
[EXTERNAL] Fwd: MTTWS 2023 Fall Newsletter

From Brandi Skone <brandiskone@gmail.com>

Date Tue 10/29/2024 11:08 AM

To Skone, Brandi <BSkone@mt.gov>

Sent from my iPhone

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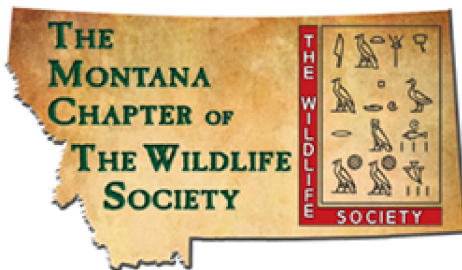
Date: October 30, 2023 at 7:05:55 AM MDT

To: Brandi Skone <brandi.skone@gmail.com>

Subject: MTTWS 2023 Fall Newsletter

Reply-To: MT TWS <secretary@mttws.org>

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**The Montana Chapter
of The Wildlife Society**

**Fall Newsletter: Deets on the next
annual conference and a new memorial
fund!**

Greetings from your MTTWS President

Dear colleagues and champions of wildlife conservation!

It's fall and a thrilling time of year to be in Montana! I hope you have been able to spend some quality time outdoors on our incredible landscapes and found some fulfillment in doing so. Quality time outside is so often the elixir that heals the ills we face....be sure to prioritize it so you stay healthy in your work and life. In fact, as you'll note elsewhere in the newsletter, this very topic of getting outdoors ties in with the theme for our upcoming annual conference in February.

On that note, I'm pleased to report that our MT TWS Executive Board has been busy preparing for the conference, which will be held at the Copper King Convention Center in Butte during February 6-9, 2024. Huge thanks to President-Elect Katie Benzel for her work in planning what I am confident will be another successful conference! Please block off February 6-9 on your calendars if you haven't already done so. I literally mean that you should stop reading this and do it right now. OK, if you've done that, you can resume reading. If you haven't done it, please do it now so you can defend that space on your calendar. You'll thank me later after you've been at the conference, at which point you'll recognize the rejuvenating power of camaraderie with your fellow colleagues and friends.

Our Executive Board has continued making headway on other fronts, with special attention to integrating conference planning with achieving fiscal goals tied to financial stability and supporting key chapter initiatives. As I mentioned in the last newsletter, hotel and conference expenses have increased significantly in recent years. Our goal is to set a conference registration fee that is not exorbitant yet covers costs so that our auction and raffle proceeds can go to supporting the work of our Chapter.

Before I close out, please take note in this newsletter of a new initiative to establish an award fund in honor of Lewis Young. Fellow MT TWS member Gary Olson is leading this effort. Please join me in contributing to this fund, which will honor Lewis's legacy while helping support student travel to our annual conference. Thank you for stepping up, Gary!

Remember that this Chapter is your Chapter. Don't hesitate to reach out to me or another board member if there is an initiative that you'd like to lead within our organization.

Thank you for all you do to support wildlife in Montana!

~Chad Bishop, President



The 2024 MTTWS Annual Conference!

February 5-9, 2024

Copper King, Butte, America

**"Cultivating Respect for Nature Without Destroying
What We Seek"**

The best way to cultivate respect for and conservation of nature is for humans to be exposed to it, spending time in the outdoors. As wildlife professionals we highly value the ethos of conservation and educating people about the importance of the natural world. The ever-increasing population in Montana, especially since Covid-19, has resulted in more people on the landscape, including more hunters, shed hunters, anglers, recreationists, national park visitors, and motorized vehicles. With all of this comes travel management issues, noxious weeds, human waste along trails and at campsites, littering, and conflicts among recreationists as well as between humans and wildlife. Areas that received little human use are now being shared worldwide on social media and other platforms, making these places easier to find access to. Hunting shows and videos draw attention to certain areas and create interest in hunting the showcased species.

While we want people to respect nature and have a connection to it, the more people there are on the ground, the higher the potential for wildlife to be displaced and habitat degraded. It is a double-edged sword that we're all a part of and a topic that provokes strong and opposing perspectives. Some believe that more people should be in the outdoors, brought to primitive, largely unknown places, as a way to engage people in activities, politics, and education that will lead to more conservation. On the other hand, some believe that bringing groups to areas and sharing locations and site information spreads like wildfire, quickly inundating areas with the issues listed above and more, to the detriment of wildlife and habitat.

