

North Central Section TWS



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The Biennial Newsletter of the North Central Section of The Wildlife Society

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The President's Column

Where Are We Going?

By Dave Luukkonen



Our past President Dennis Browning asked the question "Where Are We?" in the last North Central Section, TWS (NCS) newsletter. I continue Dennis' theme in my article as these questions are fundamental to a healthy, functioning professional society.

I believe Wildlifers must be among the most dedicated group of professionals on the planet.

For example, I am truly amazed at the intensity and duration of communications among wildlifers at professional meetings—people work long hours in committees and deliver or listen to papers all day and then retire to social events in the evening and continue vigorous discussion and debate late into the evening! I have had a difficult time reconciling what I know about the energy and enthusiasm of wildlife professionals and recent observations of lack of involvement in what has been our most important professional organization—The Wildlife Society.

An article published in Wildlife Society Bulletin a few years ago indicated that less than one-third of all wildlife biologists employed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are members of TWS or subscribe to any of its journals. Based on my anecdotal observations of state agencies, I would be surprised if membership rates among biologists working for state wildlife management agencies are much higher. TWS provides many important functions, perhaps the most important of which are communications and professional development opportunities and lack of TWS involvement should be a concern we all share. If you are reading this article, then you are most likely a TWS member and could argue that I am "preaching to the choir." However, it is important to recognize that TWS is going through a period of change that could be a very positive step in promoting membership and communication functions (please take an opportunity to read TWS Executive Director's article in the March-April edition of *The Wildlifer*). The NCS will likely evolve along with the parent society—that is likely to take some time, but that doesn't mean we can't take some immediate steps to improve our Section.

At our meeting last December I highlighted some of the priorities for the NCS and I believe we can make some positive changes over the next year. Sharing information and ideas among NCS members is a top priority and one of the projects we hope to complete a survey of NCS membership. The focus of this survey is better defining who our current members are and what barriers prevent members from becoming more involved (running for office or joining a committee, for example) in NCS operations. If you receive a survey in the future, please show your support for TWS and the NCS by promptly answering the questions and returning the survey.

Increasing NCS involvement in our membership meetings and the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference is another area for improvement. Past-president Browning and Representative Gary Potts did an excellent job in “packing the house” at our last membership meeting. We had excellent talks by TWS National Chapter Executive Director, Michael Hutchins and Vice President, Daniel Svedarsky. I am hopeful that in the future we will build upon the success of the last meeting.

Last December, we sponsored and organized a symposium dealing with Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies (A.K.A. Wildlife Action Plans) in the Midwest held in conjunction with the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference. The NCS has a long history of supporting symposia and most members attending our last meeting agreed that we should increase the frequency of NCS sponsored symposia. We received some excellent ideas and input from NCS membership for future topics and we hope to organize other symposia in the near future. If you would like to get more involved in NCS activities, including planning future symposia, then by all means contact me (luukkond@michigan.gov).

Spring is a time to initiate new growth and to become revitalized—get out and enjoy our wildlife resources!



When Change is Good.

Dennis J. Browning, Past-president

A universal catch phrase that administrators invoke is “Change is good!” When I hear these words, my reaction is to hold on to my seat and dig in my heels; here it comes. It is a similar physical response I had as a child when my father announced, “This is

gonna hurt me more than it will you.” Both clichés were meant to forewarn me of impending doom. Change is a sign of progress, a way for those in charge to test the waters and try new ideas. As most of us in the field have experience, some are good and some are not so good. Meaning more change is needed to correct what was working in the first place. I will concede that change is needed to improve performance or fix whatever is not working. This brings me to the meat of my ramblings.

The theme of the 2005 Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference in Grand Rapids, Minnesota was Bridges to Understanding; Linking Multiple Perspectives. This was appropriate with the discussion at the annual membership meeting of the North Central Section of The Wildlife Society. Besides all the routine business announcements and the raffle, those present had the opportunity to listen to our national TWS leaders. Michael Hutchins, Executive Director and Daniel Svedarsky, Vice-President, presented their perspectives on the state of our professional society. Both perspectives touched on tradition and opportunities where change can improve performance and reach new members.

Director Hutchins’ comments touched on TWS strengths and his vision for TWS. His ideas for changed had roots in the purpose and early foundation of the society. Not a complete abandonment of our past, but a return to what made us strong and build on those strengths. I jotted down 11 strengths in his comments. The ones that rang strong with me were his recognition of committed, passionate members with broad expertise in wildlife management and conservation. Michael emphasized the importance of diversity in the wildlife profession. This to him was an important strength and not something that prevents our unity. I know we tend to attract greater numbers from government agencies, but those professionals in academia and the private sector provide important perspectives to the way we function. I know I like to surround myself with an array

of different types of “thinkers.” The culmination of many different ideas makes for the best possible decision.

The certification program for wildlife professionals and a code of professional ethics were mentioned as TWS strengths. I have always embraced the certification of professional biologist an important tool for the society. I view this process as a method to strengthen our ranks and not an expense without benefits. Many of our agencies support a training program that is designed to improve leadership qualities. A strong certification program is a cost efficient way to promote excellence in the wildlife profession.

