

OBFS Member Survey Results

April 2017



Submitted by the Outreach Committee

May 02, 2017

OBFS Member Survey

On behalf of the OBFS Outreach Committee, we would like to thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The primary goal of the survey is to gather information about the members' needs and preferences, in several key areas of operation. Your responses and comments will be confidential. Your input is vital to allow the organization to most effectively serve its members. Thank you!

NOTE: All responses will be anonymous, unless you choose to include your contact information.

Q1) How long has your Station (or Individual Member) been a member of OBFS?

• Answered: 66 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses
1-2 years	9 Members (13.64%)
3-5 years	8 Members (12.12%)
6-10 years	14 Members (21.21%)
11-20 years	12 Members (18.18%)
over 20 years	20 Members (30.30%)
Other (please specify)	3 Members (4.55%)

Q2) What are your primary reasons for being a member of OBFS? (click all that apply)

• Answered: 65 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices	Responses
Annual Meetings	44 (67.69%)
Listserv	34 (52.31%)
Networking and Communication with other Members	60 (92.31%)
Research Collaborations and/or other potential collaborations	30 (46.15%)
Sense of Community and other Social Aspects	38 (58.46%)
Updates from NSF and other Federal Agencies	33 (50.77%)

Comments

- resource for any issues that arise at our field station.
- Great community!
- It's a great bunch of dedicated, friendly people!
- serve as a collective voice to funding agencies; offer science-based guidance to decision makers, managers
- Hoping to work together to accomplish more than we can alone.
- Create stronger national profile for field stations.

Q3) How often do you, or someone from your Station, attend the OBFS Annual Meetings?

• Answered: 66 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses
Always	19 (28.79%)
Often, but not every year	16 (24.24%)
Occasionally	13 (19.70%)
Rarely	7 (10.61%)
Never	7 (10.61%)
Other (please specify)	4 (6.06%)

Q4) Are expenses a limiting factor in choosing whether or not to attend the Annual Meeting?

• Answered: 65 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices–	Responses–
Yes	18 (27.69%)
No	18 (27.69%)
Often	2 (3.08%)
Occasionally	12 (18.46%)
Rarely	8 (12.31%)
Other (please specify)	7 (10.77%)

Q5) Which of the following topics would you like to see addressed at the annual meetings? (click all that apply)

• Answered: 64 Skipped: 2

Answer Choices	Responses
Administration of Field Stations	49 (76.56%)
Art & Science Convergence	25 (39.06%)
Bioinformatics	9 (14.06%)
Citizen Science	29 (45.31%)
Climate Change and/or other Emerging Issues	28 (43.75%)
Collaborative Projects between Stations	47 (73.44%)
Communicating Science to elected officials and/or the public	28 (43.75%)
Development and other Fundraising/Friendraising Ideas	45 (70.31%)
Education	22 (34.38%)
Field Trips	21 (32.81%)

Answer Choices	Responses
Marketing and Public Relations	27 (42.19%)
NSF and other federal funding sources	35 (54.69%)
Research at Field Stations & Marine Labs	33 (51.56%)
Resource Management (land, fisheries, wildlife, etc.)	24 (37.50%)
Sensor Technology	22 (34.38%)
STEM Outreach	22 (34.38%)
Workshops	22 (34.38%)

Comments

- Partnerships between field stations and other agencies
- Broadly related to all of these topics, keeping stations nimble and relevant to research and education needs
- Lobbying with AIBS. OBFS can and should do what we can't effectively do ourselves: work at larger scales, collaborate with other organizations and institutions.

