



- The -
WILDLIFE SOCIETY
Wyoming Chapter



Volume 35, Issue 2

August 2008

WY-TWS Annual Meeting—Call for Papers

Submission Deadline: October 1, 2008

The Wildlife Society (TWS) Wyoming Chapter invites submission of abstracts for the annual meeting to be held in Sheridan, WY, from November 19 – 21, 2008. The overall theme of this year's meeting is **“Changing Times for Wyoming Wildlife”** and will focus on the fact that significant changes are affecting wildlife, habitats, and the wildlife professional in Wyoming and wildlife management needs to change accordingly. Presentations on any pertinent wildlife or habitat related issue will be considered, but submissions in the following areas specifically are encouraged:

1. “Energy” – Wyoming is experiencing a boom in energy development and will be on the front lines for many years to come – oil, gas, CBM, oil shale, wind, solar, uranium, and coal – all can and will change the way wildlife will be managed. Projects, research, examples that are dealing with this issue and how we can learn from our experiences.
2. “Habitat Management/Land Use Planning” – issues that relate to how habitats and land uses are being address today for a changing future.
3. “Mitigation/Adaptive Management/Reclamation” – examples, projects, or research that deals with how impacts to wildlife are being mitigated, the use of adaptive management, and successful reclamation efforts.
4. “Wildlife Health” – wildlife health/disease; including studies at the species, ecosystem, or landscape level, and including health issues pertinent to wildlife and their interactions with domestic animals and/or humans.
5. “Natural events” – research, projects or issues relating fire, drought, invasive species and other natural events, including climate change, will change the future of wildlife management.
6. “Local Updates” – wildlife or habitat research or project updates relevant at the local or state/province level (including all states/provinces of the CMPS).
7. “Avian Ecology”, “Predator Ecology”, and “Ungulate Ecology” – research or project updates on issues relevant to management and ecology of avian, predator, and ungulate species in the CMPS.

There will be a separate oral presentation session for students – we will endeavor to accommodate all students interested in presenting and any wildlife or habitat-related topic will be considered. Presentations will be 15 minutes in length, with five minutes for questions from the audience. All presentations will be in electronic format (MS PowerPoint preferred). Submitters will be notified about the status of their abstracts by **October 31, 2008**. Please complete the attached application form (see page 4) and submit abstracts electronically (via email attachment) in MS Word or Word Perfect format to:

Steve Belinda (sbelinda@trcp.org) Preferred
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
PO Box 295
Boulder, WY 82923
(307) 231-3128

WY-TWS Annual Meeting

President-Elect Steve Belinda is in the process of planning this year's Annual Meeting. He is in need of assistance with planning, as well as suggestions for moderators, speakers and sponsors. Also, the Chapter needs members to solicit prizes, donations and auction items. Please contact him at sbelinda@trcp.org or 307-537-3135 if you are able to assist. Below is a tentative agenda.

Theme: Changing Times for WY Wildlife (focus on the changes – experienced and expected that wildlife managers and wildlife professionals have to deal with and how it affects the role for TWS)

Date: Wednesday 11/19 to Friday 11/21 (noon)

Location: Sheridan, WY - Holiday Inn (www.holidayinn.com/sheridanwy) 307-672-8931
Rooms = \$70/night (use block code **WSI**)

Tuesday 11/18

7 p.m. to 9 p.m. TWS WY Chapter Board Meeting

Wednesday 11/19

8 a.m. to noon Peripheral Meetings/Poster session

PIF meetings/Bat working group
Registration, Poster session, photographs, etc.

11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Registration

1 p.m. to 1:20 p.m. Welcome

1:20 p.m. to 2 p.m. Keynote – Special Guest

2 p.m. to 3 p.m. Panel Discussion – President's Forum (Past, Present, and Future National TWS presidents to discuss pressing issues relating the TWS and how TWS has changed or needs to change to remain relevant in wildlife management for the future)

3 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Break

3:30 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. Panel Discussion – Leadership (role of leaders and the changing way organizations/agencies must deal with the changes in wildlife)

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WY-TWS Annual Meeting

4:15 p.m. to 5 p.m. **Panel Discussion – Land Mgt/Habitat** (speakers from agencies on how land/habitat mgt has changed/is changing – USFS, BLM, NRCS, WGF, Private)

5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. **Welcome Social** (snacks) Evening welcome session

Thursday 11/20

7 a.m. to noon

Registration

8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Student presentations

10 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

Break

10:15 a.m. to noon

Student Presentations

Noon to 1:30 p.m.

