

## **TWS Council Candidate Biographic Sketch Vice President Position - 2020**

**Donald Yasuda**

### **I. Education**

B.S., Wildlife and Fisheries Biology, University of California, Davis, 1987

### **II. Professional Background**

**Current position** – (Include major duties and major accomplishments.)

***Regional Analyst. USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region, Vallejo, CA (2010 to Present)***

Major Duties: I am the Regional Analyst assigned to the Region 5, U.S. Forest Service team to support forest plan revisions for all national forests in California. Whereas I provide analysis and support for large-scale, high-priority region-wide issues, advise managers, and conduct regional analysis related to forest planning and forest management, I have either led, co-led, or was a key participant in the development of region-wide collaborative projects where I provide facilitation of diverse internal (agency) and external (public) groups. Thus, my efforts involve discussing with managers and the public the complex resource management issues involving wildlife habitat, forest management, recreation management, fire management, community involvement, and many other aspects related to a diverse range of values regarding public resources.

I provide technical assistance and perform detailed analyses, including using geographic information systems to analyze spatial data and develop interpretations and implications of different choices made by managers. However, I also serve as a professional wildlife biologist on the Forest Plan Revision (FPR) team, writing the biological assessment and leading the Endangered Species Act formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the revised forest plans. As a senior member of the FPR team, I have served as a co-team leader for the draft forest plan environmental impact statement and provide important background and context about the individual forest plan revisions to aid in continual improvement of the forest plan development process. Finally, I provide biological expertise to forest and regional level projects by conducting analysis and writing the biological resource sections of planning documents.

**Additional positions pertinent to TWS president position** (Include major duties and major accomplishments.)

**USDA Forest Service:**

***Chair, Interagency Alignment Team, California Biodiversity Council (2013 to present)***

Major Duties: I chair this interagency group of federal, state, and local government agencies whose representatives are charged with increasing interagency coordination and collaboration. I lead the team in developing and implementing methods to increase interagency integration and alignment across different organizational boundaries that have different organizational missions. As a result the group has successfully supported the development of the California Water Plan, California State Wildlife Action Plan, and developed an Integrated Regional Conservation and Development Program that has an overarching objective to balance the priorities and needs for the conservation of biological diversity with the priorities and socioeconomic needs in the state. I also work with a core team to plan and implement meetings for the full California Biodiversity Council that discusses critical issues, common interests, and shared opportunities across different regulatory agencies and land managers to address public and private interests.

***Collaboration Advisor, Firescape Monterey, USDA Forest Service, Los Padres National Forest and The Nature Conservancy Fire Learning Network (2011 to 2015)***

Major Duties: I worked with Fire Learning Network facilitators from The Nature Conservancy to plan and implement community collaborative workshops to evaluate the issues around communities, wildfires, wilderness, and forest management in a wildland-urban interface community area around Carmel Valley and Big Sur along the central California coast. We used the “Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation” process to develop common understanding and find common ground between diverse stakeholders. This process helped build a “community” focused on addressing common interests that has led to community supported projects to reduce fire risks to the community while improving the condition of local watersheds.

***Steering Committee member, Sierra Cascades Dialog, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region (2010 to 2015)***

Major Duties: I served on a steering committee with a diverse group of stakeholders that designed and implemented a series of 15 community dialog sessions addressing issues related to forest management. These sessions were supported and sponsored by the USDA Forest Service yet designed by the steering committee and led by professional facilitators. Through this effort, I learned many facilitation skills and practiced them frequently by being a group facilitation leader and presenter of information relative to different aspects of forest planning and forest management.

***Biological Scientist/Wildlife Biologist, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region, Sacramento, CA. Various positions (2003 to 2010)***

Major Duties: I was the professional wildlife biologist serving on the interdisciplinary teams for the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendments (2004 and 2010), which amended the forest land management plans for 11 national forests in California relative to concerns about sustaining habitat for the California spotted owl. Because I conducted the wildlife analysis for the final environmental impact statement, prepared the biological assessment, and led the Endangered Species Act consultation with the U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service, I was chosen to interact with the U.S. Department of Justice in their defense of the agency's decision by providing expert reports and advising agency attorneys. Accordingly, this broad experience with all its dimensions served me well as a member of the implementation team that provided technical assistance to the national forests on methods of conducting landscape scale strategic planning to implement the amended forest plan.