Q6) Periodically, OBFS holds the Annual Meeting at an international site. Please rank the following options, in terms of your preference for potential international meeting locations:

• Answered: 63 Skipped: 3

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total	Score
Africa	8	3	3	3	5	12	7	2	43	4.42
Asia	0	2	5	6	5	9	13	1	41	3.61
Australia/NZ	9	6	3	6	11	4	4	1	44	5.16
Canada	15	7	6	5	3	6	6	0	48	5.67
C. America	9	13	10	5	5	4	1	0	47	6.00
Europe	7	11	9	5	5	3	7	1	48	5.33
S. America	3	9	12	12	6	0	1	2	45	5.49
No pref.	12	0	1	0	1	0	0	11	25	4.68

Q7) OBFS has found that late September is typically the best time for the Annual Meeting and will adhere to this time frame, when possible. In the event that new dates are necessary, please rank the following options, in terms of your preference for alternative meeting times:

• Answered: 60 Skipped: 6

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Score
late August	18	6	6	2	9	4	45	4.22
early September	12	19	7	3	6	0	47	4.60
early-mid October	13	9	10	4	6	1	43	4.37
late October-early November	8	13	5	15	2	1	44	4.16
late November	1	3	9	8	13	5	39	2.87
No preference	7	1	2	2	1	10	23	3.17

Q8) How often do you visit the OBFS website?

• Answered: 66 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses
Often	3 (4.55%)
Occasionally	47 (71.21%)
Rarely	14 (21.21%)
Never	0 (0.00%)
Other (please specify)	2 (3.03%)

Q9) How often do you participate in the quarterly OBFS Board conference calls?

• Answered: 66 Skipped 0

Answer Choices–	Responses–
Always	4 (6.06%)
Often, but not always	2 (3.03%)
Occasionally	6 (9.09%)
Rarely	9 (13.64%)
Never	42 (63.64%)
Other (please specify)	3 (4.55%)

**Q10) In which of the following areas, would you like to become more involved?
(click all that apply)**

• Answered: 52 Skipped 14

Answer Choices	Responses
Annual Meeting Planning Committee	11 (21.15%)
Communication Committee (soon to be formed)	7 (13.46%)
Development Committee	8 (15.38%)
Executive Committee (President, Vice President, Secretary, etc.)	6 (11.54%)
Editorial Work	3 (5.77%)
Finance Committee	0 (0.00%)
Governance Committee	3 (5.77%)
History of OBFS	1 (1.92%)
Human Diversity Award Committee	4 (7.69%)
International Committee	7 (13.46%)
Nominating Committee	1 (1.92%)
Outreach Committee	6 (11.54%)
Website work/Network Coordination	2 (3.85%)
I am not interested in becoming more involved.	25 (48.08%)

Comments

- I do not have the capacity to get more involved at this point in time and I hope to change that in the future.
- Will in the future but no capacity right now
- European branch of OBFS
- I'm interested in becoming more involved, but currently very time constrained. Perhaps in the future...
- I'm considering more involvement but haven't identified my preference yet... as a retiree, I find it too ironic to just be part of History (sigh)...
- I already serve on the board so my interest level is high but I am not seeking more committee work at this time.
- Trying to indicate above that I would be interested being more involved in recruiting new member stations both in North America and international. See also my comments below.
- The above are areas in which someone from our station should become engaged. I'm retiring and phasing out involvement in OBFS.
- Sorry, I am so over committed now its not even funny!
- I am always torn about getting more involved because I'm working so much overtime at my job here. I love OBFS and keep hoping that I'll be able to help more soon. So I've very interested but not right now.
- I need to become more familiar with the activities and would limit my activity to participating at the annual meetings. I have found the Research About field stations incredibly useful.
- Unsure personally-I am about to make a work transition; I could potentially be available for greater involvement
- Already active in the annual fundraising auction and Human Diversity committee.