Lunch (on your own)

1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Student presentation

3 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Break

3:15 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Breakout Sessions

Breakout 1 - Energy Development

Breakout 2 – Diseases – Brucellosis, Chronic Wasting Disease, West Nile Virus, etc

5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Social

6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

**Banquet
Awards
Keynote address
Entertainment**

Friday 11/21

8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Breakout Sessions

Breakout 3 – Predator/ESA (Bears, Wolves, etc.)

Breakout 4 – Mitigation/Adaptive Management/Reclamation

10 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Break

10:30 a.m. to noon

Keynote/departing message - Special Guest

Abstract Submission Form

1. **Submitter/Author:**
2. **Institution/Agency:**
3. **Mail Address:**
4. **Telephone/Fax Numbers:**
5. **Email Address:**

ABSTRACT (please try to limit to 300 words or less, 12 point font, 1” margins, single-spaced, provide full name, affiliation, and address for all authors, underline presenting author, and capitalize title):

Sample Abstract:

PARESIS AND DEATH IN ELK (*CERVUS ELAPHUS*) DUE TO LICHEN TOXICOSIS IN SOUTH CENTRAL WYOMING

Cook, Walt¹, Merl Raisbeck², Todd Cornish², Beth Williams², Bengé Brown³, and Greg Hiatt.³ ¹Wyoming Game and Fish Department, 1174 Snowy Range Road, Laramie, WY 82070; ²Department of Veterinary Sciences, Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory, University of Wyoming, 1174 Snowy Range Road, Laramie, WY 82070; ³Wyoming Game and Fish Department, 260 Buena Vista, Lander, WY 82520.

In February and March 2004, 326 free-ranging elk (*Cervus elaphus*) became recumbent and died or were killed in the Red Rim habitat area southwest of Rawlins, Wyoming. The estimated total loss was 400 – 500 elk. Many elk were found down, alert and responsive, and unable to rise. Over time elk progressed to lateral recumbency followed by dehydration and death. When provided feed and water or treated medically several elk remained alive and responsive but could not stand. Twelve elk were necropsied; these animals were in fair to good body condition and demonstrated gross and microscopic evidence of degenerative myopathy of varying severity, affecting large flexor and extensor muscles, and sparing other muscles including diaphragm. In many elk the skeletal muscle lesions were not severe enough to explain recumbency. Diagnostic tests (bacteriology, virology, parasitology, serology, clinical pathology, and toxicology) failed to demonstrate a definitive cause for the clinical syndrome in the elk. During field investigations abundant tumbleweed shield lichen (*Xanthoparmelia chlorochroa*) was observed in the area. This lichen also was identified in the rumen contents of several elk, in some cases constituting 50% or more of rumen contents. Lichen collected in the field was fed to three captive elk. Two elk developed a clinical syndrome identical to the affected wild elk, and gross and microscopic lesions observed in these elk were identical to the wild elk – the third elk refused to eat lichen and remained unaffected. Tumbleweed shield lichen was identified as the likely cause for the clinical syndrome that resulted in the death of 400-500 elk at Red Rim habitat area. The toxic compound or compounds in the lichen have not been identified, but literature reports suggest usnic acid as one candidate. Current and future studies are planned to investigate the toxicity of this and other compounds in the lichen, and to try and determine what climatic and environmental factors contributed to lichen toxicosis in the wild elk.

WY-TWS Awards Nomination Form

To all TWS members,

We have had difficulty in past getting members to nominate deserving individuals for the WY-TWS professional and citizen appreciation awards. Please take a few minutes and give some thought about those who are working hard for wildlife and deserve to be recognized for their efforts. These awards are given out each year at the annual meeting to recognize the outstanding efforts by individuals in the state to conserve and manage wildlife and wildlife habitat.



