



The Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society

Summer Newsletter: National TWS news, a first look at our next annual conference, and a recap from last year's conference

Greetings from your MTTWS President

Greetings Wildlifers,

I'm incredibly honored to serve as your Chapter President and walk in the footsteps of those I admire. It's a meaningful opportunity to meet and work with many of you. I'm impressed with the exceptional work for wildlife our membership contributes. It's inspiring and motivating. The Chapter is so valuable because of all of you and your participation and dedication.

Chad and I have been working with Liz Bradley and Bryce Maxell on the Effects of Recreation on Wildlife Committee. This summer, intern Sawyer Vozka interviewed several managers and we are using feedback from those individuals to create a survey

for wildlife and recreation managers that will be widely disseminated across the state for input about what their concerns and needs are regarding this topic. The intention is to use this input to create a best management practices document and companion bibliography. As this year's conference theme and plenary session exhibited, this is an issue at the forefront of wildlife and habitat management.

The Executive Board recently met at the Beartooth Wildlife Management Area to recap the past year and discuss several issues including committees, awards, student support, policy participation, special projects, and start planning next year's conference. I enjoyed getting to know President-Elect, Rebecca Mowry, and Treasurer, Heather Harris. Chad, Brandi, and I are excited to welcome them to the Board! It was great to get together and brainstorm with these highly creative and knowledgeable wildlife professionals.

I'm already looking forward to next year's conference that Rebecca is diligently putting together, and I know you won't want to miss it! Although it will be a legislative year, the upcoming conference will not be held in Helena as it has in the past. With member input at this year's business meeting, the Board decided to move further east. Also, in 2023 Helena proved to be on the more expensive side. We'd like to engage the central and eastern portion of the state a little better and hope that no matter where you reside in Montana, you'll join us in Billings on March 4-7, 2025!

Please be on the lookout for conference registration and hotel reservation information, as well as abstract submission and student artwork contest details. As I mentioned above, the Chapter and annual conference are successful because of your involvement. The Board and I can't wait to see you in Billings!

Thank you for all of your support of the Chapter and Montana's wildlife.

~Katie Benzel, President



Get to know your new president-elect and treasurer!

Greetings from the smoky Bitterroot Valley!

I've been the FWP area wildlife biologist here for almost a decade, and previously served on the board as secretary. Summer is a bit of a slow time for me, but we have a new bighorn sheep research project underway and those collared critters have been keeping me busy. I also spent some time removing remote lynx and fisher camera stations that had been operating all winter throughout my area, and even got to try my hand helping our nongame crew with a harlequin duck survey in July (which was...painful). Normally September is my favorite time to get in some backpacking trips to monitor wilderness wildlife and habitat, but in late August my beloved German shepherd who accompanies me on most of my field work suffered a severe injury to her leg (in my backyard, of all places) so we've been down and out during her recovery. But it's giving me more time to think about the 2025 conference and start lining up workshops and speakers! Our board met last month to begin the planning process, and with their help, I'm excited to take on the challenge. I hope to see you all in Billings next year—it's high time we returned the conference to the eastern half of the state!

-Rebecca Mowry, President-Elect



Hello from the Hi-Line!

I'm excited to take over the treasurer responsibilities this year. I know I have big shoes to fill from the previous treasurer, also named Heather and who also lives in the northeast corner of Montana. At least we kept it consistent. For those who don't know me here is a little background. I have worked the past 11 years for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and the past 3 years as the Grassland/Wetland Coordinator in the Habitat Bureau. I enjoy the collaboration and challenges this position brings as we work internally and with partners to enhance, restore, and conserve Montana's grassland, sagebrush, and wetland habitats. In my personal time, I enjoy spending time on our hobby farm, exploring the prairie, camping, hiking, and working with my cocker spaniel so we are hopefully less of an embarrassment during this hunting season. I look forward to seeing everyone at the conference next year!

~Heather Harris, Treasurer



TWS (national) is in Baltimore this year!

