Chapter Meritorious Service Award. See the Awards tab on the IL AFS website, or page 9 of this newsletter, for details.

Have a safe and productive rest of the field season!

Greg

2018 American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting Recap, *Greg Whitledge*

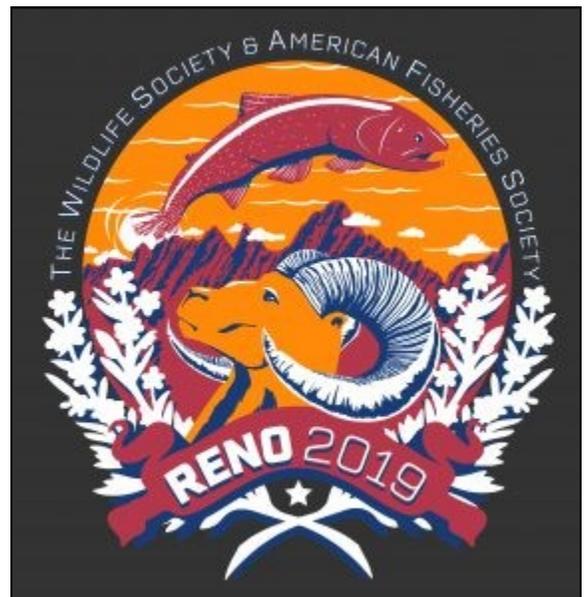


COMMUNICATING THE SCIENCE OF FISHERIES CONSERVATION TO DIVERSE AUDIENCES

AUGUST 19-23, 2018

The 148th Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society (AFS) was held in Atlantic City, NJ August 19-23, 2018. The meeting featured 80 symposia and 16 contributed paper sessions (including the ever-present Asian Carp session). Once again, Illinois was well-represented at the conference, with 39 oral presentations and 7 poster presentations authored or co-authored by students and professionals representing the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Southern Illinois University, Western Illinois University, Eastern Illinois University, University of Illinois, Illinois Natural History Survey, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Loyola University, and Shedd Aquarium. It was great to see another strong showing at the national AFS meeting by IL AFS chapter members, reflecting the quantity and quality of our fisheries research and management activities in Illinois and their relevance to our home waters and beyond. Congratulations to Julie Claussen (Fisheries Conservation Foundation and University of Illinois), who received the 2018 Emmeline Moore Prize at the meeting. This is a career achievement award, named after the first female AFS president, to recognize efforts of an individual member in the promotion of demographic diversity in AFS. Also congratulations to Nathan Lederman (IDNR), who received an AFS Emerging Leaders Mentorship Award. This award program was established to develop future leaders in AFS, and the fisheries profession as a whole, by providing selected candidates an opportunity to participate for one year in activities of the AFS Governing Board. Awardees are paired with a mentor who is a member of the Governing Board and are awarded up to \$500 to offset costs associated with attending the governance meetings, held in conjunction with the annual AFS Meeting. Finally, congratulations to Lawrence (Larry) Page, who was named an AFS Fellow. AFS designates as Fellows of the Society members who have made outstanding or meritorious contributions in leadership, research, teaching and mentoring, resource management/conservation, and/or outreach/interaction with the public.

Mark your calendars for the 149th Annual Meeting of AFS, to be held in Reno, NV September 29-October 3, 2019 (first ever joint conference with the Wildlife Society). Let's continue our tradition of a great turnout and high quality of presentations from Illinois!



Snapshot of Graduate Student Research, *Claire Snyder, SIUC*

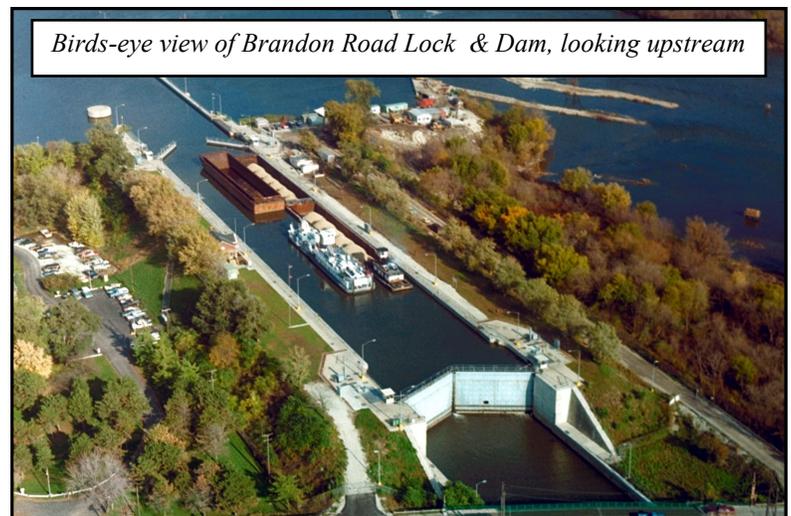
Hey there, ILAFS, I'm Claire Snyder. I'm a second-year master's student in Greg Whitley's lab at SIUC. I met some of you at the state chapter meeting this past February, where I presented a poster on my research examining native fish passage through Brandon Road Lock and Dam. This is an update to that presentation.

