



Society *for* Freshwater Science

Five-year Strategic Plan 2025–2030

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Acronyms

AIBS = American Institute of Biological Sciences
ADA = American Disabilities Act
BoD = Board of Directors
BIO-LEAPS = Leading Culture Change through Professional Societies of Biology
CASS = Council of Aquatic Science Societies
CEIC = Conservation and Environmental Issues Committee
CRC = Constitutional Revision Committee
CUV = Council of Underrepresented Voices
DEI = Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
DEIJ = Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice
EC = Education Committee
ECDC = Early Career Development Committee
ECODIVE = Evaluating Conferences for Diverse Engagement
EiC = Editor-in-Chief
EPC = Election and Place Committee
FinComm = Finance Committee
FLOWshops = Fellow Led Opportunity Workshops
GSCRA = Graduate Student Conservation Research Award
HLA = Headwaters Leadership Academy
ICC = International Coordination Committee
JASM = Joint Aquatic Sciences Meeting
JEC = Journal Endowment Committee
JEDI = Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (term no longer being used)
LRPC = Long-Range Planning Committee
MANRRS = Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences
MDC = Membership and Data Committee
NSF = National Science Foundation
PIP = Public Information and Publicity Committee
PubComm = Publications Committee
SACNAS = Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science
SFS = Society for Freshwater Science
SPC = Science and Policy Committee
SRC = Student Resources Committee
STOICH = Stoichiometric Traits of Organisms In Chemical Habitats
STREAM = Scholar Team for Research, Engagement, and Advancing Minority Voices
TCC = Taxonomic Certification Committee
TORRENT = Teaching Outreach and Research Resources and Educational Networking Tool

Introduction

The Society for Freshwater Science (SFS) is an international scientific organization whose purpose is to promote further understanding of freshwater ecosystems (rivers, streams, lakes, reservoirs, and estuaries) and ecosystems at the interface between aquatic and terrestrial habitats (wetlands, bogs, fens, riparian forests, and grasslands) (For the full Mission Statement, see: <https://freshwater-science.org/about>). The SFS vision and core values—developed as part of the 2020 Strategic Plan and associated surveys (listed below)—highlight the importance of community, inclusiveness, and diverse voices within the Society. SFS also strives to be a leader in information exchange across freshwater disciplines, and plays key roles in science communication to policy makers, educators, and others toward protecting and conserving freshwater ecosystems.

At the core of SFS activities are its annual meetings, where ~800–1000 scientists from around the world convene to share scientific advances, exchange ideas, provide training, and support professional networking. Regional and topical Chapters facilitate exchange of information within subsets of the Society through meetings and other activities. SFS also publishes a flagship journal, *Freshwater Science*, four times per year. A variety of other publications (newsletters, podcasts, media libraries, and bibliographies) have been produced through the years and all past and current materials remain on the SFS website as educational resources. SFS provides professional taxonomic certification for freshwater benthic macroinvertebrate and diatom identification in North America. Finally, SFS has a variety of professional development programs and resources specifically designed for early career and student members. More information about SFS and its activities can be found on the Society webpage: <https://freshwater-science.org/>

Many SFS current activities have been guided by Strategic Plans. The Society began strategic planning in 1999, forming an ad-hoc Strategic Planning Committee that created the first [10-year Strategic Plan in 2000–2010](#). Since then, the Long Range Planning Committee has developed three, five-year Strategic Plans: [2009–2014](#), [2014–2019](#), and [2020–2025](#) that have helped to establish priorities for the Society.

The 2025–2030 Strategic Plan was drafted by the Long Range Planning Committee, with considerable support and feedback from the SFS Board of Directors, committees, and the Council of Underrepresented Voices. We also received input from the membership as a whole through an online survey, described below. Additionally, this document provides a description of recent membership trends and a summary of investments and progress toward the goals outlined in the 2020–2025 Strategic Plan. The 2025–2030 Strategic Plan also includes goals and proposed actions that can be used to direct strategic change in the next five years and beyond. Importantly, this Plan should be viewed as a guiding document

to be used for planning, and it is not intended to be prescriptive or exhaustive. Ultimately, the activities conducted by SFS are at the discretion of the SFS leadership and members.

SFS Vision

The Society for Freshwater Science will be a vibrant, inclusive, and diverse community dedicated to advancing, applying, and translating science for the health and vitality of freshwater ecosystems and the services they provide.

SFS Core Values

1) Promoting excellence in freshwater science

SFS is dedicated to advancing freshwater science to understand fundamental properties of aquatic ecosystems, promoting interaction across the disciplinary breadth of freshwater science, and applying our science to improve freshwater policy and management.

2) Sustaining a supportive, cooperative, and open scientific community

SFS is rooted in a welcoming and collaborative community and is committed to maintaining and growing that community through its publications, annual meetings, mentoring and training programs, and associated activities.

3) Advancing diversity, inclusivity and equity in freshwater science

SFS recognizes the inherent value of diversity, inclusivity, and equity in freshwater science. SFS is dedicated to becoming a more diverse and equitable society through inclusion, where all scientists are welcomed and their voices heard, thus promoting diverse perspectives and representation in freshwater science.

4) Developing and supporting freshwater scientists

SFS is dedicated to the development of students and early career freshwater scientists and practitioners, and to supporting the continued development of all freshwater scientists throughout their careers.

Membership

SFS membership has generally hovered around 1500 people over the last two decades, with low years corresponding to data irregularities (2005 and 2019) and the 2023 annual meeting in Brisbane, Australia (Fig. 1). In 2024, 32% of members were students, and 7% of members were emeriti. As of 3 May 2024, the total membership was 1468 members, including 838 regular, 438 student, 51 developing country-regular, 35 developing country-student, and 103 emeritus members. While over 80% of members are from the United States, members are from 50 countries, including ~6% from developing countries, and represent all continents except Antarctica (Fig. 2).

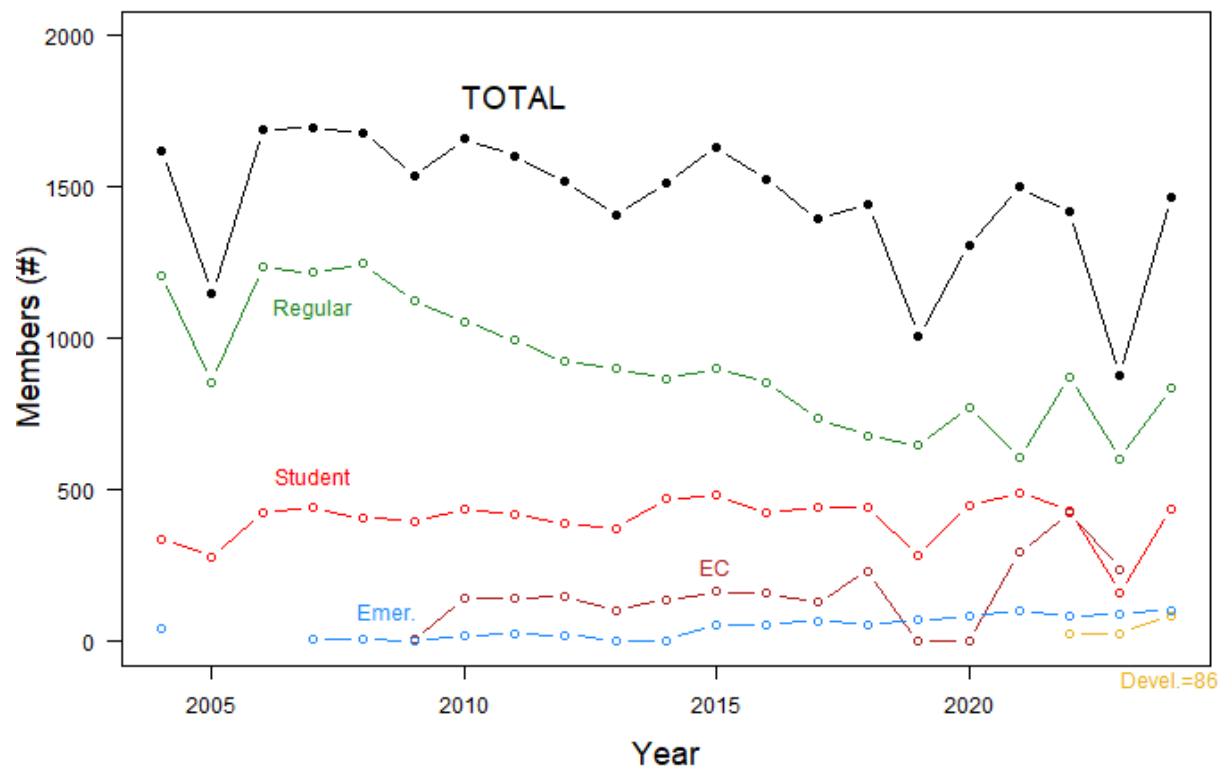


Figure 1. SFS membership trends from 2004-2024. Abbreviations: Devel. = Developing country, EC = Early Career, Emer. = Emeritus.

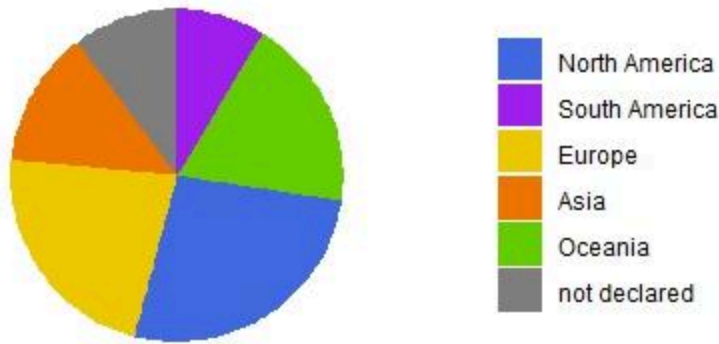


Figure 2. SFS members based on institute location across the continents excluding US-members from North America in 2024, representing 20% of total SFS membership.

