

Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society Awards

The Distinguished Service Award is presented annually for cumulative, past, current, and/or continuing achievements in wildlife conservations.

2014 Recipient: Mike Thompson



When we think about “Distinguished Service,” we immediately think of Mike Thompson. Not because of his graying appearance, but because of his unrelenting, 34-year commitment to managing and conserving the wildlife resources of Montana. Mike’s

incredible work ethic, communication skills and unfailing ability to guide discussions and decisions concerning controversial wildlife issues and land acquisitions, is a true gift. With his partnership building knowledge and skills, he has gained and continues to foster the respect and trust of his peers, sportsmen and sportswomen, and the general public. Mike has represented Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) as a true champion through 34 years of controversial political and social changes and continues to bridge the gap among the biological, social and political sciences to represent the agency in a way that earns public trust and support. Accordingly, we would like to nominate Mike Thompson, FWP Region 2 Wildlife Manager, for the Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society's 2014 Distinguished Service Award.

Mike's career with FWP began in 1980. His early work included fencing on the Mt. Haggin Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and working the paddlefish run at Intake along the Yellowstone River. In 1981, Mike completed his Master's Degree at Montana State University by studying mountain goats along the Rocky Mountain Front. FWP hired Mike as a field assistant on the Elkhorn Mountains Elk Ecology project, to help develop an elk management plan for the area. Then in 1985, Mike began work in Region 2 on the Bonneville Power Administration funded "elk mitigation and monitoring" project. Mike assisted in the preparation of a 30-year outline of timber sale activities in the Mt. Bushnell Roadless Area on the Lolo National Forest. Resource agencies still use the plan today. Mike became a full-time FWP wildlife biologist in 1987, working in the Blackfoot watershed as well as being in charge of all Region 2 WMAs. Mike's strong work ethic, humble mannerisms and infectious personality led him to build long-term collaborative relationships. Eventually, these friendships became an incredibly productive link to what we now address as the Blackfoot Challenge. Mike negotiated with private landowners in the Blackfoot and Bitterroot, which resulted in conservation easement agreements with FWP and other land trust partners. These "dinner table" conversations are responsible for permanently conserving some of the highest quality habitat in western Montana. The names of these habitat acquisitions and easements are known statewide. Browns, Bolins, Blackfoot-Clearwater, Clearwater Junction, Dalton Mountain, Manley, Mannix, Upsata, Reinoehl, and Sunnyslope are only a part of Mike's habitat conservation legacy. Mike was the initiator, key team-builder, and negotiator for a coalition of organizations that worked to implement the Blackfoot Clearwater WMA's 50th Anniversary Project. These groups, with Mike at the helm, worked to bring 7,800 acres of Plum Creek Timberlands into FWP and DNRC ownership within the Blackfoot-Clearwater WMA. More recent projects include Fish Creek, Spotted Dog, and the Marshall Block WMAs. Mike has been a principle force behind the conservation of more than 220,000 acres of wildlife habitat in Western Montana.

Mike has an uncanny ability of representing biological data and information in a way that anyone can relate to and understand. He does this through casual conversation, presentations, interviews, and now social media. Mr. Thompson, alias Mike Twain, authored more than 662 "Game Range Ramblings," a column published weekly in the *Seeley-Swan Pathfinder* newspaper. The column had a 15-year run, became a readers' favorite, and built and maintained a constituency for FWP in the Blackfoot and Swan Valleys. The Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society awarded Mike the "2004 Bob Watt's Communication Award" in recognition of his media efforts.

Mike has also been a strong supporter of wildlife research. While managing the Blackfoot-Clearwater WMA, Mike recognized the need for additional data on wintering elk. He initiated a series of research projects that deepened our understanding of elk and deer migrations, winter habitat use and forage selection, elk calf mortality, as well as moose ecology. Most recently, Mike was the key personality in navigating the proposed Upper Bitterroot Elk Ecology research effort. His actions and negotiating skills breathed life into the proposal. Mike continues to participate and help with all aspects of the project, including fundraising, communications, and fieldwork. The project has been more successful as a result of his efforts. Mike also supported local research on mountain lion, grizzly bear, wolf, furbearers, and upland game bird ecology. Mike's list of co-authored publications and research papers is as long as his daily trip from his office to the front office candy box (see attached list).

In 2006, Mike was promoted to Region 2 Wildlife Manager and almost immediately, serious wildlife issues put him to the test. Mike did not balk though—he has a natural way of putting others at ease and enjoys tackling difficult situations.

Mike was instrumental in formulating a science-based approach to wolf harvest and hunting season structure proposals for the first Montana hunting seasons. He used input from area wildlife biologists to help develop an approach to wolf harvest proposals used across the state.

When fall 2009 and early winter 2010 found Region 2 inundated with pneumonia-infected bighorns, Mike skillfully coordinated staff and kept local media updated. Mike's leadership, wisdom and communication skills provided invaluable assistance to field staff during these trying months.

Mike has used his skills in negotiating and messaging with the FWP Commission as well. He took the lead in explaining why Region 2 required more aggressive carnivore management in some areas to provide relief to several struggling elk herds. Mike's ability to read the local publics and to apply sound science in his discussions with the FWP Commission were instrumental ingredients that ushered these hunting seasons into reality.

Even with Mike's busy schedule, he continues to have an open-door policy and always takes the time to speak with the public, staff and students. He leads by example and not by lecturing. He never misses an opportunity to mentor students and staff, providing them with opportunities to improve and expand their knowledge and experience.

Mike Thompson has provided Montana's residents and its natural resources with highly creditable service. His honesty and calming demeanor in the face of difficult issues and challenges have earned him the respect of all the staff he works alongside. He is truly a servant leader; humble, yet very competent. For all the reasons described in this nomination letter and in the attached references, Mike Thompson is a well-deserving candidate for the 2014 Distinguished Service Award.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Craig Jourdonnais, Ecosystem Research Group, Senior Wildlife Biologist

Randy Arnold, FWP R2 Regional Supervisor

Vivaca Crowser, FWP R2 Information and Education Officer

Vickie Edwards, FWP Missoula Wildlife Biologist

Jay Kolbe, FWP Blackfoot Wildlife Biologist

Ray Vinkey, FWP Phillipsburg Wildlife Biologist
Nathan Borg, FWP Bitterroot Wildlife Biologist
Liz Bradley, FWP R2 Wolf Management Specialist
Kristi Dubois, FWP R2 Non-game Wildlife Biologist
Jamie Jonkel, FWP R2 Bear Management Specialist
Dave Dziak, FWP R2 Wildlife Management Area Manager
Dave Dixon, FWP R2 Wildlife Management Area Technician
Bob Wiesner, FWP R2 Wildlife Conflict Specialist
Kelly Proffitt, FWP Research Wildlife Biologist
Ben Jimenez, FWP Research Wildlife Biologist
Nick DeCesare, FWP Research Wildlife Biologist
Wayne Kasworm, USFWS Wildlife Biologist

Additional references supporting the nomination of Mike Thompson for the Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society, 2014 Distinguished Service Award

When I heard that Mike Thompson was being nominated for the Distinguished Service Award I said to myself, “you know, every now and then a person comes along and puts a positive and welcome “face” on an organization, and he is certainly one of those people!” During Mike’s six plus year role as the Wildlife Program Manager in Region 2 of the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks I have had and fully appreciated numerous opportunities to work with him, to borrow from his amazing “bank of knowledge and experiences” and to simply watch and admire as he works with fellow professionals from FWP and other organizations, including academia, and many interested and engaged hunters and wildlife admirers to effectively address what I believe are some of the most challenging wildlife conservation challenges ever faced in Montana. In my volunteer roles, including membership on the Region 2 Citizens Advisory Committee, president of the Missoula-based Hellgate Hunters and Anglers and Montana-based Montana Wildlife Federation and member/chairman of the City of Missoula Open Space Advisory Committee, Mike has been my “go-to-guy” on many tough and often controversial issues. He has consistently been there, always willing and able to support me and the conservation based organizations with whom I work.