Regional chapters were also mentioned as a strength to promote local involvement. The North Central Chapter has the opportunity to work with our national leadership to provide a wide range of membership services that attract membership and promote involvement in TWS. Very few of us join a group with the sole purpose to simply belong. We need a purpose, a mission and way an outlet for involvement. Leadership in the NCS of TWS is an opportunity to initiate positive change and provide a local voice in the national society.

Director Hutchins remarks included a vision and focus for TWS. At the conference Michael announced the strategic planning initiative with the goal of identifying our core beliefs, defining our focus within the natural resource community and laying out specific objectives. As announced in the January-February, 2006 issue of *The Wildlifer*, sixteen wildlife professionals met in Florida on January 13th to initiate the strategic planning process. This process will take about ten months to complete and is intended to be a guide for the next five to ten years. A draft document will be distributed to members for comments. Michael emphasized that this plan will be flexible and dynamic; however, “Any plan, no matter how elegant or well thought out, is useless unless implemented.”

In line with the strategic planning initiative, Director Hutchins commented that TWS members have said that our organization needs a unique and powerful new identity, niche or focus to help guide future direction and distinguish it from other organizations with similar goals. He offered up one idea for consideration: The human-wildlife interface. This would encompass all things that happen when humans and wildlife come together. Michael listed five reasons why TWS might want to adopt this niche:

(1) The many threats to wildlife and their habitats continue to grow.

(2) Wildlife must be managed if it is to survive in a human-dominated world.

(3) We must develop the technologies and applied science to begin to resolve the many issues that arise when humans and wildlife come together.

(4) Basic science is certainly important, but time is short and we must focus our interdisciplinary efforts on cutting edge issues in wildlife management and conservation, or stand to lose much biological diversity within the next few decades.

(5) With its strong connections to academia and government wildlife agencies, the TWS membership is uniquely positioned to undertake this important role. In fact, most, if not all of its current working groups are compatible with this focus.

Director Hutchins linked this possible niche for TWS back to the very roots of the organization with a quote by Aldo Leopold (1918): “No wilderness seems vast enough to protect wildlife; no countryside thickly populated enough to exclude it. It seems safe to call a fallacy the idea that civilization excludes wildlife. It is time for the American people to realize this. Progress is no longer an excuse for the destruction of our native animals and birds, but on the contrary implies not only an obligation, but an opportunity for their perpetuation.”

Section Representative's Report

by Gary E. Potts

Greetings to all you North Central Section (NCS) wildlifers. Many issues and challenges have been discussed and dealt with since the last newsletter. This column will summarize the major highlights.



North Central Section

The last Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference was held December 11-14, 2005, in Grand Rapids, MI. The NCS sponsored and/or cosponsored the following:

1) A symposium entitled "Wildlife Conservation Strategies across the Midwest: Linking state and federal agency visions for the future." NCS President David Luukkonen and I were co-chairs of the session. This important symposium featured many of the state wildlife action plans in the midwest as well as overviews from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The symposium was a great opportunity for all attendees to hear and discuss many of the wildlife projects many of us will be working on in the future.

2) The NCS also sponsored a continuing education workshop entitled "Working with the Media." Several individuals from various agencies and organizations from the midwest benefitted from the workshop held on December 11, 2005. D. J. Case and Associates conducted the workshop. This was the 3rd continuing education workshop the NCS has sponsored at the Midwest.

3) The NCS also helped to co-sponsor a workshop entitled "A workshop to prepare fisheries and wildlife students for their first post-baccalaureate position." The workshop was organized by the Michigan State University Student Chapter of TWS.

Both of the above two workshops received partial funding from the Wildlife Information Network (WIN). Nationwide, \$30,000.00 in 7 WIN grants were approved by TWS Council and announced at the annual conference during the Leaders Lunch. Thus, NCS members had several opportunities for continuing education and networking at the Midwest. Thanks to all the members and chapters who for years have helped raise funds for continuing education!

One of the highlights at the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference was having two national TWS figures in attendance. Dr. Dan Svedarsky (University of MN at Crookston) who serves as Vice President of TWS was in attendance and spoke at the NCS Annual Business meeting. Dr. Michael Hutchins, Executive Director of TWS, also spoke at the NCS Ex. Board and Annual Business meetings. He also spoke to the large gathering of students during the student/professional mixer.

TWS Council

Council met on two days at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Columbus, Ohio. I'll report on issues by category.

Administration

Dr. Michael Hutchins, Executive Director of TWS gave an update on his activities since he started last fall. Michael has traveled around the country to seven different chapter and section meetings. He has made contact with over 1,000 members. We were fortunate in the NCS to have him speak at the annual conference of TWS last September in Madison, WI. and at the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference in Grand Rapids, MI. The various meetings attended have enabled Michael to gain an appreciation of member needs and how he and staff can improve TWS services to members.