To submit a nomination, please fill out the biographical information listed on the form below and write up a short summary of the nominee's accomplishments in the wildlife conservation/management arena. Please submit nominations no later than **Friday, October 10**. Nominations can be mailed or e-mailed to the following addresses:

Dan Bjornlie
TWS Awards Committee
260 Buena Vista
Lander, WY 82520
dan.bjornlie@wgf.state.wy.us

Wyoming Chapter – The Wildlife Society
Award Nomination Form

Nominee:

Award: Professional Citizen

Address:

Present Position:

Academic Background:

Professional Background:

Submitted By:

Address:

Phone:

National TWS Position Statement

In an effort to inform our WY-TWS members about what opinion our national organization has about issues local and relevant to Wyoming, the Newsletter Committee has decided to feature position statements from the national TWS organization when space allows. The publication of these statements is not meant to advocate for or against the national organization's stance on the issue, but simply for informational purposes only.

Final Position Statement

Oil and Gas Development in the Rocky Mountain West

The boom in oil and gas development in Colorado, Wyoming, and Alberta in the late-1970's through the mid-1980's sparked concerns among wildlife managers about impacts to wildlife from 1) direct loss of habitat; 2) intensive human/industrial activity displacing mule deer, pronghorn, elk, and sage grouse from habitats crucial to their survival; and 3) offsite impacts from human population growth, rural subdivisions, and infrastructure development. In 1989, wildlife agencies recorded what they had learned about wildlife responses to development disturbance in a compilation of recommended protection measures for wildlife, a result of collaboration among state and federal wildlife agencies, and oil and gas companies. At that time, few energy development studies existed that were capable of determining the effects of development on wildlife, so these wildlife protective measures, or stipulations (such as seasonal timing limitations or no surface occupancy) were based on best professional judgment and anecdotal evidence.

The current boom (largely in gas development) began in the mid-1990's, first in Wyoming and then expanding to other Rocky Mountain states. A major expansion also began in Alberta and British Columbia. These oil and gas fields are more intensive and geographically larger developments than those of the 1980's, include denser well spacing, and appear likely to persist for many decades. In the first decade of this gas boom, experience and scientific studies in Canada and the U.S. have shown that the management approach using stipulations to reduce impacts may not fully protect wildlife and habitats and is inadequate for the sustained conservation of wildlife resources.

The intensity of these developments and others under way in five Rocky Mountain states and Alberta and British Columbia are transforming not only biological systems, but the communities and lives of people who live there and travel there for recreation. Reductions and alterations in quality and availability of wildlife habitats affect not only wildlife, but also outdoor recreation opportunities in the area. Economic and social impacts may also affect outdoor recreation activities involving wildlife. Recent fossil fuels developments include gas fields in the Powder River Basin of Montana and Wyoming, the Red Desert of Wyoming, the Piceance Basin of Colorado, in New Mexico, and the Book Cliffs in Utah, as well as tar sands mining in Fort McMurray, Alberta. Research on sage grouse in the Powder River Basin of Montana and Wyoming in the Powder River Basin has concluded that sage grouse may be extirpated from developed areas - when development occurs at a landscape scale - unless substantial blocks of habitat are protected. One new field at the Atlantic Rim in Wyoming will affect up to 145 sage grouse leks, a major mule deer herd, and other wildlife recreational uses for decades and will likely repeat the wildlife losses documented in Wyoming's Upper Green Basin and elsewhere. Research on non-game species, as well as on ecosystem functions, is lacking.

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Energy development is clearly poised to have a powerful impact on wildlife in the Rocky Mountains and associated sagebrush habitats. In some areas, 90% of federal lands are leased and available for immediate development. Current policy is pressuring federal agencies to expedite oil and gas leasing and development. This has greatly diminished the effective planning to minimize wildlife impacts at the field development stage. Mitigation on developed sites is being attempted through restoration of native vegetation, but arid habitats, especially given a prolonged drought in the U.S., pose serious challenges. New techniques, such as covering drilling sites with wooden platforms to avoid soil and root disturbance, are promising but not widely used. A variety of “best management practices” (BMP’s), such as minimizing roads and keeping well pads as small as possible, are in use by some companies. However, even those developed by BLM to guide development are predominantly voluntary. BMP’s do not currently provide adequate protection for wildlife habitat; none have been subjected to research to determine their effectiveness.