Mike has demonstrated his ability as a researcher and writer and as a leader of other professionals engaged in a wide array of wildlife conservation endeavors. He has demonstrated his abilities to effectively manage complex programs and organizations. He has displayed truly exceptional foresight while initiating prudent actions addressing the changing landscapes and capitalizing on opportunities to provide for habitat needs of Montana’s wildlife. He has excelled in a role responsible for addressing a number of important and extremely complex wildlife management and related issues with parts of the public widely divided and passionately holding and guarding their positions. In some measure, I know it is Mike’s character and communication abilities that enable him to work extremely well with people in making critically important contribution to the conservation of the public’s wildlife resources. In addressing issues involving the arrival, delisting and management of the gray wolf, elk and deer “coming to town”, large carnivores following the elk and deer and trying to share space with humans, threatened and endangered species to be considered, trapping on public lands and conflicts with other users and their

pets on public lands, declining elk populations and the need to reduce opportunities for hunters, huge wildfires and their short and long term impacts on habitat Mike has proven that he is the right man for the challenging job. Mike is a master at working with people on tough issues, at welcoming and honoring their questions and suggestions, admitting his answers are not perfect, remaining calm in the face of criticism of him and the Agency, always being a humble and respectful person, Mike's handle on the science associated with conservation of our wildlife resource is obvious and sound, and in addition he has and uses important "sociology-based skills" and a personality that encourages and welcomes public input and involvement.

The conservation of our wildlife resources may be tied to the science known to and practiced by the professionals, but in the end, conservation takes life through the diverse publics who are involved, informed and thereby motivated by the professionals. Mike obviously knows this and he operates accordingly. When I use to the two words, "**Distinguished**" and "**Service**" in reference to conservation of our very public wildlife resources, the name Mike Thompson appears next.

Tim Aldrich

President, Hellgate Hunters and Anglers

President, Montana Wildlife Federation

Volunteer, FWP Region 2 Citizens Advisory Committee

Member/Chairman, City of Missoula Open Space Advisory Committee

It is our understanding that Mike Thompson is being nominated for a Distinguished Service Award through the Wildlife Society. The Ravalli County Fish and Wildlife Association would like to express our support to Mike for this prestigious award.

Over Mike's extended career he has dedicated his life to the complex issues of wildlife management. In his position with FWP he has negotiated the difficult complexities of State government, managing the State's natural resources of wildlife, balancing public interests in those wildlife resources, and honoring the concerns and interests of both private and public influences as related to recreational enjoyment of hunting and fishing opportunities.

Mike's work with our organization has always been one of dedication and perseverance as we have worked through difficult issues such as declining elk and mule deer populations and an increase in predator species. Mike has spent countless hours in the dispatch of his duties and is most deserving of this award.

Respectfully,

David L. Harlacher

President, Ravalli County Fish and Wildlife Association

Over the past 25 years, Mike Thompson has helped forge relationships between private landowners, sportsman and the Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks in the Blackfoot Valley. His ability to find common ground on tough issues has built a reputation of coming to the table, finding solutions that work for the local communities and the wildlife. Mike's

commitment to maintaining a home grown process has earned him great respect with landowners, his quick wit and humor creates a forum for success, all of these together have allowed us to communicate on a level to maintain working landscapes in the watershed. My congratulations to a fine gentleman!

Jim Stone
Rolling Stone Ranch
Chair, Blackfoot Challenge

My name is Brittani Johnson and I would like nominate Mike Thompson to receive the 2014 Distinguished Service Award from the Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society. Here is why. If it weren't for Mike, I most likely would not have the career I do today. I am junior at the University of Montana in the wildlife biology program, and I have been an employee of the Forest Service as a wildlife technician since my freshman year of college.

The most likely reason the Forest Service considered me as an employee is because I had gained experience in the field by volunteering for Fish Wildlife and Parks on a sheep monitoring project. Mike is the one who offered me the opportunity.

I was fresh out of high school that summer when Mike took a chance on me and told me I could monitor sheep populations around Western Montana, monitoring the pneumonia outbreak that was occurring. He gave me a truck, maps, guidance, and I was on my way. That project kept me sane throughout my freshman and sophomore years of college, because I could go out into the field after being in a stuffy university setting all day and watch sheep. Sounds pretty good right? It was paradise. I would spend afternoons, weekends, watching my sheep. Hiking, driving, it didn't matter. I was observing one of nature's most beautiful entities. And all because of Mike.

I thought he was crazy when he told me I could do this. I had absolutely no experience with wild animals aside from hunting, and I had no field credit. I was just a high school student. But he had faith in me. And because he took that leap of faith, I now have years of experience in the field, which most likely led me to my Forest Service employment and I now have no doubt in my mind that this is what I want to be doing for the rest of my life.

For one person to give me so many gifts, he should receive. This award would mean so much to Mike. He is very deserving. For somebody to stop everything they are doing when an anxious college freshman walks into his office and wants to borrow a truck to go play with sheep, he should be credited. Mike Thompson not only cares about wildlife, he cares about people too. Thank you, Mike, for taking a chance on me. You opened my world to opportunities I didn't even think existed. And it all started that night at the CAC meeting when I asked "Mike, is there any volunteering I can do for you?" and Mike said without hesitation, "We'll find something for ya".

Brittani Johnson
Undergraduate Student
Wildlife Biology Program

University of Montana

In my years as Executive Director and Conservation Director of Five Valleys Land Trust I had the great pleasure of working with Mike Thompson on many complicated and often politically challenging projects focused on the protection and stewardship of the precious wildlife resources of western Montana. The more I worked with Mike, the greater my admiration became. He has always been thoroughly professional and unflinchingly committed to the core conservation values that underlie the critically important work of his agency. Mike is a big picture guy who brings a calm and thoughtful presence to any discussion or debate, no matter how contentious. When members of the public, or collaborative partners share their views with Mike, they know he is listening to and considering what they have to say. His quiet good humor and his ability to communicate the complexities and nuances of issues, whether regarding wolves, bighorn sheep, elk numbers, public access or any of the myriad other issues have resulted in a greater public understanding of and respect for the efforts of wildlife managers. Mike is one of those rare individuals who is in the habit of making a positive difference every day. Montana's wildlife and all who cherish it benefit from his efforts.

Greg Tollefson
Outdoor Writer, Missoulian
Retired Conservation Director of Five Valleys Land Trust

I've had the privilege to work with Mike Thompson since joining The University of Montana Wildlife Biology program in Fall of 2006. Mike has been the wildlife manager on two major research and management projects I have collaborated with Fish Wildlife and Parks on here in the Missoula valley (North Hills elk project) and the southern Bitterroot (Bitterroot elk study). More importantly, Mike works with the Wildlife Biology Program, through internships and work study employment with our undergraduates, mentoring our graduate students through service on their MS committees, and many of our faculty on topical management issues that arise in Mike's demanding job as the regional wildlife manager. Through all of Mike's professional interactions with the Wildlife Biology Program, he displays inspirational leadership and foresight, professionalism, and adherence to the highest scientific and ethical standards that ensure the wise and balanced management of our wildlife resources. Mike is an inspiration to our graduate students to continue working in applied wildlife management, and sage mentor for our many undergraduates that come through the region 2 office, and a valued collaborator and colleague for our faculty who are lucky enough to work with him. As the regional manager in Region 2, Mike faces a unique and different set of challenges in traditional ungulate management in systems that have switched over the last decade or so from bottom-up nutritionally limited ungulate populations to more top-down limited systems. This transition is amongst the most challenging issue facing modern wildlife management, and requires innovation, honesty with stakeholders, foresight, and strategic thinking. Mike displays all of these characteristics in his leadership, and for all of these reasons it is my pleasure to nominate Mike Thompson for the Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society Distinguished Service award.

Mark Hebblewhite
Associate Professor
Wildlife Biology Program
College of Forestry and Conservation
University of Montana

It's good that TWS chose to look past the covers on this book called Mike. One's first impression of this tall, hirsute man with easygoing habits, is that he may be a little unkempt, but probably a decent sort. Some doubts do creep in, as you enter his office, where the desk is cluttered with unsorted piles of folders, papers, and CDs and the floor and walls aren't any better. (By the way, he now hires someone to tidy up on a weekly basis.) If you can get in his truck, you must shove aside the mountains of empty coke cans and chocolate milk cartons to make space for yourself. No apologies, just a smile. That's what you get. Since he listens far more than he speaks, you wonder what drives him and what he thinks about stuff. Still the easy smile and ironic humor put you at ease long enough to give him more time, before you pass judgment.

I've had lots of time for that. And I've learned a lot. Somewhat hidden, intentionally I think, is Mike's fierce dedication to Montana's wildlife resources and to the underpinning science we use to manage them. In younger times, he conducted numerous field studies and published a fair number of refereed papers. They reveal not just good writing skills, but also an adherence to scientific methods and a desire to clearly communicate his findings and their applicability. Contrary to the evidence displayed in his office and truck cab, over time we realized that he was well-organized and well-directed, when it really mattered--when he was actually doing wildlife's work.

