

**SDAFS Small Impoundments Open Forum**  
**Asheville, NC**  
**February 18, 2025**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Call to Order**

The annual meeting of the Small Impoundments Committee (SIC) was called to order at 1:05 pm EST on 2/18/25 by Chair Cynthia Fox Holt. The North Carolina Chapter of AFS hosted the conference. This technical meeting had a Microsoft Teams virtual option for those who couldn't attend in person. Many members were in attendance with others participating in the virtual option as denoted below. Cynthia welcomed those in attendance.

*Introduction of committee members and guests*

A role call was taken with all members and guests asked to introduce themselves. It was determined there was a quorum of at least 10 members present.

Committee members/proxies in attendance were:

AnaSara Gillem – Alabama DCNR  
Ryan Mozisek – Arkansas AGFC  
Tim Bonvechio – Georgia GDNR  
Dane Balsman – Kentucky KDFWR – Secretary/Treasurer  
David Belkoski – North Carolina NCWRC - Virtual  
Dalton Thomas – Oklahoma ODWC  
Aaron Cushing – Solitude Lake Management  
Preston Chrisman – South Carolina SCDNR  
Mike Bramlett – Tennessee TWRA - Virtual  
Cynthia Fox Holt – Texas TPWD – Chair  
Steve Owens – Virginia VDGIF  
Cory Hartman – WV WVDNR

Guests in attendance were:

Matt Marshall – Alabama DCNR  
Jonathon Pritchard – Georgia GDNR  
Daniell Morrill – North Carolina NCWRC  
Justin Heflin – Virginia VDGIF  
Carly Fenstermacher – WV WVDNR  
Macey Rowan – WV WVDNR  
Joel Slabe – WV WVDNR

*Approval of minutes*

A motion to approve the minutes from the 2024 SDAFS SIC meeting was presented and passed with no objections.

*Treasurers report*

The financial report was presented to the SIC by Dane Balsman, secretary/treasurer. There was no committee income or expenditures during the past year.

- \$3,303.32 as of 2/1/24 SDAFS meeting (Truist Bank)
- \$3,303.32 as of 2/18/25 SDAFS meeting (Truist Bank)

### **Member Updates**

Cynthia asked each state to give a quick update of highlights on small impoundment management in their respective states. She said Texas had done renovations and new builds on several small impoundments in the state. Working with these parks to do vegetation management and habitat work.

Dane gave a brief update on Kentucky and the work their habitat branch is doing on both small and large impoundments across the state. An angler group is wanting to stock Florida or F1 bass in KY that has been working through the commission, doing genetic testing statewide and are working on a Thoroughbred Bass program for Largemouth Bass. Fish haulers and hatcheries cannot haul F1 or Florida Bass into KY. Another update is KY has started requiring commercial guides to report data.

Dalton with Oklahoma said they have been doing all their routine sampling but working with a group to build Shelbyville cubes on a Close-to-Home-Fishing Lake in Enid. Using the Weed-Do to do vegetation management in some lakes.

Ryan said Arkansas is renovating a couple state owned impoundments that are ageing out. Have two lakes under complete renovation to restart fishery, place habitat and fix dams. Seen a very positive response in lakes recently renovated and the public is happy with renovations. New lake effect and Wr up to 140 for bass.

AnaSara with Alabama has 23 public fishing lakes managed. Most of those have on site managers. Several others are city owned and state manages the fishery. Are providing technical guidance by taking calls and emails and do seine samples if requested. Pond stocking or electrofishing are still deferred to private companies.

Preston, South Carolina has 20 state owned or leased lakes in state lakes program, two have closed due to dam failures. Estimated 40 million to repair dams. Other 18 lakes receive varying levels of management for bass. Have installed ultrasonic algae control at one of the lakes to control cyanobacteria, Department of Health has shut down drinking water due to high counts in the past. Update on two lakes that did bass removals, one that was moderately successful still looks decent and the other that wasn't successful still looks bass crowded. Restarted technical guidance on farm ponds with seines. Slow playing it and not advertising it too much, different regions are at varying levels of participation.

Tim in Georgia, has 11 public fishing areas around the state with some areas having multiple lakes on the areas. Marvin Public Fishing Area recently renovated, four lakes have female only bass stocked, have not had males introduced. In other PFA's have had males introduced, but keeping bass densities low with a lot of 5-8 pounders and occasional 9 or 10 pounder caught. Surveying anglers about management at some of the PFAs. Concerns with summer tournaments, went to bump board only at PFAS Memorial Day – Labor Day. Trying to manage with diverse opportunities on PFA's that have multiple lakes, trying different recipes and species variety. Have had luck with hybrid striped bass in smaller lakes, but need to control access and harvest.

Aaron, Solitude has been doing a lot of work on water quality. Been working on a low dose planktonic algae treatment for blue-green algae, primarily in drinking water reservoirs. When reach an action

threshold treat the lake as it's cheaper than treating in house scrubbers. Also working on phosphorus remediation, one in particular than energizes, mobilizes and works phosphorus into system in positive way instead of just locking it up. Have been working with Red Hills Hatchery on bass genetics.