Q11) Rank the following OBFS strategic goals in order of importance to you:

• Answered: 64 Skipped 2

	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Score
Increase the value to society of the science done at Field Stations & Marine Laboratories, as well as the public understanding of that value	35 (57.38%)	10 (16.39%)	9 (14.75%)	3 (4.92%)	4 (6.56%)	61	4.13
Increase the scientific value of Field Stations & Marine Laboratories by increasing the flow of information, both between Stations and scientists and among Field Stations & Marine Labs, themselves	3 (5.00%)	15 (25.00%)	16 (26.67%)	16 (26.67%)	10 (16.67%)	60	2.75
Enhance the synergies between research and education	7 (11.67%)	15 (25.00%)	11 (18.33%)	14 (23.33%)	13 (21.67%)	60	2.82
Promote the flow of scientific information for environmental stewardship by ensuring appropriate access by scientists and students to terrestrial, aquatic and marine systems.	6 (10.34%)	11 (18.97%)	13 (22.41%) 13	15 (25.86%) 15	13 (22.41%) 13	58	2.69
Increase the operational effectiveness of Field Stations and Marine Laboratories	12 (19.67%)	12 (19.67%)	12 (19.67%)	8 13.11%	17 (27.87%)	61	2.90

Q12) I am generally satisfied with the value I receive from OBFS, relative to the cost of membership.

• Answered: 64 Skipped 2

Answer Choices–	Responses–
Strongly Agree	28 (43.75%)
Agree	30 (46.88%)
Neutral	3 (4.69%)
Disagree	2 (3.13%)
Strongly Disagree	0 (0.00%)
Other (please specify)	1 (1.56%)

Q13) In what ways can OBFS be of greater service and value to you? (click all that apply)

• Answered: 56 Skipped 10

Answer Choices	Responses
Convenient Meeting Locations	19 (33.93%)
Greater Communication with Members	25 (44.64%)
More Material on the Website	20 (35.71%)
More Regional Meetings	22 (39.29%)
More Skill Training Workshops	33 (58.93%)

Comments

- I am happy with the OBFS and appreciate the increasing activity over the past few years.
- More responsiveness to suggested meeting topics from members. I suggested a new idea for a panel to several of the OBFS leaders and got no traction. When I arrived at the next meeting, I felt like the topics were the same as always--and delivered by the same people. Why not mix up the program a little bit and try something new on occasion?
- I currently lead a skill training workshop (sensor networks, solar power, datalogger programming, wireless telemetry, etc.) associated with my field station, which is offered approximately every other year... I suppose OBFS could be potentially helpful with this effort in providing some scholarships for folks to attend who are associated with OBFS field stations.
- Enhancing OBFS's visibility nationally would give greater value to my membership. Work towards communicating value of field stations in general and impacting local, state, and national policies.
- Much of my actual work time is consumed in day to day station management issues. Any effort that OBFS can make to improve my stations sustainability and day to day efficiency are welcome. The one item I didn't check above; I think meeting sites have been very balanced regarding location. This is maybe more random than planned but it works out for me.
- Work with other organizations/associations within AIBS to increase support from Congress and The White House for research and education. This is in a nascent phase and could be greatly increased. All you have to do is look at the spiraling success rates at NSF and other funding agencies to realize we're in a crisis.
- How can OBFS increase collaborations among member stations? I'm not sure what that looks like, but it would really strengthen the value of OBFS>
- We used to have a "Small Stations and New Stations" committee focused on what we felt were the major interests of those kinds of stations, but after several years the Board felt that their needs were after all not

Answer Choices	Responses
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really unique, just different in degree. I was the chair of that, and numerous small stations did hold their own meeting some ten years ago (once in Ohio in February). The effort was not repeated.

- A little to early for me to respond to this question
- Funding increases to support travel for non faculty field station staff
- More effective voice and planning. More continuity with previous planning efforts.

Q14) Please share any additional comments or suggestions for consideration.