Michael discussed the initial meeting of a Strategic Planning Committee. Once the strategic plan for TWS is reviewed by the committee, the plan will come to Council for their review and comment. The plan will then be sent to the entire membership for their review. All comments will be quantified, revisions made and a final draft will be reviewed by Council this fall. The strategic plan is of vital importance to TWS and all members are asked to participate.

Publishing

Dr. Phillipa Benson was hired 1 March to be the Director of Publishing and Information Resources.

Dr. Benson and Tom Ryder, Council subcommittee chair, gave an update on the plans for the new member magazine "The Wildlife Professional" which should be out in 2007.

Dr. Benson also gave a presentation to Council on "Merging TWS onto the Information Highway." She provided her many ideas on our publications and how we can improve our website to disseminate information. Drs. Benson and Hutchins discussed our restructuring of publication efforts working with Alliance Communications Group.

Government Affairs and Partnerships

Acting Policy Director Laura Bies' title was changed to Associate Director of Governmental Affairs. Laura gave an update on the many policy issues and partnerships TWS is involved with.

Council approved the partnership between TWS and the Human Wildlife Conflict Coalition. An MOU has been signed.

Eric Taylor, President of the Alaska Chapter of TWS, and an employee of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, provided an overview of his work on membership in professional societies by federal employees. Eric is serving in a Wildlife Policy Internship with TWS.

A listing of other MOU's and partnerships include

1) Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement, 2) Teaming with Wildlife, 3) American Wildlife Conservation Partners,

4) Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, 5) USGS Coalition, and 6) Natural Resources Partnership (many professional societies), 7) TWS-Bureau of Land Mgmt. MOU to promote excellence in wildlife science, policy, and education, 8) TWS - Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation MOU to establish the Brad Rowse Memorial Fellowship to work on policy.

Overall, both Dr. Hutchins and Laura Bies have done much work to strengthen our partnerships with many groups which will have a huge impact in the future.

Technical Reviews and Position Statements:

One important technical review that TWS is involved with is on the Impact of Wind Energy Facilities to Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat. Laura Bies and I and other members of Council's subcommittee on Wind Energy met with the authors on 20 March to get an update on the technical review. We also attended a symposium on Wind Energy and Wildlife put on by the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

Council approved the following: 1) the Scientific Peer Review for Regulatory Decisions position statement, 2) a draft position statement on the Endangered Species Act for member review and comment, 3) to retain the Feral and Free-Ranging Cats position statement, 4) the publication of the technical review on Baiting and Supplemental Feeding of Game Wildlife Species, 5) the drafting of a position statement on Baiting and Supplemental Feeding of Game Wildlife Species based on the technical review, 6) continuing the work of the technical review on Lead in the Environment and its Implications to Policy Makers and Fisheries and Wildlife Professionals, 7) a guidance document for position statements and technical reviews.

Laura also mentioned that TWS's new literature review on Fish and Wildlife Benefits of Farm Bill Conservation Programs: 2000-2005 Update, is now available from TWS.

Agreed to continue working on the following Wildlife Policy Priorities for 2006:

First Priority:

Budgets for wildlife and habitat conservation, management, research, and education
Energy development on federal lands
Fire/fuels/forest health management on federal lands
2002/2007 Farm Bill
National Forest System planning regulations
Teaming with Wildlife/state wildlife agency nongame funding
Endangered Species Act reauthorization
Global climate change and wildlife

Second Priority:

Bureau of Land Management planning regulations
Federal employee participation in professional societies
National Forest System roads management
Science policy for FWS and USGS-BRD

Ungulate confinement
Wetlands conservation
Wildlife baiting and feeding
Wildlife diseases

Membership and Conferences

Sandra Staples-Bortner's job title changed from Program Director to Director of Conferences and Membership. Sandra reported on a membership recruitment and retention strategy. Sandra reminded Council to let members know that they can renew their membership via TWS's website. She also discussed the planning for the upcoming 13th Annual Conference and Trade Show which will be held September 23-27, 2006 in Anchorage, Alaska.

Working Groups

Council approved the formation of a Human Dimensions Working Group. Council also was given a presentation on the work of the International Conservation Working Group and received a report from the Wildlife Diseases Working Group. We also reviewed a proposal for an Invasive Species Working Group.

Awards

Council approved several nominees for TWS Fellows Award. Additionally, the Group Achievement Award Winner was selected.

Summary

TWS has gone through much transition in the past couple of years. Council has worked hard on numerous issues; one important one is that I can report that we are in the black financially! The changes in publications, extensive work on wildlife policy issues, continued improvements on conferences and membership issues are all important to the improvement in TWS.

The work of TWS at all levels takes time and effort by members serving as officers. Thanks to all the members who have taken the time to serve as officers at the student, state, and section levels, and as student chapter advisors!

Please take the time to check out TWS's updated website at www@wildlife.org to learn more about TWS services and activities. TWS's phone number is 301-897-9770.

