

Nominator: Doug Larsen (dlarsen0770@gmail.com; 907-321-0770)

Nominee: David James (ddjajames1@gmail.com; 907-460-2543): Nomination for Lifetime Achievement in Professional Accomplishments Over at Least 20 Years

Employment: Alaska Department of Fish & Game: 1) Assistant Area Game Biologist, 2) Area Wildlife Biologist, 3) Management Coordinator, and 4) Regional Supervisor in Anchorage, Ambler, Kotzebue, Petersburg, and Fairbanks. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: Subsistence Resource Specialist in Fairbanks.

I have known David James since 1985 and was professionally associated with him from 1985-2014, when I retired. I have known David as my supervisor, my supervisee, and as a colleague. When I met David, he was overseeing Alaska's GMU 23 as its Area Wildlife Biologist. During the 3 years we worked together in NW AK, I learned a great deal from David, including the value and importance of working cooperatively and collaboratively with federal and other state agencies, and with the public. Then and throughout his career, David maintained an uncanny recognition of the importance of public involvement in state resource management decisions. During his years in NW AK, David made it an integral part of his management program to regularly visit regional villages, meet with residents, and integrate local knowledge and ideas into regional policies and wildlife conservation efforts. Though it required an incredible amount of time and energy to provide this involvement, David understood the long-term value and importance of doing so and never compromised this aspect of his management programs. As a result, David was deeply trusted and respected by locals and colleagues alike, and was thereby able to implement successful conservation actions. Personally, David taught me the importance of always seeking to understand the big picture and avoid jumping prematurely to inaccurate or inappropriate conclusions. He taught me that local ideas and perceptions, though sometimes at odds with Western teachings and practices, should be treated respectfully and incorporated when possible. His actions built trust and that trust resulted in local support on numerous occasions, with associated benefits to local wildlife populations.

Throughout his career, David clung fiercely to his belief in public input. When he moved to Petersburg he inherited local hostilities towards the Department. During his short tenure there, David was able to turn those hostilities into positive working relationships that resulted in positive conservation actions for local wildlife populations.

As Management Coordinator, and later as Regional Supervisor, David was able to connect with a broad array of groups, individuals, and interests. Groups with vastly different ideals and agendas trusted him. During his years in Fairbanks, David was successful in leading efforts to collect data, share that data with the public, and implement needed but often controversial antlerless moose hunts. David's confident, open, and honest approach to issues, and the integrity he never compromised, enabled him to be an ambassador for wildlife and a consummate conservationist.

With his trustworthiness and tenacity, David was successful in implementing highly politicized predator management efforts and, notably, was instrumental in accomplishing the reintroduction of wood bison onto Alaska's landscape, arguably one of the greatest conservation efforts of this century. His patience, persistence, and ability to work with diverse interests to find common ground were keys to the success of this incredible conservation effort.

Beyond these accomplishments, David mentored a large cadre of young and upcoming biologists throughout his career. As a result, these young biologists are better prepared to successfully undertake the challenges of managing and conserving Alaska's wildlife. And, with his legacy of competence, integrity, persistence, and trust, I can think of nobody more deserving of a lifetime achievement award for professional accomplishments over the past 30+ years than David James.