

Southwest Section Newsletter

Fall 2017 - Vol. 7 Issue #2

President's Message

Warren Conway - 2017 President SW Section of The Wildlife Society

It seems only a week or so ago that many of our Members were in Albuquerque for the 24th Annual Meeting of The Wildlife Society, which from many accounts was a very successful and productive time to reconnect, learn, and make some new professional and personal contacts. It was very encouraging to see the number and diversity of attendees, including young professionals, and students who may have attended the Annual Meeting for the first time. These sorts of professional experiences are crucial for maintaining their enthusiasm and passion for The Wildlife Society, and their state and sectional chapters as well. It was great to see so many students and future leaders of our profession~

Speaking of Southwest Section members, there were many from our region who were crucial in local arrangements and planning, including our Southwest Section President-Elect Ginny Seamster and Quentin Hays, among many others including Leland Pierce and Jason Estrella who were instrumental in organizing sub-meetings sponsored by the Geospatial Advisory Committee, and the WOW! Reception. I know I am missing many other individuals that were heavily involved, but it is obvious that our members, wearing many hats simultaneously had a tremendous impact on this Annual Meeting, and continue to have significant impacts on The Wildlife Society as a whole. We continue to have a meaningful impact as a Section on the National landscape, and that has been a long-standing tradition. Thank you to all of those who were involved in these different components of the National Meeting.



Preparing for The Wildlife Society Annual Meeting in Albuquerque

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Warren Conway - 2017 President SW Section of The Wildlife Society

Also, please be sure to see the call for papers for the 2018 JAM in Flagstaff in February; registration has recently opened, and students and professionals are encouraged to get their abstracts submitted by mid-November. We are planning a couple of embedded events within JAM this year, and look forward to seeing our members there in Flagstaff.

Finally, be on the lookout for our next slate of candidates for the new Board. Ginny Seamster will be taking over the reins next year, and has already been critical for organizing Section activities and plans for her tenure as President.

It seems as though everyone I speak to is busier than ever, but I appreciate our Members' involvement in the Section and hope each of you gets to enjoy some of the autumn in the Southwest.....it has been a beautiful fall so far~

—Warren Conway
Southwest Section President
warren.conway@ttu.edu



Warren Conway with students

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Election News

Information about candidates for SW Section positions will be sent to you soon via our SW Section Listserv.

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Thanks to contributors to this newsletter: **Laura Bies, Kristi Confortin, Fidel Hernández, Dana Kobilinsky, Leland Pierce, Ginny Seamster, and Romey Swanson.**

Please contribute to our next newsletter with information on your work related to topics of interest to SW Section members. We would love more articles from student chapters! Deadline for articles is **April 1.**



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Southwest Section Tracks

Fidel Hernández, Southwest Section Rep to Council

I had a pleasant, climatic surprise last week. After months of humid, warm mornings, I stepped outside to a cool, crisp dawn. A cool front had rolled into South Texas and decreased the humidity and temperature. I welcomed the refreshing feeling, and I thought, "Autumn must be on its way..."

Autumn is a wonderful season. It is a time of migration for many wildlife as well as a time of senescence for many plants. Autumn also signifies the season when we gather as professional group during the annual conference of The Wildlife Society (TWS).

Below is brief update on TWS activities from the summer as well as information on the conference in Albuquerque.

TWS ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

Leadership succession. As you know, former Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Ken Williams retired on June 30 and was succeeded by the incoming CEO Ed Thompson. The transition was seamless. CEO Thompson met with the entire staff multiple times during the final two weeks of June to plan for a smooth transition and make organizational preparations for the new budget year (1 July–30 June). CEO Thompson also participated in conference calls with the Finance Committee and Investments Committee as part of the TWS transition plan. TWS looks forward to this next phase under its new leadership.

Finance. With the passing of Jane Jorgenson, TWS Office and Finance Manager, TWS lost a valuable friend and a tremendous asset. Jane was 30-year employee of TWS, and her long tenure and intimate knowledge made her an irreplaceable pillar of the organization. Thus, this summer, TWS reached out to Renner & Associates to handle TWS finances in the immediate future. Given this transition, TWS taking the opportunity to identify, improve, and automate accounting processes so that the 2017–2018 financial processes will be more streamlined and effective. As of June, TWS was projected to close out the fiscal year in the black.

Audit. Preparations were made for the annual audit given the closing of the budget year in June. Because Renner & Associates presently is handling the Society's finances, TWS is in the process of selecting a new auditor. CEO Thompson has received recommendations of qualified auditors and a draft request for proposals was reviewed by President Thompson. TWS Council will be updated on the status of auditors and the audit process during the annual conference.