His organizational and management skills also have emerged with time. I once teased him about taking one of the State's ballyhooed management classes. I still doubt that those classes helped much, but, rather, that he succeeded in spite of them. Mike has been getting things done throughout his career. One right after another. The list is way too long for a book. As time went by, he multiplied his accomplishments by working through others. He has been so successful, because he is insightful, smart, realistic, pragmatic, respectful, remarkably diplomatic and works harder than anyone else. He learned when to hold them and when to fold them. He realized that no one person protects our wildlife resources. He gets others on board and motivates them without seeking personal credit. And you can't beat that!

Montana is lucky that Mike chose to come and work here.

Congrats, Mike.

Bob Henderson
Retired FWP Wildlife Biologist

Mike and I worked together on issues concerning wildlife, plants, and recreation on Missoula's open space properties. I always enjoyed the meetings and field trips that Mike

and I shared together; whenever he spoke everyone in the group was very interested in his comments. The sparkle in his eyes and the resonance of his voice, combined with his vast understanding of the complicated issues associated with wildlife in western MT, made Mike a Sage in my world. Mike deserves all the recognition he is getting; he is a great ambassador for wildlife and their management in Montana.

Giles C. Thelen

Owner, Native Yards Inc

Affiliate faculty, The University of Montana

Member/Chair, Missoula Open Lands Advisory Committee

Mike Thompson is as honest as the day is long. His laid back demeanor rattles some folks. You may think he holds little interest in the issue or simply does not think too deeply into any particular challenge. First impressions with this guy are highly misleading. Mike is an incredibly intelligent wildlife biologist who holds great passion for Montana's wildlife resource. He is an anomaly in this business because he listens more than he talks. It's a skill that complements his ability to form intelligent solutions and build capacity among divergent groups of people that others figured didn't exist. His leadership is highly effective, so effective that many of the key issues surrounding Region 2 seem less than epic simply due to his ability to trust in his field staff and use their expertise to develop creative and successful solutions. Finally, Mike's honesty and ability to honor other people's opinions and attitudes as helped build credibility with the general public at a time when Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks needs it most.

Craig Jourdonnais

Retired FWP Wildlife Biologist

Senior Wildlife Biologist, Ecosystem Research Group

Mike Thompson is the consummate wildlife professional. He offers information clearly, calmly, respectfully, and in a way that fosters trust. If he doesn't know, he says so. He is not averse to going out on a limb with new ideas and new approaches, but he does his homework beforehand and expects you to do yours. He keeps his eye on the big picture and overarching goals. He works well with a variety of players. He supports his staff and other colleagues. He maintains his good humor in the face of a grueling work schedule and an endless barrage of difficult wildlife conservation and management issues. He is a humble guy who has consistently shown great leadership as a steward of Montana's wildlife resources.

If we keep him well-stocked in Pop Tarts, we're hoping he's good for another 30 years at FWP!

Doris Fischer

Retired Land Use Planning Specialist

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Although we have worked together over the years on a wide variety of wildlife-related projects in the Blackfoot Valley, we worked together most closely on the Blackfoot

Community Project and the Blackfoot Community Conservation Area, a partnership involving private citizens, federal and state agencies and conservation organizations. Mike was a charter member of both the Disposition Committee and the Blackfoot Community Conservation Area.

Mike has been a pioneer in community-based conservation. He has successfully melded a solid, scientific grounding in wildlife management issues with outstanding people skills. This unique ability has enabled him to take often diverse viewpoints and meld them in a result-oriented solution.

I wholeheartedly recommend Mike Thompson for the 2014 Distinguished Service Award from the Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society.

Hank Goetz
Lands Director
Blackfoot Challenge

Mike Thompson was instrumental in the success of the Blackfoot Community Project. Especially in his role on the Disposition Committee, he help guide the 89,000 acres of former Plum Creek lands to the best possible outcome for wildlife and the communities of the Blackfoot Valley. Mike is incredibly smart, not only in everything to do with wildlife and protecting wildlife habitat but more importantly in working with people, all kinds of people. He's funny, patient and humble and all the while working for solutions and real-on-the-ground results. Plus, he knows where to find the best pie in Western Montana. Mike is a tremendous champion for wildlife and conservation in Montana and I can think of no better recipient of the Distinguished Service Award.

Caroline Byrd
Previous, Western Montana Project Manager
The Nature Conservancy

Please accept this letter of support for the nomination of Mike Thompson, Region 2 Wildlife Manager for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, for the Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society" Distinguished Service Award. I have had the honor of knowing Mike for nearly twenty years and have worked with him on several occasions on various issues.

Mike is an outstanding Wildlife Biologist and Manager, and I am always impressed by his strong grasp of all of the aspects of whatever issue was being discussed at the time, as well as the details of how it will affect wildlife or habitat. When he speaks, one knows full well that he knows his facts I have also always been impressed with his operating style. While we are all advocates for the resources that we manage, we must always remember that we must communicate effectively and patiently with other people. Mike has an innate ability to make people feel comfortable and at ease talking and working with him which then offers an opportunity to seek good solutions to complex issues. These features, along with an outstanding track record, have distinguished him as wildlife professional. I strongly urge the Awards Committee to confer the Distinguished Service Award upon Mike Thompson.

Sincerely.

Dale Becker. Tribal Wildlife Program Manager

M. Thompson's Publications and Reports

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Past Distinguished Service Award Recipients:

Year	Recipient
2013	Dan Pletscher
2012	Gary Olson
2011	Kurt Alt
2010	Gael Bissell
2009	Kenneth Hamlin
2008	B. Riley & Pat McClelland
2007	Heidi Youmans
2006	Terry Lonner
2005	Gary Dusek
2004	Les Marcum
2003	Lynn Irby

2002	Dennis Flath	
2001	Joe Ball	
2000	Neil Martin	
1999	John Wiegand	
1998	Charles Jonkel	
1997	Harold Knapp & Harold Picton	
1996	Ed Bangs	
1995	Bart O'Gara	
1994	P. L. Wright & Jim Cross	
1993	L. Jack Lyon	
1992	Jack Jones	
1991	Jerry Gallegher	
1990	Jim Phelps & Joe Egan	
1989	-----	
1988	Jim Mitchell & Larry Thompson	
1987	Dick Mackie	
1986	-----	
1985	-----	
1984	Ken Walcheck	
1983	Jim Posewitz	
1982	Bob Eng	
1981	Faye Couey	
1980	Merle Rognrud	
1979	Reuel Janson	
1978	Bob Greene	
1976- 1977	Wynn Freeman	This was the First Chapter Award. This award for professional excellence was made prior to establishment of current Chapter Awards

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

2014 Recipient: Pat Basting

We are writing to present a nomination of Mr. Pat Basting for consideration for the Biologist of the Year Award, to be presented at the upcoming conference of the Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society. We believe that Pat exemplifies the quality of work and character that we all aspire to in our profession as Wildlife Biologists. He works diligently and tirelessly to complete high-quality projects that will have many lasting benefits for wildlife and habitat resources. As a biologist with the Montana Department of Transportation, he is often the lone spokesman for wildlife and habitat in meetings crowded with individuals of other, and sometimes, opposing disciplines. In those settings, he has always been a strong and persistent advocate for those resources. His excellent work has been recognized by his receipt of the AASHTO/Technical Review Board's Outstanding Interagency partnership Award for the Libby Creek North Corridor Study in and two State of Montana Governors' Awards for Excellence in Performance.



We have had the opportunity to work closely with Pat for nearly a decade on the design, construction and monitoring of forty-two wildlife crossing structures on U. S. Highway 93 on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Throughout that process, Pat has consistently been a strong advocate for designs and construction that would benefit wildlife habitat

connectivity and linkage, wildlife movement and the reduction of wildlife mortality and injury, while at the same time creating a safer highway for people. He is a thoughtful and experienced dedicated professional in his field, as well a calm and rational individual who is dedicated to practical problem-solving. He has also been a key player in developing sound plans for mitigation of the effects of highway construction upon wetland and riparian habitats here on the Reservation, as the development of several mitigation projects illustrate. He has also spearheaded similar wetland and riparian habitat mitigation projects elsewhere in western Montana.

Pat also participated in efforts in the Bitterroot Valley to work with citizen's groups to assist in the redesign and reconstruction of that portion of U. S. Highway 93 through the valley. The construction of that project also included provisions for wildlife crossing structures that simultaneously provided for a safer roadway for motorists and wildlife and provided for habitat linkage and connectivity in the area. He was also instrumental in the construction of a wildlife crossing structure to achieve the same benefits on a segment of Highway 2206 east of Kalispell where elk, deer, moose and black bears crossing the highway and motorists have also had conflicts. In order to make the project happen, Pat worked with the landowners, MDOT and several conservation groups, notably the Yellowstone to Yukon Initiative, the Wildlife Land Trust, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Flathead County, American Wildlands, and the developer of a nearby subdivision to develop adequate funding to make the project a reality. He also worked with the Montana Chapter of the Backcountry Horsemen and the Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers to develop a fund-raising campaign to develop the remainder of the funds needed.