The Des Plaines River flows from southeastern Wisconsin to northeastern Illinois, where it confluences with the Kankakee River southwest of Chicago to form the headwaters of the Illinois River. Previously quite degraded, the Des Plaines has undergone improvements in water quality and habitat, and a recent basin survey by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources documented 30 fish species that were not present when the first basin survey was conducted in 1983. It is thought that many of these new species may have immigrated from downriver, from rivers such as the Illinois and Kankakee, and are able to persist due to improved conditions.

In order to move upstream into the Des Plaines, fish must pass through Brandon Road Lock and Dam (BRLD), which is located 21 km from the mouth of the Des Plaines River. Passage through the lock will be made even more difficult in the future due to the pending installation of technologies designed to halt upstream passage of aquatic invasive species, especially bigheaded carps. The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has proposed the installation of an electric barrier, an engineered channel with complex noise, a flushing lock with complex noise, and water jets, which, in concert, will likely be quite effective at preventing upstream passage by bigheaded carps. However, they may also reduce passage by native species. Native fish passage upstream through BRLD has not previously been studied and is the goal of this project.

The primary technique I'm using is microchemistry, which uses trace elemental concentrations in water bodies to provide a record of an individual fish's environmental history. Trace elements in water are incorporated into fish hard structures such as otoliths, fin rays, and scales in reliable ratios that reflect the water chemistry of where the fish is currently residing. Therefore, looking at data across a transect of a hard structure, starting at the middle (i.e. material reflecting a fish's natal environment) and going to the edge (reflecting the fish's environment where it was sampled) should allow us to infer movement between different water bodies, assuming those water bodies are chemically distinct. For this project, we want to determine if any fish captured in the Des Plaines River above BRLD have signatures reflective of residence in the Illinois or Kankakee River (i.e. downstream of BRLD) earlier in life, since this would indicate upstream dam passage.

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Snapshot of fish passage research at SIU, Claire Snyder

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To determine whether the Des Plaines, Illinois, and Kankakee Rivers have different trace element signatures, we collected multiple water samples from each river. Our trace element of interest was strontium, and we examined its relationship to calcium (Sr:Ca). We analyzed the water samples for Sr:Ca and found that there was enough separation between rivers to continue.

Next, we collected the pectoral fin rays from fish in the Des Plaines, Illinois, and Kankakee Rivers. We grouped fish into 3 taxonomic groups for analysis: Centrarchids (bass), Ictalurids (channel catfish), and Catostomids (buffaloes and carpsuckers). To date, 211 fish have been collected. We used the Sr:Ca signature from the fin ray edge of each fish as representative of the river where the fish was sampled. This allowed us to determine a signature range for each river (e.g. a Des Plaines Catostomid signature or a Kankakee Centrarchid signature, etc.). Once we developed signatures, we used a classification model to apply the signatures to each fish's entire environmental history. Then, we looked at whether any fish captured in the Des Plaines above BRLD had Illinois or Kankakee classifications earlier in life, indicating upstream dam passage.

Preliminary results show that, of fish sampled from the Des Plaines upstream of BRLD, all taxonomic groups showed evidence of having passed upstream through BRLD at least once. There was no significant difference in probabilities of movement between taxonomic groups. Fish origin has not yet been analyzed, so fish may have originated in any of the three rivers.

While these estimates are still preliminary, even the lowest estimates of movement indicate that native fish passage through BRLD is likely occurring. Therefore, restricting or even eliminating this movement may have an impact on Des Plaines River fishes ranging from reduction in gene flow to eliminating access to population recruitment sources to impacting the ability of Des Plaines fishes to recover from disturbances. These impacts should be considered prior to further action on the USACE's tentatively selected plan.

In the next year of the project, we anticipate increasing our sample size as well as adding fish from additional species, including longnose gar and freshwater drum. We will also try to examine whether other rivers in the upper Illinois watershed may be contributing fish to the Des Plaines community. It's been great to have the support of the AFS community in this project, with various wonderful folks from IDNR, INHS, USFWS, and USACE assisting in the field.