The Society is comprised of people who have been members for many years and consider SFS a societal “home”, along with many new members who often first join SFS when attending the Annual Meeting. Approximately half of SFS are “core” members, who have been members in 4–5 of the last five years (Fig. 3). The other 50% are new members who are attracted to SFS each year. In the last four years, new members have ranged from a low of 82 (in 2023, corresponding to the Brisbane meeting) to 582 (in 2024). 704 individuals were members for only a single year (2020–2023). Approximately one third of the members are intermittent or short term and have held membership for 2-3 of the past five years.

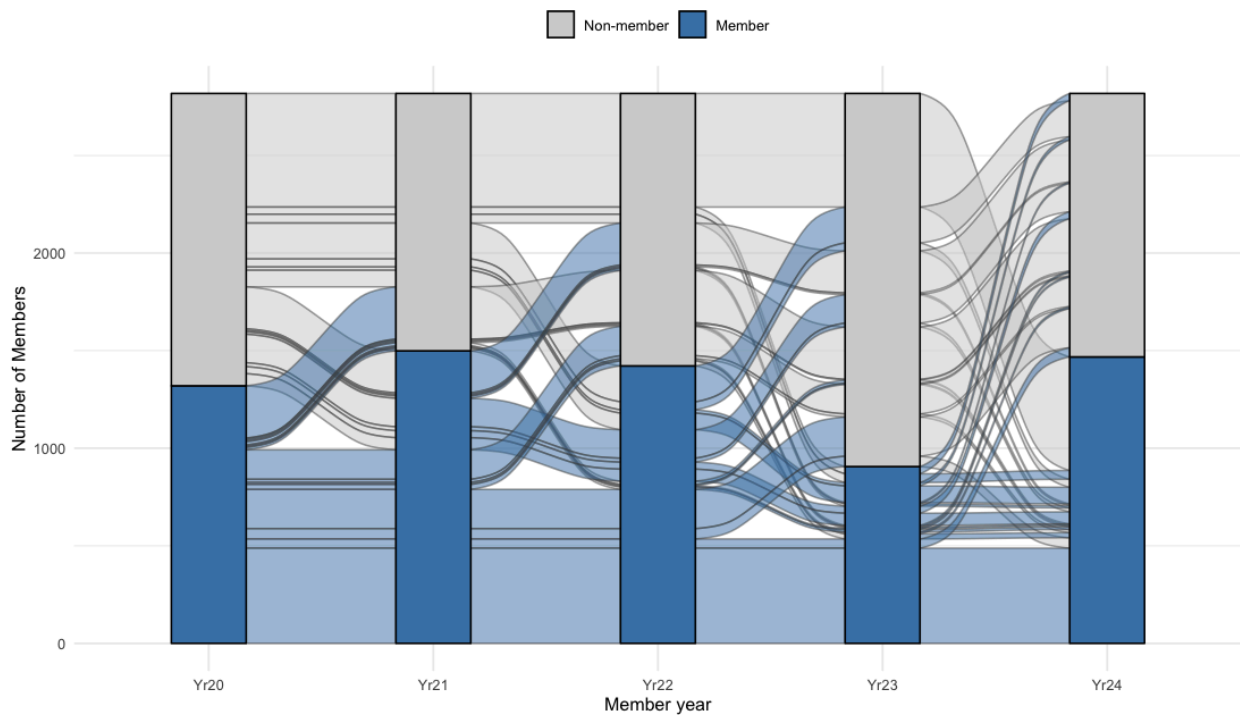


Figure 3. Alluvial plot showing the flow of members from 2022–2024 member years. Over the 5 year period, 2818 individuals were members of SFS for at least 1 year. Blue bars denote members in a given year and the grey bar denotes non-members. The size of the alluvial boxes between years denote the flow of individuals between membership status.

Members in the Society hold a wide range of employment (Fig. 4). Two thirds of the members are from academia, including undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral scientists, research scientists, and faculty. The next most represented employment type is in government, which includes federal government (7%), state, local and tribal government (7%), or in consulting (7%). The remaining members include those working with a non-profit, from private industry, or individuals who are retired.

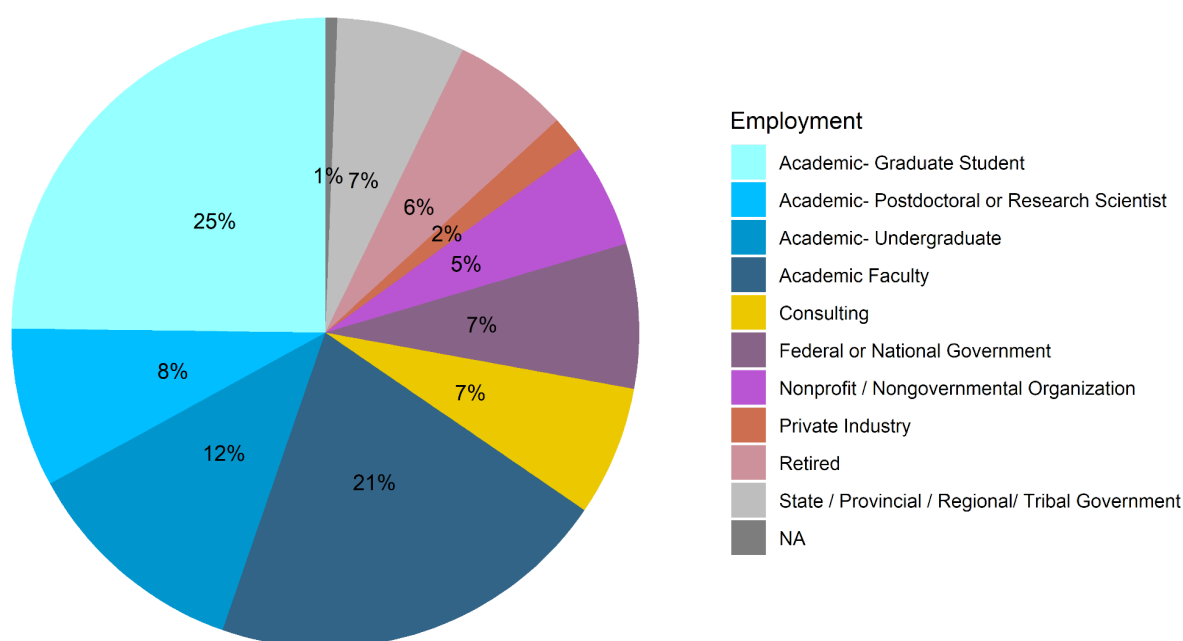


Figure 4. Pie chart of SFS professional affiliations in 2024. 66% of SFS members’ reported affiliations were related to academia. Graduate student (25%) was the most represented professional affiliation while private industry (2%) was the least represented affiliation.

Leadership

SFS is governed by dedicated members who volunteer their time and provide expertise to help the Society function. The Society has a Board of Directors (18 people), a subset of which forms the Executive Committee, whose roles and responsibilities are described in the Society’s constitution and bylaws. SFS pays three, part-time employees: an Executive Director (Andy Leidolf), a Journal Editor-in-Chief (Elizabeth Anderson), and a Communications and Media Specialist (Andrea Ward) who assist the Board of Directors in carrying out the activities of the Society.

There are 17 current standing committees for 2024–2025. Since 2020, the Development Committee and Technical Issues Committees have disbanded. The Public Information and Publicity Committee was renamed the Communications Committee. The Education and Diversity Committee was renamed to the Education Committee, and activities that promote diversity have been embedded in all standing committees. Two short-term, ad-hoc committees were created in the last five years that helped move initiatives forward and have evolved or disbanded. The Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (JEDI; term no longer being used) Task Force (2020–2023) created the Council of Underrepresented Voices (CUV) that has a voting seat on the Board of Directors. The Journal Task Force (2023–2024) evolved into the Journal Advisory Council and currently supports the Publications Committee and Journal Editor. There are currently 10 regional or international and two topical chapters. There are additional programs hosted by the Society that emphasize leadership opportunities and network building.

Current Standing Committees

- Finance Committee (FinComm)
- Endowment Committee
- Journal Endowment Committee (JEC)
- Election and Place Committee (EPC)
- Awards Selection Committee
 - Fellows Administrative Body
 - The Award of Excellence, Distinguished Service Award, Leadership Award, and Environmental Stewardship Award Selection Subcommittee
 - Hynes Award for New Investigators Selection Subcommittee
 - Student Awards Selection Subcommittee
- Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC)
- Publications Committee (PubComm)
- Communications Committee
- Constitutional Revision Committee (CRC)
- Membership and Data Committee (MDC)
- Student Resources Committee (SRC)
- Early Career Development Committee (ECDC)
- Taxonomic Certification Committee (TCC)
- Science and Policy Committee (SPC)
- International Coordination Committee (ICC)
- Conservation and Environmental Issues Committee (CEIC)
- Education Committee (EC)

Current Chapters

Africa	South Asia	Non-Perennial
California	Central U.S.	Ecosystems
Latin America	Southwestern US	Urban
Mid-Atlantic US	Taiga	
Pacific Northwest	Southeastern US	

Advisory Council

Council of Underrepresented Voices (CUV)

Additional Leadership Roles

Council of Aquatic Science Societies (CASS) Representative

American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS) Representative

Progress toward Prior Strategic Goals (2020–2025)

The 2025–2030 Strategic Plan builds on the efforts of SFS to meet the goals established in the prior Strategic Plans. In the last five years, the Society has made substantial progress toward its goals of increasing representation and diversity throughout its leadership. SFS held its first Annual Meeting outside North America and its first all-virtual meeting, and now integrates virtual components into meetings and professional development workshops allowing for more inclusion of scientists worldwide. Several new programs—including NSF-funded (Emerge, EcoDIVE) and internally funded (HLA, STREAM) programs—started to provide professional development and increase diversity in leadership, with a particular focus on students and early career members.

A brief summary of other accomplishments that further the 2020–2025 Strategic Plan is included below. This list provides an overview of the highlights and is by no means comprehensive. Some of the activities listed below met several 2020-2025 strategic goals, but are listed here with the most relevant goal for brevity. Moreover, some significant Society accomplishments were not explicitly forecasted in the 2020 Strategic Plan, but are important changes reflected in the summary below.