**TWS North Central Section
Annual Membership Meeting
Grand Rapids, Michigan
December 12, 2005**

Executive Board Reports

President's Report: Dennis Browning reviewed some of the NCS accomplishments for the year. The Section donated \$5000 for the TWS endowment paid over the next 5 years. NCS funded a Midwest 2005 Workshop, the student chapter award, and contributed to the TWS national conference. The Section sponsored a symposium at the 2005 Midwest and funded a professional journey workshop for 44 students. We were successful in gaining WIN grants in funding some of our activities this year.

Other Executive Board Reports: Secretary Brian MacGowan distributed copies of the 2004 annual membership meeting minutes which were unanimously approved. Treasurer Christine Ribic's report was unanimously approved. The balances were \$4,603.70 in General Fund, \$22,035.46 in Continuing Education fund; and \$12,038.01 in the Symposium Fund.

State Chapter Representative's Reports: Illinois Chapter is going strong and planning a joint meeting with the AFS. The Indiana Chapter helped sponsor a sustainable forest conference for professionals and landowners and also held a fall meeting in conjunction with a vegetation management workshop. Iowa Chapter had meetings with AFS and to discuss state conservation plans. Missouri Chapter noted that four professional natural resource societies hold their annual conference jointly to help bring in different perspectives. Ohio Chapter has their annual conference with AFS and supported the Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative. Minnesota Chapter had a summer meeting at Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge and will have a joint meeting of four societies in early March. There were no reports from Michigan or Wisconsin Chapters.

Section Representatives Report: Gary Potts passed out a written report that contained the details of his activities and the Council Meetings. Gary recommended development of a DVD that could be used to present the image and activities of TWS and a national technical review for wind farms. Gary noted that Scott Craven and Frank Thompson were selected as TWS fellows in 2005. Council has spent a lot of time on the changes in the organization including the publications. Council unanimously selected Michael Hutchins as the new TWS Executive Director. Gary's

term is over in 2 years and he asked people to consider running for section representative.

Committee Reports

Nominations and Elections: Dennis suggested that maybe a postcard ballot should be sent out since only 49 of 595 members voted. New officers are David Luukkonen (President), John Moriarty (President-elect), Jeff Lawrence (secretary), and Mark Shieldcastle (treasurer).

Awards: The Professional Award of Merit was given to Dr. James Hardin and Student Chapter of the Year to University of Missouri. The NCS will have more involvement in the future with Midwest Student Presentation and Poster Awards.

Student Workshop: Beginning Your Professional Journey, was held in conjunction with the Midwest. Eight colleges were represented by 44 individuals. They hope to have this as an annual event at the Midwest.

Audit: Lonnie Hansen found no problems.

The Wildlife Society Council

Michael Hutchins, Executive Director, discussed the strengths of TWS, the focus or niche for TWS – the “human-wildlife interface” and science-based wildlife management and conservation. Bob Brown, TWS President, could not attend and Michael covered some of his information. Fiscal issues and declining membership are the major problems. TWS will engage in a major strategic planning process to address these issues. TWS needs to redefine its core values and beliefs and ID its niche in the natural resources community. A big challenge is that most of the membership are just starting their careers and or are near their end. TWS is in the black financially for the first time in many years. The Society is very active in policy issues thanks to Laura Biles. By 2007, a new journal, the Wildlife Professional, will be provided to all members. We will go to one peer-reviewed journal that combines content from WSB and JWM with 8 issues per year.

Daniel Svedarsky, Vice President, reiterated the positive feelings about our new director. Awards are short on nominations - Please honor those who work amongst us. Membership is a continuing focus of the Council.

New Business

NCS Priorities for 2006: Dave Luukkonen, president, noted that we need to ask ourselves what the NCS role is, what is our vision, and how do we serve our membership. Dave plans to increase our involvement in the Midwest, and work on strategies to improve communication and involvement among NCS members.

2007 Midwest Conference Symposium sponsorship: historically host a symposium in odd years. Gary Potts made a motion for a joint symposium with published proceedings on lead poisoning in 2007. The AFS and TWS are doing a technical review of lead poisoning and the symposium may serve as an informational source for the review. Ed Linquist mentioned recent pine marten and Canada lynx work could be a topic for a symposium. Gary felt an initial expenditure of \$2,000 to \$3,000 would allow the symposium to proceed and we would get some money back from publication sales. Christine suggested that NCS try and do a symposium every year, but only publish proceedings every other year. Motion passed unanimously.

NCS involvement with Midwest Conference student paper and poster awards: We will coordinate with the host state better.

Incentives for leadership roles in NCS – paid registration or travel grants to Midwest: The cost of travel is a barrier for people serving as NCS officers. It may be beneficial for NCS to provide funds for travel. Possibly time was a more important barrier than travel dollars. It was decided to have more thought and discussion on this issue. We know we are having trouble getting members to run for office - we need to ID the barriers. It was suggested we survey NCS members to determine why they don't run and other potential barriers to involvement in the NCS.

Student Chapter Annual Report – needed revision: Low involvement in report submission and interest in Chapter of the year award. The current form may not be very user friendly for students. The form is the same one on the national level so NCS needs to work with the national office on the revision.

