



NORTHWEST WILDLIFER

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October 2003 _____ NORTHWEST SECTION

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The certification program for professional wildlife biologists has been in place within The Wildlife Society for 25 years and we have heard much about it over this time. There have been many discussions of the value of being certified as a wildlife biologist.

- Some agencies and organizations require certification as a criterion for employment
- Some agencies and organizations link salary increases to certification
- Certification enhances a wildlife biologist's credibility publicly, politically, and legally

- Certification may enhance opportunities for upward mobility
- Certification may be a valuable asset in marketing wildlife management services

The last item received greater relevance this year. The 2002 US Farm Bill requires the US Department of Agriculture to provide technical assistance to farmers, ranchers, and forest owners participating in Farm Bill conservation programs, and authorizes the agency to approve individuals who can provide technical assistance. With increasing demand by landowners for participation in Farm Bill conservation programs, the US Natural Resources

Conservation Service (NRCS) was facing difficulties in carrying out its mission of providing quality conservation assistance to its customers within the constraints of its current staff levels. Certified Wildlife Biologists will be able to provide conservation assistance to farmers and ranchers under an agreement signed in late March between NRCS and TWS.

TWS-Certified biologists will be able to work as Technical Service Providers to help farmers, ranchers, and other private landowners protect and restore resources through conservation planning in wildlife and habitat management. This agreement officially recognizes that an individual who has met the rigorous educational, experience, and professional conduct standards of the Society's Certified Wildlife Biologist program also meets NRCS standards for providing wildlife conservation assistance. It will allow

Certified Wildlife Biologists to become certified by NRCS and be placed on the list of NRCS-approved Technical Service Providers.

Professionals certified by TWS are authorized to help agricultural producers develop management plans that benefit wildlife and habitat on their land. This agreement offers an unprecedented opportunity for Certified Wildlife Biologists to conserve wildlife through habitat management.

To learn more about TWS certification program go to:

<http://www.wildlife.org/professional/index.cfm?tname=certification>

To learn more about the Technical Service Provider program go to:

<http://techreg.usda.gov/>

Lowell Suring

REQUEST FOR NOMINATIONS

2004 is an election year for the Northwest Section. The Executive Board is seeking nominations for Section Officers. You are encouraged to nominate Section members (with their approval) or yourself for the offices of President Elect, Vice President, or Secretary-Treasurer. The President Elect serves 1 year on the Executive Board in that office, 2 years as President, and 1 year on the Executive Board as Past President. As President, this person has general supervision of the Section's officers, appoints committee chairpersons, and presides at meetings of the Executive Board and the Section. The Vice President assumes the duties of the President in the President's absence and assists the host chapter with the program for the Annual meeting. The Secretary-

Treasurer is responsible for the files, records, and funds of the Section. All Section officers must also be members of The Wildlife Society.

Please contact the current officers if you have questions about any of these positions. Contact information is on the last page of the newsletter.

If you would like to nominate a Section member for 1 of these positions or would like to be a candidate please contact Lowell Suring at 208.373.4351 or lsuring@fs.fed.us.



Robert Savannah,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

NORTHWEST SECTION AWARDS

The Arthur S. Einarsen Award was established in 1966 to recognize outstanding service to the wildlife profession by individuals residing in the area encompassed by the Northwest Section of The Wildlife Society. The Wildlife Administrator Award was designed to recognize and reward excellence in the areas of wildlife program development and

administration. The Awards Committee encourages nominations from the membership of the Section by 15 January 2004 for both awards. Nominations benefit from supporting documentation so please contact Lowell Suring (208.373.4351 or lsuring@fs.fed.us) for more details if you have deserving candidates in mind.

TERRY BOWYER WINS AWARD

Terry Bowyer, a Professor of Wildlife Ecology at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, received the 2003 C. Hart Merriam Award for outstanding research

contributions to the science of mammalogy from the American Society of Mammalogists. Congratulations!