Strategic Plan Goals 2020–2025

1. Elevate the Society by maintaining and improving the annual meeting, the flagship publication *Freshwater Science*, and the communication tools used for in-reach and outreach.

- SFS has continued to maintain and improve its core operations, including the Annual Meeting and the Society’s journal, and communicate within and outside of the Society.
 - An Annual Meeting Philosophy was developed in 2022 and is posted on the website. A survey was conducted after the Brisbane meeting to get feedback on international meetings. See Goal #3 for more specific activities related to increasing inclusivity at the Annual Meeting.
 - A Journal Task Force was convened to identify members’ issues/concerns about the journal and propose solutions, and led efforts to reconnect SFS members with their Society journal at the 2024 meeting in Philadelphia. The new Editor in Chief has started to implement some changes, including: faster publication times, more special issues, President messages, broader topics, and clarifying and updating roles of Associate Editors.
 - SFS has worked to improve outreach to its members (see Goal #8) and people outside of Society (see Goal #2), which has required adapting to new social media platforms and changing how information is shared. Significant website updates are planned for the second half of 2025.
- SFS has maintained three paid positions (two contractors and one honorarium) and has evaluated and updated the roles of these positions as needed.
 - The Executive Director Scope of Work is reviewed annually and job responsibilities have been revised as needed to align with activities and needs. SFS decision-making is primarily with the Board of Directors and leadership, and this part-time position currently primarily supports logistics, financial management, and fluidity among administrations.
 - The Media Officer was renamed as the Communications and Media Specialist in 2023, and the reporting structure was changed in 2021 so they are supervised by the Executive Director. The Membership and Data Committee worked closely with the Communications and Media Specialist to update demographic questions.
 - A new journal Editor-in-Chief (EiC) was selected in 2024, and the transition will likely lead to some changes in the management of the journal.

2. Translate and communicate freshwater science to policy makers, managers, and the general public.

- SFS has continued to provide input to federal agencies and committees aimed at protecting and managing water quality and freshwater resources.
 - The Science & Policy Committee drafted several comments on legislation (e.g., 2023 letter on PFAS to the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, WOTUS) prior to 2023-2024.
 - Discussions are ongoing within the Consortium of Aquatic Science Societies (CASS) about how best to engage different society leadership and society policy committees on policy issue statements that require a rapid response.
- The Society is adapting to ever-changing member engagement with social media and its historic reliance on volunteer labor to find the best approach to maintaining effective communication with membership and the public.
 - The Public Information and Publicity Committee (PIP; renamed to Communications Committee in 2024) saw declining membership and SFS member engagement during the early pandemic, which limited our communications in a changing social media landscape. During 2023-2024, we added Bluesky and LinkedIn accounts. Most SFS communications on Twitter (now X), Bluesky, and LinkedIn were “society business” topics.
 - The Communications and Media Specialist worked with SFS leadership during 2023-2024 to restart a member newsletter (good email click engagement so far!) and make functional updates to our website where possible.
 - The Society maintains a presence on Instagram led by the Student Resources Committee and Emerge.
- SFS has facilitated opportunities for thematically-connected groups to engage and develop policy and communication skills at annual and chapter meetings.
 - The Science and Policy Committee hosted a “Learning about policy” workshop during the 2024 Annual Meeting, which included a presentation about planned updates to the National Forest Plan and how to comment as well as a panel of government and academic members discussing how researchers can engage with policy at local to national levels.
 - A BRIDGES cluster about public engagement was published in 2021 following the highly successful public engagement station organized with the PIP Committee at the 2019 Annual Meeting.
 - The establishment of the first two non-geographic SFS chapters, the Non-Perennial Ecosystems Chapter and the Urban Chapter, will offer future opportunities for project meetings and workshops to be planned in association with our annual meetings.

- SFS has worked with individual groups who have received NSF funding (e.g., Emerge, the Stoichiometric Traits of Organisms In Chemical Habitats (STOICH) database project) to host workshops in conjunction with the annual meeting.

3. Improve equity, inclusivity, representation, and a sense of belonging at SFS meetings, welcoming all freshwater scientists.

- SFS deliberately selected meeting venues to facilitate interaction with people around the world and foster an inclusive environment.
 - SFS hosted its first meeting outside North America (Brisbane, Australia) in 2023 (Table 1). There was a focus on Indigenous knowledge and cultures at the Brisbane meeting, providing a model for future meetings. It is important to note that while overall attendance was down at the Brisbane meeting, the attendance from developing countries was doubled.
 - The Joint Aquatic Sciences Meeting (JASM, Detroit 2022) and SFS meeting in Philadelphia (2024) offered cheaper opportunities for members within the United States. The 2026 meeting in Spokane should also serve as a more affordable location for members within the United States.
 - The 2025 annual meeting will take place in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where the Society will waive registration for local students and host science flash talks in Spanish that are open to the public. In addition, the Society assisted members with resources to support attendance at this meeting (visa interviews, monetary awards for support).
 - A National Science Foundation grant was awarded to support EcoDIVE (2022), to conduct research on how different meeting formats engage different professional perspectives and can be more inclusive. They are analyzing existing databases of meeting participants, conducting surveys, and holding focus groups. SFS is one of the four participating societies.
- SFS provided opportunities for people with financial and other constraints to engage with annual meetings.
 - In 2021, SFS held its first all-virtual meeting due to the Covid pandemic. The meeting was very affordable and attracted more participants than a typical meeting. Selected hybrid aspects (e.g., plenary talks) have been included at all meetings since 2021.
 - There are numerous travel awards to support student attendance at meetings, supported by Society Endowments and the Student Resource Committee. The Endowment Committee hosted webinars to assist students in writing applications and has targeted certain universities to increase representation. Significant travel awards were available to all members for

the Brisbane meeting, funded by Presidential discretionary funding, Fellows, and others.

- Participation of underrepresented people and marginalized groups at annual meetings has been broadened through Instars (since 2011) and Emerge (since 2022, with 5-year funding from an NSF grant).
- The International Coordination Committee assessed the number of people attending meetings from African countries, and the Africa Chapter supported attendance at annual meetings starting in 2023.
- SFS continues to improve inclusivity at annual meetings.
 - The Council of Underrepresented Voices (CUV) was created and was officially represented on the Board of Directors starting in 2024. The CUV is an advisory group that provides guidance and input to the Society and committees, including the Annual Meeting Committee, to help ensure just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive practices at meetings.
 - A diversity, equity, inclusion and justice toolkit was produced to provide guidance for annual meetings, as a collaboration between the JEDI Task Force and the SRC DEI Committee. This included a list of minority-owned businesses to support at the Grand Rapids JASM meeting in 2022.
 - The Code of Conduct for meetings was updated before the 2024 Philadelphia meeting, BoD members received training in “active intervention strategies” as reporting contacts for Code of Conduct issues, and more information and options to address any issues or concerns was available to attendees.
 - Inclusive practices at meetings include: parent rooms, subsidized child care, gender neutral bathrooms, accessibility via ADA compliance, hearing and visual assistance during plenaries, and a reporting email for anonymous concerns and violations.
 - DEI events have been hosted at several annual meetings, including an affinity breakfast, LGBTQ+ mixer, and land acknowledgements at meeting opening sessions.
 - The JEDI Task Force held a DEIJ workshop at the 2022 JASM meeting, and the CUV are developing training to implement at future annual meetings.
 - A Spanish translational session was included in the 2021 meeting, and bilingual components are planned during the 2025 meeting.
 - The Endowment Committee hosts a reception for awardees of Endowment Awards, Undergraduate Travel Awards, and the Graduate Student Conservation Research Award (GSCRA) recipients, which increases a sense of belonging.

Table 1. Annual meeting location and attendance in the last 4 years. The 2021 meeting was virtual only, and the 2022 and 2023 were joint meetings with other societies, but only SFS numbers are reported.

	Virtual 2021	Grand Rapids 2022	Brisbane 2023	Philadelphia 2024
Developing Country	36	32	75	26
Student	548	437	194	395
Early Career	221	189	116	159
General	306	305	322	358
Emeritus	29	15	14	15
Other	0	3	38	16
TOTAL	1140	981	759	969

4. Increase the diversity of the community of practitioners of freshwater science.

- SFS developed new programs and activities that enhance existing programs to increase the recruitment of underrepresented scientists into graduate training programs and careers.
 - SFS expanded support for recruitment and mentoring programs that target increasing the diversity of the membership at early career stages (e.g., Instars, Emerge, HLA)
 - CASS holds recruitment efforts at national conferences that foster diversity and inclusion in STEM (e.g., SACNAS, MANRRS)
 - NSF funding was received to support EVOLVED, implemented through CASS, which aims to build and implement a culture within STEM-focused scientific societies that supports and welcomes a diverse community. EVOLVED aims to recruit and teach more students from underrepresented minority groups to study aquatic sciences and push for a cultural change within society so students are valued in their careers.
 - NSF funding was received to support Emerge.
 - TCC has been translating taxonomic exams to Spanish and Portuguese and expanding the range of geographic images to enhance accessibility to international members in Latin America.
- SFS tasked an ad hoc committee and the Early Career Development Committee to quantitatively assess how our demographics compare to our peer societies and to the demographics of earned doctorates in freshwater science.
 - The Membership and Data Committee became a permanent, not ad hoc, committee in order to track progress on membership and diversity goals.

- Trends show an increase in percentage of members that identify as non-white categories over the last 5 years (Fig. 5).
- New demographic data (e.g., disability/ability, sexual orientation, language, first-generation) is being collected by the committee with potential to look at trends in the future.
- SFS tasked appropriate committees (e.g., ECDC, EC, SRC) to develop ways to recruit and retain scientists from underrepresented groups in our membership. SFS will promote diversity in leadership and participation in its executive and planning committees to ensure that multiple perspectives are heard.
 - CUV was established and a new voting position on the BoD was added for a member of the CUV.
 - SFS added 5 new chapters (3 geographic and 2 topical).

