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CLASS OF 2017 MEETS IN ALBUQUERQUE

In October, the Class of 2017 finally met in person during the Annual Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The members of this year class are:

- Kyle Daly, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Minnesota
- Paul Di Salvo, APHIS-Wildlife Services, Oregon
- Stacey Elmore, Colorado State University
- Marcella Fremgen, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, Colorado
- Bryan Kluever, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Massachusetts
- Christopher Lituma, West Virginia University
- Melissa Merrick, University of Arizona
- Sarah Milligan, fRI Research, Alberta
- Pamela Moore, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Kansas
- Beth Ross, U.S. Geological Survey, South Carolina

“Participating in the LI this year was one of the most impactful things I have done so far for my career,” says Paul Di Salvo, one of this year’s participants. “Getting to have difficult and enlightening discussions with my LI class, alums, Council, and TWS staff helped me expand my perspectives and become more confident in my leadership capabilities.”

This year’s class had a busy week in Albuquerque. “I think the best part of LI happened at the conference - meeting with TWS leadership, our LI mentors, LI alum, and my fellow LI classmates most of all,” says Melissa Merrick, from this year’s LI class. “Spending so much time with the fantastic network of friends and colleagues made possible via LI made this conference the best I have ever attended.”

One highlight of the conference was a panel discussion on leadership in the wildlife profession, moderated by Mindy Rice, a Leadership Institute alumni and current chair of the Leadership

Institute Committee. Kristin Madden (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Lisette Waits (University of Idaho), and Kenneth Wilson (Colorado State University) were on the panel and discussed their leadership experiences throughout their careers. Leadership Institute participants also attended TWS Council meetings. "I was really intrigued by the inner workings of TWS Council - a great group of leaders who made every contact with us personal and comfortable," says Pamela Moore, another LI participant. "Also, I'm proud of the choice my LI Class 2017 made to initiate a fund for professional development in early career professionals that will be finalized in the upcoming year, which we hope LI alum from classes past and future will contribute towards." (Read more about this below).

"The importance of incorporating young professionals into The Wildlife Society is critical to the future leadership within TWS at the chapter, section, national, and working group levels," says Rice, LI committee chair. "This year's class were enthusiastic to take on leadership roles and continued the tradition of providing innovative ideas to the council with a young professional's view of The Wildlife Society."

Marcella Fremgen offered thanks for the LI experience: "Thanks to everyone that helped our class as we learned along the way, including our mentors, classmates, and anyone else that contributed!" Our class really learned a lot from each other and from the mentors we had! Looking forward to using our new knowledge!"

2017 LI GRADS ESTABLISH LI ALUMNI FUND

The LI Class of 2017 rose to the challenge set forth by the Class of 2016 to financially give back to TWS. Their class has pledged \$1,000 to establish the Leadership Institute Alumni Fund. The hope is for future LI classes and all years of LI alumni to continue to contribute to the Fund, which will be annually utilized by the Early Career Professionals Working Group. The ECPWG will use the Fund for activities to increase diversity and inclusion of young people in TWS and in the wildlife profession, by building leadership skills and promoting mentorship. More details to come on how the Fund will be implemented and how to donate. If you have any ideas or suggestions as we begin this new initiative, please contact Paul Di Salvo '17 at pdisalvo25@gmail.com.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? AN INTERVIEW WITH DAN THOMPSON

Read about what a Leadership Institute alum is up to now and what they have achieved since they participated.

Dan Thompson (Class of 2007) currently works for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game as a Wildlife Biologist, conducting research on both captive moose at



the Kenai Moose Research Center, and on wild moose on the Kenai Peninsula. He also is a full time Ph.D. student at Texas A&M University, evaluating how moose respond, both physiologically and behaviorally, to daily and seasonal fluctuations in environmental temperature on the Kenai Peninsula, Alaska. Using internal temperature sensors in moose, he can look at daily and seasonal body temperatures in moose to determine when they may become stressed from warm environmental temperatures. Using captive moose, he can evaluate how individual moose respond physiologically to warm environmental temperatures by using novel techniques such as heart rate belts, salivary and fecal stress hormone levels, and forward looking infrared thermal images. With wild moose, he will evaluate behavioral responses to warm environmental temperatures by using GPS collars to determine habitat selection and activity.

After completing the Leadership Institute, he left his position as a Wildlife Biologist with the NRCS in Colorado and relocated to Fairbanks, Alaska. He worked one year as a NEPA coordinator at Fort Wainwright before starting a Master's Program at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks (UAF) studying nutrition on captive caribou and reindeer at the UAF Large Animal Research Station. Prior to completing his masters in 2013, he began working for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Kenai Moose Research Center. In 2014 he received the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation Directors Award in Research. The following year, he achieved one of his goals since he became a member of TWS, he became a Certified Wildlife Biologist. In 2015 he was awarded the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Graduate Studies Fellowship, which allowed him to pursue his PhD at Texas A&M University, where he also was awarded the Boone and Crockett Club Fellowship in 2016.

There are two aspects of the LI that had a lasting effect on him. First, the required reading for his class in 2007 was "The 7 Habitats of Highly Effective People." This book improved his ability to multitask and accomplish his goals in a timely manner for both work and for assisting in organizing the Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society meetings the last 4 years. The second aspect of the LI is the networking for which LI provided the ground work. For example, during the 2007 National Conference, he was paired up with Tom Ryder for lunch as part of the mentoring program. Fast forward 10 years later to the 2017 North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, he ran into Tom (and had not seen or talked to him since 2007) at an evening social and they struck up a conversation like old friends, discussing future leaders in the wildlife profession and the challenges they face.

The main goal at the moment is to finish his PhD program at Texas A&M while continuing to work full time for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. After completion of his degree, he looks forward to expanding his research at the Kenai Moose Research Center, with the goal of incorporating research that is being conducted throughout Alaska on different moose populations. He plans to keep working for Alaska Department of Fish and Game, with his future goal of becoming a Wildlife Physiologist.

The best advice he could give to Leadership Institute alumni is to get out of your comfort zone and try something new. Volunteer for committees at the state, section, or national levels of TWS or other organizations, even if it is in a subject you are not an expert on. It will provide an open door to networking with a new set of professionals, and you never know, you might learn something along the way too!

ALUMNI NEWS

Amy Carrozzino-Lyon (Class of 2013) recently started a new position as a Research Specialist at University of Wisconsin- Green Bay. As Green Bay Restoration Project Coordinator, she will be collaborating with Ducks Unlimited, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Wisconsin DNR, and others to manage several fish and wildlife habitat restoration projects in the historically impaired lower bay of Green Bay. Projects include coastal wetland enhancement, aquatic vegetation reestablishment, course woody debris habitats for fish, and facilitating development of a habitat management plan.

Sarah Fritts (Class of 2015) After spending the summer in Borneo sampling invertebrates, soils, and bats with undergraduates, Sarah started a tenure-track assistant professor position at Texas State University.

Richard Gerhold (Class of 2012) and his wife, Kelly Lockerman, adopted a little girl in March. Congrats to the new family!