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Fidel Hernández, Southwest Section Rep to Council

TWS PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

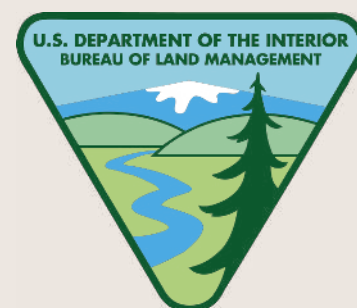
One of the primary duties of TWS Leadership is to engage with other professional societies on important conservation initiatives. This engagement occurs at many levels in TWS. Below is a brief summary of some of these engagement activities that occurred during summer.

Multi-agency Engagement. Keith Norris, Director of Wildlife Policy and Programs and Executive Director Williams met with representatives from the American Fisheries Society (AFS), the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, and the USGS Cooperative Research Units to continue planning for a workshop at the 2018 North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference. In addition, Director Norris joined leaders of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and AFS to review elements of TWS's joint MOU and in particular the elements that call for joint efforts in growing diversity in the natural resource workforce.



Midwest Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies. Director Norris attended the director's meeting of the Midwest Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies near Omaha, Nebraska. TWS applied for and was approved as an affiliated member of MAFWA.

Feral Horse and Burro Coalition. Director Norris engaged with state and tribal agency leaders regarding management challenges posed by feral horses and burros. Discussions included potential policy solutions, advocacy needs, management approaches, and social research opportunities. In addition, TWS was invited for a second year by the Mustang Heritage Foundation and Bureau of Land Management to participate in an Extreme Mustang Makeover Event on behalf of the National Horse and Burro Rangeland Management Coalition. Kovach attended the weekend event along with a representative from the Society for Rangeland Management. During the event, Associate Director Kovach hosted two presentations that educated over 150 individuals on the effects that



overpopulation of wild horses has on western rangelands and native wildlife.

Farm Bill Coalition. A collaborative meeting of the Farm Bill Conservation Coalition was convened to discuss consensus building efforts for the 2018 Farm Bill. Associate Director Kovach advocated for dedicated funding for monitoring and evaluation of conservation outcomes and increased funding for wildlife in both CSP and EQIP programs.

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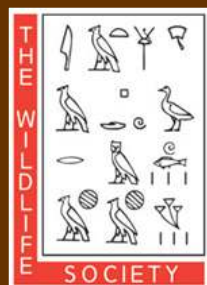
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Fidel Hernández, Southwest Section Rep to Council

TWS General Operations

Membership. TWS membership continues to maintain strong trends. For the first time since 2012, TWS closed the fiscal year (1 July – 30 June) with a membership growth higher than the previous year. The final count for the closing budget year was 9,133 members compared to 9,076 last June (+57, +0.6%). While the increase was modest, demonstrating growth in membership after three consecutive years of losses is a huge turnaround for the society. During June, TWS added three distinctly-themed email campaigns at members who lapsed during 2014, 2015, and the first five months of 2016 with positive responses. TWS also is announcing two new major member benefits in the coming months that should continue to showcase the value of TWS membership. One minor but critical improvement in membership services was the automatic renewal option.

This membership option continues to perform beyond expectations. Since January, 3,394 members (32.6%) are enrolled in Automatic Renewal.

While we're on the topic of membership, I'd like to take the opportunity to highlight the Give Back Program. This program extends a free 6-month TWS membership to a colleague of your choosing. Nominees do not have to join TWS at the end of their 6-month free membership, but get to enjoy all membership benefits during the 6-month period. If you did not take advantage of this opportunity last December, be sure to do so the next time you renew your membership. It does not cost you anything more than a simple click of a box in your renewal form and the nomination of a colleague, who—if he/she accepts your nomination—will enjoy a 6-month free membership and many TWS benefits.



Publications. TWS has just completed an author survey of the *Wildlife Monographs*, *Journal of Wildlife Management*, and *Wildlife Society Bulletin*. This is an effort to improve the publication process in these journals while enhancing their effectiveness. Survey results are being compiled, and I will report back on the findings in my next newsletter. Of worthy mention is the recent increase in the impact factors for all 3 TWS journals. We extend our gratitude to the current editors of these journals—Drs. Merav Ben-David (*Wildlife Monographs*), Paul Krausman (*Journal of Wildlife Management*), and David Haukos (*Wildlife Society Bulletin*)—for their professional service.