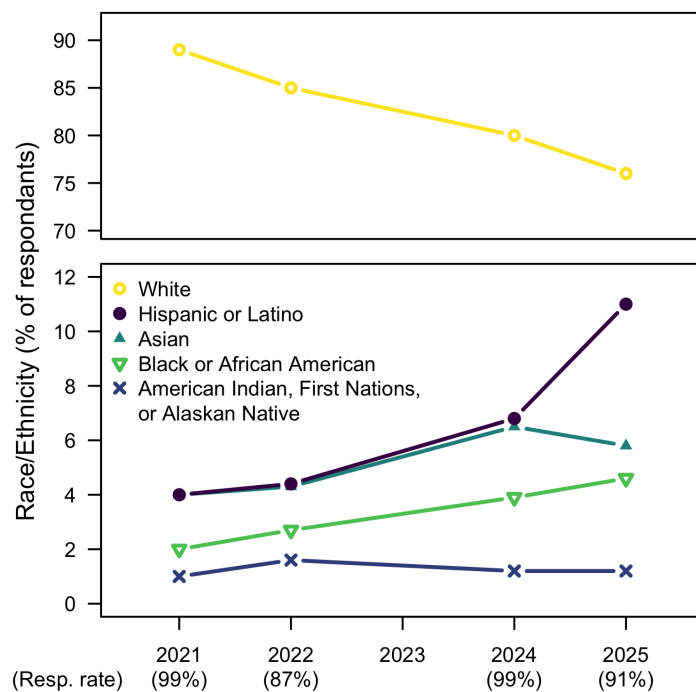


Figure 5. Trends in race/ethnicity of members from 2021 to 2025 (2023 data is missing). Percent response rates are below the year.

5. Increase membership, including regional and international participation, and promote the field of freshwater science globally.

- SFS continued to expand its international footprint via international meetings and incorporation of international scientists into the SFS leadership and administrative structure.

- SFS held an international meeting in Brisbane in 2023 (held jointly with the New Zealand and Australian Freshwater Science Societies) and the Africa Chapter was established.
- Active collaboration with other international societies through CASS allows for global engagement with the freshwater science community.
- The percent of international members has slightly increased over the past five years (Fig. 6). SFS membership includes members from 50 countries (Fig. 2).
- SFS fostered the growth of established chapters, and encourage the development of new chapters, especially outside the United States.
 - The number of chapters increased from 7 to 12 with the addition of 5 new chapters that were started in the last five years: Southwestern US, Africa, Southeastern US, Urban, Non-Perennial Ecosystems
 - Activity and engagement within chapters is variable, from highly active chapters that have held multiple chapter meetings in the last 5 years (e.g., Pacific Northwest (annually), California (annually), Southeastern US (2)) and chapter meetings at SFS (Latin America) to chapters with little to no activity in recent years (e.g., Taiga, Mid-Atlantic US, South Asia).
- SFS strived to increase Society membership to 2000 or above in 5 years by concerted efforts to retain members and recruit new members. This would return the Society to membership levels occurring from 1993-2003.
 - The Membership and Data Committee became a permanent, not ad hoc, committee in order to track progress on membership and diversity goals.
 - Membership has fluctuated in the last 5 years (Fig. 1), with 1400–1500 people in 3 years (2021, 2022, 2024), and lower numbers in 2020 (1320, attributed to Covid) and 2023 (906, attributed to having an international meeting in 2023 with lower attendance).

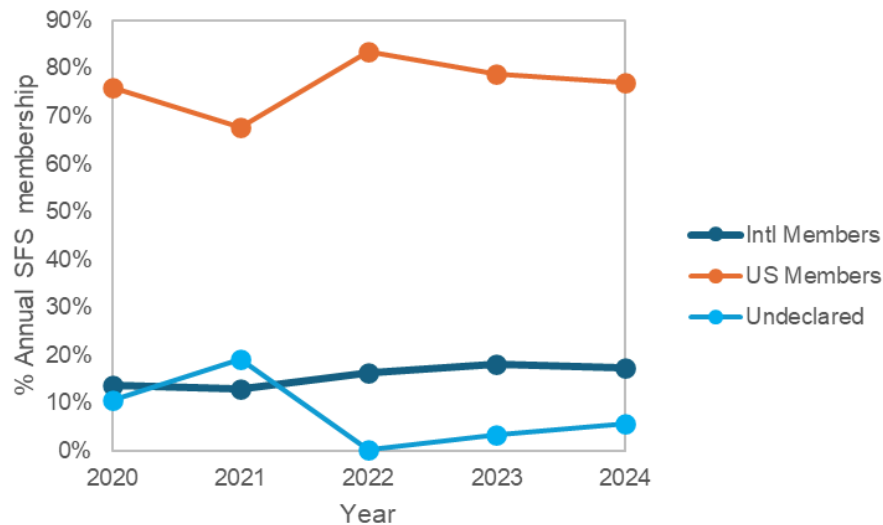


Figure 6. Percent of SFS members from the United States vs other countries.

6. Support the professional development of all members across all career stages through specific programs and actions.

- SFS has held professional development workshops that holistically advanced research and teaching skills, resources, and career needs for all sectors of professional affiliations represented in the Society (Fig. 4). These have been financially supported by the Society and through member donations.
 - Data analysis and publishing workshops were held at SFS meetings.
 - Early career workshops were held on various topics (professional and personal balance, curriculum vitae development). Mixers were held that focused on career networking.
 - A teaching resources website, TORRENT, was developed.
 - The new Scholar Team for Research, Engagement, and Advancing Minority Voices (STREAM) held 8 Fellow Led Opportunity Workshops (FLOWshops) on various topics in 2024.
 - Workshops were held by Emerge and STOICH.
- The continuation of existing and development of new Society leadership initiatives helped expand representation and leadership in the SFS.
 - The SFS Fellows nominations process rotates committee members to promote fairness and equity.
 - The Headwaters Leadership Academy (HLA), which started in 2022, trains overlapping cohorts of 12 people over 2 years, providing professional mentors and encouraging members to become active in committees.
 - The SFS Leadership Award established in 2021 (first given out in 2022).

- Several NSF grants have been received by SFS members in support of diversity and professional development: Emerge, Bio-Leaps, and EcoDIVE. SFS continues to support the Instars Program.

7. Increase efforts to train the next generation of freshwater scientists by supporting graduate and undergraduate students and early career scientists.

- In addition to training offered through specific programs (e.g., Instars, Emerge, HLA), SFS offered professional development workshops that developed critical skills of grant writing (also see Goal 6). Training for the next generation of freshwater scientists has been financially supported by Society member donations through specifically targeted funds (Fig. 6).
 - Workshops offered on how to write Endowment Award solicitations
 - Workshops offered on how to write travel grants for SRC and undergrads, but ECC has no support for meeting travel
- The Society has begun to recognize the distinct need for resources and support of Early Career and Primarily Undergraduate Institution (PUI) members.
 - An idea to use the Journal Endowment Fund to support stipends for Early Career/PUI Associate Editors was discussed.
 - Teaching resources are being developed through the website TORRENT.

8. Continually seek new and innovative ways to improve communication among and services to our members.

- Society leadership surveyed members about membership needs and is working to implement suggested changes.
 - Surveys after annual meetings and by the Early Career Committee have happened, but it's not clear how information from these surveys has directly influenced change in how we are communicating with or providing services to our members.
 - During 2023–2024, leadership polled followers on Twitter about where else they would like to see us engage if we decide to leave Twitter (now X). Results from a poll were overwhelmingly in favor of Bluesky and LinkedIn; SFS leadership established those accounts to share society information with those who no longer participate in the Science Twitter community. Current online presence is summarized here: https://linktr.ee/freshwater_science. Engagement on all accounts remains limited as we rebuild the Communications Committee (formerly PIP) in 2024-5.
 - The LRPC surveyed membership about priorities for the next strategic plan, and other committees also have planned membership surveys in the pipeline.

- Subgroups such as chapters and committees are continuing to innovate ways to connect with their own membership.
 - The Student Resources Committee now has a presence on all major social media platforms, and recently established a WhatsApp group for student members to communicate during annual meetings.
 - The Early Career Committee developed content for the website and has a Slack channel for early career scientists.
 - A newsletter is now delivered monthly and information is solicited from chapters and committees.

2020–2025 Investments in Strategic Activities

Overview of sources of funding supporting Society Strategic Goals

Primary sources of funding to address Society Strategic Goals are from the Society operating budget, from which Presidential Discretionary Fund (\$15–25K/yr), Innovation Awards (\$15–25K/yr, see below), Instars (\$10–15K/yr), Communications and Media Specialist (\$17.5K/yr), and support of diversity, educational and mentoring activities at the Annual Meeting. In addition, dividends from the Endowment Fund (\$20K/y) and the Journal Endowment Fund (\$12K/yr) are distributed as awards, and SRC raises funds to support awards. Donations made to the Society (Figs. 7, 8) also contribute to meeting Strategic Goals.

The funding available through Society donations varies from year to year (Table 2). In addition, donations are also made to the Society in support of various Endowment Awards, or to address a particular need (e.g., travel support for an international meeting in Australia). While these financial sources may vary on the ways they are allocated, they can also help support important strategic initiatives for the Society (e.g., diversity and inclusion, professional development of Society members, networking events, etc.).

