Improving Communication/Cooperation Among Aquatic Professional Societies

Mark V. Hoyer, Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, School of Forest resources and Conservation, IFAS, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32653. E-mail: mvhoyer@ufl.edu

Terry McNabb, Aquatechnex, PO Box 30824 Bellingham, WA 98228. E-mail: tmcnabb@aquatechnex.com

Mike Allen, Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, School of Forest resources and Conservation, IFAS, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32653. E-mail: msal@ufl.edu

Michael D. Netherland, USACE ERDC Environmental-Laboratory, Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants, 7922 NW 71st Street, Gainesville, FL 32653. E-mail: mdnether@ufl.edu

At this year’s North American Lake Management Society (NALMS) 34th International Symposium in Tampa, Florida, a session was held to discuss how NALMS, the American Fisheries Society (AFS), and the Aquatic Plant Management Society (APMS) could better communicate/cooperate using the strengths of each society to help better manage aquatic resources. While the societies maintain varying membership sizes (AFS ~ 6,000, NALMS ~ 800, and APMS ~ 500), working together should increase the impact of managing the same natural resources. Representatives of each society gave the following presentations followed by an open discussion with approximately 70 participants.

The consensus was clear that more collaboration and communication among our societies would improve the value to our collective members. Presentations included:

- Introduction on the Overlap among Three International Aquatic Professional Societies NALMS, AFS, APMS (Mark Hoyer, NALMS President 2010)

- Improving Communication Between All Lake Management Interests, the NALMS Perspective (Terry McNabb, NALMS President 2013 and APMS President 1997)

- Benefits of Cooperation Between Aquatic Professional Societies AFS, NALMS, and APMS (Mike Allen, AFS Representative)

- Common Interests That Link the Aquatic Plant Management Society with NALMS and AFS (Michael Netherland, Immediate Past President of APMS)

Mark Hoyer started the session by showing how the mission statements of each society use different language but the primary action statements (AFS “Conservation and Sustainability,” NALMS “Management and Protection,” and APMS “Environmental Stewardship”) point to a shared goal of protecting natural resources now and into the future. An analysis of publications was performed by searching eight key words from the last five years in each society’s peer-reviewed journal using THOMSON REUTERS Web of Science. While there was considerable overlap among the journal articles, there was also considerable specialization (Table 1). The amount of overlap shows considerable common interest while the areas of specialization demonstrate that each society could help the other with specific management expertise.

Mark also pointed out that each society has a magazine (AFS Fisheries, NALMS LakeLine, and the Florida Chapter of APMS has Aquatics, which is distributed to all APMS members). The magazines contain general information on the current activities of each society along with professional articles on aquatic resource management/research that would be of interest to all groups. Each of these magazines exists in an electronic format that, with little or no expense, could easily be shared among the three societies, vastly increasing information exchange among the three memberships.

Terry McNabb focused his presentation on the overlap of the three societies and how information from each one helps him in the management efforts he puts forth on a daily basis as a business owner. He feels all three societies do a good job promoting the management of aquatic resources; however, much more could be accomplished by better communications among them using each society’s strengths toward the common goal of protecting natural resources.

Terry pointed out that toxic algae (e.g., golden algae, Prymnesium parvum) is becoming more important to aquatic plant managers while also impacting fish populations on a large scale (VanLandeghem et al. 2013). Both APMS and AFS have little expertise in toxic algae and could benefit from the experience of NALMS in this area. For more than a decade NALMS has worked with and hosted multiple Blue Green Algae Initiatives (http://www.nalms.org/home/programs/blue-green-algae-initiative/blue-green-algae.cmsx).

Mike Allen suggested that developing stronger ties with related professional
organizations that focus on lake management and aquatic habitats could provide better education for all members, more shared science among our sub-disciplines, and better understanding of the full range of tools available for improving fishery resources. He suggested a few opportunities and mechanisms for improving collaboration among societies including:

- Holding special symposia and/or joint chapter meetings that can focus professionals, especially at the local level, on pertinent resource management issues of common interest. Holding joint meetings of the national societies would be impossible due to logistical issues; however, NALMS has 14 state affiliate groups (NALMS 2014, http://www.nalms.org/home/members/affiliate-members/nalms-affiliate-members.cmx/, accessed 2014), APMS has 6 Regional Chapters (APMS 2014, http://apms.org/regional-chapters/, accessed 2014), and AFS has four Divisions and 44 Chapters (AFS, http://fisheries.org/units/units) that show considerable geographical overlap where it might be possible.

- Membership for all three societies is static or declining, and it is hard for individuals to be members of all three. Explore the potential to bundle memberships, such that total membership of all three societies could improve.

Mike Netherland pointed out that all issues related to the management of aquatic plants, and especially the spread of invasive aquatic plants, is of great importance to all three societies. From his experience, the most common concerns expressed by NALMS and AFS members regarding organized aquatic plant management programs revolves around the following:

- Controlling too much vegetation
- Impact to non-target native vegetation
- Loss of habitat for fish
- Potential for managed lakes to switch from macrophyte to algae dominated systems

The APMS feels that improved communication among these three societies could help facilitate meaningful dialogue that would allow aquatic managers and researchers to better understand and address the concerns expressed above. Increasing linkages among APMS, NALMS, and AFS members would insure broader perspectives when addressing aquatic invasive plant issues.

Approximately 70 individuals enthusiastically participated in the discussion that followed the presentations. The one resounding consensus was that all three societies would benefit from increased communication. Many suggestions on how to make this happen were discussed – some easier to accomplish than others. Here we list some of these ideas, both the easy and the more difficult, that could be accomplished if the Executive Boards of each society agree and work together. We recommend one Executive Board member from each society establish some form of regular communication together (e.g., conference calls) and report back to their respective boards.