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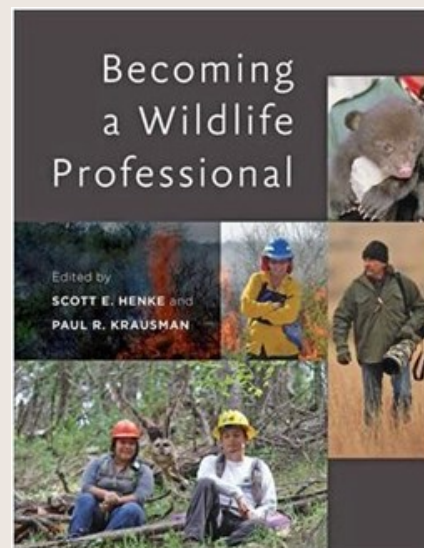
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Fidel Hernández, Southwest Section Rep to Council

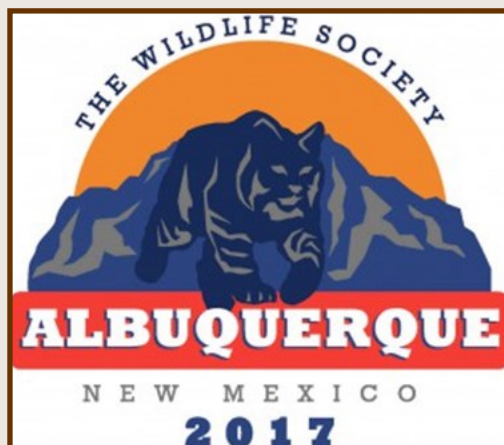
I would also like to highlight the recent release of a new book, **Becoming a Wildlife Professional**, that is part of TWS's book-series agreement with the John Hopkins University Press. This book is an edited volume by Drs. Scott Henke (Texas A&M University-Kingsville) and Paul Krausman (Professor Emeritus, University of Arizona). The book represents a compilation of perspectives on the wildlife profession from students to early-career professionals to seasoned biologists. Topics are wide ranging and include careers in wildlife, graduate-school advice for prospective students, student perspectives on higher education in wildlife, contemplations on the future of the profession, and many more topics. It is an excellent textbook to include as part of an undergraduate wildlife course. For more information on TWS book publications, please visit the following website: <https://jhupbooks.press.jhu.edu/books-published-association-wildlife-society>



Certification. Certification of wildlife biologists is one of the many services TWS provides to its members. During the month of June, 12 applications were reviewed for certification by the Certification Review Board. The review resulted in the approval of 9 Associate Wildlife Biologist® applications and 4 Certified Wildlife Biologist® applications. In addition, 6 renewal applications and 1 Professional Development Certificate application were approved. In an effort to increase the relevance of certification, Government Affairs Associate Caroline Murphy and Director Norris engaged in a meeting organized by the Ecological Society of America on the merits and challenges faced by other professional societies when operating their certification programs.

2017 Annual Conference

TWS 24th Annual Conference in Albuquerque took place **23-27 September 2017!!!** TWS and many Section, Chapter, and Student Chapter members of TWS have been busy at work planning for the conference. It is impressive the number of our members in the Southwest region who have been assisting with numerous conference activities ranging from fundraising to program to field-trip organization.



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Southwest Section Tracks

Fidel Hernandez, Southwest Section Rep to Council

This year's conference theme was, *Wildlife Conservation—Crossroads of Cultures*. The Plenary on Sunday morning highlighted the cultural factors that are important in effective conservation and included presentations by:

Arthur "Butch" Blazer (*Retired USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, Mescalero, NM*). Mr. Blazer is retired deputy undersecretary for natural resources and environment for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Since retiring, he has remained passionate about engaging the next generation of wildlifers, particularly Native Americans. Mr. Blazer, a member of the Mescalero Apache tribe, once managed its 463,000-acre reservation. He has been an active member of TWS and helped found the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society.

Hilary Tompkins (*Partner, Hogan Lovells US LLP*). Ms. Tompkins, a member of the Navajo Nation and former solicitor for the Department of the Interior, spoke about the intersection of Native American tribes with legal processes, an important aspect of cultural influences in wildlife conservation. In her former role, Ms. Tompkins represented the department in judicial litigations, negotiations and contracts between federal and state agencies and tribes. Her legal experience includes work with the Navajo Nation Supreme Court in Arizona and the Navajo Nation Department of Justice as a tribal court advocate.

Alexandra Sandoval (*Director, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, Santa Fe, NM*). Ms. Sandoval is the current Director of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and just the second woman director in the department's 101-year history. She has worked for the department since 1994 in various roles, including district wildlife officer (game warden), wildlife management specialist, federal grant manager, and licensing supervisor. She holds a master's degree in Business Administration and a bachelor's degree in Wildlife Management, and is a graduate of the National Conservation Leadership Institute.