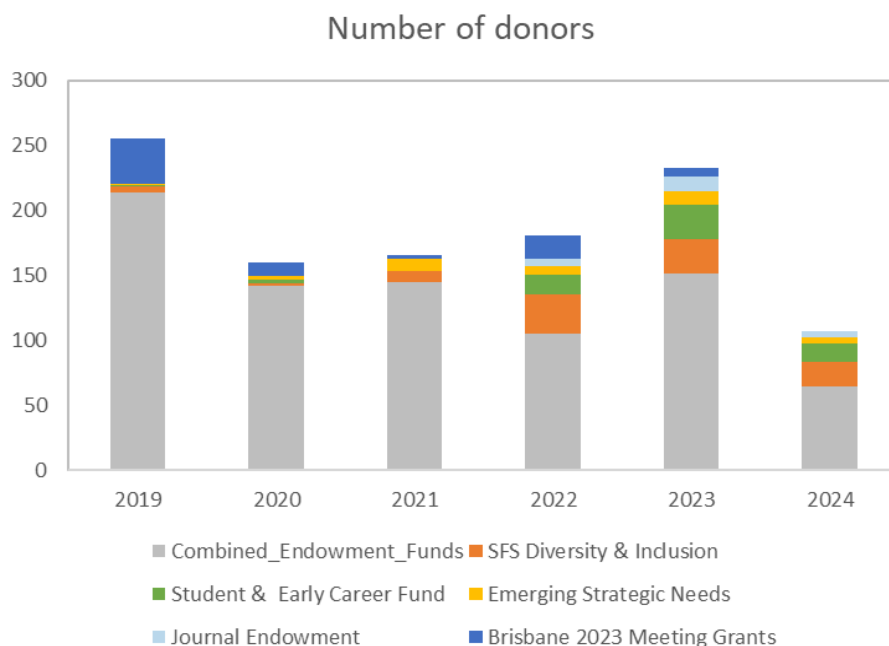


Figure 7. Stacked bar chart showing number of donors by fund and by year for the past 5 years. Endowment funds were combined to simplify figures.

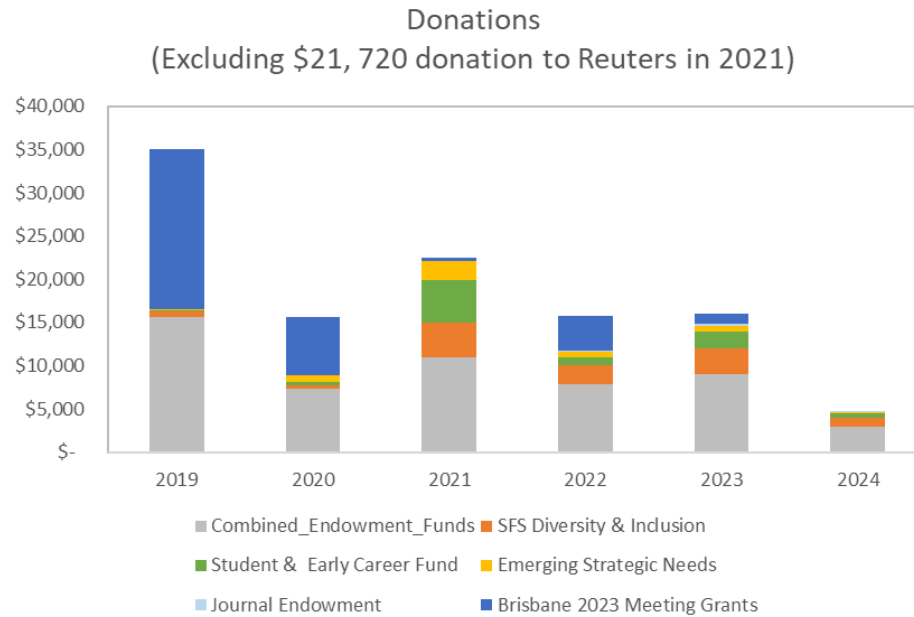


Figure 8. Stacked bar charts showing amount of donation by fund and by year for the past 5 years. Endowment funds were combined to simplify figures.

Table 2. Donations to Society Strategic Initiatives (2020–2024). Numbers in parentheses denote the total number of donations made for each strategic category in a given year. The Brisbane Travel Fund was designed to assist Early Career and Student members to attend the 2023 meeting, thus were no longer included as a donation possibility beyond that year. Donations made to the Endowment Fund are not included.

Year	Brisbane Travel	Diversity and Inclusion	Student and Early Career	Emerging Strategic Needs
2020	\$6,750 (11)	\$350 (2)	\$470 (3)	\$750 (2)
2021	\$350 (2)	\$4,080 (8)	\$4,870 (unknown)	\$2,245 (10)
2022	\$4,100 (18)	\$2,226 (30)	\$856 (15)	\$625 (7)
2023	\$1,220 (7)	\$3,031 (27)	\$1,911 (26)	\$606 (11)
2024	—	\$1,065 (19)	\$445 (14)	\$90 (5)
Total	\$12,420 (38)	\$10,752 (86)	\$8,552 (58)	\$4,316 (35)

Past Funding Allocations for the Innovation Fund (2020–2025)

The Innovation Fund, which is overseen by the Long Range Planning Committee, is established to directly fund initiatives that aim to address goals of the Strategic Plan. The Board of Directors (BoD) shifted their funding approach in the 2021, moving from a set allocation of \$25,000 for three years (amount similar to 2018–2020) to a percentage-based allocation from annual meeting revenue, as was the practice from 2011–2018. Because reserves decreased and operating funds were stretched, the Innovation Fund was supported at \$10,000–\$15,000 in 2023–2025 (Table 4), which amounted to a 40–60% reduction in funding availability.

The reduced funding resulted in fewer funded projects in the past 2 years, with a maximum funding per proposal set at \$5,000, limiting the number of supported projects to 2–3 per year. Despite a 50% increase in applications from 2020–2023 to 2023–2025, funding limitations required adjustments in allocation. To accommodate more applicants, the average funding per proposal was reduced to \$2,500 in FY 2024–2025, equating to 50% of the maximum award. Most of the requests in recent years have been related to professional development; hence the higher proportion of funding toward Strategic Goal 6.

Table 3. Innovation Fund Proposals 2020–2025

Year	Proposals Received	Funding Allocated (\$)	Total Requested (\$)	Proposals Recommended	Total Funded (\$)
2020-21	6	21,650	7,700	6	14,000
2021-22	3	12,000	N/A	3	5,000
2022-23	2	9,500	14,000	2	10,000
2023-24	5 (1 off-cycle)	10,550	22,900	4	10,550
2024-25	9	15,000	41,218	6	15,000

Table 4. Strategic Plan Goals and Allocations (2020-2025). Allocations from the Innovation Fund addressed eight key Strategic Plan Goals (projects may address more than one goal, so allocation is greater than total funded in Table 2).

Goal	Allocation (\$)	% of Total
Goal 6: Support the professional development of all members	\$38.6K	48%
Goal 7: Train the next generation of freshwater scientists	\$19.65K	24%
Goal 5: Increase membership and promote freshwater science globally	\$17K	21%
Goal 3: Improve equity, inclusivity, and belonging at SFS meetings	\$16.75K	21%
Goal 8: Enhance communication and services for members	\$12.65K	16%
Goal 1: Maintain and improve the annual meeting, journal, and outreach tools	\$10.7K	13%
Goal 4: Increase diversity among freshwater science practitioners	\$10.15K	13%
Goal 2: Translate freshwater science for policymakers, managers, and the public	\$6.65K	8%

2025–2030 Strategic Goals & Actions

The goals and proposed actions for 2025-2030 emerged from the following sources: 1) goals from the 2020–2025 Strategic Plan that continue to be applicable, 2) feedback from SFS Committee Chairs about progress towards previous goals and needed actions, 3) feedback from the Membership Survey (Appendix 1; which resulted in revisions to Goal 6 and the addition of Goals 7 and 8), 4) feedback from the BoD, SFS committees, the EiC of *Freshwater Science* about the revised goals and actions. These goals and actions should be considered as proposed guidance, not directives, for the Society for the period of 2025–2030. The brackets suggest a possible committee or person who may be responsible for the action; however, this may change. The purpose of naming committees and timelines is to track progress toward goals. Unless the timeline is specifically stated below, we anticipate these actions will develop over the next five years, as determined by relevant committee members and SFS leadership.

Goal 1: Continue and improve communication of freshwater science to policy makers, managers, and the general public.

Proposed Actions

- **Action 1.1** Expand funded support of communication/media engagement to ensure continuity and SFS leadership engagement in messaging rather than relying on volunteers. For example, we could dedicate a small stipend to support one or more “Science Communication” activities, related to journal article publications and/or broader SFS outreach goals. We also recommend generating a revised communication plan for SFS as the Communications Committee is re-established in 2024 to develop revised goals and needs related to expanded support. *[Who: Communication Committee, Publications Committee, and Finance Committee. Recommended timeline: Finance Committee work with the Communications and Publications Committees to identify potential mechanisms for funding within one year, test expansion in year two, and have a broader and more stable communication framework within five years.]*
- **Action 1.2** Increase meaningful interactions between, and communications from, the SFS policy committee and SFS communications (e.g., perhaps at FWS beyond BRIDGES). *[Who: Science and Policy Committee, Communications Committee, Publications Committee]*
- **Action 1.3** Support opportunities for all SFS members to interact and network with federal/government/management/tribal SFS membership outside of Annual Meeting activities. Potential actions include hosting webinars or another event between annual meetings. Also see Actions 4.3, 6.4, 8.4. *[Who: Science and Policy Committee; potentially with collaboration/support from Early Career Committee, Student Resources Committee, and International Coordination Committee]*
- **Action 1.4** Identify opportunities to increase interactions with freshwater scientists and the media. Potential actions include generating press releases associated with conference presentations and/or SFS journal articles as well as hosting workshops

or webinars for SFS members on interacting with the media or proposing op-eds. *[Who: Communications Committee, potentially with collaboration/support from the Early Career Committee, Student Resources Committee, Publications Committee, and Science and Policy Committee]*

- **Action 1.5** Continue to support policy-related communications through collaboration with CASS, including potential opportunities to collaborate with other societies for lobbying efforts. *[Who: Science and Policy Committee and CASS representative]*

Goal 2: Improve equity, inclusivity, representation, and a sense of belonging at SFS meetings and within all Society events, activities, and communications, welcoming all.