Offsite, landscape scale habitat enhancement projects do not directly mitigate specific resource losses from energy projects and cannot take the place of stronger requirements for avoidance of resource damage before and during development. Complicating the management challenges facing wildlife professionals is the reality that pressures from outside sources impact the ability of these professionals to be effective and make decisions based on sound science.

The scope of this modern gas and oil development surge is unprecedented and threatens to reduce 1) wildlife habitats and populations, 2) traditional uses of wildlife and their habitats, and 3) sustainable economic benefits upon which local communities depend (such as tourism, hunting, and fishing). Current management is not achieving the intent of federal land management policy and legislation. Furthermore, science supporting such management has not been applied in an effective manner. It is reasonable and socially responsible to manage energy projects on public lands in a manner that sustains fish and wildlife habitat and public recreation, and protects environmental and ecological values, including air and water quality, and provides for aesthetic considerations.

Therefore, it is the position of The Wildlife Society in developing the oil and gas resources of the Rocky Mountain West that:

1. Experience with development impacts on wildlife during previous and current oil and gas booms presents opportunities for improved management of the energy development process (from exploration to abandonment) that should be used by the responsible agencies to avoid negative impacts to wildlife.
2. Adequate procedures to avoid and minimize impacts, including programmatic requirements that need to be met during well field planning and development, must be established as lease stipulations.
3. Early and continuing cooperation between state, provincial, and federal agencies in land use planning and NEPA analysis should be encouraged.
4. Pre-lease planning should include state/province-wide mapping efforts to identify areas of high importance to wildlife, including habitat required for populations of sensitive species to remain viable, big game crucial winter ranges and migration corridors, areas sustaining a high density of sage grouse leks, and those intact portions of the landscape without substantial habitat fragmentation. The mapping effort should also identify suitable areas to potentially serve as refugia for sensitive species, where drilling activities would be prohibited, and to maintain functionally contiguous habitats.
5. Pre-project conservation plans for sustaining wildlife and their customary uses by people should be a) based on state or provincial wildlife conservation plans for habitats and populations, b) constructed with clear wildlife objectives and thresholds for management action, and c) in full coordination with state and provincial wildlife agencies and other affected interests.

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6. State and provincial wildlife agencies are encouraged to issue a formal, science-based finding (statement of record) at the conclusion of each resource management planning process, well field planning process, or permitting process that authorizes drilling. These statements should objectively describe whether each plan or the provisions of a drilling permit would adequately protect important wildlife resources affected by the proposed action and describe the impacts, including cumulative impacts, anticipated as a result of the action.

7. The development process (from leasing to drilling, production, and abandonment) should be actively managed to achieve multiple uses of public lands and resources through a transparent adaptive process that includes a) scientific monitoring, b) evaluating monitoring results, and c) using monitoring and evaluation information to adjust well field operations to reduce impacts to wildlife.

8. Protecting wildlife values during development should follow Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Guidelines to a) *avoid* the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action, b) *minimize* impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation, c) *rectify* the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment, d) *reduce or eliminate* the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action, or e) *compensate for the impact* by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

9. Federal, provincial, and state agencies have the authority and mandate to require reasonable planning and mitigation measures that will minimize and avoid impacts to wildlife and sensitive habitats.

However, the appropriate management practices and planning considerations are not being consistently or effectively applied. Protective measures (best management practices) should be required as needed to protect and sustain wildlife resources and mitigate unavoidable impacts. Oversight and enforcement of such measures is key to ensuring their effectiveness.

10. Some unique Rocky Mountain habitats, such as native shrub ecosystems, crucial winter ranges for big game, and sage grouse reproductive habitats are difficult or impossible to replace when impacted by intensive oil and gas field developments. The most effective way to mitigate oil and gas impacts is to avoid the impacts altogether, or to minimize them through planning considerations and operational management practices.

11. Prior to developing a field, a complete inventory of resources should be completed, including soils, geology, vegetation, aquatic resources, wildlife, and other environmental and ecological considerations, to provide a complete baseline for monitoring and to formulate mitigation.