Continuing Education Committee: Had the 3rd workshop at the Midwest with 12-15 attendees. The original goal was to use interest from a \$50,000 continuing education fund to support 1-2 workshops every year. We are currently are at about \$22,000 and the original authors decided to reduce that to \$25,000. Six of eight states have contributed. We made \$95 in interest in 2005. Michael mentioned that TWS is working with IAFWA on a leadership program for mid-

career professionals. TWS will have a leadership workshop in 2006 where 10 students or recently graduated students receive training, mentoring, and a follow-up activity. Many conservation groups including TWS are looking into how to combine that into a multi-disciplinary leadership program.

*Strategies for improving communications –*TWS may introduce multiple listserves. NCS will undertake membership dues reminders and more frequent electronic communications. The PowerPoint on TWS will be timed with the new strategic planning process over the next 6 months. We may have a booth at the national conference in future years.

Other items

David thanked all of the out-going officers, particularly from John Shultz; and the incoming officers. Gary thanked John from Crookston for the web site; and members should use the TWS web site.

State Reports

Illinois Chapter

by Clay Nielsen, President

The Illinois chapter of TWS held our 42nd Annual Meeting at Rend Lake Resort & Conference Center in March 2006. The conference kicked off with a special session on “The Future of Wildlife Management in Illinois - Where Are We Going?” Our keynote speaker was Dr. John Organ, President-elect of TWS, who spoke about the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation and the Public Trust Doctrine. Following the keynote address, speakers from various groups (i.e., The Nature Conservancy, Pheasants Forever, Farm Bureau, and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources) addressed the Chapter on their organizations goals and views concerning wildlife management in Illinois. Dr. Organ, along with North Central Representative Gary Potts, also discussed recent changes in The Wildlife Society. Several fine research presentations were given during the conference. We held our meeting in conjunction with the Illinois state chapter of The American Fisheries Society, and the fish folks served up some great eats at the fish fry!

Iowa Chapter

by Rolf Koford

The 2005 fall meeting was held in October in conjunction with the Midwest Birding Symposium in Davenport, close to the banks of the Mississippi River. Several Iowa Chapter members gave talks at the symposium, which was well attended. Several members also attended The Wildlife Society’s 12th Annual Conference in Madison, Wisconsin. The Chapter also donated a Knight Muzzleloader to the auction at the conference.

Our electronic newsletter, produced under the direction of Pat Schlarbaum, chair of the Education & Information Committee, looks great and is available at our web site, <http://www.public.iastate.edu/~iowatws/>.

One bit of good news for Iowa wildlife was a new law that expanded the Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program to provide funding for the state’s Wildlife Diversity Program. REAP funding comes from the purchase of the Natural Resource License Plates. This new funding will attract 50% federal grants that had been unavailable because of the DNR’s lack of matching funds.

Minnesota Chapter

By David Trauba

The Minnesota Chapter of The Wildlife Society (MN-TWS) held its 2006 Annual Meeting on March 1-2 in Brainerd, Minnesota. This was a special event as for the first time ever all four Minnesota natural resource organizations (MN-TWS, Society of American Foresters, American Fisheries Society, Society for Conservation Biology) came together for a joint meeting - Minnesota Natural Resources Conference. Over 440 professionals attended the two-day conference including 100 students from 12 colleges. This level of student involvement was most encouraging. Eight presenters set the stage the first day outlining demographic and natural resource trends the state of Minnesota will face in the coming decades. This was followed by 2 keynote speakers: Jim Bowyer, Consortium for Research on Renewable Industrial Materials, discussed consumption patterns and the need to consider consumption in environmental planning. Brian Czech, Center for the Advancement of a Steady State Economy, advocated an economic sustainability model, which recognizes and values biodiversity. Over the 2-day period 14 concurrent sessions were also held covering a wide range of topics: invasive species, genetically modified organisms, riparian/shoreline management, urban/regional planning, timber investment management organizations, plus traditional papers on forest, wildlife, and fisheries research and management. Conference was well received by attendees and it is our intent to hold a joint meeting with all four professional societies every 5 years. Conference should only get bigger and better.

Over the past year the Chapter has been working on a position paper on pattern tiling. The topic of pattern tiling was a summer workshop theme 2 years ago. After that workshop the USFWS contracted with South Dakota State University for a literature review on the effects pattern tiling has on wetlands and receiving waters. Document was recently completed and serves as the base for our Chapter’s position statement. Goal is to have the document finalized and out for review by the national office by mid-summer.

Planning is underway for two summer workshops in 2006. The first will be held in the prairie zone of Minnesota and will deal with rotational grazing and patch-burn grazing regimes. The second workshop is planned for the forested region. Workshop theme is still being formulated but will most likely deal with brushland management and the potential for biomass harvest or ecological classification systems in relation to forest planning.