We were excited that the annual conference returned to the Southwest Section and was attended by over 1800 wildlifers! Collectively, the conference featured 4 Plenary/Keynote Sessions, 950 educational opportunities, 40 networking opportunities, 2 major networking events, 3 field trips, and much more. The complete conference program is available in PDF at: <http://twsconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2017-Program-Guide.pdf>.

Until next time,

Fidel Hernández

Fidel Hernández
Southwest Section Representative of TWS

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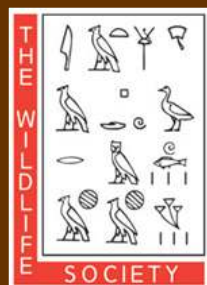
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Student News

Student Development Working Group

Greeting Students,

Have you ever heard of the Student Development Working Group (SDWG)? We are a Working Group that promotes increased student awareness of TWS membership benefits, works to expand knowledge and technical capabilities of student members, and helps prepare student members for professional wildlife careers. The working group facilitates networking between students and experienced TWS members by hosting meetings, workshops, poster sessions, a mentoring program, and a student chapter leaders' breakfast. **The working group also selects the recipient of The Wildlife Society's Student Chapter Advisor of the Year Award.**

Our working group features the latest student news in The Student Chronicles. We actively post on our TWS Student Development Working Group Facebook page. We delivery new topics, current student research and professional skill building.

We look forward to being the voice for students to The Wildlife Society. We are always here to welcome new student members. We look forward to helping and providing for the next generation of the wildlife profession!

If you have any questions about the Student Development Working Group please contact Chair Kristi Confortin at kaconfortin@bsu.edu.

Please see attached link for the Student Development Working Group Facebook Page, all you have to do is "like" the page to get daily updates! https://www.facebook.com/TWS-Student-Development-Working-Group-252817268125541/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel



TWS SDWG Award Winners

—Kristi Confortin
Chair of the Student Development Working Group
Student Liaison to Council
kaconfortin@bsu.edu

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Share with Wildlife Program

Updates: New Share with Wildlife Projects Announced for FY18

The Share with Wildlife Program at New Mexico Department of Game and Fish has identified 10 new projects for FY18 out of 34 proposed. Each year, the program funds new projects pertaining to wildlife research, education, rehabilitation, and habitat enhancement. The list of new projects is now posted on the Department's Share with Wildlife website (<http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/conservation/share-with-wildlife/>).



The FY18 projects include funding for three wildlife rehabilitation centers, which provide wildlife rehabilitation and education services in northern, central, and southeastern New Mexico. There is also an education project being carried out by the Asombro Institute in Las Cruces, New Mexico focused on developing a series of lessons for elementary school students focused on wildlife found in Doña Ana county.

The six research projects focus on a diversity of species, including two mammals (North American river otter, Peñasco least chipmunk), one reptile (western river cooter), one bird (Bendire's thrasher), and a multitude of amphibians and bats potentially impacted by two diseases caused by fungal infections. These projects will involve surveys for the focal species, evaluation of the effects of land management practices on nest survival and juvenile condition of birds, compilation of information on the presence/absence of chytrid fungus in amphibians and *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* (Pd) in caves throughout New Mexico.



The new projects will be getting underway in 2018 and the projects that started in 2017 will be wrapping up by May, 2018. Any questions about the newly funded projects or about the program should be directed to the Share with Wildlife program coordinator, Ginny Seamster (virginia.seamster@state.nm.us).

—Ginny Seamster
New Mexico Department of Game & Fish
President Elect SW Section
virginia.seamster@state.nm.us

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Book Review

Attracting Birds in the Texas Hill Country

Attracting Birds in the Texas Hill Country by W. Rufus Stephens and Jan Wrede is wonderfully valuable tool for bird lovers, wildlife biologists, and land stewards. This book is first and foremost a habitat management tool. However, being well suited to those that own and manage land for wildlife benefits, this book will also interest readers interested in birding, natural history, and landscape ecology. This isn't to say that it is a heavy tome that dives deeply into complex paradigms and theories but it does introduce the concepts of holistic habitat thinking and the connectedness of life. All readers, from seasoned wildlife biologists to new landowners to the casual backyard birder, will come away from this book with an improved understanding of the challenges to declining and imperiled Hill Country birds. Readers will develop a deeper appreciation for today's wonderful land stewards and how the Hill Country's man-made problems often require man-made solutions.

The book explores the specific challenges to habitat and avian species found within the Hill Country of Texas. It provides an overview of specific habitat types with treatments to assist in identifying healthy versus degraded conditions, problems regularly observed within each of the habitat types treated, likely causes of these problems, and strategies to recover or restore habitat. The authors tackle specific challenges such as predators, deer management, and cedar control.