Steve said Virginia has 32 department owned lakes, with about three dozen other small impoundments managed around the state. Not much has changed with urban fishing program which has been ongoing since 90's, reduced creel limits, stocking trout in winter and catfish during summer months. Working on habitat projects, Christmas tree numbers decreasing. Pallet structures and Polypipe structures, get good life out of structure except wood in the draw down lakes. Catfish spawning boxes tried similar to PA, with use and spawning documented but no recruitment. Not worth time in building boxes as have not seen returns. Dane chimed in that KY saw the same thing, lot of usage, just no recruitment with catfish spawning boxes in small impoundments. Vegetation management in parts of the state and have had great results with ProcellaCor. Big price tag, but in the end have had good results and didn't need multiple treatments. VA is buying catfish, due to short growing season, recommends stocking at least 10" to avoid bass predation. Boundary infringements at state owned lakes has also been an issue, and not backed up by legal for legal pursuit. Working on bathymetry mapping to incorporate into website.

David with NC said they stopped doing pond checks about two years ago, but still do answer questions on technical guidance. For the most part don't monitor small impoundments. Do have a community fishing program where stock catfish during the summer and do creel surveys to see if stocking rates need to be adjusted. Winter trout stockings at city lakes, F1 stockings on larger lakes, habitat work on larger reservoirs. Hatchery renovation at main hatchery and lost a hatchery to Hurricane Helene.

Cory with West Virginia has changed some catch and release largemouth lakes to allow for harvest. Have a new water supply lake built, but having legal issues with access to legally fish. Have allowed bank fishing access. Legislators tried to stock F1 in eight lakes. Doing a statewide genetics project and start stocking largemouth bass in several lakes.

## **Old Business**

### *Workshop Effectiveness Quiz and Feedback*

Cynthia said we messed up the before and after quiz on effectiveness and haven't heard back from Matt Sell, so probably nothing useable for a white paper. Got a lot of positive feedback on the workshop. Need to plan the entry and exit survey to collect data we need next time if we want to measure workshop effectiveness.

### *SIC Facebook Page*

Reminder to post any work conducted on small impoundments to the SIC Facebook page that you may be overlooking. While it may seem mundane to us it may be interesting to young professionals. Work you're doing is important, post it.

### *Review of State Agency Fish Chief Priorities – Small Impoundment Assessment and Management Standardization*

Jason Olive, SDAFS past president sent the results of a survey of fish chiefs for needs or desires of SDAFS technical committees. We briefly reviewed last year. The survey helped identify common themes of areas of need. One of the items identified was compiling a summary of fishing regulations and management of small impoundments. How would we send out spreadsheet or surveys for states to fill out that we could compile useful information to distribute to fish chiefs. After a lengthy discussion on how each state defines small impoundments, what level of management constitutes "works on" or

“actively manages” we determined every state is VERY different and this would be a difficult task to summarize into a useful document. Some states don’t have standardized methods for sampling on small impoundments, other states have species specific sampling that applies to small impoundments. Some states not even sure how many small impoundments there are in the state. Different levels of managements between states and varying regulations and management even within a state. Special regulation by waterbody, complicate things. Discussed columns and how you fill out spreadsheet. Matt Marshall, Alabama chief was present and chimed in that he didn’t think this would be a useful document for him and questioned who filled out this survey of fish chiefs? Would need to be short to be useful for fish chiefs. If states had a SOP for sampling by waterbody type, please share and committee can compile. Draft a SOP for small impoundment sampling for the mid-year meeting.

Jessica Baumann stopped by to answer questions as the incoming president of SDAFS. AFS recently switched publishers. Jessica was going to check on Small Impoundment book getting back into print and book royalties. In the past SDAFS had just received one check from parent society and she had to determine what and who it was for as far as book royalties. Asked Jess to check on appointments of committee members by fish chiefs and this hasn’t been regular request for incoming presidents. Do our committee bylaws need to be updated? Haven’t been updated in 20+ years and not sure if it needs EXCOM approval, we don’t have a procedure manual. Something needs to be added for virtual option in bylaws for meetings. Can we push the reporting timeframe back for state reports and briefing bulletin?

## **New Business**

### *New member appointment(s) and vacancies*

We covered this with Jessica on appointments and vacancies. Puerto Rico and DC will probably not ever be filled.

### *Member participation and leadership*

Are there any voting members that would like to take over the chair appointment? No nominations or anyone interested, Cynthia will stay on for another year.

### *Aquatic Plant Workshop*

We talked about doing workshop every 3 to 5 years. Five years sounds like a reasonable number to get a new batch of students young/professionals. Five years also keeps managers abreast of any updates to chemical treatments. Do another workshop in 2027, everyone was in favor. Any other workshop ideas for future? Basic fish id, may be better for LE at SEAFWA meeting. Cynthia will send out a doodle poll for the mid-year meeting.

## **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 3:55 pm.



# The Southern Division of the American Fisheries Society

## Small Impoundments Technical Committee

### 2025 Annual SDAFS Meeting Agenda

18 February 2024, 1:00-3:30 pm EST

1:00\* – Roll Call (There will be a virtual attendance option)

1:10 – Introduction (Cynthia)

- Determine quorum (Dane)

1:20 – Meeting Minutes and Treasurer's Report (Dane)

1:30 – Member Updates (all state representatives) *Not a review of reports, just highlights of work going on in small impoundments in your state.*

2:00 – Old Business

- Workshop Effectiveness quiz and feedback survey (very old business)
- SIC Facebook (Post! Post! Post!)
- State Agency Fish Chief's Priorities – Small Impoundment Assessment and Management Standardization
  - Impoundment types (by state)
  - Regulation strategies (by state)
  - Stocking strategies (by state)
  - Habitat development/management strategies (by state)
  - Other information...

3:00 – New Business

- New member appointment(s) and vacancies
- Member participation and leadership
- Aquatic Plant workshop
- Mid-year Meeting Date

3:30 – Adjourn

**\*All times are estimates**