NW SECTION 2004 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The NW Section's 2004 annual conference will be held May 1-3 (Saturday - Monday) at the Alyeska Prince Hotel, located about 60 miles south of Anchorage, Alaska. A call for papers will be forthcoming along with information about registration. Both the

NW Section and the Alaska Chapter will hold their respective business meetings during the conference. There will be opportunities to visit the Sea Life Center in Seward, Alaska and tour Prince William Sound before or after the conference.

NORTH AMERICA CARIBOU WORKSHOP

The 10th North America Caribou Workshop will be held in conjunction with the NW Section conference during May 4-6, 2004 (Tuesday - Thursday), also at the Alyeska Prince Hotel. The theme of the workshop will be "Caribou and Climate" and the first call for papers will come out in early September.

Registration will begin in October. As with the NW Section conference, there will be opportunities to visit the Sea Life Center in Seward, Alaska and tour Prince William Sound before or after the workshop. Information about the workshop can be reviewed at: www.10thnacw.org.



Robert Savannah, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2003 TWS ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND COUNCIL MEETING

The setting for the event was ideal: a spacious and accommodating hotel, close proximity to the University of Vermont and Lake Champlain, and a run of flawless weather. Those conditions, plus exceptional work by the arrangements and program committees, made this an annual meeting to be remembered.

In addition to a plenary session and members' forum, the conference included 6 workshops, 15 symposia, >25 contributed paper and poster sessions, and a variety of working group and committee meetings. Student involvement was high, with record participation in the student breakfast and standing-room-only attendance at the student-professional mixer. The winner of the Student Chapter of the Year Award, the University of Wisconsin Student Chapter—Steven's Point, was well represented in attendance. The naming of the winner of the Aldo Leopold Memorial Award was a real highlight of the conference. If ever an individual was caught off guard and speechless, it was when Dr. Nova Silvy was called to the podium.

TWS Council meet for two full days immediately before the annual meeting, plus a ½-day session that provided a transition for new Council members. The following is a summary of items discussed and decided on by Council.

A poster contest among the student chapters is now underway, with the objective of producing a tool for use in TWS recruitment. Winning posters will go on the web, and hard copies will be made available for display. Recruitment is a significant issue for TWS, given that membership continued its negative

decline in 2003 with a loss rate of 2.4% from the previous year.

The TWS Endowment Campaign is a year into its 18-month run. So far \$1.7 million has been raised of the \$3.0 million goal. The campaign was successful in obtaining the few, large pledges that it requires to complete the topmost rungs of the fund-raising pyramid. This means that smaller donations by many will be needed to complete the lower rungs of the pyramid. Once completed, the endowment fund will provide a perpetual source of funding for the Society's policy activities and other priority work.

The Society completed technical reviews on economic growth, ungulate confinement, and status of the northern goshawk. A technical review on global climate change is making good progress. Council decided to form new technical review committees in response to proposals from TWS chapters and members. The topics are: baiting and feeding of wildlife; the Endangered Species Act; and, the introduction of lead into the environment by hunters and anglers. The latter is a joint project of TWS and the American Fisheries Society. Council also decided to establish a special committee to expedite progress toward the electronic publication of TWS journals.

On the subject of electronic publications, TWS is implementing an electronic system to receive journal manuscripts, assign them to reviewers, forward them to the editorial office, and generally to keep track of submissions and their progress through the system. Council's purpose is to make things easier and more efficient for everyone involved, so it's important that we receive feedback from authors, reviewers, associate

editors, and others as the system is implemented.

The Certification and Professional Development Subcommittee reported on the comments received from TWS members concerning recommended changes to the Certification Program. Council discussed and decided on the committee's recommendations. The changes (nothing major) will be provided in *The Wildlifer*.

A disproportionate amount of Council's work focused on the TWS budgets for 2003 and 2004. A year ago, Council made a firm decision to not approve any budget that represented a deficit

situation. We are pleased to say that the 2003 budget is "in the black," and projections for 2004 are looking likewise. Given the declining trend in membership, Council will study anticipated trends in income and expenditures, and adopt a strategic approach toward fiscal planning.