• Answered: 17 Skipped 49

- Would have liked to see the "small" field station meetings go further.
- I understand that the timing works for most folks the annual meeting. i note however it usually is very close to the jewish high holidays and combined with distance and expense, i will continue to not attend.
- I believe OBFS is a critical organization to bridge classroom learning, hands-on experience and science-driven policy decisions. I would be more involved if I had more time and more to offer. I am happy to be a member and to promote OBFS to my students.
- We are in Brazil, so distance limits possibilities for closer collaboration. We really like OBFS's light touch
- besides getting to know my colleagues, access to NSF FSML Program Director has been the greatest value for my time and commitment to OBFS
- Overall I think membership in OBFS is an outstanding deal and I get much more back from OBFS than I put into it. There is some guilt there. One valuable aspect to me of the annual meetings is a chance to look at another station in some depth. A chance to talk with that stations employees, so see what sorts of management choices have been made and what sorts of compromises have been made to keep the station functional for its users. I'd like to do more of this, maybe on a regional level as an event we do outside of the annual meeting. Maybe an irregular OBFS sponsored station visit event, just 2 days with an overnight (3 would be better). I think this sort of event could be tied into an effort to raise funds and awareness for the hosting station and for FSML / OBFS in general. OBFS is already doing this on some levels. I think this would be useful for the station, would give exposure to smaller stations that will NEVER host an annual meeting, if 12 to 25 people participate the group interaction and discussion would be highly valuable for all. This could maybe be the core effort for a program of regional meetings. I think this would be good for smaller stations and would be an opportunity to try out the potential for a station to host the annual meeting in the future. These need not be heavily planned events. They should be easy and simple for the host station and I'd think simple would be acceptable to most participants. Like my comment above regarding my interest in recruiting more members to OBFS; this sort of effort is something I would be interested in pursuing. I do think it would tie in well with an effort to recruiting non-member stations regionally.
- OBFS does a great job. Publications and reports demonstrating the importance of field stations in general are important elements that can be shared with each individual station's administration to help them understand the value of field stations.
- OBFS rocks!
- OBFS is a great organization, and I appreciate all the great work provided by its leadership.
- I think it might help the whole if we developed a set of standardized methods, and design standards for the attributes we most commonly share.

- OBFS might find financial assistance to offer support to field stations with larger initiatives, like developing the UCNRS's reserve reservation and use-tracking system, iDigBio's push for small collections digitization, expanded work with AIBS, etc.
- Is it time to consider changing the name of OBFS? I know we revisit this every now and then, but if field stations are to become of value to the nation, they need to serve all disciplines. "Biological" even excludes other scientific disciplines. Organization of Field Stations? Or even consider a name that says what we do, rather than what we have.
- This is consistently the first or second place organization whose meetings I most enjoy attending. I retired last year so will probably attend less often. At Augustana College in Illinois, we recently took the bold step in selling our major field station Green Wing Environmental Lab to better preserve it. Since our annual budget was too small to do more than needed maintenance on the three field stations we own (which include Beling Ecological Preserve and Collinson Ecological Preserve) we sold 395 of the 410 acres to the Illinois Audubon Society which has the money, expertise and manpower to do big time restoration and management. I was told by their head management guru that it would take perhaps \$300K to do the job (largely eradicating Asiatic honeysuckles and related weeds) which was FAR beyond our resources. So the College realized a large profit in the sale (over \$2M) which was used to establish a new endowed chair in environmental science and conservation and a large endowment for field station operations. Illinois Audubon has indicated that they eventually plan to put the unit into Illinois Nature Preserve status, and we have the right to use it for teaching and research as we always have.
- One of our biggest challenges is maintaining longevity with staff and maintaining historical data. Support with respect to operational and HR systems, data management, and similar topics are important to us
- great work by a volunteer organization
- I think that as a volunteer organization what OBFS does is great. Once it becomes an organization with professional staff will be poised to serve its membership more broadly.

Q15 Optional: Please feel free to provide your name and/or your Station's name and contact information.

- Answered: 26 Skipped 40

NOTE: The names and other contact information of those who provided are left off of this report; but these will be shared with the Board. In particular, those names of those individuals who expressed an interest in a specific area, such as a committee, will be passed along to the appropriate OBFS Board members to follow up.

Thanks to everyone who took the time to provide feedback.
It is much appreciated and will be valuable to the organization.