Proposed Actions

- **Action 2.1** SFS will continually review and improve a comprehensive 'Code of Conduct' for participants at SFS sponsored events (<https://freshwater-science.org/about/society-governance/code-of-conduct>). *[CUV, Annual Meeting Committee]*
- **Action 2.2** SFS will continue to support and increase travel awards to the Annual Meeting for members with documented needs, and will use the SFS Meeting Philosophy guidelines to explore ways to decrease the cost of attending the Annual Meeting. *[Who: Elections and Place, Annual Meeting Committee(s), Awards Selection Committee]*
- **Action 2.3** SFS will prioritize accessibility and inclusivity when selecting meeting locations. Meeting locations will be chosen to balance geographic diversity, travel costs, sustainability, and inclusivity. *[Who: Election and Place Committee]*
- **Action 2.4** SFS will sponsor activities at the Annual Meeting that promote and celebrate the diversity and welcoming nature of our Society. Activities might include workshops that leverage the value of a diverse membership, workshops that train members to recognize and overcome implicit bias, and other timely topics. *[CUV, Annual Meeting Committee]*
- **Action 2.5** SFS will integrate initiatives to enhance inclusivity and diversity into committee efforts and programming by embedding strategic goals into meeting agendas and program evaluations. *[CUV, Annual Meeting Committee]*
- **Action 2.6** SFS will continue to support the Council of Underrepresented Voices, ensuring a platform at all annual meetings for the council to speak to the full Society, highlighting council activities in the SFS newsletters, and celebrating council members at the annual meeting. *[Communications Committee, Publications Committee, Annual Meeting Committee, CUV]*

Goal 3: Increase geographic, demographic, and disciplinary diversity of membership.

Proposed Actions

- **Action 3.1** SFS will continue to expand its international membership and scientific/policy impact via planning of international meetings and incorporation of international scientists into the SFS leadership and administrative structure while balancing conflicts with meeting affordability and accessibility. *[Who: Elections and Place Committee. Timeline: Annually when meeting bids are discussed.]*
- **Action 3.2** SFS will host a special session focused on a particular freshwater issue/challenge encountered in multiple different international regions at each annual meeting, focusing on a different issue/challenge each year, and will provide travel funding when possible for the international scientists who present at the session. *[Who: International Coordination Committee, Annual Meeting Committee. Timeline: During call for special sessions - session created at 2026 meeting.]*
- **Action 3.3** SFS will foster the growth of and support established chapters as well as encourage the development of new chapters, especially outside the United States, by updating the SFS website and social media presence to incorporate chapter activities and encouraging local or virtual chapter meetings within the next five years. Also see Action 8.6. *[Who: Membership and Data Committee, Communications Committee.]*
- **Action 3.4** SFS will strive to increase membership over the next 5 years by concerted efforts to retain current members and recruit new members. *[Who: Membership and Data Committee, Board of Directors]*
- **Action 3.5** SFS will continue to offer membership discounts to members from developing countries to increase engagement with underrepresented geographic regions in the Society. Also see Action 6.1. *[Who: Membership and Data Committee, International Coordination Committee, Finance Committee]*
- **Action 3.6** SFS will increase the visibility and activity of the diverse International Coordination Committee, which is composed of members from outside the United States and includes International Student Representatives from the Student Resource Committee. The main goals of this committee are to: brainstorm ways to increase accessibility to membership (e.g. through the creation of an Ambassador program), better communicate the needs of international scientists, and advocate to have needs met from the Board of Directors. *[Who: International Coordination Committee. Timeline: committee meeting at 2026 meeting, activities by 2027.]*

Goal 4: Support professional development and training for members, especially students and early career members, through programs and funding.

Proposed Actions

- **Action 4.1** SFS will enhance support for existing professional development programs for students and early career members (i.e., Emerge, Headwaters Leadership Academy, STREAM, mentor/mentee mixer [SRC]) by establishing dedicated funding and providing logistical assistance for each program. *[Who: Finance Committee and Board of Directors]*
- **Action 4.2** SFS will maintain the availability of travel funds for student members and increase the availability of travel funds for early career members. *[Who: Endowment Committee]*
- **Action 4.3** SFS will organize and deliver at least two professional development workshops per year, accessible to all members while specifically addressing student and early career needs. These workshops will be developed through collaborative efforts between the Student Resources and Early Career Development Committees, in partnership with relevant groups e.g., Emerge, Headwater Leadership Academy, STREAM). Also see Actions 1.3, 6.4, 8.4. *[Who: Student Resources Committee and Early Career Development Committee]*
- **Action 4.4** The Student Resources and the Early Career Development Committees will develop and implement a structured pathway to support students in transitioning into early career membership and leadership roles within SFS. This pathway will include clearly defined milestones and information about early career funding, development, and leadership opportunities. *[Who: Student Resources Committee and Early Career Development Committee]*
- **Action 4.5** SFS will update, maintain, and publicize the “Education and Engagement” section of the webpage to provide educational resources, including launching Freshwater TORRENT, a publicly available [database](#) that provides high-quality teaching resources for freshwater science education, and resources that highlight targeted recruitment and training of underrepresented groups, as a benefit to Primarily Undergraduate Institutions and non-profit members of the Society. *[Who: Education Committee]*
- **Action 4.6** SFS will continue supporting taxonomic training by organizing and administering the Taxonomic Certification Program both online and in person at the Annual Meeting. The TCC will continue translating taxonomic exams to Spanish and Portuguese and expanding the range of geographic images to enhance accessibility to international members in Latin America. Additionally, SFS will support at least one taxonomic workshop per year at the annual meeting. *[Who: Taxonomic Certification Committee]*

Goal 5: Support innovation of freshwater science by advancing theories, methodologies, and discoveries, and sharing cutting edge science.

Proposed Actions

- **Action 5.1** SFS will consider creating a mid-career scientific achievement award to complement the Hynes award, which could allow us to recognize non-traditional trajectories, barriers, life events, etc. that may prevent someone five years out of their PhD to gain recognition. *[Who: Awards Selection Committee, Finance Committee. Timeline: Next awards cycle after this Strategic Plan is approved.]*
- **Action 5.2** SFS will engage members more fully to solicit award nominations through social media, newsletters, emails, and at the Annual Meeting via online forms. *[Who: Awards Selection Committee, Communications Committee. Timeline: Next awards cycle after this strategic plan is approved.]*
- **Action 5.3** SFS will facilitate creating a network across the Society with a portal to enable members to connect beyond the Annual Meeting, encouraging collaborations, such as a LinkedIn page or via social media. *[Who: Communications Committee]*
- **Action 5.4** SFS will commit to continue hosting joint meetings with other related societies to enhance membership and increase topics at annual meetings, including inviting people outside of academia to attend, as well as encouraging members to attend other relevant society meetings. *[Who: Election and Place, BoD, Annual Meeting Committee. Timeline: Annually when meeting bids are discussed and as opportunities to attend other society meetings are available.]*

Goal 6: Build on the SFS Meeting Philosophy to improve the accessibility, affordability, and sustainability of the Annual Meeting to our Society and host communities.

Proposed Actions

- **Action 6.1** SFS will continue to offer membership and registration discounts to Society members from developing countries, including low and middle income countries, as defined by the World Bank. Also see Action 3.5. *[Who: Finance Committee, International Coordination Committee, Membership and Data Committee, and Board of Directors]*
- **Action 6.2** For annual meetings located in North America, SFS will commit to finding affordable host cities close to an international airport to attempt to increase accessibility while also using established resources to review/update the locations we consider for annual meetings by prioritizing locations that are safe for LGBTQ+ members, where all attendees have access to life saving health care, and other considerations that may influence the accessibility of our meeting location. *[Who: Election and Place Committee, Board of Directors. Timeline: because 2027 bidding is already underway and 2028 is the next planned JASM, we aim to have updated policies in place to guide selection of the 2029 meeting location.]*
- **Action 6.3** SFS will actively seek to include more working professionals at meetings, inviting consultants, local government officials, and local artists to speak at annual meetings. *[Who: Annual Meeting Committee, Science and Policy Committee]*

- **Action 6.4** SFS will actively explore affordable and equitable options for virtual engagement and/or regional meetings to engage members who cannot attend annual meetings. Also see Actions 1.3, 4.3, 8.4, 8.7. *[Who: Chapters, Elections & Place Committee, Board of Directors]*
- **Action 6.5** SFS will commit to increasing the accessibility of their conferences, including providing subsidized childcare for in-person attendees during annual meetings and ensuring meeting spaces are accessible and provide appropriate accommodations for members with disabilities. *[Who: Finance Committee, Annual Meeting Committee, Board of Directors. Timeline: We will have a formal process for ensuring accessible meetings in place for our 2026 Annual Meeting in Spokane, WA.]*
- **Action 6.6** SFS will explore mechanisms to increase the financial support available to early career and international members to attend annual meetings. *[Who: Finance Committee, Annual Meeting Committee, Board of Directors]*
- **Action 6.7** SFS will encourage community engagement and service activities in addition to field trips. E.g., sharing lists of minority-owned businesses near the conference center, providing opportunities for members to volunteer with organizations in the host cities and/or collaborate with local extension agencies to create documents related to applied research and environmental issues in the area. *[Who: Annual Meeting Committee]*
- **Action 6.8** SFS will commit to decreasing our environmental impact of meetings, including: seeking more sustainable venues for annual meetings (e.g., LEED buildings, hiring kitchens that source from local farms for offsite events, good vegan food options, etc.); identifying opportunities to support local restoration efforts through a carbon offset program; highlighting local businesses that offer sustainable services, including minority owned businesses (restaurants that partner with local farms, etc.); reducing disposable cups, plates, and utensils; encouraging members to bring refillable drink containers and name tags/lanyards to reduce waste. *[Who: Annual Meeting Committee, Election and Place Committee, Board of Directors. Timeline: because 2027 bidding is already underway and 2028 is our next planned JASM, we aim to have updated policies in place to guide our selection of the 2029 meeting location. We encourage near-term conference planning to keep all of these actions in mind, when possible within current contracts for meeting services.]*

Goal 7: Elevate the reputation and impact of *Freshwater Science*, the go-to journal for members of SFS, both today and in the future.

