

APMS Annual Meeting Logistics & Events

The Aquatic Plant Management Society (APMS) Annual Meeting involves considerable planning and scheduling to provide maximum learning and networking value for attendees. Following are steps toward organizing the Annual Meeting and a brief explanation of meeting events. APMS members are encouraged to review this information to better understand the reasoning behind meeting locations and the opportunities available at the Annual Meeting. Members are also encouraged to provide feedback to improve upon the Meeting. Please send your questions or suggestions to the APMS Secretary or the Meeting Planning Committee Chair.

The APMS organized as the Hyacinth Control Society in 1961 as a forum to exchange information related to water hyacinth and its management in Florida waters. The Society has since evolved to include aquatic and wetland plants and algae species found across the country and internationally. Each July, APMS convenes an Annual Meeting with a focus on current research addressing topics like plant identification and physiology, control techniques, and management strategies from a national perspective. Seven Regional APMS Chapters have formed through the years. Each holds an annual conference that focuses on local operational issues and product updates.

Note: The APMS Board has surveyed membership on several occasions regarding the best time of year to hold the Annual Meeting to accommodate the greatest number of members. Polls have not indicated specific preferences for a meeting month, with even percentages of preferences to meet throughout the year. The July meeting time has the fewest conflicts with other aquatic or weed management society meetings. July has also proven convenient for families to attend the Annual Meeting during school summer breaks.

Site Selection and Negotiation

The Meeting Planning Committee is the most active of the APMS 18 Standing Committees. This Committee is responsible for locating Annual Meeting sites and ensuring smooth operation during the meeting. APMS contracts with a Meeting Manager to solicit and assess meeting site venues, negotiate guest room, meal and meeting event costs, provide audio visual equipment, coordinate events during the meeting, and act as a liaison between meeting attendees and hotel staff.

The Annual Meeting site is on a seven-year rotational schedule to coincide with each of the APMS Regional Chapters. Delegates generally come from as many as 30-35 states and several foreign countries. The meeting is held in a different Region each year to highlight local aquatic plant management issues and to offer holding a joint meeting with the local Chapter if that suits their membership schedule or needs. The Meeting Manager solicits proposals from hotels in locations suggested by the APMS and Regional Chapter Board. Key site considerations include:

- guest room price;
- hotel availability during the 2nd-3rd week of July;
- convenience to transportation, especially airports and shuttle service;
- meeting, exhibit, and banquet hall size and proximity to hotel guest rooms;
- meal and beverage costs for the various functions during the meeting;
- walking distance to restaurants, parks, museums, and nightlife.

The Meeting Planning Committee evaluates as many as 20-25 proposals and creates a list of 3-4 sites for Board consideration and approval for the Meeting Manager to conduct an onsite visit. During the onsite visit, the Meeting Manager ensures the hotel meets APMS requirements and negotiates the best possible price for the above listed parameters. This process is conducted up to three years prior to the Annual Meeting date scheduled for that Region to negotiate the lowest prices and to get a better selection of preferred meeting dates.

Note: APMS must guarantee that a minimum number of guest rooms will be occupied during the Annual Meeting to receive the negotiated lowest price and hotel concessions such as complimentary rooms and reduced food and beverage costs. While Annual Meeting attendees may find a lower room price at a nearby hotel, off-site lodging will not provide the meeting and event services available at the host hotel. Additionally, APMS must pay for the agreed upon number of guest rooms even if they are not occupied and would lose negotiated concessions if the room minimum is not met.

Meeting Planning Committee (MPC) Venue Selection Timeline for Annual Meeting

- Jul - MPC Chair seeks suggestions for venues in the next region at the post-Annual Meeting BOD meeting
- Sep/Oct - Meeting Manager requests proposals from venues in selected host cities
- Nov/Dec - MPC reviews venue proposals provided by Meeting Manager and selects best options
- Jan - MPC recommends venues at Midyear BOD meeting for on-site visits and requests travel cost approval for Meeting Manager
- Mar/Apr - Meeting Manager visits selected venues and recommends top choices to MPC
- Apr/May - MPC recommends Annual Meeting location to APMS President for vote by the Board

Meeting Costs and Sponsorship

The APMS Annual Meeting generally runs from Sunday evening through noon on Wednesday. The meeting is occasionally extended into Wednesday afternoon when important local issues generate additional interest and discussion. The APMS Annual Meeting is the most important and most expensive educational event provided by the Society. It is also an important income source for the Society to pay annual operating costs and to solicit funds for education and outreach initiatives like the [Michael D. Netherland Graduate Student Research Grant](#). The average cost for the seven previous Annual Meetings is about \$92,000. This cost includes about \$5,000-\$10,000 in student incentives (described below) at the Annual Meeting.

