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The Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society

DRUMROLLLLLLLLLL.....

The 2020 Montana Chapter Annual Conference

*Private lands conservation: Where it has gone and
where it is going*

February 3-7

Copper King Hotel & Convention Center, Butte, MT

Our conference theme this year revolves around the multifaceted approach to habitat conservation on private lands and exploring the successes and failures from the past, what is currently working, and how those will help guide us into the future. Nearly two thirds of Montana is privately owned and working lands cover a large portion of that footprint, as agriculture and ranching/livestock production are continually the lead economic industries within the state. Additionally, Montana is home to a wide array of

wildlife and habitats. These factors serve as perfect building blocks to work across private lands for the shared goal of conservation. Whether we are working on a grass restoration project, incorporating grazing infrastructure into expiring CRP to keep grass-based agriculture on the ground, modifying or removing fences to increase permeability of the landscape for migratory species, or layering a conservation easement on a working ranch, we need to effectively work with private landowners. Given the constant constraints on wildlife and wildlife conservation, it is important that we continually work together to keep our systems intact and improve where we can. This will ensure that we continue to keep our traditions alive and habitat viable in the “The Last Best Place”.

For **conference registration** and a link to **hotel reservations**, [CLICK HERE!](#)

A block of rooms is set aside at the govt rate of \$96/night (single occupancy) and \$111/night (double occupancy) through **January 15th**. The hotel link seems to only give you the king bed option right now so if you want two beds (because having a roommate is the most fun and economical way to conference!), there's this thing called a phone, where you dial numbers, and talk to a human....:-) Just make sure to ask for the group rate under "Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society". Please contact us if you have any issues with this.

Early bird conference registration available through **January 15th** for \$135/member, \$185/non-member. After January 15th the price goes up to \$165/member, \$215/non-member.

****You will get a very stylish TWS t-shirt with ALL NEW DESIGNS! with your registration****

We have 2 great workshops being offered this year and they're both FffFrReEEeeEE!!!!!!

- **Mineral Rights and Private Land Conservation**

- Instructor: Zachary Zipfel, Montana FWP
- During this workshop, participants will take a look into surface and subsurface mineral rights and the complexities that they may add when working on easements or habitat projects on private lands.
- **Conservation Programs Training**
 - Instructors: Catherine Wightman, Montana FWP and Abby Dresser, Ducks Unlimited
 - Unlimited
 - This workshop continues on the foundation it built a few years ago and will provide a refreshing overview of how to utilize conservation programs with private landowners and provide new updates on existing programs as well as what has been rolled out over the last two years

Abstract/Presentation and Poster Submission:

FIRST CALL FOR ABSTRACTS!

The deadline for abstract submission is: **January 1**. *We will be accepting abstracts on all aspects of wildlife research, conservation and management.* We would be especially interested in abstracts related to our conference theme. **We had some glitches last year with the submissions so if you don't get a confirmation after you submit your abstract, LET US KNOW!** And if at all possible, avoid using a colon (:) in your submission (apparently that was what caused the glitches, and none of us are computer savvy enough to know how to fix it....)

SECOND CALL FOR AWARDS AND SMALL GRANTS!

Small Grants proposals are due by **December 31, 2019**, and Award Nominations are due by **December 14, 2019**. The Small Grants have gone up from \$500 to up to \$1000 each! And remember, we have a brand new award for you rising professional biologists out there! Details are posted at: <https://mttws.org/awards/>

Plenary Speakers

For the plenary session this year we are proud to say that we have put together a group of individuals who are leading the charge in conserving Montana's many habitats through some very novel approaches. Through scientific, holistic approaches that work cooperatively with private landowners, the members of the plenary session are continually moving the conservation needle forward. We hope that you will join us as we hear about their individual approaches, what has worked and what has not, and where they think habitat conservation is heading in the future!