How do we as wildlife professionals manage this intersection of nature and human responsibility? It is my intent with this conference theme to bring together plenary speakers with different perspectives, policies, and objectives. It is a passionate topic, and the conversation is not meant to be controversial, but openly and respectfully discussed.

Reserve Your Hotel Room!

You can reserve your hotel room now with the Copper King in Butte! Use the [link \[mttws.org\]](http://link.mttws.org) to book directly or call the front desk at 406-533-6960 and mention the Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society to receive the state rate (\$107/night plus tax).

Memorial Fund in Honor of Lewis Young



Hello Friends and Associates of Lewis Young:

As most of you know, Lewis passed away in April due to complications from a stroke. And, as most of you are aware, Lewis was the consummate biologist who gave countless hours of volunteer effort to multiple conservation causes before and after his retirement from the Forest Service. His expertise in handling bats and numerous bird species (to name a few), as well as an innate ability to quietly communicate and practice a conservation ethic have no equal among the Montana wildlife community.

To honor Lewis' career and contributions to habitat and wildlife management it seems fitting to establish an award fund by the Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society (Lewis was a long-time member and volunteer). The Young family has decided that an established annual travel award for students from various academic institutions to attend Chapter

meetings would be their preferred way to proceed.

We are soliciting donations to establish a memorial fund in his name. Any amounts are appreciated. Checks can be made to the Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society (check memo: Lewis Young memorial fund) and sent to the MTTWS treasurer Heather Brower, PO Box 605, Scobey, MT 59623. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact Gary Olson (grolson1973@gmail.com [mttws.org]; 406-289-0064).

Thanks!

~ *Gary Olson*

Small Grants Award

It's time to start submitting your applications for our small grants! Every year MT TWS awards up to \$1,000 for scientific research AND up to \$1,000 for education and public outreach. If you have a project that falls into one of these categories and aligns with the goals and core values of our Chapter, consider applying! Just do it!! Visit our website for more details on how to apply!

See below for how our recipients from last year used their grants. Thanks to Jacob Melhuish and Colleen Piper for sharing and congratulations again you two!



Jacob Melhuish with a silver-haired bat (above), Northern long-eared bat (right)



We used grant funds in 2023 to continue netting and radio tagging efforts of the endangered Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) and the state species of concern Little-brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) in Northeastern Montana. I am tagging these bats with the ultimate goal of characterising their habitat during the summer reproductive season. Reproductively active females of both species will often roost colonially in a single structure, and they tend to display high levels of roost site fidelity. This means that roosts of these females (also called maternity roosts) are incredibly for population success and thus should be of high conservation priority. In 2023 we radio tagged 25 bats and tracked them to 36 different roosts, including 11 confirmed maternity roosts. Despite a slow, rainy start to the season we also experienced generally high capture numbers with a total of 212 bats caught comprising 7 species, over 111 net nights (35 nights of effort). I am working on mapping roosts now and

will begin analysis soon.

~Jacob Melhuish



Trail camera images of beavers from Colleen Piper's project.

In summer of 2023, the University of Montana Prairie Beaver Research project began a pilot season to investigate survival and movement of beavers in prairie streams of eastern Montana in relation to water availability. We attached 12 GPS transmitters to the tails of beavers in streams between Glasgow and Zortman. So far, we are seeing beavers inhabiting streams with varying degrees of water availability in dry months, from deep, connected stretches of water to dry stream beds comprised of patchy mud puddles, with no known mortalities of tagged individuals.

As with many projects working with new wildlife technology, we hit a few bumps in the road with our transmitters and needed a way to conserve transmitter battery life while also obtaining useful data. The cameras purchased with the grant money awarded to us by the Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society allowed us to monitor the time of night that would be best for our transmitters to send location data while remaining dormant the rest of the day. We have also gained information on ages present and group demographics of beavers from pictures based on individual size, maximum number of individuals in photos, and resighting of tagged individuals. We plan

to continue tagging and monitoring prairie beaver for the next 2 years.

~ Colleen Piper

Seeking Award Nominations

It's time to start thinking about who YOU want to nominate for one of our fabulous awards. We know so much amazing work is being done in this state. This is your chance to recognize that work and those deserving individuals! It's not too early to start working on that nomination now. See below for more details on each award or visit our [website \[mttws.org\]](http://www.mttws.org).