Golden-cheeked warbler

Photo from <http://www.hillcountrylandtrust.org>

The few criticisms I have do not take away from the value of this book. I'll preface these comments by stressing that these are my opinions and based in a matter of personal preference.

First, although the authors include many photographs with examples of birds, habitat, and management activities, the layout is not impressive. This isn't to say that the layout isn't effective, it just lacks the graphically appealing appearance I'm becoming more used to seeing in semi-technical and popular publications. Second, I would prefer to see more diagrams (like that associated with rotational grazing in chapter 2) to complement management techniques in the book. I believe that this would benefit readers lacking land and wildlife management backgrounds. Lastly, the organization of the book can be tricky to navigate. Since problems like overgrazing and high deer densities can affect multiple habitat types, they are addressed in multiple chapters with one chapter usually exploring the issue more thoroughly than the others.

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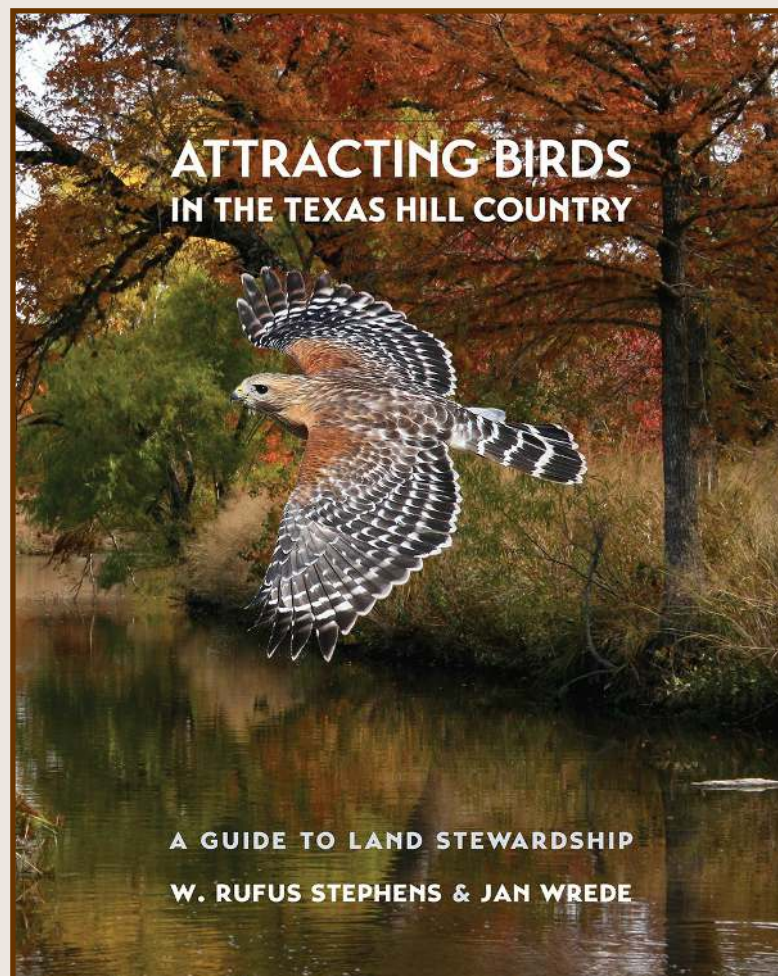
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Book Review

Attracting Birds in the Texas Hill Country (continued)

Stephens and Wrede do a great job of connecting specific Hill Country birds to the habitat with which they are most closely associated. They often remind the reader that species specific management is irrevocably tied to a habitat's ability to provide food, water, and shelter for the species. Further, the authors stress that, as wildlife managers, we should focus our activities on improving or stabilizing these critical components.



Stephens and Wrede have captured a depth of knowledge and experience of the Hill Country that will benefit a variety of readers; a welcomed addition to both the professional's and enthusiast's library.

—Romey Swanson
Dripping Springs, TX

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In Memoriam

Brad McRae · August 13, 1966—July 13, 2017

It is with a heavy heart that we announce the passing of Brad McRae on 12 July, after a 5 month battle with cancer. An engineer, ecologist, and conservationist, Brad worked as a staff scientist at The Nature Conservancy in Ft. Collins Colorado. Brad earned a degree in electrical engineering from Clarkson University in New York State and he soon discovered a deep connection to the outdoors and conservation. He received a Master's degree in Land Resources from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and earned a PhD in Forest Science from Northern Arizona University. Brad was a postdoctoral fellow at the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis in Santa Barbara, CA following which he was hired by The Nature Conservancy.