While most of Pat's work on issues related to highways and wildlife has occurred in western Montana, he has also provided his expertise to assist with projects on a larger scale. He is widely known in the transportation world as a thoughtful biologist who solves problems and puts worthwhile projects on the ground. His advice is sought by transportation engineers and biologists from around the nation and Canada. He recently served on a select committee tasked by the Western Governors Association (WGA) to investigate the issue of conserving and maintaining crucial wildlife movement corridors in the face of a rapidly-developing West. His insight and contributions to the discussion of the issue was very valuable in the formulation of the final report, "Western Governors Association Wildlife Corridors Initiative". Those efforts set the stage for many of the wildlife corridor efforts currently occurring throughout the Western United States.

We have valued the opportunity to work closely with Pat during the past decade, and we have admired his strong advocacy for wildlife and habitat, both through his employment with MDOT and as a personal passion. His ability to think out of the box and develop solutions for problems facing wildlife and people has benefitted both in several areas of western Montana.

Sincerely

Dale M. Becker, Wildlife Program Manager
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Whisper Camel-Means, Wildlife Biologist
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Pat has been a helpful partner on projects that benefit fish and the anglers that pursue them. He is the Missoula District Biologist with the Montana Department of Transportation. His duties include working with MFWP on 124 SPA permits. Through Pat's efforts, MDT is doing a better job of maintaining natural stream processes in their projects. Pat has been successful in contracting professional hydrologists to design and oversee stream channel alterations that largely use vegetative and natural flow design techniques for stream projects. His efforts have led to projects that are designed with natural streamchannels and fish habitat in mind. Pat's efforts have been instrumental in easing tensions between MFWP and MDT during the permitting process.

Even though MDT is not in the business of actively providing fishing access, Pat has been helpful in this area. He helped delineate right of way at a potential FAS in Rock Creek. He also helped on a willow/soil lift project on the Bitterroot River at Veteran's Bridge near Hamilton. The site, owned by MDT, is heavily used by recreationists to access the Bitterroot River. A streambank stabilization project was proposed to stop the erosion that would have made boat access difficult. Pat and others in MDT provided ½ of the funding for the project. Pat even spent a day helping build soil lifts at the site.

Christopher G. Clancy

To: MT Wildlife Society Awards Committee Chair

From: Jacquelyn Corday, founding member of Montanans for Safe Wildlife Passage
<http://www.montanans4wildlife.org/>

RE: **Montana Wildlife Society 2013 Biologist of the Year Award – Pat Basting**

Dear Awards Committee:

I am happy to provide this letter of support for nominating Pat Basting for the Biologist of the Year Award. Although he has worked as the MDT District Biologist for Region 1 for almost 20 years, this award, which focuses on contributions to wildlife in the past 5 years, is most befitting now. Pat's knowledge of the still relatively new field of creating safe passages for wildlife across and under roads has increased tremendously during the past decade and application of that knowledge has resulted in dozens of new crossing structures being installed in his district during the past 5 years.

I first began working with Pat in 2000 as the Chair of the Bitterroot Valley Wildlife & Wetlands Hwy 93 S. Focus Group. This citizen group formed to address the impacts to wildlife of the planned highway expansion. We organized field trips with MDT, FWP, & USFS biologists and MDT engineers to determine where to install crossing structures and what types of structures were going to serve the most species based on feasibility, topography, vegetation, and road-kill data. At that time, the science was still very sparse on what type of culvert and what size would be successful and where.

Pat had just recently transferred from Region 3 (the Rocky Mt Front/Great Falls area) to Region 1 (the western 1/5 of MT). Region 1 has a much more active citizen population versus Region 3 and never before had Pat worked with a citizen group that was so engaged in making design recommendations for over 40 miles of highway. Our group appreciated greatly that he was open to listening to our recommendations and trying new things. With the support of his District Manager, Pat's and our group's recommendations eventually led to 41 structures being installed in the past 5-7 years between Florence and Hamilton. This includes all crossing structures from small mammal pipes to culverts to bridges with game trails. Preliminary camera work by Dr. Patricia Cramer is already showing that these structures are being used by a great diversity of wildlife to safely pass beneath the highway.

Just when the Bitterroot design plans were mostly completed in the early 2000s, the work on designing Highway 93 N. from Evaro to Polson really began to come together with the Tribes and MDT. The work with our group might have served as the warm-up for Pat for an even greater involvement of the tribes with determining the design of the highway through their tribal lands. The success of that story has now been covered extensively in the media along with Pat's significant contribution to making that a world renowned context sensitive design. As I understand, there will be other letters submitted focused on that story.

Both Highway 93 South and North are incredible success stories of saving the lives of 1000s of wildlife over the coming years and improving the safety for drivers that Pat played a substantial role in as the District Biologist. However, the next project I want to tell you about, even though it is much smaller in scope, is even more important in establishing why Pat is so deserving of this award. In 2007, MDT was moving forward with a Safety Project of widening the shoulders of Hwy 206 located NE of Kalispell. During right of way negotiations, a landowner who raised cattle and who had pastures on both sides of the highway, (Jay and Sandy Whitney) requested a livestock/wildlife underpass be incorporated into the proposed design.

Unfortunately, the MDT Maintenance crew had not been documenting roadkill on Hwy 206, which is one of the major indicators used for justifying wildlife mitigation for road projects. Pat consulted with local residents and local FWP biologists to confirm that the culvert location identified was an important movement corridor for area wildlife and was informed that elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, moose, and wild turkey inhabit and move within the immediate area. Grizzly bears utilize areas two miles west in the Flathead River riparian areas and also use the western foothills and mountains of the Swan Range two miles due east of the proposed project, and thus could also benefit from a safe crossing of Hwy 206.

Thus, a crossing in that location was justified, but Pat didn't want to see the crossing go in and later be nullified by housing or other development on the adjacent lands. He also knew the budget for funding such structures would fall short, and thus he recommended that MDT's offer to the Whitneys include two terms: 1) that they would "gift" back the \$21,000 MDT owed them for right-of-way for the project towards the cost of the culvert and 2) that

they would grant a conservation easement on the acreage on both the west and east side of the highway in order to permanently protect the integrity of the culvert for wildlife passage. They agreed to both terms.

The cost of the culvert plus wildlife wing fencing to guide them to the culvert was \$165,000 and Pat now needed to figure out how to raise the remaining \$27,600 budget shortfall within less than a month. This was something that no other MDT biologists had done and certainly well beyond what is expected in his position. Pat turned to his extensive network of contacts in both the wildlife agencies and conservation organizations and successfully led the fundraising effort. Contributors included the Yellowstone to Yukon Initiative, the Wildlife Land Trust, FWP, Flathead County, American Wildlands, and the developer of a subdivision south of the wildlife crossing location. The balance was rounded out with individual contributions fueled by an e-mail campaign led by the Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers.

The wildlife culvert along with exclusionary fencing was installed the following year in 2008. In short, although the landowners were certainly the heroes lauded in the press, this wildlife passage would never have been installed without Pat's leadership and dedication to making it happen beyond the normal duties of his job.

This is a letter strongly supporting Pat Basting of the Montana Department of Transportation for the 2014 Biologist of the Year Award from the Montana Chapter of TWS. Pat has been an unsung hero of wildlife conservation along the highways of Montana for many years. He has represented the needs of wildlife in an agency with a very different mission than simply wildlife. Pat has taken his job to address the issues of wildlife in highway project proposals to a whole new level. Instead of just making sure the wildlife issue is "addressed" in environmental documents, his commitment has made MDOT a lead agency in wildlife conservation in Montana. He is an advocate for wildlife (without seeming to be an advocate) in an agency where he does not get many "points" for doing so. He is consistently a strong advocate and supporter of research and monitoring projects that enhance our knowledge of how highways impact wildlife and how the investments of MDOT in wildlife crossing enhancements perform. It is though his strong commitment that we have so many excellent wildlife crossing projects in western Montana. Pat's commitment is responsible for a reduction in the number of vehicle-wildlife collisions in Western Montana. In addition to being a good biologist, Pat is ever the gentlemen and it is always a pleasure to work with him.

Thank you for the opportunity to support Pat for this award.