The Distinguished Service Award: This award is presented for cumulative, past, current, and/or continuing achievements in wildlife conservation. This is typically acknowledgment of accomplishments over a career.

The Biologist of the Year Award: This award is presented annually for significant achievements in wildlife conservation anytime during the five years immediately preceding the award presentation.

The Bob Watts Communication Award: This award is presented for significant communication in media such as professional publications, popular wildlife articles, books, movies, or videos that have a relatively wide audience.

The Wildlife Conservation Award: This award is given to an individual or non-governmental organization for past, present, or ongoing efforts that enhance wildlife conservation in Montana.

The Rising Professional Award: This award recognizes emerging professionals and rising leaders in the wildlife field who are drivers of professional progress in Montana. Eligible candidates will have worked in a part or full-time professional capacity (seasonal or year-round positions) for at least 3 years, and no more than 8 years. Employment need not be continuous. Current students are not eligible. Employment may include, but is not limited to: wildlife and habitat management or research, conservation policy or

advocacy, environmental education or program development, consultation, etc.

To nominate, email a written recommendation for a specific award, along with compelling justification for the nomination and a discussion of the qualifications of the nominee. While there is no prescribed format, nominations often take the form of a formal letter or letters, and are often supported by several agencies, organizations, or MT TWS members. Nominations will be reviewed by the Award Committee and selections will be made in January. Nominators will be notified of selections at that time and will be asked to assist with coordinating the attendance of the awardee. Send nominations to **Megan O'Reilly** at moreilly@mt.gov.

Seeking Nominations for President-Elect and Treasurer!

Your MTTWS board is soliciting nominations for **President-Elect AND Treasurer** this year. They are both 3-year terms full of excitement, surprises, and good-humored folks that want to help you put on the conference of your dreams... or whatever we have enough money to do. Please consider! And if interested, please e-mail Chad Bishop (chad.bishop@mso.umt.edu) to nominate yourself or someone else.

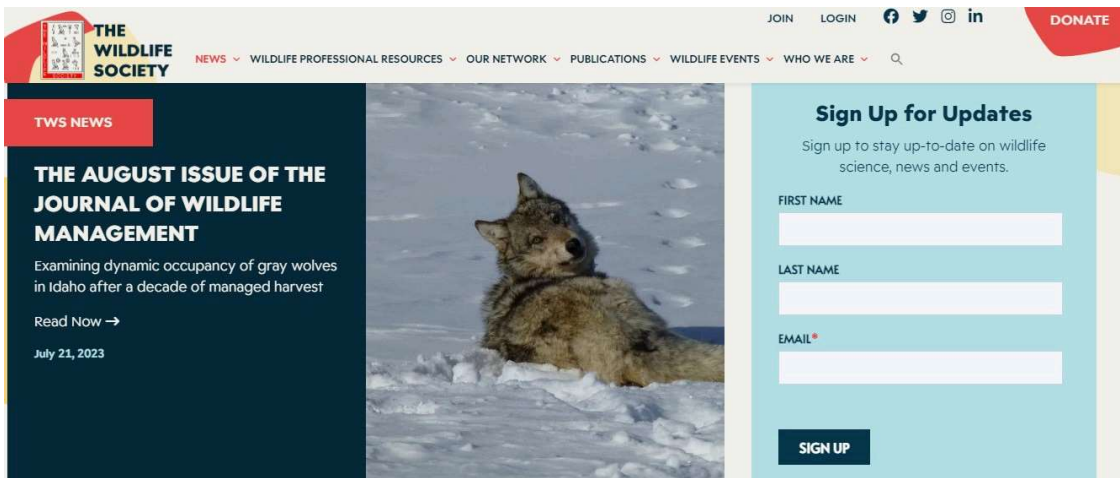
Seeking Help with our Social Media Accounts

Do you enjoy popping on the IG, sending a tweet, snapping a chat, or good ol' Facebooking? Clearly we don't know how to even use that terminology, but I bet you do!! We need YOUR help in revamping our social media accounts! We're looking for folks to serve on a committee and crush our social media accounts, keeping our membership informed on local science, events, and news. Please reach out to Brandi Skone at mttws.secretary@gmail.com if interested.

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