Some of the easier ideas to accomplish that need to be discussed and hopefully approved by each Executive Board are as follows:

- Each society should provide space in their respective magazines (Fisheries, LakeLine, and Aquatics) for editorial articles from the leadership of the other societies. This would be easily accomplished as presidents from AFS and NALMS already write an article for their respective magazines that could be adjusted for the other societies’ magazines and it would be a good idea for the APMS president to start. This simple task would give members information on the current status and, to some extent, direction of the other societies that may be of interest.

- The web sites of each society should have direct links to each other.

- Many individuals cannot travel to more than one meeting per year due to money and time limitations. Therefore, each society should organize and sponsor a core information session at the annual meetings of the other societies (e.g., APMS could hold an aquatic invasive plant control session at the NALMS and AFS annual conference). This would allow multiple concentrations of information at each annual meeting adding areas in information that are generally not available.

Some of the more innovative suggestions to increase communication among societies are as follows:

- Membership for all three societies is static or declining and it is hard for individuals to be members of all three. Members are looking for more value in a membership. Explore the potential to bundle memberships so all three societies can benefit by their collective members while increasing communication.

- Currently AFS and NALMS use Taylor and Francis for publishing their professional journals. AFS also uses them for publishing the Fisheries

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**Table 1. Aquatic Professional Societies’ Peer-Reviewed Journals Overlap and Specialization.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Words</th>
<th>AFS</th>
<th>NALMS</th>
<th>APMS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitat</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquatic Vegetation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Quality</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phosphorus</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitrogen</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxygen</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbicide</td>
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<td>0.5</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentage of all publications for the last five years (January 2009 to December 2014) found using eight key words and THOMSON REUTERS Web of Science in each society’s peer-reviewed journal. **Bold print** indicates the largest percentage within a journal.
If NALMS and APMS would work toward using Taylor and Francis to publish their journal and magazine, it could be easier to share professional information. All three magazines are provided in an electronic format so sharing would be with little or no cost.

- It would be difficult to hold shared national society conferences due to timing of meetings and size. However, joint meetings with state chapters could be feasible and beneficial. Encourage regional and state chapters of each society to collaborate.

Many other suggestions were made during the discussion for increasing communications among societies. However, the ideas listed above are a good start for increased dialogue. Now, each society’s membership needs to communicate their desire to move forward with this initiative to their respective Executive Boards.

**Literature**

**Three Manuals for the Drinking Water Industry Prepared by NALMS**
Water Research Foundation Grant 4222 to NALMS has been completed. Three separate manuals were prepared under the direction of Ken Wagner, addressing water quality modeling, rapid water quality monitoring, and oxygenation and circulation as methods for improving raw water quality. These manuals are aimed at utility management and reservoir managers who purchase equipment and services relating to these areas. Each has a comprehensive overview understandable by those without a strong background in the area already, detailed descriptions of options, a literature review, and an analysis of lessons learned from case studies. Cost estimates and important implementation factors are provided. While the focus is on drinking water reservoirs, these manuals are applicable to virtually all lakes and other water resources. Many members of NALMS, including vendors of relevant products, helped build the case history data base, and several members assisted Dr. Wagner with analysis and writing of the manuals. The NALMS research team thanks everyone for their participation. The Water Research Foundation holds the copyright to these manuals, so NALMS cannot provide them directly to you, but the link to the site where these manuals can be found is [http://www.waterf.org/resources/Pages/recentlycompletedprojects.aspx](http://www.waterf.org/resources/Pages/recentlycompletedprojects.aspx), and the manuals are indicated as 4222a, 4222b, and 4222c. The executive summary can be viewed and copies of the complete manual can be ordered as hard copies or downloadable PDFs.

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**In Memoriam**

**Jim Flynn**

Longtime NALMS member and supporter, Jim Flynn, passed away on March 18 after a long battle with Parkinson’s disease.

It is not possible to overstate the contributions that Jim has made to NALMS over the years. A member of NALMS from early in its history, Jim and his employer, Hydrolab Inc., were perennial sponsors of NALMS’ annual symposium and the Student Paper Award. Jim was instrumental in the success of the annual symposia, particularly in the early years of the Society. He organized the exhibits as the chair of the Industrial Relations Committee for many years. He also was responsible for significantly improving our poster sessions, encouraging members to work with ideas that had been successful for other societies. Jim was a constant recruiter for NALMS as he traveled the country, successfully persuading individuals and groups to attend NALMS meetings and join the organization.

Jim Flynn was the recipient of NALMS’ highest individual honor, the Secchi Disk Award, in 1999. In 2007, NALMS renamed its Outstanding Corporation Award the Jim Flynn Outstanding Corporation Award in recognition of his longtime support of NALMS. The Jim Flynn Outstanding Corporation Award recognizes the corporation considered to have contributed the most to the Society’s goals.

Beyond making NALMS stronger, Jim was a great role model for people in business. He treated everyone with respect, was genuinely interested in how people were doing – both personally and professionally – and he made everyone feel like they were part of his family. There are countless stories of Jim paying for things when someone else couldn’t, of kind words offered when someone was feeling down, and offering sage business advice that relied on moral courage and human values. He was a man of faith, a leader by example, and a very good friend to so many. He will be missed.

Viewing will be at Cook Walden Funeral Home in Pflugerville, Texas (florist 1-877-894-0431, code 51230) and a memorial service will be held at 1:00 p.m. Saturday, March 21 at St Vincent De Paul Catholic Church in Austin, Texas.