

Annual Report of the South Atlantic Chapter of SWS
Mid-Year Meeting, January 2001
Prepared by Pat Megonigal, Chair

Highlights

The Mid-Atlantic Chapter made progress this year planning new activities and changes to the bylaws to allow on-line voting. We began planning a workshop next fall on a topic selected by our members in the regulatory and consulting communities. The Chapter sponsored a workshop at the 2000 meeting of the Association of Southeastern Biologists on Bottomland Hardwood Forests. We developed a travel award for students presenting wetland-related research at the ASB meetings that will run for the next three years. The chair fielded several inquiries from employers in the region. Diana De Steven of the Center for Forested Wetlands Research was elected as our new Vice-Chair and will serve until Spring 2002. There is about \$9,000 in the Chapter's account, a portion of which was recently transferred from a checking account to a Certified Deposit.

Treasurer's Report (prepared by Will Conner)

The chapter currently has about 892 members which is an increase from 880 members last year. Our treasury has grown from dues and other activities, and we must begin investing these funds into activities that will benefit the membership.

Income	
Accumulated Dues Previous Year (4/99)	\$8,926.30
1996 Forested Wetlands Conference	\$546.78
Balance Previous Year (4/99)	\$9,473.08
Expenses	
ASB Y2000 Student Travel Fund	\$500.00
Current Balance	\$8973.08

Buisness Meetings

April 2000 ASB Business Meeting

Eleven people attended the luncheon meeting of the South Atlantic Chapter of SWS held in Chattanooga during the annual meeting of the Association of Southeastern Biologists. The group included several long-time members of ASB and SWS, and a large contingent of students from Christopher Newport University, VA who accompanied Rob Atkinson. After several trips to the buffet we spent about 30 minutes discussing business.

August 2000 SWS Business Meeting

Thirteen people attended the luncheon meeting of the Chapter held in Quebec, Canada during the Millenium Event. This was largely a different group than those who attended the ASB meeting. We

discussed a proposal to link the ASB student travel award more clearly to SWS by limiting eligibility to wetland-related projects. The outlines of this were voted upon, and after follow up conversations among Chapter officers, we settled on a written description of the award. It was published in the December issue of the ASB Bulletin (reproduced below).

Other topics discussed briefly included changing the bylaws to allow on-line voting and sponsorship of an annual workshop (details below). There were many good comments offered, but these activities will require further work to flush out the details before they are implemented.

Published ASB Graduate Student Travel Assistance Award

The South Atlantic chapter of SWS is offering a new travel award to support graduate students presenting wetland research at ASB meetings. We will award at least \$100 to a maximum of five students. Officers of the Chapter will judge the applicants based on the scientific quality and importance of their research as described in the abstract. All graduate students presenting research on a wetland topic are eligible; membership in SWS is not required. Please check the appropriate box on your ASB registration form to apply. You may contact Dr. Patrick Megonigal of George Mason University at jmegonig@gmu.edu or 703-993-1045 for more information.

Proposed Procedure for On-line Voting in South Atlantic Chapter of SWS

By Bob Jones, Virginia Tech

- 1) It is quite possible to set up the voting on-line at Virginia Tech. Our college just set up a voting mechanism for faculty governance, and the person who did it will provide advice.
- 2) I propose that I set up the form with the advice and help of the Chair.
- 3) It would include a link to short biographies of the candidates, so the voters can make a decision online.
- 4) I propose to receive the votes, check to make sure each voter hasn't already voted AND is a member of the chapter.
- 5) I would then strip the names from the vote tally and send you only the tally.
- 6) One issue to deal with is paper ballots. Can we go totally online? An alternative would be to offer (online) the option for mail ballots. I would be willing to mail out ballots for individuals who request them. I imagine that very few people would make that choice. There may be other options.
- 7) One big advantage of this system is cost. Without a mailing, we will save quite a bit of money.

Proposal for An Annual Workshop Sponsored by the Chapter

By Pat Megonigal, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center

- 1) Divide our region into the following sub-regions:
 - (a) VA, NC, WV (b) SC, GA (c) FL, VI, PR
- 2) Each year the members of one sub-region will organize a workshop on a wetland theme that they choose. By rotating the workshop we will encourage participation by a wider group of members, spread the burden of planning the workshops across the membership, and allow the

- groups to focus on sub-region-specific issues if they wish.
- 3) The workshop will be planned by a 3-member committee that includes representatives from three communities - regulatory, academic, and consultation. The committee will be chaired by one of the current chairs of a Wetland Professional Association in the region.
 - 4) The workshop will be supported from registration fees and Chapter dues.
 - 5) The workshop will be open to the entire membership of the Chapter.

Bottomland Hardwood Workshop Early Report

Prepared by Marianne Burke, Center for Forested Wetlands Research

A workshop titled *Research on Wetlands, Bottomland Hardwoods, and Riparian Areas in the Southern United States: Status and Frontiers* was held in conjunction with the Association for Southeastern Biologists on April 7, 2000 in Chattanooga, TN. It was sponsored by the Southern Research Station of the USDA Forest Service, the Society for Wetlands Scientists' South Atlantic Chapter, and the Consortium for Forested Wetlands Research. The workshop was a forum to help the Southern Research Station plan future research priorities in one of the Station's six main focus areas or Cross-Cutting Themes : *Wetlands, Bottomland hardwoods, and Riparian Areas*. After an introduction by the Station Director, Pete Roussopoulos, Curt Richardson of Duke University opened the workshop with a lecture on *Status of research on wetlands in the Southeastern United States*. Subsequently, six panelists presented their view of research needs in each of their disciplines:

Silviculture -- John Hodges (retired)

Biodiversity -- Jane Lareau of the South Carolina Coastal Conservation League

Restoration -- Ronnie Haynes of the US Fish and Wildlife Service

Riparian Area Management -- Wendell Gillium of North Carolina State University

Water Quality -- Jim Shepard of NCASI

Non-Commodity Interests -- Robert Abernethy of the Wild Turkey Federation

The workshop concluded with a discussion between the panelists and audience. The outcome of the workshop is a report that will recommend priority research directions for the Southern Research Station.

New Vice-Chair of the South Atlantic Chapter of SWS

Diane De Steven is a Research Community Ecologist with the USDA Forest Service, Center for Forested Wetlands Research, in Charleston, South Carolina. She received her Ph.D. in Ecology from the University of Michigan and did postdoctoral research at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama and at Duke University. From 1985-1999, she was Assistant and Associate Professor of Plant Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where she taught plant ecology, natural resources management, and wetland ecology. Her research focuses on wetland vegetation-environment relationships, upland-wetland interactions, and wetland restoration. She has a particular interest in southeastern depressional wetlands, and she has also studied tree regeneration dynamics in a variety of forest ecosystems. She is Vice-Chair of the Vegetation Section of the Ecological Society of America, and she served on the Board of Editors for the ESA journals *Ecology* and *Ecological Monographs* from

1996-1999. She has also served in a scientific advisory capacity with The Wisconsin Nature Conservancy. As a relatively new member of the South Atlantic chapter, she is looking forward to greater involvement in SWS activities.