In closing, I want to thank the Northwest Section members for allowing me to serve as your representative. It's a privilege, a challenge, and a great learning opportunity to be involved in the leadership of this great organization.

Wini Kessler
Northwest Section Representative

NEW NEWLETTER LOCATION

This is the first of our newsletters posted on the TWS website. As noted previously, this will save us approximately \$4000/year in hardcopy

newsletter printing and mailing costs that can then be applied toward other worthy wildlife causes.

TWS POLICY PRIORITIES FOR 2003

These are some of the issues that The Wildlife Society is concentrating on. For more details go to:
<http://www.wildlife.org/policy/index.cfm?tname=currentissues>

First Priority

- Arctic National Wildlife Refuge / Energy Development on Public Lands
- Budgets for federal land management and research agencies
- 2002 Farm Bill implementation
- National Forest System Planning
- National Forest System roads management

- Teaming with Wildlife / State wildlife agency funding

Second Priority

- Endangered Species Act (listings, recovery plans and reauthorization)
- Federal employee participation in professional societies
- Federal land management plans (regional and forest/resource area-level)
- Livestock grazing on public lands
- National Wildlife Refuge System policies
- Privatization of wildlife
- Wetlands conservation

WILDLIFE POLICY NEWS

Excerpts from September 2003 Wildlife Policy News
Complete Wildlife Policy News available at:
<http://www.wildlife.org/policy/index.cfm?tname=wpn>

House Resolution Supports Sportsmen

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution in September 2003 expressing Congressional support for the nation's millions of hunters and anglers. Representatives James Walsh (R-NY) and Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY) introduced the measure. Resolutions express the sentiment of Congress and do not have the force of law, but the measure is an important affirmation that current Members will support sportsmen and conservation programs as they make decisions affecting wildlife and habitat.

With the enactment of the resolution, supported by The Wildlife Society, Congress officially recognizes the importance and contributions of sportsmen to American society; supports the traditions and values of sportsmen; supports the many conservation programs implemented by sportsmen; recognizes the many economic benefits associated with outdoor sporting activities; and recognizes the importance of encouraging the recruitment of future sportsmen, and teaching the traditions of hunting, trapping, and fishing.

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the Energy Bill

Following passage of the Energy Bill in both houses of Congress, conference committee staff is working to resolve differences between the House and Senate bills. Sections of the compromise bill are being released as they are completed-including a section that would open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas exploration and development. Drilling proponents hope to entice some Democrats and moderate Republicans who oppose the drilling in ANWR to agree to the provision by emphasizing

other pet projects and programs that will be included in the overall measure. However, even if the drilling plan has to be dropped to pass the final bill, the concession could be used to quiet those critical of the other portions of the bill.

A bipartisan group of at least 131 Members of Congress signed on to a letter by Representatives Ed Markey (D-MA) and Nancy Johnson (R-CT) in September, urging energy conferees not to open ANWR to drilling.

Healthy Forest Legislation

The Healthy Forests Restoration Act passed the House in June, and passed the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry at the end of July. The bill is strongly supported by the

Administration as a means to reduce hazardous fuels and enhance forest health on 20 million acres of federal land. The bill is awaiting consideration by the full Senate. In the meantime,

Senators Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Barbara Boxer (D-CA) introduced an alternative bill they say would focus projects and funding on communities at

the wildland-urban interface that are most at risk from wildfire, without affecting environmental protection laws.

BLM Issues New Policies for Energy Development

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) issued policies in August 2003 aimed at reducing or eliminating impediments to oil and gas leasing on BLM-managed lands. The policies instruct BLM land-use planners to evaluate the necessity of current constraints on energy development in seven "focus areas" -- found to have high potential for oil and gas development -- with an eye toward ensuring timely development of energy resources in an environmentally sound manner.