Sincerely,
Christopher Servheen
Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator.

To: TWS Awards Committee

From: Jim Williams, FWP Wildlife Manager

Subject: Pat Bastings Nomination Support Letter

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) staff have had the pleasure of working with Pat Bastings for years on various transportation and wildlife conservation projects. Pat has been an incredible resource when it comes to transportation infrastructure and impacts of motorized vehicles and associated impacts on wildlife. Pat also stays current on transportation/wildlife research and is a valuable asset to our planning teams.

One of Pat's most significant conservation achievements was working with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes' Wildlife Team on the development and logistics of the groundbreaking Highway 93 wildlife crossing project. Tom met regularly with the technical team for over ten years on design and implementation. Today you can see the fruits of his labor when you drive that culturally important stretch of Highway 93.

FWP has also been working with Pat on the bighorn sheep problems on Highway 200. Here bighorns have been migrating to winter range and licking the salts on Highway 200 near Thompson Falls. FWP Wildlife Biologist Bruce Sterling contacted Pat, and together they are now sharing data and coming up with solutions to tackle this high profile bighorn sheep mortality problem. In fact, they are experimenting with alternatives to salt to minimize attractant potential of the highway.

FWP staff has worked with Pat on a myriad of wetland conservation projects and other technical designs over the years. We are fortunate to have him in Montana, and we look forward to working with him in the years to come. Pat Bastings is very deserving of this prestigious award.

Jim Williams and Alan Wood

It is a pleasure to nominate, on behalf of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Pat Bastings for the Biologist of the Year Award being awarded in 2014 by the Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society. I have been associated with Pat and worked with him in his capacity as wildlife biologist for MT DOT for many years and highly recommend Pat for this recognition. Pat is a dedicated wildlife biologist professional and has always worked hard on behalf of the interests of Montana's wildlife and habitat resources. Pat has been a valued colleague and assisted the Elk Foundation with several projects and provided valuable assistance when making important decisions about wildlife conservation. Pat is always ready to take on new projects and challenges dealing with wildlife and habitat conservation and is a sound voice for the MT DOT and the conservation community when it comes to wildlife conservation in our state.

Pat has many accomplishments and the recent project he contributed to resulting in successfully conserving the Richardson property is an example of his dedication to conservation. Pat also has a keen understanding of the value of partnerships working together with both private and public interests to achieve conservation success.

Again thank you for the opportunity to support Pat and his nomination as the Biologist of the Year in 2014.

Sincerely,

Mike Mueller
Lands and Conservation Department
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

This is a letter in support of Mr. Pat Bastings, Montana Department of Transportation, Missoula, Montana for his outstanding contributions to wildlife conservation via the numerous wildlife crossings and other work he has been involved with. I have worked with Mr. Bastings for over 15 years on various wildlife crossings, wildlife habitat connectivity assessments and other wildlife mitigation measures for highways.

Mr. Bastings is the first person I call when conducting wildlife crossing seminars throughout the western United States because of his knowledge and wisdom associated with "common sense" wildlife mitigation for highways. Mr. Bastings influence is both within Montana and with convincing other State DOT's to consider wildlife crossings and other wildlife protection measures. When The Wildlife Society put on a Highway Ecology session at the national meeting in Salt Lake City, Mr. Bastings was one of the first people contacted to help conduct the session.

One of Mr. Bastings finest contribution in Montana is the leadership he exhibited in Highway 93 wildlife connectivity assessment, the subsequent wildlife crossings (nearly 70 crossings built or planned) and his contributions to the monitoring program. These crossings are not just an example of highway ecology in practice; I consider them the most comprehensive system of wildlife crossings in the United States or Canada. Mr. Bastings continuous leadership was a decisive factor in planning and constructing this system. As mentioned before, Mr. Basting has been an inspiration both within his agency, with other wildlife biologists and with other agencies throughout the U.S. He is often contacted when biologists have concerns about highway impacts on wildlife and how to effectively deal with them. Few biologists have had as great an influence on the ground to Montana's wildlife as Mr. Bastings has had.

I thoroughly support Mr. Bastings for the Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society Wildlife Biologist of the year.

William C. Ruediger
Wildlife Biologist
Wildlife Consulting Resources

I wanted to take a moment and voice my support for Pat Basting's nomination for Biologist of the Year for the Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society. Pat has been employed by MDT for many years and is assigned to the Missoula District as its biologist.

The Missoula District has a constant need for the services of a highly skilled biologist. The roadway projects in this District are usually very complicated and require a great deal of care when dealing with the numerous environmental issues encountered on these projects.

Pat has been that highly skilled person and has played a key role in assisting MDT in solving problems and finding solutions to project related environmental issues and concerns. He

balances the need for safe transportation needs with care for the environment to arrive at solutions enabling MDT to deliver its projects while demonstrating a responsible care for the environment.

Another key component of Pat's performance is the relationships he has built with various resource agencies and associated personnel. When dealing with multiple resource agencies whose needs and interests are diverse, Pat works diligently with all parties to arrive at solutions acceptable for the permitting of highway construction.

A recent highlight of Pat's performance was his work on the Swamp Creek projects located on US 2 east of Libby. These projects have been on MDT's radar for roadway construction for over 30 years. One significant hurdle was the delicate habitat and native streams which required relocation to construct the roadway.

Pat facilitated discussions which numerous resource agencies, balanced construction needs with habitat requirements, and built relationships and trust with resource agency personnel. The result was the successful acquisition of permits for construction and solutions placed in the construction contract for protection and care of the stream work and the native habitat surrounding the roadway.

Pat's efforts have resulted in two construction contracts receiving the necessary permitting to allow construction to begin. Also, the third and final project in this corridor will be somewhat easier to obtain permitting due to the work Pat has already done and the trust built through his efforts.

Pat has worked for many years with CSKT staff to arrive at solutions to protect and enhance resources important to the CSKT government as well as the State of Montana. These solutions have resulted in the creation of an award-winning highway corridor known as the People's Way.

The People's Way is a section of US 93 from Poison to Evaro which contains tremendous habitat characteristics and as well as numerous areas of historical and cultural importance to the CSKT government. Pat was involved in each project and greatly assisted in working with CSKT staff to develop acceptable solutions and ideas for habitat development, growth, and protection.

This corridor is not complete as MDT and CSKT will work together to develop the Ronan Urban reconstruction project and the Ninepipes section of US 93. These two projects contain some of the more challenging environmental issues in the entire corridor and Pat will, once again, be an important asset when developing these projects.

I would appreciate your consideration of Pat Basting for the Award of Biologist of the Year. He is versed at his profession and his work has achieved real results for each and every taxpayer in challenging and complicated situations.

Sincerely,

Ed Toavs, P.E.
Missoula District Administrator

It is with great pleasure that I support Pat Basting's nomination for the Montana Chapter of

the Wildlife Society's Biologist of the Year award! I've had the great fortune to work with Pat for nine of his twenty-one years here at the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT). Not content to sit around and react to issues regarding wildlife biology, Pat has been extremely proactive in his field. He tackles subjects that are important to the resources, while still meeting the needs of the MDT. In the process, Pat has helped to develop a comprehensive modern highway system in western Montana that serves the needs of both wildlife and the people. Although he is too humble to admit it; Pat is considered, by me and many others, the leading expert on highway wildlife crossings in Montana. Pat has developed and maintains good working relationships with state, federal, and local agencies, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, special interest groups, and Montana citizens. US 93 North and US 93 South are just two highways in western Montana that are safer for the travelling public while allowing for wildlife passage either over or under the highway due to Pat's efforts and his ability to work with a diverse array of professionals. Through all of this, Pat has never lost sight of the importance of the resources and their significance to the people of Montana. He is, in addition, one of the hardest working people I know, who always takes time to sit down and discuss not only wildlife issues, but a host of other subjects in which he has interest. He has an uncanny ability to think on his feet and consider new ideas and look for alternate ways of getting things done in his field. That is something I can more than appreciate about anyone.

I cannot think of a more gratifying way to acknowledge my friend and colleague's dedication to wildlife and his achievements in this field than Pat receiving an award of this significance.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (406) 444-7227 or e-mail me at bsemmens@mt.gov

Bill Semmens
Resources Section Supervisor
Environmental Services

I am writing this letter in support of the nomination of Pat Basting for the Biologist of the Year Award with the Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society. I have worked with Pat Basting for just over ten years on wildlife-transportation issues throughout Western Montana. These projects include investigating the effectiveness of the wildlife mitigation measures implemented along US Hwy 93 North on the Flathead Indian Reservation, a review of several sites for the potential implementation of an animal detection system, a literature review of mitigation measures aimed at reducing wildlife vehicle collisions and at providing safe crossing opportunities for wildlife, and several student projects.

