

2013 WCTWS Winter Meeting Summary

Submitted by Tami Ryan, President

The 2013 Wisconsin Chapter of the Wildlife Society (WCTWS) winter meeting took place on March 12th – 14th at Chula Vista Resort in the Wisconsin Dells. As occurred last year, our winter meeting immediately followed the Wisconsin DNR Wildlife Management program's annual statewide which often boosts attendance, and old man winter was kind to us this time around which also likely contributed to a strong attendance of over 200 WCTWS members.

As per tradition the winter meeting began with an evening social and provided an opportunity to enjoy the companionship of fellow wildlifers and hone in those all-important limbo skills.

The Plenary session on Wednesday morning was centered around the conference theme "Wisconsin Conservation: Achieving Success in the 21st Century through Collaboration". After welcoming remarks by WCTWS President Scott Hull the plenary began with Mike Strigl, Executive Director of Gathering Waters Conservancy, who provided an overview of strategies to engage whole communities in conservation. Jeb Barzen, Director of the International Crane Foundation's Field Ecology Department, followed Mike and shared with us the evolution of the conservation initiative for whooping crane reintroduction and how the diversity of collaboration and partnerships have influenced the success. George Meyer, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, closed out the plenary with an overview of conservation success stories that featured a progression of collaborative efforts in Wisconsin's historical conservation timeline. It was our good fortune to have such an all-star line-up of speakers all of whom provided us with valuable information to reflect upon and contemplate as we each strive for success in our collaborative efforts toward wildlife conservation.

New this year, Wednesday's concurrent afternoon sessions included a special symposia "Effectively Engaging the Agricultural Community: Finding the Right Message and Messenger"; and the other was the general session which carried on the plenary theme. Special thanks to Alan Crossley and Andy Paulios for initiating and organizing the symposia. I think they may have started a new tradition. Feedback for both of the afternoon sessions was very positive!

The WCTWS business meeting took place late Wednesday afternoon and early evening and the awards banquet was held in the evening. Both had very good attendance. Thank you chapter members!

We continued our emphasis and focus on students this year and both sessions on Thursday morning were dedicated to student presentations. Student submittals were high once again leading to this outcome. Way to go students! Presentations were all first-rate & kudos to Northland College for having such a strong presence this year! Thanks also to conference attendees for adjusting to the changes we made this year and for maintaining a strong attendance throughout these morning sessions and into the last event of the conference – the student presentation awards. Thanks to outgoing president David Drake for his role in organizing student presentation judges once again and to all of the student presentation judges.

Sincere gratitude goes out to all presenters and session moderators for an exceptional meeting. A round of applause for the WCTWS Executive Board/Planning Committee: David Drake, Scott Hull, Lesa Kardash, Travis Anderson, Rachel Samerdyke and Sharon Fandel. And, special thanks to Krista McGinley for once again putting together the program pamphlet and for organizing the inaugural art show/silent auction.

The WCTWS winter meeting continues to be a venue that is highly valued by chapter membership & provides great opportunity for professional development, continuing education, and social interaction. The executive board welcomes your feedback to inform our planning of the 2014 winter meeting. Please email your comments to WICTWS@gmail.com.

Thanks to all members who ran for office this year, to David Drake and Rachel Samerdyke our outgoing officers and to the Awards and Scholarship Committees for reviewing and selecting the 2013 award winners. And now, for this year's elections and awards results:

Elections:

- President-elect: Scott Craven
- Board member: Mandy Cyr

2013 Award Winners:

- Wisconsin Award: Adrian Wydeven
- Don Rusch Memorial Award: Jim Holzwart
- WCTWS Student Award: Josh Siebel
- 2012 Aldo Leopold Memorial Scholarships: Ona Alminas (graduate student award), Katherine Moratz (undergraduate student award)
- Best Undergraduate Student Presentation: Gabriella Jukkala (Northland College)
- Best Graduate Student Presentation: Camille Warbington (UW Madison)