Proposed Actions

- **Action 7.1** SFS will coordinate with the journal's publisher, editor, and editorial staff to improve communication between journal and the Society in all journal functions (e.g., oversight of financial matters, the endowment, the journal budget, contract negotiations with the publisher, etc.) and related publishing needs of the Society. *[Who: Publications Committee]*
- **Action 7.2** SFS will work towards an efficient and transparent editorial process for all manuscripts submitted to *Freshwater Science*, including guidelines for handling

times, guidelines for reviewers, and support to early career authors. *[Who: EIC and Associate Editors; Publications Committee]*

- **Action 7.3** SFS will expand types of articles and disciplinary and geographic diversity of articles submitted and published in *Freshwater Science*. *[Who: EIC, Associate Editors, Publications Committee]*
- **Action 7.4** The journal will publish articles from research presented at Special Sessions at the Annual Meeting and provide information to enhance connections to the Society. *[Who: EIC, Publications Committee, Annual Meeting Committee]*

Goal 8: Continually seek new and innovative ways to improve communication among and services to our members.

Proposed Actions

- **Action 8.1** SFS will conduct an annual survey of membership after each annual meeting and request suggestions for improvements to meetings and Society functions. Specific actions could include, but are not limited to, the following: create focus groups for specific member segments, implement a suggestion box feature on the website with transparent tracking of suggestions, strengthen its social media presence to highlight work being done by the Society and its members, share regular “You Asked, We Delivered” updates via the newsletter to show how member feedback leads to changes in the Society. *[Who: Membership and Data Committee, Communications Committee]*
- **Action 8.2** SFS will continue to send monthly newsletters to communicate important announcements such as changes to the journal, calls for special issues of the journal, annual meeting announcements, nominations for awards, etc. *[Who: Communications. Timeline: Continuing with current trajectory.]*
- **Action 8.3** SFS will enhance digital engagement with Society members. Specific actions could include, but are not limited to, the following: invest in an updated Society website, establish virtual “office hours” with Society leadership and/or committee chairs, develop a podcast or blog featuring career studies and early career/student research (potentially run by SRC Social Media Committee), implement a members-only discussion forum organized by research topics and career interests. *[Who: Communications and Student Resources Committee]*
- **Action 8.4** Strengthen community building via a peer-to-peer knowledge exchange program based on career stage. Specific actions could include, but are not limited to, the following: workshops on communicating with policy makers, land owners, and other stakeholders, workshops to develop CV, resume, and other application materials, art exhibits or discussions of other ways to communicate science, workshops on transitioning to other careers, and informal interviews with members outside of academia. Also see Actions 3.8, 4.3, 8.4. *[Who: Early Career Development Committee, Student Resources Committee, International Coordination Committee]*
- **Action 8.5** SFS will enhance accessibility of Society content by providing additional multilingual resources and communications and ensure all digital content meets accessibility standards. *[Who: Communications Committee]*

- **Action 8.6** SFS will continue to find new ways to serve members with a wide variety of career foci and institutional strengths including employees of state and federal agencies, municipal governments, nongovernmental organizations, consulting and technical firms, primarily undergraduate-serving institutions, and other colleges and universities. Also see Action 3.3 (new chapters). *[Who: Board of Directors, Communications Committee]*
- **Action 8.7** SFS will identify ways to best serve members in a variety of career stages including pre-college, undergraduate student, graduate student, early career, regular and emeritus members via new awards, career-stage specific virtual coffee hours to facilitate networking, and virtual workshops and seminars for skills training. *[Who: Awards Selection Committee, Early Career Development Committee, Student Resources Committee, International Coordination Committee]*

Future Funding for Strategic Plan Initiatives (2025–2030)

Initiatives addressing the Strategic Plan have faced significant funding constraints over the past five years, requiring reductions in both the number of funded Innovation Fund grant proposals and award amounts. Moving forward, either an increase in funding for the Innovation Fund is necessary to restore full award values, or the maximum allowable award should be adjusted to align with financial constraints. Moving forward, the Society should strive to support efforts to diversify revenue sources, reassess funding allocation strategies, and adapt funding priorities to align with strategic objectives. Ensuring financial stability will allow the Society to sustain its core initiatives while supporting new and innovative projects in freshwater science.

Building on previous investments, the Society for Freshwater Science (SFS) must implement strategies to sustain and expand its funding for strategic initiatives. To ensure continued support, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Establish a Dedicated Strategic Initiatives Fund:** Transition from reliance on meeting surpluses to a dedicated fund sourced from reserves and external grants. We suggest allocating a minimum of \$30k annually to maintain the level of support for strategic initiatives. This would provide the same level of support to Strategic Initiatives (i.e., Innovation Fund) under the set allocation model from 2018-2020 in the previous strategic plan and reverse a \$18,974 decrease accounting for inflation that has occurred from 2020 to 2025.
- **Expand the Request for Proposals (RFP) Process:** Increase the frequency of RFP submission deadlines to twice per year (April and November), enabling more timely support for innovative projects.
- **Focus on Underrepresented Goals:** While professional development has received substantial funding, additional emphasis should be placed on proposals to enhance public engagement and diversity to address a broader range of Society goals.
- **Leverage Partnerships:** Collaborate with external organizations (e.g., CASS) to co-fund initiatives, particularly those aimed at global outreach and training the next generation of scientists.
- **Evaluate and Adapt:** Implement a robust evaluation framework for LRPC to assess the impact of funded initiatives and adapt funding strategies based on outcomes.

Additionally, donation trends must be closely monitored, especially in light of the 2024 downturn in donations, where they decreased by two-thirds, alongside a 50% decrease in the number of donors (Fig. 6). This may be linked to shifts in donor focus due to the presidential cycle and requires ongoing assessment.

Acknowledgements

The Society extends a special thank you to all SFS members who have provided input through the member survey or in written comments on earlier drafts of this strategic plan.

We specifically thank past and current leadership and BoD members for their significant contributions to the Strategic Plan, including: Andy Leidolf, David Arscott, Wil Wollheim, Sherri Johnson, Erin Hotchkiss, Steven Thomas, John Kominoski, Ashley Moerke, Allison Roy, Alonso Ramirez, Checo Colón-Gaud, Sally Entrekin, Natalie Griffiths, AJ Reisinger, Erasme Uyizeye, Frank Akamagwuna, Zanethia Barnett, Jim Hood, Peter Levi, Abagael Pruitt, Lauren Kinsman-Costello, Anna Hamilton, Amy Burgin, Manda Kambikambi.

David Costello and the Membership and Data Committee provided data and figures related to membership and compared demographics of survey participants to the membership. Peter Levi, Treasurer, provided financial data related to strategic investments and donations. Andy Leidolf, Executive Director, provided Annual Meeting data and confirmed many names, dates, and titles.

We thank the current (and recent past) committee and chapter chairs who provided input on the Plan, including: Anna Hamilton, Amanda Rugenski, Ben Block, David Strayer, Sherri Johnson, Sally Entrekin, Emma Rosi, Steve Hamilton, John Kominoski, Allison Roy, Checo Colón-Gaud, Peter McIntyre, Eric Benbow, Amy Burgin, Lauren Kinsman-Costello, Laura Naslund, Caleb Robbins, David Costello, Champagne Cunningham, Lindsey Rasnake, Anna Vincent, Abagael Pruitt, Corey Krabbenhoft, Megan Fork, Bernard Sweeney, Sandra Clinton, Erasme Uyizeye, Diana Oviedo, Karen Gaines, Elizabeth Sudduth, Fred Govedich, Zanethia Barnett, Amy Marcarelli, Amy Rosemond, Marc Peipoch, Jonathan Lopez, Angela De Palma Dow, John Olson, Nelson Odume, Carla Atkinson, Zee Searles Mazzacano, Shannon Clausen, Jessica Corman, Weston Nowlin, Rebeca de Jesús, Paula Caroline dos Reis Oliveira, Daniel Allen, Subodh Sharma, Erica Smith.

Appendix 1: SFS Membership Survey Results

In fall 2024, the LRPC developed a survey that went to all SFS members requesting demographic information and feedback on 6 draft goals for the 2025–2030 Strategic Plan. The survey included an additional open-ended question for each goal: What existing or new activity(ies) would you like to see in the next 5 years for Goal X? A total of 162 Society members completed the survey (~11% of all Society members), and the respondents were representative of the Society (Table 5).

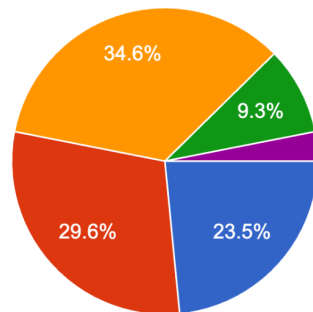
Table 5. Proportions of the 2025 membership in each category and proportion of survey respondents in the same category. Categories are not mutually exclusive and thus cannot be summed.

Category	2025 Membership (%)	Survey respondents (%)
<u>Career Stage</u>		
Early career	39	30
Student	33	23
<u>Geographic Location</u>		
North America	83	91
Chapter member	34	44
<u>Area of Employment</u>		
Academic (all)	68	65
Academic: Faculty	22	33
State/Provincial/Tribal Government	10	12
Consulting/Private	8	8

Results from the survey are included below. The challenges that were identified in open response questions included: funding and costs for attending the meeting; addressing environmental problems, political landscape, and expanding science applications; improving the journal’s impact to the literature; communication; and human vulnerability.

What is your SFS membership status (career stage)?

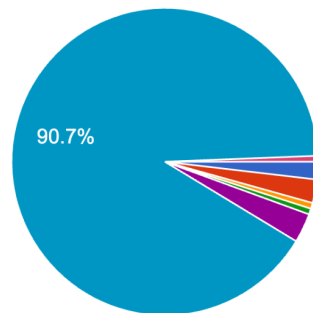
162 responses



- Student
- Early Career (<10 years from graduation)
- Regular
- Emeritus
- Not a current member
- Prefer not to say

What is your geographic location?