Note: There are pre-conference and post-conference Board of Directors meetings associated with the Annual Meeting. The Board meets on Sunday to address last-minute issues prior to the Annual Meeting along with usual business of the Society. The Board meets again immediately after the Annual Meeting to introduce new Board members and to review all facets of the Annual Meeting to improve upon future conferences.

The Annual Meeting is an education and outreach event. Therefore, the Board works to keep meeting registration as low as possible to increase attendance. This is especially important to retain government employees who have been facing increasing difficulty obtaining conference travel approval. With an average attendance of about 200, funding the meeting solely through registration costs would be cost-prohibitive to cover all expenses, let alone annual operation costs for the Society. Therefore, APMS solicits donations from Sponsors whose generous contributions provide about half of these necessary funds. An approximate breakdown of Annual Meeting income and expense for the seven previous Annual Meetings is listed below:

		Funding Source, Amount & Percentage for Meeting							Meeting Cost Analysis		
Year	Venue	Attend	Sponsor	%	Exhibitor	%	Registration	%	Income	Expense	Net
2019	San Diego	202	53,719	46	18,400	16	44,070	38	116,189	100,300	15,889
2018	Buffalo	201	57,140	56	14,400	14	31,315	30	102,856	85,549	17,307
2017	Daytona Beach	217	71,065	56	18,400	14	38,880	30	129,874	89,601	40,273
2016	Grand Rapids	172	45,360	52	15,400	17	27,021	31	88,706	65,892	22,814
2015	Myrtle Beach	248	47,712	43	18,200	16	45,620	41	114,058	125,133	-11,075
2014	Savannah	213	49,739	47	19,600	19	36,495	34	107,734	100,592	7,142
2013	San Antonio	208	52,472	48	18,900	18	37,180	34	108,552	78,844	29,708
	Average	209	53,887	50	17,614	16	37,226	34	109,710	92,273	17,437

Note: Annual Meeting early registration was increased in 2019 to \$395 to offset some of the costs to Sponsors. Late or onsite registration increases to \$490. The lower rate is an incentive to register early so the Meeting Planning Committee can schedule appropriate meeting room sizes and seating and prepare for sufficient food and beverage for each of the Annual Meeting events.

Student Incentives at the APMS Annual Meeting

Education and outreach, especially student initiatives, are among the most important core values of the APMS. Students represent research ingenuity and future leadership of aquatic plant management. Several student incentives are available at the APMS Annual Meeting to: broaden university participation, provide opportunities to organize and present information in a public setting, interact with their peers, and observe first-hand research and operations from across the country. Following is a list of incentives for students who compete in the Oral and Poster Presentation Competition at the Annual Meeting:

- registration cost is waived
- one-year free membership to APMS
- lodging provided by APMS (share two per room)
- network with APMS guest speakers at the Student Luncheon (open to all students)
- cash awards for 1st (\$300), 2nd (\$200), and 3rd (\$100) place Oral and Poster Competition
- post-conference tour of local research facilities / management areas (open to all students)
- networking with potential employers (all students)

Annual Meeting Events and Rationale

Each of the events scheduled during the Annual Meeting is planned to increase interactions and discussions among attendees. In addition to education, outreach, and business events for delegates,

APMS schedules meeting site venues and events for families to enjoy the surroundings during the Annual Meeting.

Student Meet-and-Greet – *Sunday - 6:00-7:00 pm*

All students registered for the meeting are invited to gather for an hour to introduce themselves and get to know other students prior to the Presidents' Reception. Beverages and light snacks are provided. This students-only event is open to all students who are registered for the meeting.

Presidents' Reception – *Sunday - 7:00 – 10:00 pm*

The Presidents' Reception begins the week's activities on Sunday evening before the Program commences on Monday morning. Heavy hors d'oeuvres and beverages are free to all registered delegates and guests in a setting selected to encourage attendees to stay and get reacquainted with friends and meet new colleagues. Local musicians are sometimes solicited to further enhance the social experience.

Program – *Monday - 8:00 am through Noon Wednesday*

Program Content

The Annual Meeting Program is arranged to maximize learning and networking. Forty-five to fifty oral and 10-20 poster presentations are selected from abstract submissions. The Program focus is on technical information of current or recently completed research or government management program updates. There is usually a special session addressing local issues. Oral presentations are limited to 15 minutes with an additional five minutes for questions and discussion.

Continental Breakfasts, Breaks and Luncheons

Each morning begins with a complimentary continental breakfast from 7:00-8:00 am held in the same room as the exhibits to facilitate discussions among delegates and vendors. Two morning and two afternoon sessions each contain 4-5 presentations separated by 30-minute breaks, likewise held in the exhibit hall, allowing time to network and tend to business issues before returning on-time for the next presentation. Lunch breaks are scheduled for an-hour-and-half to accommodate the networking luncheons described below and provide more time for face-to-face interaction among meeting attendees. The hour-and-a half format increases attendance for the first presentation after the lunch break.