Register now for \$700 (\$350 for students)

The Wildlife Society annual conference is in the harbor this year! It will take place from **October 19-23, 2024 in Baltimore, MD.**

Register and check out the conference schedule by [clicking here \[mttws.org\]](https://mttws.org). The National TWS conference is a great opportunity to meet lots of wildlife nerds like yourself and get exposure to new topics on conservation, research, and management. It's also an opportunity to network and engage with professionals in the wildlife community, share all the great work you've contributed, and learn from other's experiences. We hope to see you there!

The 2025 MTTWS Annual Conference will be in Billings this year!

March 4-9, 2025

Billings Hotel and Convention Center

"Conservation Policy: Why it matters and what we can (*and should*) be doing"

We're looking forward to seeing everyone and are full steam ahead planning another exciting, jam-packed conference at the Billings Hotel and Convention Center! Stay tuned for more details on this year's conference!

Congratulations to our Award Winners!

Each year we like to recap the deserving award recipients who were honored at the previous conference. Below is a list of the 2024 award winners.

Congratulations to you all!



Distinguished service award: **Mike Mitchell (University of Montana)**





Wildlife Conservation Award:
Mike McTee (MPG Ranch)

Bob Watts Communication Award:
Torrey Ritter (MT FWP)





Biologist of the Year:
Brandi Skone (MT FWP)

Rising Professional:
Amber Feddes (MT FWP)



No photo available.

Wynn Freeman Award:
Carly Segal (MSU)

Wynn Freeman Award:
Mattie Budine (UM)



Western Meadowlark Award:
Joe Lamb (UM Western)

Best Presentations/Posters by Students



Best Oral Presentation

Graduate Student:

Anna Kurtin (UM)

*Improving black-billed cuckoo monitoring
in Montana*



Best Poster Presentation

Graduate Student:

Eli Estey (University of Idaho)

*Human dimensions of wolverine (*Gulo gulo*) perspectives and attitudes of
backcountry winter recreationists*

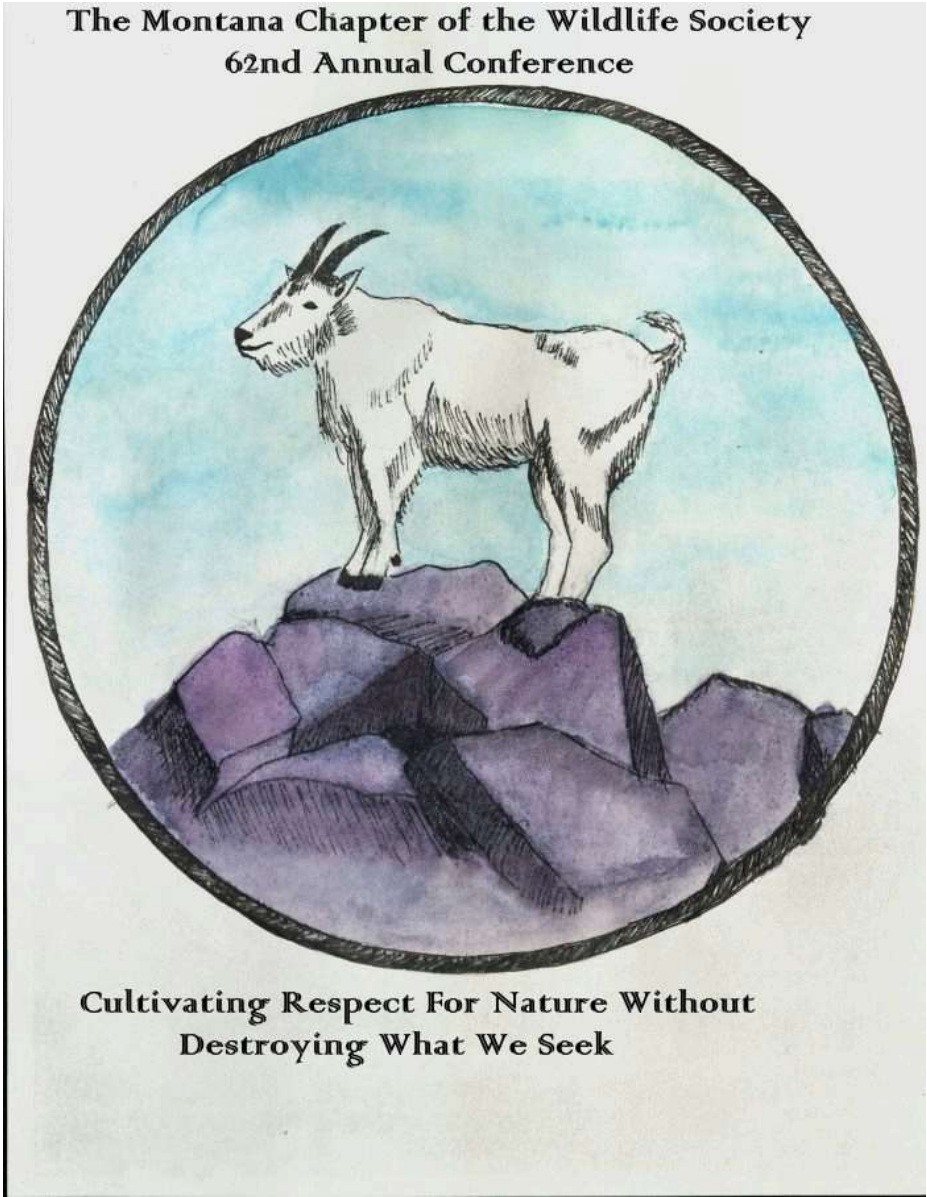
***No photos available for the rest of our award/grant recipients who were unable to
attend the banquet:*