Brad is best known as the inventor of circuit theory and creator of Circuitscape and Linkage Mapper, extremely useful and accessible tools for modeling landscape connectivity and corridor design that are used around the world. His research includes more than 30 publications that have been cited over 3,500 times, and his software is downloaded more than 500 times per month. Friend and colleague, Paul Beier (Northern Arizona



University), wrote of Brad, "He was famously kind, witty, friendly, and inclusive. He was also a practical joker and an avid participant in outdoor recreation, especially forms involving water or snow." Brad was a beloved husband, father, and friend and is survived by his wife Theresa and two children Eliza (4) and Jake (2). A graduate scholarship in conservation science has been established in Brad's name. Donations can be made here: <https://www.youcaring.com/scholarshipforgraduatestudentinconservation-878987>.

First hand examples of Brad's legacy were provided during the two-part symposium on wildlife connectivity at the Annual TWS Meeting in Albuquerque, sponsored by the Southwest Section's Geospatial Advisory Committee. Tuesday, September 26th and Wednesday, September 27th: <http://twsconference.org/sessions/freedom-to-roam-wildlife-connectivity-in-action-from-data-to-implementation-and-assessment-i/> <http://twsconference.org/sessions/freedom-to-roam-wildlife-connectivity-in-action-from-data-to-implementation-and-assessment-ii/>

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2017 Leadership Institute

Emerging Leaders Selected for Class of 2017

Congratulations to the TWS members chosen to participate in the 2017 TWS Leadership Institute! These promising early career wildlife professionals, selected from a competitive pool of applicants, will engage in a variety of distance learning projects over the coming summer. The program culminated in September, with intensive hands-on mentoring activities and leadership workshops during the 2017 TWS Annual Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

"The Wildlife Society established the Leadership Institute in 2006 to enrich the future of our membership and our profession," says TWS Executive Director Ken Williams. "The program has garnered widespread support because it has been very successful in preparing our early career members for active professional leadership roles both within and outside TWS."

This year's participants are:

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



Leadership Institute Class of 2017

Photo by K. Norris

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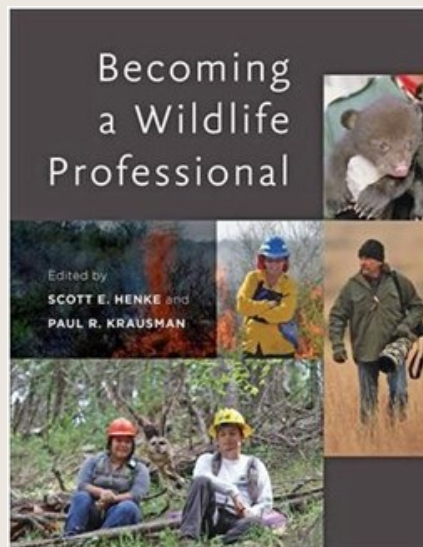
2017 Leadership Institute

Emerging Leaders Selected for Class of 2017

"Many young wildlife professionals entering leadership positions have not necessarily been trained in the skills needed for successful management of large groups or complicated programs," says Laura Bies, coordinator of the Leadership Institute. "The Leadership Institute introduces these exceptional young people to the management, mentoring, and organizational skills they need to become exceptional leaders."

Alumni news

From across the U.S. and Canada, Leadership Institute alumni represent the leading conservation organizations charged with managing and conserving North American's wildlife and habitats – state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, and academia. Together, these alumni serve as the foundation for the next generation of wildlife leaders. For a list of LI grads, see <http://wildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/alumni-list.pdf>.



Lindsay Smythe ('10) currently works in Flagstaff, AZ for the Coconino National Forest, but is going on detail this summer to the Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands in KS and CO as their biologist to help with a Lesser-Prairie Chicken reintroduction project (among other things). She'll be working with several of the people mentioned in the LPCH article in a recent issue of the Wildlife Professional. She's also working with Kent Fricke on the LPCH project, who went through TWS LI with her and is now working for Kansas Parks & Wildlife.

Dr. Serra Hoagland ('12) recently accepted a new position with the US Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station as the Liaison Officer to the Salish Kootenai College in Pablo, MT.

Three LI alumni, Michel Kohl ('13 and Past-Chair: Native Peoples WG), Serra Hoagland ('12 and Chair: Native Peoples WG), and Ashley Gramza ('15), along with Jessica Homyack, Chair of the Ethnic and Gender Diversity WG, authored a book chapter entitled "Professional Diversity: the key to conserving wildlife diversity" in the new book by Scott Henke and Paul Krausman that came out in July.