***Natural Resource Biologist/Wildlife Biologist, USDA Forest Service, Eldorado National Forest, Pacific Ranger District, Pollock Pines, CA. Various positions (1988 to 2003)***

Major Duties: I was the District wildlife biologist responsible for the wildlife, fisheries, and botany programs on the Pacific Ranger District. I not only conducted species surveys, evaluated management projects for effects on wildlife, and implemented habitat improvement projects but also supervised assistant biologists and seasonal field crews conducting surveys for California spotted owls, northern goshawks and plants. Consequently, I worked directly with the District Resource Officer, the District Recreation Officer and Assistant, and the Assistant District Biologist to report my findings and to implement a self-directed leadership team. This self-directed leadership team substantially increased productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness of the various resource program areas as well as improved employee job satisfaction and team cohesion above that which would have been achieved through a traditional top-down leadership organization.

**III. Memberships and involvement with TWS at the Chapter, Section, and National levels**  
**Involvement** (include major contributions, officer or chair positions held, and committee involvement at each level.)

**TWS:**

I joined The Wildlife Society in 1988 when I was still in high school. When I entered college I became an active participant at society functions, which transformed my life as an engaged wildlife professional. Consequently, I have served The Wildlife Society in many capacities each of which I describe briefly below.

***Chair, Ethnic and Gender Diversity Working Group (Fall 2016 to Fall 2022; the Working Group has 2 year terms as chair-elect; chair; then past-chair)***

This Working Group evaluates and identifies opportunities for TWS to increase inclusiveness for TWS members and wildlife professionals. But we also plan and execute events at the TWS Annual Conference that address issues related to ethnic and gender diversity and inclusiveness in general. Therefore, the working group assists all TWS members in addressing issues related to ethnic and gender diversity including increasing inclusiveness in chapter, section, or working group activities. As chair, my emphasis in leadership is on increasing working group member involvement and supporting grass roots efforts by members and groups of members. However, the working group has an executive board and Council has a Diversity Subcommittee such that I work with both

these groups to improve integration and coordination between the different relevant working groups and TWS staff, leadership, and members. The effectiveness of this structure and function is exemplified by the highly successful “Out In The Field” events held at the 2019 TWS Annual Conference in Reno, NV where the working group provided support to a self-organized group having the objectives to increase awareness, understanding, and support for LGBTQ+ issues and members.

***Member, TWS Organization Integration Ad Hoc Committee (Fall 2016 to Fall 2018)***

I served as a TWS member on this ad-hoc committee identifying options and opportunities for improving TWS engagement and communication with sections and chapters. Yet, this committee was simply a continuation of my interests in improving the relationship between TWS and its sections, chapters, and working groups that I pursued during my tenure on Council. Thus, my work here demonstrated my abiding interest raising interaction among all entities of TWS.

***Audio-Visual Coordinator and Awards Coordinator, TWS Conferences (2016 to Present)***

I am part of the TWS Conference organizing team in charge of the concurrent session presentations at the annual meeting. I ensure speaker presentations are correctly placed in each concurrent session room each day. I also coordinate the presentation of TWS awards each day. This involves coordinating with award recipients and organizing the presentation of awards. I have developed and implemented techniques to ensure a smooth and efficient process that allows TWS to recognize those individuals who have made stellar contributions to the wildlife profession.

***Member, TWS Nominations Committee (2016 and 2017)***

I served as Western Section representative on this committee seek candidates for TWS Vice-President. I actively solicited candidates from the Section and then reviewed candidates from all sections.

***TWS Fellows Award (2015)***

I was recognized as an individual who has “distinguished themselves through exceptional service to the wildlife profession” by TWS. As a TWS Fellow, I serve as an ambassador for the Society and engage in outreach and other activities that benefit and promote both TWS and the wildlife profession.

***Audio Visual Coordinator, TWS Conferences (2009 to 2013)***

I was the lead organizer for concurrent session presentations and coordinating uploading presentations to session rooms each day at the TWS Annual Conference. However, I also developed a process to download files from the online submission system and then organize and operate the speaker preview room during the conference to ensure presentations were properly loaded in each concurrent session room. Hence,

the smooth operation of the concurrent sessions at TWS is partly the result of the system I developed.

