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STILL ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR THE CLASS OF 2017

We're still accepting applications for this year's Leadership Institute. The application deadline for the Class of 2017 is March 17. Please encourage any young professionals you know who might be interested to apply. As in previous years, we looking for 10 early-career professionals who are a few years out of school (either undergraduate or graduate school), currently working full-time in a wildlife professional position, and have demonstrated evidence of their leadership potential.

From April until September, participants will engage in a series of activities to develop and expand their leadership skills. Institute members will attend the TWS Annual Conference in Albuquerque, NM (September 22-27, 2017) and participate in various activities, including mentoring and leadership workshop sessions. The Institute is free, and participants receive complimentary registration and a \$1500 travel grant for conference. Preference will be given to individuals who are certified as Associate Wildlife Biologists® or Certified Wildlife Biologists®, or who have submitted such an application. Visit <http://www.wildlife.org/leadership-institute> for more information.

TWS NETWORK ONLINE DIRECTORY LAUNCHED

The new TWS member benefit that will revolutionize networking opportunities for members has been in the works for months, and now it is being launched! The TWS Network Online Directory is an incredible tool for members, featuring a robust search

engine that will help you connect with other TWS members by location, area of focus, employer type, and other relevant factors based on each members' TWS database profile.

The directory will help you make valuable connections for collaboration, search for jobs, find mentors and more! It will include a private email messaging system that delivers email to you without disclosing your contact information to the sender. You can then decide if you want to reply and share your contact information and continue the conversation.

So far, 5000 members have updated their profiles. Join them today! Learn more [here!](#).

2015 ALUMS LEAD EFFORT TO OVERCOME RESEARCH-MANAGEMENT DISCONNECT

By Jerod Merkle and Tyler Harms

The 2015 annual TWS meeting in Winnipeg was where the idea came to fruition. There was little we could do about it; our conversations continued to needle a subject that might as well be one of the biggest internal issues our field faces. Both Aldo Leopold and Theodore Roosevelt emphasized that wildlife management and conservation be grounded in scientific knowledge. Even today, one of the most important pillars of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation is that “science is the proper tool for discharge of wildlife policy.”

Yet, we have a problem that is not new. There is a clear and well known disconnect between science and management. Researchers feel like their research is not used or is actually disregarded by managers, and managers feel like they are not receiving the information they need from ‘out of touch’ researchers.

We quickly realized that resolving this disconnect and developing synergy between research and management would not be simple. Although many have written about this subject, we deemed it a necessary first step to renew the conversation. Thus, with the aid of our colleague Michael Sheriff from Penn State University, we decided to put together a symposium on the subject for the 2016 TWS conference.

That decision has led to a landslide of new interactions and information, as well as the surfacing of many wildlifers who see this disconnect as something momentous to overcome. We had no problem filling the speaker list for our symposium, as everyone we asked said “Yes, and let me know if there is anything else I can do!”

The symposium started with an energizing introduction by TWS' Executive Director Ken Williams. The handful of presentations that followed outlined how to ask research questions that both are grounded in management and provide reliable knowledge. We then heard presentations on the impact and relevance of impact factors, as well as the importance of clearly established management implications and how they can bridge the gap between research and management. Next, we transitioned into a number of case studies where integrating research and management led to significant advances in science, while also providing concrete information for managers to meet their management goals. Although there are too many to list here, the most important conclusion that surfaced from the symposium is that personal relationships between researchers and managers, as well as the integration of managers into research and researchers into the management process, from the beginning, is essential to build trust and strengthen collaborations that result in synergy between research and management.

Since the successful symposium, our group has grown in size, and has collectively decided that the effort would not stop at the conference. In a second step in the process of turning the research-management disconnect into synergy, we are currently developing two written pieces that outline the issue, and provide new *ideas for resolution*. *Editors of The Journal of Wildlife Management and The Wildlife Professional* have agreed, and are eager, to publish these pieces.

We can attest that the momentum is strong, and this disconnect is beginning to be overcome as we write this update. So, as you move about your daily routines, think about whether your actions facilitate synergy between research and management or continue to widen the canyon between the two. If you are interested in fresh ideas on how to resolve this disconnect, keep your eyes peeled for our publications and share them with your colleagues.

BOOK REVIEW: STRENGTHSQUEST

“Know yourself” is a famous mantra of Aristotle. To reach our full potential as leaders in the wildlife field, we need to understand how we function best and what makes others tick. Multiple books and tests assess personality, but it is rare to find a book of this depth that goes beyond likes and dislikes to focus on key characteristics, which everyone has in a unique combination, that enable us to do our collective best. *StrengthsQuest* by Dr. Donald Clifton and Dr. Edward Anderson explains what strengths entail and how we can optimize these skills to maximize our performance.



Strengths are our natural talents and inclinations that provide the tools to attain success. Strengths are grouped into 34 themes. The authors recommend readers focus on their top 5 strength themes. They encourage people to claim strengths outside of their Strength Finder's test results. The premise of the book is that thriving people recognize their strengths, know how to use strengths depending on the role in life, and creatively apply strengths to all tasks. Figuring out our strengths brings many benefits. However, we must overcome hindrances to living out our strengths.

This book explains the types of strength themes, how to develop those themes, the necessity of becoming our own educators and teachers, and why we should maximize our strengths while fostering others' strengths. According to this book, strengths make all the difference. If we focus on our strengths, we can overcome our weaknesses. Knowing our strengths calls us to take action and increase their usefulness.

The Gallup Organization, which conducts national surveys, produced this book back in 2002 as one of the original in a series. The book is written toward a wide audience while highlighting students. *StrengthsQuest* is effective in helping readers discover their gifts and in demonstrating how strengths are essential for success. It enhances understanding of strengths by explaining the core elements and multiple combinations, then it shows how to best apply your strengths. Some other follow up books to read include *Strengths Finder 2.0* and *Strengths Based Leadership*. Leadership Institute alumni likely will recognize the fundamental concepts in this book. It provides the opportunity to reaffirm what you know and to learn more about other people. *StrengthsQuest* is a great book to recommend to mentees as well.

ALUMNI NEWS

Krysten (Zummo) Strong ('13) recently finished a stint on Council as the student liaison, got married, and started as a new biologist for Pheasants Forever.

Sonja E.R. Leverkus ('14) successfully defended her PhD thesis, "Conserving biodiversity in northern Canada through ecological processes and cultural landscapes," in 2015. She has been enjoying a great diversity of fieldwork including moose mortality investigations, habitat restoration, and mobilizing traditional and historical knowledge with science in natural resource management and development in the boreal forest. She has encouraged numerous young professionals to apply to LI as it was an amazing program to be involved with.



LEADERSHIP TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

National Conservation Leadership Institute

The National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI) recently announced that it is accepting applications for its next cohort of future conservation leaders. The program trains upper and middle level managers how to address adaptive challenges, lead through change, and other critical leadership skills that are essential for the efficient and effective management of today's fish and wildlife agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and related industries. Applications are due by 15 April. Learn more at <http://www.conservationleadership.org/>.