—Laura Bies
Leadership Institute Coordinator
laura@wildlife.org

Editor for the LI Institute Newsletter
Excerpt from June 2017 TWS Leadership Chronicles
<http://wildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/June-2017.pdf>

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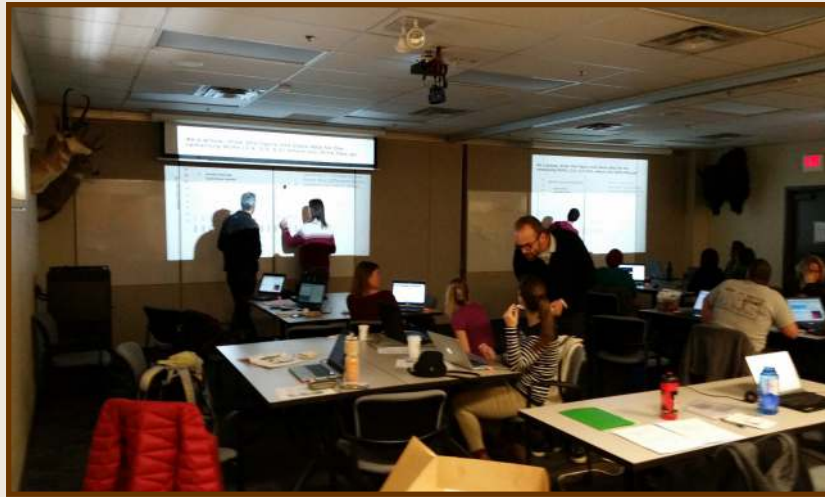
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Geospatial Advisory Committee

Symposia at TWS Annual Meeting

The Southwest Section Geospatial Advisory Committee (GAC) supported a pair of important symposia at the TWS conference in Albuquerque. The first, "Freedom to Roam – Wildlife Connectivity in Action from Data to Implementation and Assessment," covered the afternoon sessions of Tuesday and Wednesday, September 26th and 27th. The symposium was hosted by GAC member Melissa Merrick, University of Arizona, and Julie Mikolajczyk, Arizona Game and Fish Department, and "provided wildlife professionals with information on techniques to model and assess connectivity and covered an overview of best practices for ensuring that wildlife connectivity is maintained."



GAC during JAM in 2016

The second symposium, titled, "Mobile Apps in Conservation Science," was hosted by Jason Estrella, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and GAC co-chair, Ginny Seamster, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. This symposium was scheduled for the afternoon of Wednesday, September 27th, and focused on the use of mobile apps toward conservation and the trend of how these apps are quickly replacing GPS.

Ginny, along with co-chair Leland Pierce, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, hope to use the conference as a springboard for future actions by the committee, such as events at the chapter meetings for Arizona-New Mexico and Texas. Committee members plan to have a mobile apps symposium at the Texas meeting in February 2018. For more information on the symposia or participation in the committee contact Ginny at Virginia.seamster@state.nm.us or Leland at Leland.pierce@state.nm.us.

—Leland Pierce
Co-Chair, Geospatial Advisory Committee
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WoW! 2017 TWS Conference

Wini Kessler (PhD, Texas A&M) Receives Aldo Leopold Award

When Winifred "Wini" Kessler learned that she achieved the highest honor bestowed by The Wildlife Society, the Aldo Leopold Memorial Award, she was shocked, she said, and "feeling like a rock star."

"It's not something I ever pictured myself getting," said Kessler, who's been a member of The Wildlife Society since 1973 and served as TWS president in 2012-2013. "It just means so much to me because it comes from the wildlife community itself. It's great. It says, 'OK, I've had a career well-lived.'"

Kessler is now the second woman to receive the award. Lucille Stickel was the last recipient, in 1974.

Kessler began studying zoology as an undergraduate at the University of California-Berkeley. While she didn't know about the field of wildlife biology, her brother told her about a professor at the university who worked on wildlife management. His name was Starker Leopold, the son of Aldo Leopold, the man who pioneered the field of wildlife management. She met Starker Leopold, received advice on what she needed to know for the field, began attending seminars and signed up for a few classes.



At the time, the program had no women. "It was kind of uncomfortable," she said. "I was the only one in a class full of men, and all of the professors were males."

But her mentors, including Starker Leopold, were willing to "take the risk" of working with women, she said. Leopold introduced Kessler to Harald Heady, an ecologist in the range management program who took on three women as master's students. "They called us 'Heady's harem,'" she said. Another mentor, Harald Biswell, took her on as a research assistant to study fire ecology.

She had great experiences in academia, she said, but finding a job was not so easy. "The jobs I wanted were field jobs that were not open to women," she said. "That was kind of discouraging."