***Western Section Representative to TWS Council (Fall 2007 to Fall 2013)***

I served two terms as Section Representative and chaired several Ad Hoc Committees such as: Future of TWS Conferences; Membership; Financial Management Guidelines for Subunits; and Ethics Policy. However, I was also a member and active participant on many other Committees over my tenure including being a very active participant during Council meetings and with the Western Section Executive Board to ensure that I represented the best interests of both the Western Section and all TWS members. When on Council, I actively engaged with attendees at the TWS Annual Conference to improve the visibility and transparency of TWS Council, to encourage active leadership participation, and to gather the “pulse” of member satisfaction with TWS services and operations. Additionally, I have been a devoted supporter of the TWS Leadership Institute as a means of actively developing leadership abilities of our wildlife professionals because we need more active members in TWS. Thus, I have been and remain a formal and informal mentor to several Leadership Institute participants over the years. I also served as an informal Council liaison to the newly formed Early Career Professional Working Group before the current process that specifies formal liaison assignments are to be made as needed. I provided guidance and support to ensure the successful formation and development of this working group and remain a strong supporter of the working group. Finally, I was a strong supporter of the newly developed Women of Wildlife initiative and have been an active supporter of the Ethnic and Gender Diversity Working Group (see above).

***Certified Wildlife Biologist (2000)***

I am a Certified Wildlife Biologist. I have used this status to support my qualifications to serve as an expert witness because it specifies my adherence to the TWS Code of Ethics and indicates my support of professionalism and the value of science to inform decisions relative to the needs of society.

**Western Section (WS) of TWS:**

***Historian (2018 to Present)***

I serve as the Western Section historian, managing an archive of historic records including historic newsletters and programs from previous section meetings and other documents related to section history. Despite the consistent interest by organizations in their history or the historical context of their decisions, rarely do they have a viable mechanism for accessing such information. Therefore, I am working to create electronic versions of historic material that will be available to our membership.

***Section President; Served as President-Elect, President, and Past-President (2014 to 2017)***

I served in this role following my term as Western Section Representative to TWS Council. As President-Elect, I organized the 2015 Annual Meeting in Santa Rosa, CA with the theme of "Conservation through Collaboration." The focus of my president's term was to increase WS Executive Board meeting organization and efficiency. I instituted pilot practices to streamline meetings and business operations of the Western Section Board, often by adopting and implementing meeting and business practices similar to those used by TWS and TWS Council. I helped initiate the development of the Section Diversity Ad Hoc Committee to bring emphasis on diversity and inclusion to the section level.

***James D. Yoakum Award for Outstanding Service (2012)***

I was honored to be recognized for this award to individuals who have provided outstanding, long-term service, support, and commitment to the Western Section of The Wildlife Society.

***Membership Committee Chair (2000 – Present)***

I serve as chair of the Membership committee that is responsible for addressing issues related to maintaining a strong and growing membership in the Section.

***Membership Coordinator (2005 – Present)***

I am responsible for managing the Western Section membership database of approximately 1,000 members, including renewals management and coordination with TWS about members who join or renew through TWS. Whereas I also coordinate with the Western Section Meeting Planner and Registrar and the Western Section Webmaster to manage memberships collected by the Section, I developed and maintain a Microsoft Access database to manage this membership. For these reasons, I have been asked to advise the Western Section Executive Board and leadership about issues related to membership.

***Audio Visual Coordinator and Meeting Support, Western Section Annual Meeting (2000 – Present)***

I served as primary WS Audio-Visual Coordinator and was responsible for coordinating management of concurrent technical session presentations at the Western Section's annual meeting, which included daily equipment set-up and take-down and coordinating volunteers. But having done this for almost two decades, I wanted to develop a new cadre of volunteers. Henceforth since 2018, I have provided support and mentoring for a new WS Audio-Visual Coordinator and continue as a member of their audio-visual volunteer team as well as serving in various as-needed support roles to the section's annual meeting arrangements committee.

***Membership with other professional organizations*** (Include major contributions, officer or chair positions held, and committee involvement.)

