

Autumn, and the land is parched from a summer of little to no rainfall. The olives and tans of dried sagebrush and grasses blur in the heat waves of an Indian summer. Above the mirage in above average temperatures, through the smoke from fires a thousand miles away, dust swirls in a breeze too faint to conceal the sound of approaching animals. On a bench above the only alkali water and green vegetation for miles around, a sizable group of pronghorn does and fawns descend to drink and forage. Noticing a potential opportunity, two bucks quickly approach from opposing directions. With no champion, the bucks, equally matched in size, ego, and desire to control the next generation, make no hesitation and charge one another at full speed. On the grand stage of the basin, under the watchful eyes of the herd, the politics of nature manifests as the bucks engage in battle to be elected superior by victory. The only rule in this election is that whoever doesn't get broken wins unanimously.

This year is election year for a variety of positions nationwide, everything from local school board reps to the U.S. President. Despite much of the ridiculousness of campaigns, speeches, and borderline slander in many of the debates, voting is a right we have and ultimately should exercise to help steer and guide our government. Ridiculousness aside, WYTWS is no exception, and this year we have several excellent candidates who have stepped up for the opportunity to serve as board member at-large, treasurer, secretary, and president-elect. Be sure to check out their bios and cast your votes in the coming weeks. Win or lose, thankfully our candidates are here to help and won't be seeking to break each other.

Those of us elected previously in WYTWS and CMPS have also been working to finalize this year's conference, and none other more so than president-elect Tayler LaSharr. Set for a virtual platform, offered at no cost, and focused on diversity, the deep connections of Daly, Anna, Jerod, and Tayler have helped this one-day event to secure four of the biggest names in TWS that our conference has had in many years including *Professional* writer Josh Rapp and past-president Wini Kessler. Members will also have the opportunity to attend both CMPS and WYTWS member meetings to stay on top of what's hot, and enjoy quiz questions as well as results of nominations for Professional and Citizen of the Year and Best Newsletter Article awards. And for those who elected to help WYTWS, including COWCH chair Stan Harter and student chapter liaison Sara Locker, technology and helping hands from students are starting to transcribe past interviews of wildlife icons from Wyoming.

In the desert, the bucks driving and spiraling with every shred of energy, trying to outmanipulate one another for that brief lapse of concentration and balance, continue to show no signs of yielding. One misstep and defeat is imminent. Yet relentless effort has taken its toll, and although they refuse to quit with so much at stake, physical exertion is looming. Focused on the clash, the does, who hold the ultimate power to reproduce and recruit individuals to the herd, patiently wait for the results of a rather violent election debate. Two fawns mimicking the battle break their play, and the attention of the does shifts to a white flash. After a long, tactful approach, and now charging at full speed with fresh legs and lungs, a larger buck quickly displaces the competitors to claim the prize.

For those of us as members of any chapter of The Wildlife Society, from undergraduate students to retired administrators, each of us has the potential to recruit and strengthen our herd – and without conflict or regards to sex, sexual orientation, age, race, physical ability, or for that matter, political affiliation. If every WYTWS member would reach out and recruit another wildlife student or professional, we might not only double our membership, but also ideas, opportunities, and maybe even influence. And although often exciting and even somewhat necessary for survival, competition in any form also holds the risk of tunnel vision. No matter how much we think we know, when we don't pay attention and keep each other informed, there is always something potentially stronger, faster, smarter,

adaptable. All of us are here to promote wildlife and wildlife science and we can't do this alone. There is certainly strength in numbers, especially when those numbers include those who strive for excellence. Another reminder for our herd, no matter how competitive, it takes all of us to keep wildlife science, management, and our Society moving forward.