- **Bob Sanders** - Ducks Unlimited
(Manager of Conservation Programs for Montana)
- **Brian Martin** – The Nature Conservancy (Montana Grasslands Conservation Director)
- **Leo Barthelmess** – Rancher Stewardship Alliance (President)
- **Rick Northrup** – Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (Wildlife Habitat Bureau Chief)
- **Greg Neudecker** – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (MT State Coordinator)
- and a representative from the **American Prairie Reserve** (TBD)

Wildlife Trivia (answer on bottom): How many acres were enrolled in Montana FWP's Block Management Program for the 2019 hunting season?

A. 7.1 million B. 710,000 C. 71,000 D. 7,100

ART CONTEST!

Do you like to doodle during classes or student chapter TWS meetings? Do you supplement your work-study income as a world-famous tattoo artist with her own show on cable TV? Do you like money and free stuff?



IF SO, please consider designing the cover for our 2020 Annual Conference program! It doesn't HAVE to incorporate this year's conference theme, but it'd be a lot cooler if it did. If we choose your submission, you'll get \$100 (WHAT) as well as free conference registration!

STUDENTS ONLY! Submit your masterpieces to mttws.preselect@gmail.com.

A sneak peek of Movie Night at the Annual
Conference - Deer 139

“Deer 139” follows University of Wyoming research scientist Sam Dwinnell and two friends as they hike, ski, and pack raft the path of the collared mule deer known as #139 for 85 miles through western Wyoming and learn to see the world differently in the process.

Go to <https://www.deer139film.org/> for more info!



Newsletter editor's note: I checked out the 2-minute sneak peek on their website and this film looks AMAZING



A great gray owl poses for Mike Thompson on the Blackfoot-Clearwater WMA, southeast of Seeley Lake. Got a cool photo? Send it to mttws.secretary@gmail.com!

We STILL need your help with president-elect nominations!

We have one candidate so far for **President-Elect**, for a three-year term. **We need at least two to have a valid election!**

Finding candidates has been difficult in recent years. Serving as president of MTTWS can be a big commitment and is certainly challenging, but we've yet to hear of anyone who regretted their decision to run--you get to put together the highly-anticipated annual conference and choose the theme and guest speakers, network with some truly great professionals in our field, and lead a state full of passionate wildlife biologists toward building and thriving in this dynamic career. We realize the board has been dominated by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks staff in recent years, and we'd love for this to change! Please consider running for this office, and let Liz Bradley (mttws.president@gmail.com) know if you're ready to take the plunge.

MTTWS News:

**Montana's first Leopold
Conservation Award
recipient**



The Milton Ranch has been selected as the recipient of the inaugural Montana Leopold Conservation Award. Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the award recognizes farmers and foresters who inspire others with their dedication to land, water and wildlife habitat management on private, working land.

In [Montana](#), the Office of Governor Steve Bullock, Montana Department of Agriculture, and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation's Rangeland Resources Committee present the award with Sand County Foundation. Bill and Dana Milton of Roundup, Montana, were presented with \$10,000 and a crystal award at the Montana Farm Bureau Federation's Convention in Billings on November 12.

The Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society was one of many groups that helped

sponsor the award this year. A complete article about the Milton Ranch can be found on the [Sand County Foundation website](#) and a YouTube video about the ranch can be found [here!](#)

The following picture was taken at the appreciation dinner for the Milton Ranch that was held last week in Billings. Included in the photo is Kelvin Johnson, MT TWS past-president, Stacey Barta, DNRC (who is the Montana lead for this award), and Bill Milton, the 2019 Montana LCA recipient.



Got something for our next newsletter? Send it to mttws.secretary@gmail.com!

We want your photos! I know, we're so needy....

You may remember that the Copper King Convention Center has a really rad set of ginormous screens in their main reception hall. This is a great opportunity to showcase a slideshow of Montana wildlife professionals doing good work throughout the state, especially if that work involves working with private landowners: fixing fence, helping with haying, capturing critters, assisting with access, and any other alliterative participle or gerund phrases you can think of.

Send photos to

mttws.preselect@gmail.com



Answer to trivia question: (A) 7.1 million. Yeah, that's a lot! That's about 13% of Montana's total land area! I know, right?

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