- Land Ethic Leader, The Aldo Leopold Foundation (2012). Training completed and recognized as a trained “Land Ethic Leader.”
- Member, International Association of Society and Natural Resources
- Member, Forest History Society

**IV. Please provide a 300-word answer to the following question:**

**Why are you interested in running for the office of TWS Vice President and what is your vision for The Wildlife Society?**

Assuming the leadership role in TWS is something that I’ve thought much about since I served as the Western Section Representative on TWS Council. During my time on Council I saw how an effective President could lead TWS by reflecting TWS’ history, understanding the present, and visualizing the future. What I admired about Council and TWS were the TWS leaders who could see the best in each Council member and who could guide, encourage, and challenge them to provide the best service to the Society. I have waited until I have gained a broad understanding of TWS and its members such that I now feel I can offer effective leadership to build on the historically strong leadership legacy of TWS as it continues to fulfill its mission.

My vision for TWS is to elevate its effectiveness to meet the needs of wildlife and people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Yet, I am committed to TWS remaining the preeminent professional society that emphasizes the importance of science-based wildlife management and conservation of biological diversity that is necessary for a diverse human society. To accomplish this, TWS must reflect and represent that human diversity. I know I can lead TWS in its quest to be more inclusive so our membership of wildlife professionals reflects society, which, in turn, will ensure that our views and positions on wildlife-related issues are contemporary and relevant.

If I earn the honor of serving TWS, I will be diligent that TWS remains financially sound, operationally effective, and focused on understanding member needs while encouraging the empowerment of all members to achieve their potential. I strongly believe that our collective strength will ensure that TWS continues to remain vibrant and relevant to its members, contributes to the sustainability of wildlife resources, and benefits society as a whole.

**V. Other Information**

I have been a member of TWS, the Western Section, and the Sacramento-Shasta Chapter since 1988 when I graduated from high school and started pursuing my degree in wildlife biology. While at the University of California Davis, I embraced community service by volunteering, and later becoming a senior leader, at the California Raptor Center. I became involved with The Wildlife Society a decade later when I attended a Western Section Annual Conference. When one of the speakers in a concurrent session had a problem with their presentation and I was sitting near the projector, I fixed the

projector so they could finish successfully. Helping to ensure a smooth and successful conference was the beginning of a long and continuing contribution to TWS that I enjoy to this day.

At that same meeting I attended a working group meeting with some Section leaders and expressed an interest in volunteering. A few months later, I was asked to join the Membership Services Committee and a few months later, I became the chair because the chair of record moved out of the section. As a volunteer, I interacted with the Western Section Executive Board and learned ways I could contribute to the organization of the board meetings and the annual meeting. Having served as a board member for many years, it was a tremendous honor to be asked and selected by the membership to serve as the Section Representative to Council for two terms and to represent the interests and needs of Western Section members.

On Council, I used the opportunity to meet and interact with some of the pillars of our society as well as many students and early career professionals who excitedly aspire to influence and lead their profession. Seeing the full range of leadership, formal and informal, aspiring and well-established helped me see the full potential a professional society like TWS could provide throughout the lifetime of a wildlife professional.

Following my time on Council, I was again honored to serve the Western Section as President. I continue to remain active with the Western Section Executive Board as a non-voting member on the membership committee and as the historian. I have also been the manager of the section bylaws since 2009, working with the Board to make seven amendments, including several substantive changes.

I am especially committed to supporting students, early career professionals, and aspiring professional leaders. The highlight of my attendance at annual meetings and conferences is inspiring and assisting those beginning their journey in the wildlife profession yet helping others helps me remain grounded in the issues, needs, and opportunities that lay ahead for all members of the profession. Because I am a supporter of students and early career professionals, it is gratifying that these members seek me out at meetings for advice and encouragement. Accordingly, it follows that I am an advocate for diversity and inclusion within our society and am also proud of my contributions, as both a role model and strong supporter of ethnic and gender diversity and inclusiveness in TWS.

I am proud, yet humbled, by the Western Section's James D. Yoakum Award for Outstanding Service, my TWS Fellows status, and my Charter membership in the TWS 1000. I feel like it is my personal and professional responsibility to "pay it forward" for the inspiration and support that I've received from other TWS members and wildlife professionals. I hope to have the chance to lead this incredible organization that has been such a fixture in my career and my life.