It was also a big factor in Kessler pursuing her doctorate. "They were not open to me, so I'd get so darn qualified they'd have to accept me," she said.

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WoW! 2017 TWS Conference

Wini Kessler Receives Aldo Leopold Award (continued)

While she was getting her PhD at **Texas A&M University**, the field was beginning to accept more women. At 27 years old, she landed her first job, as an assistant professor at the University of Idaho. Since then, she's held many positions in both academics and government agencies. She taught at Utah State University, chaired the forestry program at the University of Northern British Columbia and worked with the U.S. Forest Service for 21 years in positions such as Alaska regional ecologist, national wildlife ecologist and Alaska regional director of wildlife, fisheries, ecology and watershed management.



TWS members toast Kessler as new Aldo Leopold awardee

From left to right, Aldo Leopold Award Recipients Gary White (2000), Dale McCullough (2016), Nova Silvy (2003), Wini Kessler (2017), Paul Krausman (2006)

Throughout her career, she's seen the field of wildlife biology accept more women and minorities. She was vice president at the 2011 TWS Annual Conference in Hawaii where the first Women of Wildlife reception was held and was pleasantly surprised at the large turnout. "It was really exciting. I'll never forget that," she said.

While Kessler is retired, by no means is she slowing down. She's serving on a number of boards, including the Ducks Unlimited Canada board, the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council and others. She also continues to volunteer for the Boone and Crockett Club, where she became its first female professional member, in 1993.

"I've had such a great career, and I think I've amassed pertinent experience," she said. "I've learned a lot, and now I'm giving back."

—Dana Kobilinsky
Science Writer at TWS
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Social Media. The Wildlife Society Southwest Section Chapters Hub has jumped in 'likes' from 711 to 747 since spring. Check us out at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Wildlife-Society-Southwest-Section-Chapters-Hub/205755042835210>.

Find the latest news from the TWS office at the **TWS** Facebook page with almost 60,000 likes (<https://www.facebook.com/thewildlifesociety/?fref=ts>).

Most of the content being added to **TWS Women of Wildlife (WOW)** Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/TWS-Women-of-Wildlife/234411723382592>) is provided by volunteer Deniz Martinez. The page now has 1794 followers.

Here's a recent favorite of readers. In this interview with Scientific American, 83-year old Jane Goodall talks about the importance of conservation (https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/jane-goodall-still-traveling-the-world-and-speaking-up-for-animals-at-83/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=sa-editorial-social&utm_content&utm_term=sustainability_news_text_free).



From the article—

Weintraub: You are sometimes criticized for caring too much about animals when there are people suffering. Why do you think it's important to conserve animals?

Goodall: Think what the world would be like without animals. It would collapse. Ecosystems must be healthy. By helping the animals, we're helping the people, too.



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JAM in Flagstaff Feb 1-3!

Save the date for the Joint Annual Meeting

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THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

The Arizona Chapter Presents:

SAVE THE DATE

51st Joint Annual Meeting

of the Arizona and New Mexico Chapters
of The American Fisheries Society
and The Wildlife Society.

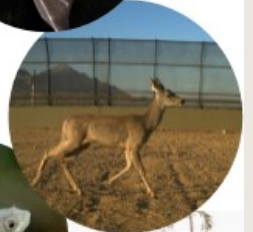
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President-Elect: **Ginny Seamster** virginia.seamster@state.nm.us 505-476-8111

Past President: **Dan Collins** collinsdp3@gmail.com 505-248-6881

Secretary: **Melanie Culver** melanieculver59@gmail.com

Treasurer: **Ryan O'Shaughnessy** rosshaughnessy@sulross.edu 432-837-8904

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Electronic Communications: **Vacant**

Finance Committee: **Vacant**

Geospatial Advisory Committee: **Leland Pierce** leland.pierce@state.nm.us 505-476-8094 & **Ginny Seamster** virginia.seamster@state.nm.us 505-476-8111

Membership Committee: **Vacant**

Newsletter: **Misty Sumner** mmiisstty@aol.com 432-283-2934 & **Carol Chambers** carol.chambers@nau.edu 928-523-0014

Women of Wildlife Committee: **Carol Chambers** carol.chambers@nau.edu 928-523-0014



Pinyon mouse (photo by J. Kasten)

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Membership Application

Membership Fee \$5.00

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Mailing Address

City	State	Zip Code	Country
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E-mail address	Phone
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Member Type (Please circle one): Student Regular Retired

Please include this form with your payment and mail to: Ryan O'Shaughnessy, Treasurer, Southwest Section of TWS, Assistant Professor, PO Box C-16, Alpine TX 78932.

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