Successful shocking of a river carpsucker on the Des Plaines River

Joan Duffy Travel Grant to Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference



The **Illinois Chapter of the American Fisheries Society** (IL AFS) will be awarding a single \$200 travel grant which will be matched by the North Central Division of the American Fisheries Society. This will provide **\$400** for a fisheries student to attend the **Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference, January 37-30, 2019 in Cleveland, OH.**

Criteria for this selection will be based upon financial need and/or reason(s) for attending the meeting (e.g., paper presentation, pertinent paper session, IL AFS committee meeting). Students should state their class standing (e.g. junior, B.S. candidate), interests, and AFS membership status when applying. A letter from each applicant's advisor confirming the need for travel money is required.

The grant recipient is asked to attend the business meeting at the conference to receive their award. **ALL STUDENTS ARE URGED TO APPLY, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY ARE PRESENTING A PAPER!!!**

Submit applications (**electronic copies preferred**) or inquiries:

by: **November 2, 2018**

to: Dan Grigas
Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
3S580 Naperville Road
Wheaton, IL 60189

Phone: (630)933-7668
Email: dgrigas@dupageforest.org

Announcement: Larimore Student Research Award Program



Dr. R. Weldon Larimore of the INHS Center for Aquatic Ecology uses newly developed electric seine and fish shocker in Jordan Creek in 1950.

PURPOSE: The mission of the Illinois Chapter 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. Thus, the purpose of the Larimore Student Research Awards Competition is to provide financial incentives for outstanding student research projects to promote the conservation, development, and wise use of the Illinois fisheries.

WHO CAN APPLY: Students attending any accredited Illinois college or university, who maintain a cumulative GPA equal to or greater than 3.0 may apply.

AWARD: A maximum of four awards per year will be granted. Each grant is eligible for up to **\$500** depending on the quality of the proposal.

APPLICATION: Applications require submission of a proposal packet, which includes a proposal cover sheet, abstract, project description, budget, resume and transcripts of candidate, and two letters of recommendation. See attached packet for further instructions.

DEADLINE: Completed proposals must be received by the Chair of the Student Concerns Committee of Illinois Chapter of the American Fisheries Society by **December 3, 2018**. Send applications to:

Daniel Grigas

Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
3580 Naperville Road
Wheaton, IL 60189

SELECTION: All award proposals will be reviewed and selected by the Student Concerns Committee of the Illinois Chapter of the American Fisheries Society. Successful applicants will be notified by the end of January each year. At or near the end of their research, recipients of the ILAFS grant award must present their research findings at an IL AFS meeting.

CONTACT: Dan Grigas at the above address or phone:
(630)933-7668 or e-mail: dgrigas@dupageforest.org

**Note: a full packet with grant application details will be provided to each subunit.*

Announcement: ILAFS Excellence and Service Awards***Stephen A. Forbes Fisheries Excellence Award***

This award will be given to fisheries professional who has made an outstanding contribution to the fisheries profession in Illinois. This contribution should be a collection of achievements over the individual's career which surpass normal job duties, and contribute to advancement of the profession through either research or management activities. While not necessarily a requirement, evaluation of the nominee should consider dissemination of their work by publication (in refereed or non-refereed formats) and/or presentations at AFS, or other profession meetings. Award recipients should be members of the Illinois Chapter during the period the work was accomplished. Nominations should include the names and signatures of at least 2 nominators, a brief (1 page maximum) biographical sketch of the nominee, a brief (1 page maximum) narrative of significant contributions made by the nominee, and copies of any additional materials to support the application. Nominations should be submitted to the Awards Committee (Steve.Pescitelli@Illinois.gov) and must be approved by the Executive Committee.

Illinois Chapter Meritorious Service Award

This award will recognize extraordinary service to the Chapter by an active or past member. Nominations may be based on a variety of service activities benefiting the Illinois Chapter. Consideration may also include contributions to North Central Division or Parent Society. In the nomination, evidence must be presented that this service has gone beyond routine membership and that it has made a genuine and lasting contribution to the betterment of the Chapter. Nominations should include the names and signatures of at least 2 nominators, a brief (1 page maximum) biographical sketch, a brief (1 page maximum) narrative of significant contributions made by the nominee, and copies of any additional materials to support the application. Nominations should be submitted to the Awards Committee (Steve.Pescitelli@Illinois.gov) and must be approved by the Executive Committee.

Announcement:

SAVE THE DATE!

57th Annual Meeting of the Illinois Chapter of the American Fisheries Society
Hilton Garden Inn, in Champaign Illinois
February 26-28, 2019

Registration details to be posted on the Chapter website soon.