12. To improve our understanding of the impacts oil and gas exploration and development have on wildlife populations, and whether specific mitigation measures are effective, additional long-term studies are critically important. Agencies should base development decisions on the science that is the product of these studies.

13. In some areas, standard management practices have been or will be inadequate to protect important fish and wildlife resources when oil and gas is developed intensively, especially where multiple important habitats overlap. In these areas, special designations should be used, to assure surface management decisions are based on the most current sound science and resource information.



UW Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society Update ~By Brady Neiles, Chapter President

The University of Wyoming Student Chapter had a wonderful spring semester with attendance high at meetings and trips. The Chapter was also involved with many activities this past spring. These included; a River Otter Survey in Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP), Colorado, the 2008 Wildlife Society – Western Student Conclave hosted by Colorado State University, and an Adopt-a-Highway Trash Pickup south of Laramie on 287 (mile marker 404). The deer count scheduled in February was cancelled due to stress on the animals from the deep snowpack this year.

The Chapter is now gearing up for a busy fall semester which will include RMNP River Otter Survey, Adopt-a-Highway Trash Pickup, Beast Feast and many more activities along with bi-monthly meetings.

Awards nominated by members of the University of Wyoming Student Chapter presented at the Department of Zoology and Physiology Awards Day were:

Mat Seymour received the Elizabeth Williams Memorial Award

Tanna George received the Jack Sinn Memorial Award

Sage Grouse lek April 2008



2008 OFFICER INFORMATION

	Name	E-mail
President:	Brady Neiles	neilesb@uwyo.edu
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ADVISOR FOR THE SUMMER AND FALL SEMESTER OF 2008

Merav Ben-David

Department of Zoology and Physiology
Tel: (307) 766-5307

Email: bendavid@uwyo.edu

Treasurer's Report

**By Frank Blomquist
August 10, 2008**

Operating Account

Savings	\$19,454.91
Checking	\$ 3,364.70
Balance	\$22,819.61

Special Meeting Account

Savings	\$4,042.25
Checking	\$1,368.79
Balance	\$5,411.04

Membership Form

Change of Address

New Member

Membership Renewal

If you would like to receive your newsletter other than via e-mail or off the web page, please let Frank know.

NAME _____

AFFILIATION _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

WORK PHONE _____ HOME PHONE _____

ADDRESS CHANGE **Dues are \$10.00 per year or \$25.00 for 3 years.**

E-MAIL ADDRESS CHANGE Make checks payable to: **Wyoming Chapter-TWS**

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NEW MEMBER

I wish to receive the newsletter via E-MAIL or at the physical address listed above .

Mail to: Frank Blomquist P.O. Box 1571 Rawlins, WY 82301

Email: Frank.Blomquist@blm.gov

Please support your WY-TWS Chapter by paying your membership dues.

The Wildlife Society – Wyoming Chapter 2008 Officers and Committee Chairs

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**Nominations Committee—
Currently Empty**

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edmundsd@nwf.org

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BDADDYLL@WYOMING.COM

We're on the Web!
www.wyotws.org

The Wyoming Chapter of The Wildlife Society strives to:

- ◆ *Provide an organization of wildlife management professionals from which statements affecting wildlife can be made exclusive of agency limitations.*
- ◆ *Provide for the exchange of ideas and information between wildlife workers without agency consideration.*
 - ◆ *To strengthen The Wildlife Society, its objectives and goals.*
 - ◆ *To promote and provide for intradisciplinary communication and training to keep abreast of modern needs and technological developments.*
- ◆ **To promote awareness of and continued improvement in wildlife management.**

Please note...

Articles or other submissions for the WY-TWS newsletter can be made to the following newsletter committee members. We accept appropriate articles or information related to wildlife management and conservation activities in Wyoming from governmental agencies as well as non-profit organizations. Written information and photos can be sent to:

Christina Schmidt-

BDADDYLL@WYOMING.COM

Chris Colligan-

CCOLLIGA@GMAIL.COM

Eric Maichak-

ERIC.MAICHAK@WGF.STATE.WY.US

Newsletter deadlines for 2008:

February 15 (for March/April
newsletter)

June 15 (for July/August newslet-
ter)

October 15 (for October/
November newsletter)