- Best Oral Presentation - Undergraduate Student: **Emily Pizinni (MT Technological University)** *The effect of precipitation accumulation on bull elk harvest in the Big Hole area of Montana*
- Best Poster Presentation - Undergraduate Student: **Mathew Gomez (UM)** *Comparison of beaver dam densities between drainages open and closed to trapping*

Small Grant Recipient

Leah Rensel (UM)

Edit this to insert text.





Conference Program Artwork:
Carly Segal (MSU)

Artwork from 2024 conference pictured above. Stay tuned for our next newsletter on how you can enter our contest and have your artwork showcased next year!

Lewis Young Memorial Fund

Hi Everyone!

We wanted to provide an update on where this fund currently stands and future plans. To date, we have raised almost \$14K thanks to all your contributions! We are humbled by all the support from our membership to honor Lewis Young.

For those who are less familiar with Lewis, he was a celebrated wildlife biologist and conservationist who unexpectedly passed away last year. After retiring from a career with the U.S. Forest Service he continued to contribute to multiple conservation groups and causes including pivotal work on bats and grouse in the state. Friends and family proposed to honor his legacy by establishing a memorial fund that would support student participation in chapter meetings.

Our board is committed to seeing this fund established but we need your help to reach our goal. To create a lasting contribution, we need to raise an additional \$12K. This will allow us to establish an endowment that will provide funds annually in perpetuity. To assist with this effort, at this year's conference we will provide a high-end raffle item, with all proceeds going directly to the Lewis Young Memorial Fund. You'll need to stay

tuned to find out what that item will be, but trust us, it will be good.

To help support this effort, you can make donations to the Lewis Young Memorial Fund by mailing checks to our treasurer: Heather Harris, Attn: MT TWS, 1 Airport Road, Glasgow, MT 59230. Checks can be made out to "The Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society" with "Lewis Young Fund" in the memo line. We are working on a way to take donations through our website - stay tuned for more information. Again, thank you to all those who have already contributed to this effort!! Providing ways to keep our students and young professionals engaged in the wildlife field is so important to our chapter!

Seeking Nominations for President-Elect AND Secretary

Your MTTWS board is soliciting nominations for **President-Elect and Secretary** this year. Both are 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 Katie Benzel (mttws.president@gmail.com) to nominate yourself or someone else :)

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

MTTWS website
[mttws.org]

Want to stay informed on the latest wildlife science, news, and events? Visit TWS [National's website \[mttws.org\]](http://National's website [mttws.org]) to sign up!

THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

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TWS NEWS

THE AUGUST ISSUE OF THE JOURNAL OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Examining dynamic occupancy of gray wolves in Idaho after a decade of managed harvest

Read Now →

July 21, 2023



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