With all of these projects Pat Basting has shown dedication to making Montana's highway transportation system more sustainable for both people and wildlife. While his efforts and actions are not always fully supported by all stakeholders, Pat has been able to get important on the ground mitigation measures implemented with real and immediate benefits for wildlife conservation. Pat has proven that a mixture of dedication, diplomacy, patience, and a willingness to work with both traditional and non-traditional partners can book concrete results that are not only important on a regional scale but that are also regarded as exemplary projects by transportation and natural resource management organizations at a

national and international level. Pat is modest about these achievements and he quickly steps out of the spotlights. This is all the more reason to call attention to his efforts and make him aware that people do notice and appreciate his important contributions to wildlife conservation.

Marcel P. Huijser, PhD
Research Ecologist, Road Ecology Program
Western Transportation Institute (WTI) - Montana State University PO Box 174250
Bozeman, MT 59717-4250 Phone: (406) 543-2377 mhuijser@coe.montana.edu
<http://www.westerntransportationinstitute.org>

We would like to offer our support of the nomination of Pat Basting for the 2014 Biologist-of-the-Year Award. Pat's contributions to wildlife conservation and habitat connectivity have been integral in allowing us to better manage and sustain wildlife populations across a broad landscape. Pat's work in helping to identify wildlife linkage and movement areas has helped conserve wildlife far beyond our region, especially for forest carnivores and omnivores.

At a more local level, Pat is our "go-to-guy" at the Montana Department of Transportation—he is extremely knowledgeable, competent, cooperative, innovative and tenacious on addressing and mitigating for wildlife/vehicle collisions. We've been fortunate to work with Pat on wildlife crossing and wildlife concentration issues along our roadways throughout Region 2. Pat has been instrumental in ensuring accurate documentation of road kill and problem areas, and readily provides signage to try and decrease wildlife/vehicle collisions. His analysis along I-90, Highways 200, 93 and 83 has helped identify important wildlife linkage and movement areas and focused conservation and mitigation efforts accordingly.

Pat also has a knack for identifying issues and gathering partners and cooperators together to try and address problem areas. He focuses his efforts on working with landowners and community members to mitigate obstructions to safe wildlife passage.

In his quiet, effective way, Pat is able to bring diverse constituents together and recommend innovative ways to raise funds and support for projects. He also is extremely effective in creating follow-up research projects to test the efficacy of wildlife crossings. Projects such as the US Hwy 93 Mitigation and the Hwy 83 mitigation project immediately come to mind. His knowledge of wildlife crossing structures has been integral in making these projects successful.

Sincerely,

Vickie Edwards, Wildlife Biologist
Jay Kolbe, Wildlife Biologist
Ray Vinkey, Wildlife Biologist
Mike Thompson, Region 2 Wildlife Manager

I am writing in support of the nomination of Pat Basting, District Biologist with the Montana Department of Transportation, for the Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society's Biologist of the Year award. During positions I have held with both US Fish and Wildlife Service and the US Forest Service, I have had the pleasure of knowing and working with Pat for many years on a variety of projects and issues in western Montana. From that perspective, I have no reservations in supporting his nomination for this well-deserved award.

Whether working hands-on in the field, participating in project design meetings with engineers, or toiling behind the scenes with agency policies and processes, I have always found Pat to be a dedicated environmental advocate. He has repeatedly demonstrated a strong conservation ethic and a reasoned, common sense approach to working through complex issues. Pat knows how to get along well with people and is always willing to share his ideas and experiences with others. He has worked in the transportation ecology field for a long time and his willingness to try new approaches to finding effective and workable solutions has allowed him to attain a high level of trust and success with a wide range of partners and stakeholders. Pat is an asset to the State of Montana and its fish and wildlife resources.

SCOTT JACKSON
NATIONAL CARNIVORE PROGRAM LEADER

I am nominating Pat Basting for the Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society's Biologist of the Year Award. Mr. Basting, the Missoula District Biologist for Montana Department of Transportation, is a colleague I work with on Montanan's US 93 South, US 200, and at the national level in the field of transportation ecology. Pat does more for wildlife in the face of roads in his state than any other biologist in the nation. As a member of the Wildlife Society and the Montana chapter, I am very aware of the state of science of wildlife ecology in North America; I've written an article for the Wildlife Professional, attend and present talks at annual meetings, and stay in touch with my colleagues across the nation. Pat Basting is someone with few peers.

I began working with Pat in 2004 when I surveyed all states and provinces for a National Academies' project, 'Evaluation of the Use and Effectiveness of Wildlife Crossings.' Pat and I put together the list of all the wildlife crossings to be placed on US 93 in Montana. Today this road has at least 75 wildlife crossings on it, more than any road anywhere in North America. All of this is within Pat's district. Some of these were in the works when Pat entered his position with Montana Department of Transportation in Missoula, other crossings Pat made sure were built into transportation plans. In 2008 we began work together on US 93 when I became the scientist studying wildlife use of 19 crossings south of Missoula. What I see with Pat's work is a dedication to detail, while also reaching out to professionals of many specializations who can help prevent wildlife vehicle collisions. For example, I watched him shape the earth at a wildlife shelf in a culvert to make sure voles could get up to their tube on the underside of the shelf; he asked MDT maintenance to repair wildlife fencing after crashes punched holes in it at multiple places; he works with landowners to address their concerns about wildlife crossings where their land came to the road; and he worked with public citizen groups to assure them US 93 south

would be built with their concerns addressed. I also see Pat working to help wildlife all over western Montana, which is his district. No one has worked with roads and as many species as he has, from mountain goats and bighorn sheep to mule deer, elk, and grizzly bear. He has more wildlife mitigation in his district than 40 U.S. states combined! Pat is not just a biologist, he is literally an ambassador for Montana Department of Transportation with the Montanan community.

Patricia Cramer, PhD 264 E 100 North Logan, UT 84321
Research Assistant Professor at Utah State University, Logan, Utah

Acceptance of Biologist of the Year Award From Pat Basting

I am deeply honored with your presentation of this award, but tremendously saddened I cannot be there to accept in person. Life's changes have come extremely fast as of late and I am now living and working in Colorado. I've been fortunate over the course of my career to be in the right place at the right time.....and working with MDT for the past 20 years has been no different. While I've always felt I could make a difference, the reality is I was fortunate to have outstanding fellow wildlife biology professionals with CSKT, FWP, USFWS, USFS, university professors, NGO's and concerned citizens over the years to work with and supervisors who trusted and let me do my job the way I felt it needed to be done. I am humbled and extremely grateful for the opportunities to have known and worked with such tremendous people over the years.

Secondly, I'd like to sincerely thank all who supported my nomination and took the time to write letters of support, I was and still am stunned to be given this tremendous award.....coming from my colleagues.....it means more than words can adequately express.....thank you so much. It's been an honor and a privilege to have lived and worked in the great state of Montana for the past 30 years.

Past Biologist of the Year Award Recipients

Year	Recipient
2013	Bryce Maxell
2012	Tim Griffiths
2011	Carolyn Sime
2010	-----
2009	Daniel B. Tyers
2008	David E. Naugle

2007	-----
2006	Art Soukkala
2005	Rich DeSimone
2004	Dale Becker
2003	Keith Aune
2002	Randy Matchett
2001	Gael Bissell & Alan Wood
2000	Denver Holt
1999	Lynn Kelly
1998	Rick Mace
1997	Dick Buscis
1996	Tom Carlsen
1995	Mike Fox
1994	Alan Wood
1993	-----
1992	Mike Thompson
1991	Scott Denson
1990	Gary Hammond & Neil Martin
1989	-----
1988	Duane Pyrah
1987	-----
1986	-----
1985	Dale Harmes
1984	-----
1983	Mike Rath
1982	Tom Mussehl
1981	-----
1980	-----
1979	-----
1978	-----
1976- 1977	Established

The Bob Watts Communication 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.

Bob Watts was a biologist for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks from the 1970's through 1990. The Bohemian Corners Foundation, included board members Richard Mackie, Dave Pac, Bob Watts, Shawn Riley and Ken Hamlin. They and others would gather for deer surveys at Bohemian Corners, east of Roy, Montana, and discuss wildlife problems and issues. Bob was very articulate, enjoyed playing devil's advocate and tested the ideas presented during these discussions. The seed money from this award began with the funds collected from recycling the empty aluminum cans produced from these gatherings, in addition to the money made from selling antlers. This money was put into a fund and allowed to earn interest. Bob died in 1990 while on a deer survey from a severe asthma attack. The Foundation members chose to establish an award in honor of Bob. The award consists of a plaque and a monetary award of \$100.