In carrying out these policies, BLM will determine by 31 December 2003 the need for changing existing land-use plans to facilitate energy exploration and development. The policies direct land-use planners to avoid unduly restricting access to federal lands while continuing to protect resources when they review oil and gas lease stipulations, especially in cases where an unnecessary stipulation could result in the abandonment or delay of a project.

Energy companies, the Administration, and many in the Congress have said

that restrictions on energy exploration, development, and operations on public lands must be relaxed or removed, and that new areas must be opened to development. However, according to the Energy Policy and Conservation Act report released by BLM in January 2003, 85% of the technically recoverable oil and 88% of the technically recoverable natural gas on federal lands in the West is available for leasing. After accounting for the oil/gas resources on non-federal lands in that area, only 9% is closed to oil leasing and development and 7% is closed to natural gas leasing and development.

Wildlife professionals are concerned that the change in BLM policy may lead to inadequate analysis of oil and gas impacts on natural resources, including wildlife species that are sensitive to drilling and associated human activities. The Wildlife Society and others are trying to work with BLM to ensure that it avoids and/or mitigates the effects of oil and gas development on wildlife.

Double-crested Cormorant Management

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has released a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on management of double-crested cormorants in the U.S. The document analyzes six alternatives for managing cormorants, a species that has been found to sometimes negatively impact commercial aquaculture, recreational fisheries, vegetation, and

habitat as its populations increase. The preferred alternative offered in the EIS would be to establish a depredation order to address public resource conflicts. The final rule was published in the Federal Register on 8 October (68 FR 58022), and will go into effect 7 November. Comments can be emailed to cormorants@fws.gov.

Under the preferred alternative, the Service would establish a public resource depredation order authorizing certain public agencies in 24 states to implement a cormorant management program. Control activities under authority of this new depredation order must be intended to alleviate damages to public resources such as fish, other wildlife, and vegetation. Lethal control of double-crested cormorants would be authorized at state and federal fish hatcheries.

The Wildlife Damage Management Working Group of The Wildlife Society developed written comments and a position statement on the double-crested cormorant Draft Environmental Impact Statement in 2002. The Working Group recommended the Service combine the preferred alternative for a public resource depredation order with parts of a second alternative for regional population reduction, in order to reduce regional/continental cormorant overpopulation in a timely and effective manner.

EQUIPMENT GRANTS FROM SANDPIPER TECHNOLOGIES

Sandpiper Technologies has extended availability of its rental/grant equipment to include off-season research. The company has issued Equipment Grants to U.S. and Canadian students since 1998, and now makes the equipment available during the fall and winter months. Although there is no deadline for applications during the off-season, students must follow the requirements detailed on the website: <http://peeperpeople.com>. The deadline for the Equipment Grant Program during the 2004 spring/summer field season is December 1, 2003.

Available Rental/Grant equipment:

TreeTop Peeper 1 (IR or monochrome cavity camera and 16-foot pole)

TreeTop Peeper 2 (Monochrome cavity camera and either a 35- or 50-foot pole.)

Peeper Video Probe (2.3-inch diameter, 3 meter gooseneck probe with head mounted video display)

Peeper-A-Roo Video Probe (1.0-inch diameter, 3 meter gooseneck probe with head mounted video display)

Basic Sentinel System 1 (AutoColor camera with VCR and 25-meter camera cable. Batteries are not included.)

AquaPeeper Video Probe (16-foot pole with waterproof color camera and head mounted video display)

For more information about the Sandpiper Equipment Grant Program: <http://peeperpeople.com>



CHAPTER NEWS

Check Out these Websites for more details on Chapter Activities!

Alaska: <http://mercury.bio.uaf.edu/ak-tws/>
Alberta: <http://albertadirectory.net/actws/>
Idaho: <http://www.ictws.org/>
Montana: <http://www.montanatws.org>
Oregon: <http://fw.oregonstate.edu/tws/>
Washington: <http://www.washingtonwildlifesoc.org>

(British Columbia, Northwest Territories and Yukon Chapters: No websites)

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