Student Oral and Poster Competitions

Students who compete in the Oral Presentation Competition report master's or PhD level research updates for their major professors. Student presenters are alternated among other speakers, scheduled from Monday afternoon through Tuesday at noon to allow enough time for judging between presentations and to tally scores prior to the Tuesday evening Awards Banquet. At least five different volunteer judges are sought every year to evaluate presentations. Both the oral and poster presentations are judged on factors such as; materials and methods, data organization and interpretation, visual and oral presentation, and ability to relate their research to current management issues.

Annual Business Meeting

The APMS Annual Business meeting is scheduled after the last oral presentation on Monday afternoon. Business items include updates on Officer and Committee activities. The general Membership votes to approve or amend the Slate of Officers and Directors recommended by the Nominating Committee and tentatively accepted by the Board pending the Membership vote.

Members may also vote on Bylaws revisions drafted by the Board. All items proposed for Membership vote at the Annual Business Meeting are advertised and explained in the APMS [Newsletter](#) at least 30 days prior to the Annual Meeting.

Toward the end of the Program, a five-minute update is provided by a representative from each APMS Chapter on significant Regional aquatic plant management activities along with logistics for the Chapters' Annual Meetings.

Student Affairs Luncheon – Monday – 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

Open to all students registered for the Annual Meeting, the Student Affairs Luncheon is an opportunity for students to get to know each other and to interact with key APMS members. The Student Affairs Committee Chair presides over the Luncheon. Guest speakers discuss research as well as career opportunities in aquatic plant management-related fields. Students elect a representative to serve a one-year term as the Student Director on the APMS Board of Directors. The Student Director attends all three BOD meetings providing insight on issues of concern among students and is a full voting member on the APMS Board of Directors.

Regional Chapter Presidents' Luncheon – Monday – 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

Each Chapter President and a guest are invited to attend the Regional Chapter Presidents' Luncheon directed by the Regional Chapters Committee Chair. Attendees discuss management-related issues within each region. Updates are also provided for Chapter attendees on APMS activities. The Chair petitions attendees for suggestions as to how APMS may assist Chapters, for example, in outreach or research matters, and reports back to the APMS Board at the post-conference BOD meeting.

Poster Reception – Monday Evening – 6:00 – 7:30 pm

The APMS Poster Reception is presented early on Monday evening with all poster presenters in attendance to explain their work and answer questions. The Poster Reception is held in the Exhibit hall to enhance networking among vendors and sponsors along with researchers. Light hors d'oeuvres and beverages are served to encourage and retain attendance. Afterwards, there is ample time for attendees to discuss research or business on site or at a local food or beverage venue.

Past Presidents' Luncheon – Tuesday – 12:00 – 1:30 pm

All APMS Past Presidents in attendance at the Annual Meeting are invited to share experiences and comment on current issues before the Society. The Past Presidents Advisory Committee Chair leads discussion during the luncheon. The current President also attends to report findings and suggestions back to the Board at the post-conference Board meeting on Wednesday afternoon.

Awards Banquet – Tuesday – 6:00 – 10:00 pm

The Awards Banquet is the premier social event of the APMS Annual Meeting. The event is usually held in the hotel banquet hall, but occasionally in a nearby interesting venue. Local entertainment is sometimes booked. A dinner cruise may be scheduled when space is suitable for the 150-180 that may attend. Following a pre-banquet social hour, guests enjoy a sit-down meal with friends and colleagues until about 8:00 pm. Both short and long-term achievement [Awards](#) are presented to APMS members and others who have served in aquatic plant management.

All student presenters are introduced and 1st – 3rd place cash awards are presented to the winners of the Oral and Poster Presentation Competitions. The Outstanding Graduate Student Award is

presented, and the recipient of the [Michael D. Netherland Graduate Student Research Grant](#) is announced (the GSRG is awarded during even numbered years - more often if sufficient funding or sponsors are available).

After outgoing Officers and Directors are acknowledged and new Board members are introduced, entertainment and fund-raising activities for education and outreach programs begin. Silent auction winners are announced and a raffle drawing for grand prizes culminates the banquet. The auction and raffle generate about \$5,000-\$8,000 for the GSRG annually.

Post-Conference Student Tour – *Following the Annual Meeting*

Transportation is provided for students to see first-hand, aquatic plant infestations, management operations, and local research facilities. APMS rents a van or small bus for transportation. The Student Affairs Committee Chair leads the tour with support from other committee members in attendance. The group interacts with local researchers and managers at different stops along the tour to discuss plant issues and to review management strategies. The group may stay overnight at a remote site or return to the Annual Meeting Hotel for one last night prior to departing for home. APMS provides lunch and dinner for tour attendees in addition to lodging.