Missouri Chapter

by Chris Newbold

Professionals and Students Build Relationships Again for a Second Year. Nineteen Wildlife and Forestry professionals led hands on demos at the Missouri State University Bull Shoals Field Station located on the Drury-Mincy Conservation Area over the weekend of March 31- April 2. This was an opportunity for wildlife conservation and biology students from Missouri's colleges to experience first hand management techniques in the field. Forty-eight students representing The Wildlife Society Student chapters from five different Missouri colleges attended the workshop. Students were given the choice of participating in any or all of a variety of activities: rocket-netting, bat telemetry, wildlife damage trapping, feral hog trapping, avian damage control, orienteering, GPS, raptor trapping, prescribed fire operations, herpetology sampling, and even fungi ID. This workshop was the second attempt by the Missouri Chapter of The Wildlife Society to offer college students across the state a forum to share training experiences with other students and professionals. Participating professionals were again encouraged by with the interest of students and the passion for pursuing careers in the field of wildlife management, research and conservation. Students camped at field station grounds and at primitive campground on the Drury-Mincy Conservation Area. APHIS staff sponsored an evening pig roast (of course) and the new Missouri State University Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society provided grilled lunches. Springtime in the Ozarks was a great time to enjoy the blooming of Service berry, hearing the Wild turkeys gobble from the Oak savannas and woodland hills early in the morning and experiencing a typical springtime thunderstorm roll across the landscape at night. The warmer temperatures made for great herp sampling as the numerous spring peepers were displaying their choruses from the sinkhole ponds on the area. The weather conditions were perfect for providing students the opportunity for observation and some closely supervised training with demonstrating the execution of prescribed fire in a Post-oak savanna. Conservation professionals from, APHIS, DNR, Missouri State University, Central, Missouri Western State Colleges and two Divisions within MDC helped coordinate the workshop. The Missouri Chapter is planning to offer the 3rd annual workshop for students next year perhaps on a big river system. It is our effort to encourage more relationships with professionals, and to provide real field experiences within the variety of natural communities and landscapes of Missouri for years to come.

Wisconsin Chapter

Wisconsin State Chapter News

By Michele Windsor

Wisconsin wrapped up another successful winter meeting in March. Over 80 people attended and were treated to some great talks as well as wonderful hospitality at Fox Valley Technical College in Appleton, WI. This year's theme focused on success stories in wildlife management. A nice break for those of us that deal with chronic wasting disease, deer rules, and legislative activities.

Elections were held during the meeting and we welcome Steve Hoffman as our new treasurer/secretary; Karl Martin as president elect; and Ken Stromberg as executive board member. Thanks to our exiting officers for their hard work: Tami Ryan, Adrian Wydeven, and Jeff Pritzl.

Goals for the upcoming year will be to increase awareness of the state chapter as well as membership.

The summer meeting is already scheduled for August 11th and 12th at Kemp Station, near Tomahawk, WI. The event will be preceded by a meeting to discuss updating the book "Mammals of Wisconsin" and looking at having the state chapter sponsor publication of the book.

The student chapter at UW Stevens Point will be hosting the North Central student conclave in 2007 and is asking for support in making sure this is a successful conclave. They have already secured money from the University to keep costs down for student registration and are looking to raise additional funds.

The chapter is working to get its web page up and running. Past difficulties in maintaining the web page and keeping good communications amongst members has been a thorn in our side, but hope to work with the parent chapter to get our web page back online.

And ending on a great note, a significant endowment from the estate of Mr. Floyd Bjerke has given the state chapter a financial windfall. Mr Bjerke was not a wildlifer, but enjoyed watching wildlife and wished to give something back to the state and its wildlife professionals. A subcommittee has been formed to determine the best method of investment and disbursement of this bequest as well as future ones once the estate is settled.

Award winners at this year's banquet for the Don Rusch memorial award went to Pat Kaiser and the student award went to Sarah Orlofske from UW Stevens Point.

Non Reporting State Chapters

Indiana Chapter
Michigan Chapter
Ohio Chapter

Meetings of Interest



2006

May 31-June 4 **Gamebird 2006** - A joint conference - Quail VI and Perdix XII. Hosted by the University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia. See <http://gallus.forestry.uga.edu/QuailVI/> for more details.

July 12-17 **Joint Meetings of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists**, New Orleans, LA
<http://www.dce.ksu.edu/jointmeeting>

August 23-26 **4th North American Duck Symposium**, Bismark, ND (Mike Johnson, North Dakota Game & Fish Dept., 701-328-6319, mjohnson@state.nd.us).

September 23-27 **The Wildlife Society Annual Meeting**, Anchorage, AK
<http://www.wildlife.org/conference/index.htm>

December 3-6 **Midwest Fish and Wildlife** - see back page of newsletter

Obituary

Art Hawkins 1914-2006 Minnesota

Conservationist and waterfowl management pioneer Art Hawkins died Thursday where he spent much of his life — outdoors.

Hawkins, 92, of Lino Lakes, Minnesota, had taken a walk outside his home on Lake Amelia, sat on his favorite bench and visited with his granddaughter before collapsing. A student of famed conservationist Aldo Leopold, Hawkins was a graduate of Cornell University and the University of Wisconsin. “Art was a legend in waterfowl management,” said Harvey Nelson, 81, of Bloomington, a retired U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service colleague.