2014 Recipients: Christine Paige and Joe Weigand

(Unbeknownst to Joe, within minutes of Joe submitting a nomination for Christine, Ken McDonald submitted a nomination for him for the same publication. The Awards committee selected both as recipients even though they were submitted separately).



I am nominating Christine Paige of Ravenworks Ecology for the Bob Watts Communication Award. I had the privilege of working alongside Chris during the writing and development of *A Landowner's Guide to Wildlife Friendly Fences: How to Build Fence with Wildlife in Mind* which was first printed in 2008. At that time the concept of wildlife friendly fence wasn't entirely new but no comprehensive guide existed that provided landowners and wildlife conservationists with a place to begin when considering alternative fence designs that accommodated livestock containment, wildlife welfare, and property delineation.

As wildlife biologists in Montana, we well know that barbed-wire is what truly conquered the west and that fence designs have changed little over the last 100 plus years. During this same period of time, wildlife had been largely eliminated from rangeland but then restored to the levels that we enjoy today. Fences, however, only increased in number and expanse. Four-strand, five-strand, and even six strands of barbed wire remain the dominant means of containing livestock, along with and often in combination with what we commonly call "sheep fence." These fences frequently act as barriers to wildlife movement, especially American pronghorn and young-of-the-year deer and elk. Research has shown that deer and elk injury and death from entanglement in fence wires is not uncommon and now more recently the impacts to waterfowl and sage grouse due to collisions with fence wires has been recognized and the desire to abate the impacts more prominent. In the last decade new ground was broken for state and federal agencies when the Bureau of Land Management and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks adopted fence designs that had lesser impacts on wildlife. Specific wire types and spacing recommendations were developed and put into place by both agencies on the lands that they managed. These new designs were primarily intended to reduce deer and elk entanglement, allow fawns, calves and pronghorn to go under the fence, and contain livestock the majority of the time. Yet, these designs were used internally and the documents that contained detailed descriptions of the designs remained largely unknown to the public.

In 2006, Craig Jourdonnais said to me, "What can we do on private lands to facilitate pronghorn migration in the Madison Valley and north to the town of Harrison? They can't get under or through the fences." This question and statement haunted me for several months before I was contacted by Christine Paige regarding wildlife entanglement in fences and what Fish, Wildlife & Parks could do to recommend alternative fence designs to landowners to reduce entanglements. Chris, like me, had begun searching the literature and the internet for information. Our efforts had mirrored results. We found research and fence recommendations from Wyoming, Colorado, and even a little from Montana. We had greatly enhanced our knowledge of the impacts of fences and our knowledge of what could be done on-the-ground to reduce those impacts. But not a single document was something that I wanted to hand back to Craig and say, "Here you go, problem solved." We were in dire need of an attractive, detailed, reader friendly guide that was specific to Montana and that featured home-grown Montana experience. Because of Chris' vast experience with both research writing and popular writing I quickly recognized that I already had the right person for the job.

No sooner than the suggestion was made that she start developing a Montana fence guide, when she was already extending her literature review and contacting landowners that I had begun working with to conduct fence design evaluations. A short year later she had enthusiastically completed the comprehensive guide *A Landowner's Guide to Wildlife Friendly Fences: How to Build Fence with Wildlife in Mind*. Chris worked closely and extensively with Nancy Seiler of Seiler Design and produced the most attractive, most comprehensive, and by all indications, the most used wildlife oriented fence guide worldwide. The entire printing of 7,500 guides was distributed to wildlife biologists, wildlife enthusiasts, and landowners in less than 48 months. A PDF of the guide was

posted on the Fish, Wildlife and Parks website and feedback was received from as far away as Maryland, Argentina and Nepal, and an Australian website, *Wildlife Friendly Fences*, features the document as a primary literary resource. As word and use of the document spread, I received requests from multiple state and federal agencies to use the guide for production of fence guides specific to other states. Montana's, or more accurately Chris', ground-breaking guide is cited and credited in the production of guides in at least six other western states and provinces.

With the supplies of the 2008 publication so quickly exhausted and new information and techniques cropping up, Chris quickly recognized that the guide not only needed to be reprinted, but also that much new information could be incorporated. She took the already useful and popular, 41-page document and expanded it with 13 additional pages of case studies and critical information, including how to address highway right-of-way fence and how to work with Montana Department of Transportation while doing so. Distribution of 10,000 copies of the second edition of *A Landowner's Guide to Wildlife Friendly Fences: How to Build Fence with Wildlife in Mind* began in earnest in January 2013.

I can think of no other author or publication that has had, and will continue to have, such a boots-on-the-ground influence in public and agency involvement for the benefit of wildlife and wildlife conservation. The impact of Christine Paige and her work will be rippling across Montana's rangelands and all western rangelands for generations to come. The additional impact that this guide will have for restoring habitat connectivity along Montana's 16,000 miles of state right-of-ways is of incomparable magnitude.

Chris' ground-breaking work on the original publication as well as the second edition is truly deserving of this prestigious communication award. Thank you for your consideration of this nomination.

With highest regards,

Joe

Joe Weigand, CWB®
Private Land Wildlife Specialist

It is with great pleasure that I nominate Joe Weigand, Private Lands Wildlife Specialist in FWP's Wildlife Division in Helena for recognition through the **Bob Watts Communication Award**, presented for significant communication in media.

Over the past 3 years, Joe has created 2 new types of FWP Landowner Outreach Publications that have received acclaim throughout Montana, as well as nationally and even internationally. Working with contracted staff, Joe produced *A Landowner's Guide to Wildlife Friendly Fences: How to Build Fence with Wildlife in Mind*, a highly attractive and informational guide that incorporates extensive research and input from landowners, contractors, and other fence-builders about how to design fences that minimize negative impacts to wildlife. Among Montana champions of the publication are Montana Department of Transportation ROW agents and biologists, staff from BLM, USFS, DNRC, The Nature Conservancy, Missoula County Extension, Defenders of Wildlife, and Montanans for Safe Wildlife Passage. Other states have used the Montana Guide to develop their own state guides, while Australia and Canada have companies with websites promoting the Montana Guide, and people in Argentina, Nepal, and Maryland have written to voice their appreciation for the

publication. This booklet, and a series of quarterly Private Land Technical Assistance Bulletins, has proven popular at conventions of Montana Stock Growers Association, Montana Farm Bureau, and other Montana organizations. Through his quiet leadership and exceptional initiative, Joe Weigand has created a whole new set of landowner outreach tools that help achieve high-priority agency wildlife management objectives and well as the objective of improving relations among Montana landowners, hunters, and FWP. These outreach tools also help enhance the image of FWP by enabling staff to better assist the Montana public in dealing with wildlife-related issues.

Please feel free to contact me at the above address, phone, and email addresses if I can provide any additional information.

Ken McDonald

PO Box 200701
 Helena, MT 59620
 406-444-5645
kmcdonald@mt.gov

Past Bob Watts Award Recipients

Year	Recipient	Name of significant communication
2013	Thomas Baumeister	Montana Wild
2012	-----	
2011	Doug Chadwick	"The Wolverine Way"
2010	Robert Garrott	"The ecology of large mammals in central Yellowstone: sixteen years of integrated field studies."
2009	L. Scott Mills	"Conservation of Wildlife Populations: Demography, Genetics, and Management"
2008	Kerry R. Foresman	The Wild Mammals of Montana and bringing scientific knowledge to the public through different media formats including newspaper and television
2007	-----	
2006	Terry Lonner, Harold Picton, Jim Williams	Back from the Brink-Montana's Wildlife Legacy
2005	J. Kirwin Werner, Bryce A. Maxell, Paul Hendricks, Dennis L. Flath	"Herpetology in Montana" and "Amphibians and Reptiles of Montana"
2004	-----	
2003	Ryan Rauscher	series of non-game articles for all major newspapers in Montana
2002	-----	

2001	-----	
2000	Gayle Joslin & Heidi Youmans	"Effects of Recreation on Rocky Mountain Wildlife: A Review for Montana"
1999	Richard Mackie, Dave Pac, Ken Hamlin, Gary Dusek	
1998	Mike Frisina	communications to TWS, Montana Academy of Sciences, popular outlets (Montana Outdoors, Montana Stockgrowers), Symposia, and 5 different professional Journals
1997	Martha Lonner	Media Works materials including: poster sessions, educational/informational brochures, videos, symposia, agency reports, bulletin, Intermountain Journal of Sciences
1996	Craig Jourdonnais	FWP's "video magazine" and "Outdoors Report"
1995	-----	
1994	Vince Yannon	
1993	Craig & Pam Knowles	
1992	-----	
1991	-----	
1990	-----	
1989	Gary Dusek	
1988	Established	