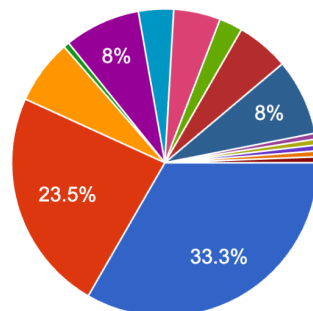
162 responses



- Asia
- Africa
- Australia/Oceania
- Central America
- Europe
- North America
- South America
- Prefer not to say

What is your current area of employment?

162 responses

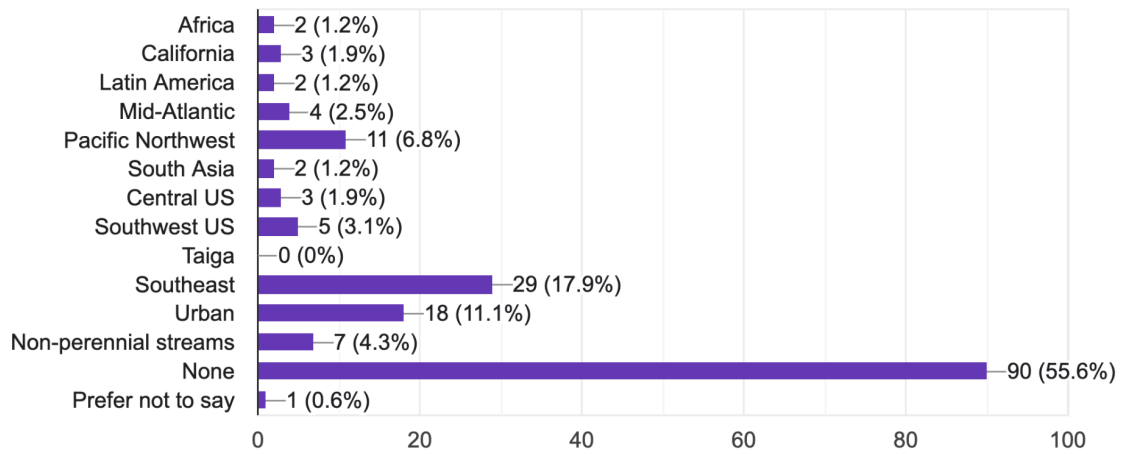


- Academia - Faculty
- Academia - Graduate Student
- Academic – Postdoctoral or research...
- Academia - Undergraduate Student
- Federal or National Government
- State/Provincial/Regional/Tribal Gover...
- Non-Profit or Non-Governmental Orga...
- Private Industry

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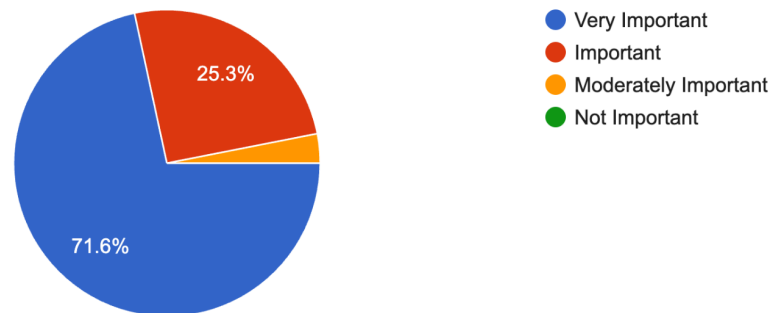
Are you a member of any of these Chapters? Check all that apply.

162 responses



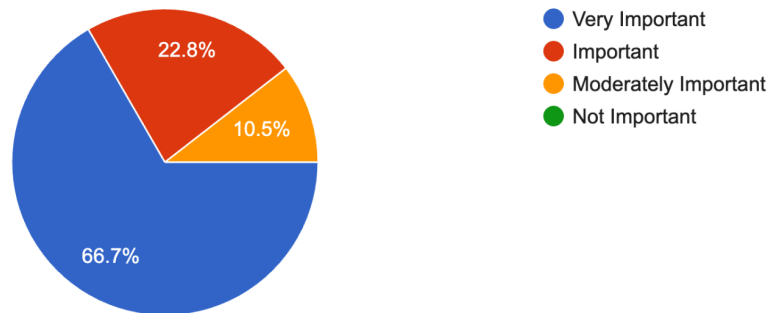
Goal 1: Continue and improve communication of freshwater science to policy makers, managers, and the general public.

162 responses



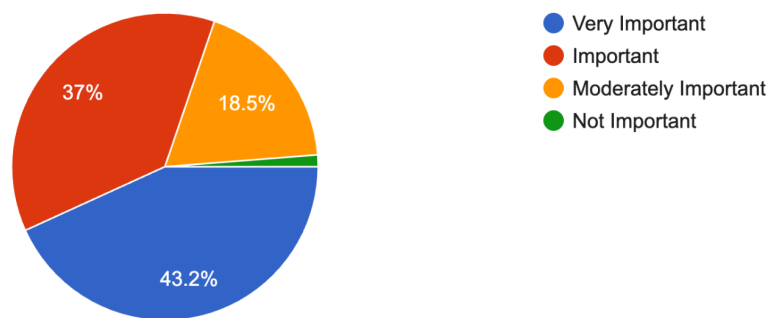
Goal 2: Improve equity, inclusivity, representation, and a sense of belonging at SFS meetings and within all Society events, activities, and communications, welcoming all.

162 responses



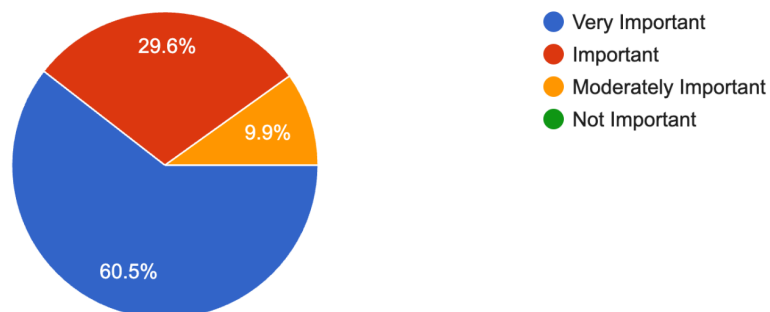
Goal 3: Increase geographic, demographic, and disciplinary diversity of membership.

162 responses



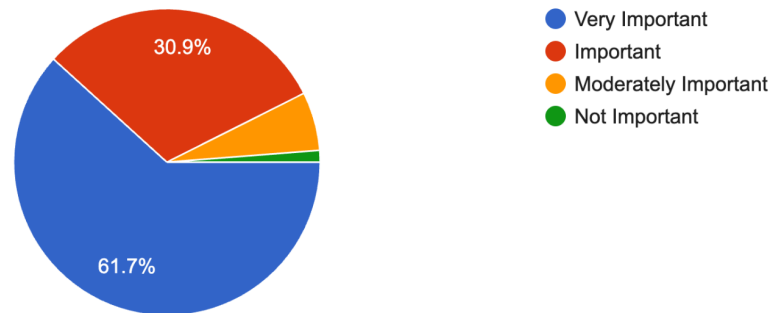
Goal 4: Support professional development and training for members, especially students and early career members, through programs and funding.

162 responses



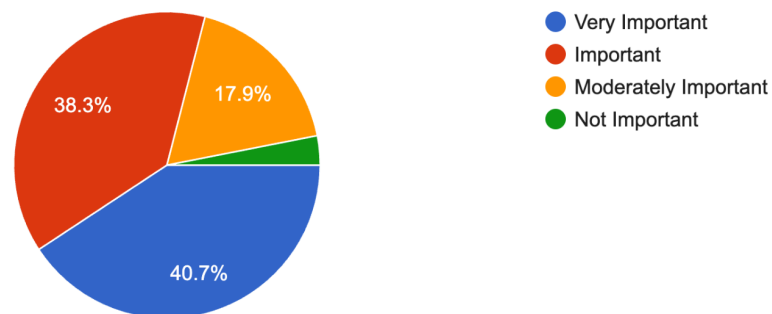
Goal 5: Support innovation of freshwater science by advancing theories, methodologies, and discoveries, and sharing cutting edge science through our Society's flagship journal, Freshwater Science.

162 responses



Goal 6: Minimize environmental impacts of the Society (e.g., annual meetings) and contribute to local freshwater stewardship and outreach.

162 responses



Appendix 2: SFS Statements on Racism and Equity, Diversity, and Ethics

Racism and Equity

Acts of racism and oppression call us to assess our own actions and those of our Society. We stand with all people demanding justice, and acknowledge the personal pain that is being experienced by many around the world, particularly underrepresented minorities, from recent events. We are vigorously committed to ensuring that the sciences can be a welcoming place for all people, especially those who have historically been discriminated against. The Society for Freshwater Science calls upon our members, colleagues, and friends, to join us in advocating for and creating safe and equitable environments in which to live, work, and practice science.

Approved by the ExComm in 2020.

Diversity

The Society for Freshwater Science is dedicated to promoting diversity among its members and welcomes and encourages participation from all, regardless of ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, physical or mental difference, religion, age, or national origin. The SFS is inclusive and accepting of all people and built on tolerance, respect, and a welcoming spirit at all of our activities. We strive to actively promote diversity across all levels of our society including members, leaders, committees, and staff. We value a diverse community and believe it fosters a richer understanding of freshwater ecosystems and conservation of global freshwater resources. Members with questions, comments or concerns about SFS diversity issues are encouraged to raise them with a member of the SFS Education and Diversity Committee.

Approved by the SFS Board of Directors in December 2015, and by the membership on 23 May 2016.

Ethics

As professionals of aquatic sciences, we are obligated to provide clear, accurate, and timely information; to encourage open discourse, both professional and public; and to participate in the debate that contributes to informed choices by the public. We are also obligated to select for ourselves and to recommend to others courses of action we believe will protect and rehabilitate the biological diversity and integrity of aquatic ecosystems.

Passed by the Executive Committee on 6 June 2004, and the membership on 7 June 2004

These statements are also available on the SFS website at:

<https://freshwater-science.org/about/society-governance/society-statements>