“He helped lay the foundation for waterfowl surveys that have been used for 50 years to set our annual duck regulations,” said Steve Wilds, regional Fish and Wildlife Service migratory bird chief.

Hawkins was a Mississippi Flyway biologist and flyway representative during a career that spanned more than 35 years. The recipient of countless conservation awards, since retirement Hawkins has served as an advisor to the Department of Natural Resources, the Aldo Leopold Foundation, the Leopold Education Project of Pheasants Forever and the city of Lino Lakes.

In 1970 he co-founded the Environmental Program in Churches and has helped organize Earth Day events. He also helped design the wood duck box that has aided the return of that species.

Hawkins is survived by his wife, Betty, three children, “Tex,” Amy and Ellen, and four grandchildren. (Minneapolis Star-Tribune, 11 March 2006)



Student Chapter Reports

University of Illinois

by Geriann Albers, President

The University of Illinois Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society has had an active spring semester so far. At our first meeting, the Wildlife Medical Clinic at the University of Illinois gave a presentation on their organization and on their four resident raptors, including a Red-tailed Hawk, Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, and an American Kestrel, all of which they brought along to the meeting and allowed the members a close look at. At our next meeting, Dr. Jeff Brawn and Dr. Jack Jovic, both of the University of Illinois, gave a mini workshop on writing a Curriculum Vitae and applying to graduate school. At our third meeting, Ben O'Neal, a Master's student and member of the club, talked about his research project and discussed what to do and what not to do when conducting field research as a graduate student. Dr. Dan Harvey discussed his research on Eastern Massassauga rattlesnakes in Ontario at our fourth meeting, and Dr. Robert Schooley, a recent addition to the University of Illinois faculty and to our student chapter's advisory board, has agreed to discuss some of his research at our final meeting of the semester to take place in late April.

Aside from speakers, we have also had two weekend trips. The first was to Richardson Wildlife Sanctuary in Lee County, Illinois where we aided the staff in conducting tree surveys, and in our free time we hiked and bird watched. The second was a trip to Southern Illinois. Members camped at Giant City State Park and helped members of the Southern Illinois University Carbondale student chapter build snake hibernacula for one of their ongoing projects. Members were also given a tour of Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge.

Several members attended the annual State Wildlife Society meeting which this year was held as a joint function with the Illinois American Fisheries Society at the Rend Lake Resort. One member, Ben O'Neal, gave a presentation on his research. Also at the state meeting, the club sold Illinois Wildlife Society shirts as a fundraiser.

Throughout January, February, and March many members aided Allerton Park, owned by the University of Illinois, in sample collection during a series of hunts designed to reduce the number of deer in the park. During hunts, many samples ranging from brain to liver to teeth were collected to test for various diseases and contaminations, and members aided in the collection and processing of the samples.

Several members also took a special training session at the Urbana Park District to become Volunteer Naturalists and lead nature hikes through Busey Woods, a local natural area, for school children between the ages of kindergarten and 5th grade. Hike leaders will complete nature activities with the children such as dip netting and tree identification.

Finally, we were asked to be a part of the interview process for a new Fisheries faculty member being hired by the University of Illinois. Members from both TWS and the student chapter of the American Fisheries Society are meeting with the candidates and will then give feedback to the search committee based on the meetings to aid in their selection of a new faculty member.

To finish off the already busy semester, we are going to try to organize a canoe trip, a workday at the local park district, and we will have an end of the year cookout and election of officers in early May.

University of Illinois (Champaign-Urbana)

The Illinois Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society in Urbana-Champaign had a busy few months this past fall. We held meetings every 3 weeks, and were honored to have several guest speakers including Jane Li, a representative from Prairie Rivers Network, Steve Beckman, a local nuisance trapper, and Josh Stafford from the Forbes Biological Station in Havana.

The semester started off early, with returning members bringing our display to Quad Day to recruit new members. This is an event designed to show students all the different clubs and groups that are on campus, and we had over 100 people sign up for our mailing list at this one event. We also recruited at the Environmental Action Night, which is similar to Quad Day but geared toward environmental groups on campus, and at the New Student Welcome, which is strictly for incoming freshman.

In late September we sent several students to the Wildlife Society Annual Conference in Madison, Wisconsin, where we had 2 members presenting posters. The students who attended listened to interesting talks on a variety of subjects, browsed through interesting poster presentations, and talked to a variety of people in the wildlife field at the student-professional mixer. One student, Geriann Albers, also shadowed a professional, Robert Timm, for half a day. During that time, she attended all the same talks as Mr. Timm, discussed some of the research he is working on, and attended the wildlife damage working group meeting.

In early October, we completed a project called Storm Drain Stenciling in conjunction with Prairie Rivers Network, a local river conservation organization. The project was

designed to raise awareness that the pollutants people dump down storm drains flows directly to rivers and streams without any sort of treatment process. We spray painted stencils that stated "dump no waste, drains to river" on or near all the storm drains in the Assembly Hall parking lots, where many people park for basketball games and tailgate for football games.