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

2014 Recipient: None

Past Wildlife Conservation Award Recipients

Year	Recipient
2013	Flathead Land Trust
2012	-----
2011	Wind River Bear Institute
2010	Ron Gipe
2009	Jamie Williams

2008	Dr. Jon Graham
2007	Leonard Howke
2006	Roger Stradley
2005	Dave Hoerner
2004	Northwest Connections
2003	Crow Creek Falls Citizens Group
2002	American Public Land Exchange Company (APLE)
2001	Chris Marchion
2000	The Cinnabar Foundation
1999	Montana Land Reliance
1998	Five Valleys Land Trust

Recommendations for these awards, along with a brief justification for the nomination and a discussion of the qualifications of the nominee, should be submitted no later than January 15, 2015 to

Brendan Moynahan, Awards Committee Chair
58355 Bison Range Road
Moiese, MT 59865
406 644-2211 x212
brendan_moynahan@fws.gov

Wynn G. Freeman Memorial Scholarship Fund, established in 1979, is awarded annually by the Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society to an outstanding wildlife student(s) at the University of Montana and/or Montana State University. Participation in and commitment to the wildlife profession as well as academics are considered in selecting individuals for this award. The award was established in tribute to the outstanding professional contributions of Wynn Freeman.

Wynn Freeman 1920-1978

A widely respected wildlife professional, in Montana and nationally, Freeman began work with the Montana Fish and Game Department (now Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks) in 1948 as the statewide waterfowl biologist. Under his leadership, the department developed a progressive waterfowl management program which included splitting of the state into the Pacific and Central flyways in 1961, and revising the boundaries in 1965 to their present status. His work on behalf of sportsmen and Montana's waterfowl resource continued throughout his tenure with the department.

Freeman served the department, Montana's sportsmen and the state's wildlife resource in a variety of capacities. In 1950, he was promoted to senior biologist. In 1953, he became the Federal Aid Coordinator. In 1960, he became the state Small Game Manager and, in 1963, Administrator of the department's Game Management Division. He continually endeavored to promote a sound wildlife management program based on the highest ideals of resource use, management and perpetuation.

A number of small game and waterfowl areas in Montana were developed under Freeman's supervision. Freezeout Lake near Fairfield is probably the most notable, since it has become one of the best such areas in the West. He also gave strong leadership to acquisition of winter game ranges, such as the Blacktail southeast of Dillon, and the Beartooth north of Helena.

In 1976, the Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society named Freeman "outstanding professional in the field." This was the first time in the organization's history that such an award had been presented.

The Department of Fish and Game's wildlife management program is recognized nationally as one based on sound biological principles and work by dedicated professionals. Freeman nurtured this program and continually insisted that high standards be maintained. His skillful leadership through the years included many extra personal contributions and efforts that indicated the devotion with which he served the department and Montana's wildlife resource.

Freeman was a native of Brigham City, Utah, and graduated from Utah State University with B.S and M.S. degrees in wildlife management. He attended Columbia

University under the U. W. Navy Midshipman's Program in 1943 and served on active duty with the Navy until 1946 in the Philippines and British Solomon Islands.

He was administrator of the department's Game Management Division from 1963 until his death on September 2, 1978. In August 1978, the Montana Fish and Game Commission recognized Freeman for 30 years of dedicated service to the department.

He was an active member of several lodges, the Naval Reserve and Ducks Unlimited. He was also a member of numerous professional organizations. He served as the Central Flyway Council's consultant to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regulations Committee.

In every respect, Freeman typified the highest ideals in professional wildlife management. For those fortunate enough to have worked or associated with him, it was a pleasure and an experience.

2014 Wynn Freeman Scholarship Recipients:



Erin Kenison, Montana State University



Jason Hanlon, University of Montana

Past Wynn Freeman Scholarship recipients

Year	Montana State University	University of Montana
2013	Brandi Skone	Kelsey Hay
2012	Elizabeth Flesch	Kristina Gunderson
2011	Brittany Mosher	David Nikonow
2010	Shana Dunkley	Parker Bradley
2009	Jesse DeVoe	Janelle Quezada
2008	David Christiansen	Darin Newton
2007	Megan O'Reilly	Scott Eggemann
2006	Justin Paugh	Kyle Miller
2005	Jenny Sika	Paul (Ben) Chappelow
2004	Julie Fuller	Jason Tack
2003	John Winnie	Nathan Stone
2002	Jeremy Paul Zimmer	Carl Saunders
2001	Jeffrey Warren	Melissa Robinson
2000	William (BJ) Lukins	Julie Fuller
1999	David Koons	Susanna Sowry
1998		
1997		Jacek (Tom)

		Giermakowski
1996	Andrew C. Pils	Dana Sanchez
1995	Shanno Podruzny	Michelle Wilbur
1994	William J. Semmons	Paul Sweet
1993	Ryan Rauscher	Jill Minor
1992	Kevin Podruzny	Denali Henderson
1991	Jim Williams	John Hughs
1990	Thomas R. Baumeister	Mike Gibeau
1989	Shawn R. Bayless	Nathan Hall
1988		
1987	Timothy Ferguson	
1986	Katharine Albrecht	Mark Hurley
1985	Scott Jackson	Susan Reel
1984	John Vore	Sandra Noble
1983	Scott Greer	Rob Bennets
1982	Jody Canfield	Robin Rae Bown
1981	Tim Andryk	
1980	Karl Grover	

Student Paper Awards: The Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society encourages student participation at the annual meeting and recognizes the best student paper in 2 categories, PhD and Master's.

2014 Student Paper Award recipients:

Best Student Paper: Erin Kenison. "Investigating Coexistence Between Trout and Long-toed Salamanders and the Indirect Effects of Fish Predators"



Past Student Paper Award recipients

Year	PhD Paper	Masters Paper	Best
2013	Angela Brennan	Brandi Skone	
2012	Nick DeCesare	Megan O'Reilly	
2011	Jody Tucker	Brittany Mosher	
2010	Jeff Stetz	Jerod Merkle	
2009	Jennifer Woolf	Victoria Patrek	
2008	Ellen Cheng	Chris Hammond	
2007	Brett Walker	Chris Forristal	
2006	Joseph Fontaine	Nathan Schwab	
2005	John Winnie	Karen McCoy	
2004			
2003			Jennifer Woolf
2002	Brett Walker	Nick DeCesare	
2001	Scott Stephens	Jo Ann Dullum	
2000	Michael Schwartz	Jacob Ivan	
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Student Poster Awards: The Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society encourages student participation at the annual meeting and recognizes best student posters.

2014 Student Poster Award recipients:

Adam Kehoe "Landscape Heterogeneity at White-Headed Woodpecker Nest Sites in West-Central Idaho"



Past Poster Award recipients (2007 1st year of award)

Year	Recipient and Title of Poster
2013	Sarah Sells "Proactive Management of Pneumonia Epizootics in Bighorn Sheep in Montana-Project Update"
2012	Dan Bachen "Mechanisms Driving Non-native Plant-mediated Changes in Small Mammal Populations and Communities"
2011	-----
2010	Brittany Mosher. "Implications of a Recent Mountain Pine Beetle Outbreak on Site Occupancy and Detection of the Avian Community"
2009	-----
2008	-----

2007	Megan O'Reilly. Montana State University. Relationships among moose abundance, willow community structure, and migratory landbirds at Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge.
2007	Kyle Cutting. Montana State University. Contaminants in eggs of Lesser Scaup nesting on Lower Red Rock Lake, Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge.

2014 Grants

MCTWS Grant Recipient: Flathead Audubon Society- \$913

Upon completion trunk contents will include:

1. Background information on the ecology, biology, and conservation of Montana owls for teachers and educators
2. Pellet dissection curricula, directions and skeletal guides for rodents
3. Puppets & scripts to accompany them
4. Costume components & scripts to go with them
5. Curricular activities for kindergarten through 8th grade – for both classroom and in the field
6. Songs & poetry
7. Books, both literary and scientific
8. Zip drive with images and common sounds of all Montana owl species, and related resources
9. Field guide to all Montana owls
10. Owl feathers, study skins, egg replica, pellets, talon replica
11. Bibliography of other owl resources



If you would like to report an error or fill in missing information, please contact:

Brendan Moynahan, Awards Committee Chair
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Moiese, MT 59865
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