We also were given the opportunity to learn a little about radio telemetry and track an eastern massasauga rattlesnake with John Griesbaum, a student who works under Chris Phillips of the Natural History Survey. Students were allowed to go with John any day that he tracked, and while out, he demonstrated all the equipment used, and gave each student the opportunity to work with the equipment. He also showed us the data he recorded each day, including wind, nearest trees and woody cover, and the body temperature of the snake.

In late October, members spent a day at the Vermilion River Observatory hiking around with guide and advisor Steve Buck. Several members also went hiking around the backpacking trail at Forest Glen Preserve in Vermilion Country in early November.

The group also held several social events to get club members better acquainted. We held a cookout at Illini Grove on campus, and we went bowling at the Illini Union after our November meeting, and held a bar crawl for those members of drinking age in December.

We are looking forward to an even busier spring semester, which we are hoping will include a weekend at the Richardson Wildlife Sanctuary, a day trip to the Forbes Biological Station, and several members attending the State Meeting in March among other activities.

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

by Dan Whiting

The Southern Illinois University of TWS has had a great year so far. To start our semester, Dr. Steve Taylor from the Illinois Natural History Survey gave a talk on cave and karst biology, conservation, and management. Bev Shofstall from the "Free Again" Wildlife Center spoke at one of our meetings about being wildlife rehabilitator. She brought in a few of her birds for show and gave members the opportunity to volunteer at the center.

We also thank the ICTWS for providing \$500 to fund our deer spotlighting survey, which will be conducted in 2006 during a campus-wide deer project. The goals of this project will be to understand deer-human interactions on SIUC campus and will involve the SIUC student chapter to a great degree.

We also organized a funded project through the IDNR involving man-made hibernacula for snakes in the area. A hibernaculum design was drawn and we will be installing 4 snake hibernacula at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge during the spring semester. This spring, we are also looking forward to our annual beast feast and a possible camping trip with the University of Illinois chapter.

Southeast Missouri State University

As the school year comes to a close and the summer approaches our members of the Missouri Western State University chapter of The Wildlife Society are preparing individually for a variety of exciting summer job experiences. The ammunition the students used to snag their respective internships and budding careers came in large part to their involvement with The Wildlife Society. This year the chapter worked alongside the Missouri Department of Conservation and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in a variety of projects including white-tailed deer aging, bobwhite quail whistle counts, prairie restoration, exotic plant species removal, white-tailed deer distance surveys, and Eagle Days.

A major accomplishment the chapter has enjoyed this year is the continued increase in involvement with the Missouri Hunter Education Program. A record number of our members are now active hunter education instructors, promoting safety, sportsmanship, and wise management of Missouri's wildlife resources. Year after year the accomplishments and experiences that our chapter acquires seems to build upon the year before. The roadmap is already being made for next year; we're looking forward to more growth and a developing list of accomplishments.

University of Missouri - Columbia

by Bethany Meyer, Secretary

The University of Missouri student chapter has had an exciting year. Members have worked hard at many fundraisers to raise money for exciting conferences and other rewarding experiences. The participation of our students in these events encourages their professionalism and encourages them to network with the many new professional faces.

This fall was a fast one for the membership packed full of exciting events. The chapter started the year off by jumping in with both feet in fundraisers; lots of football viewers were served hotdogs with smiles by our TWS members. Moving further into the year we got buck fever. Our membership helped the Missouri Department of Conservation with a deer-aging study. Members asked nicely and then removed the two front teeth of deer over 1 ½ years old. Antler measurements were also taken on bucks. Members learned professional and scientific skills they are not exposed to in the classroom. Our members also learned about habitat management by assisting the Missouri Department of Conservation with tree planting, plus we got money for each tree planted. Members also helped make our Wildlife Society Banquet

a success. Many people attended for the food and the raffles.

The club also formed a bird watching group. The group helped the Audubon Society with winterbird counts and traveled to Northwest Missouri to get an up-close view of the elusive Prairie Chicken.

Ongoing yearly activities are supported by our members attending fundraisers. Some of these activities are our outreach program the Mammals Program, student resume workshop, and Conference attendance.

Lake Superior State University

The Lake Superior State University student chapter of the Wildlife Society has had an eventful year. Students attended the national meeting in Madison, WI and the Midwest Fish & Wildlife conference in Grand Rapids, MI. In order to support student travel to the conferences the LSSU Fisheries and Wildlife Club held several fundraisers including a wild game dinner, a fish fry, and construction and sale of wood duck boxes, bird feeders, and bat houses.

Students gained valuable experience by volunteering at the deer check stations in St. Ignace MI, and the Hiawatha Sportsman's club. Other activities included bird banding with the Whitefish Point bird observatory, assisting the Michigan DNR with waterfowl banding and nuisance goose roundup within the city of Sault Sainte Marie, MI. Additionally, students assisted students with senior thesis projects which included mallard hen house placement and repair, collection of forage samples for white-tailed deer food plot analysis, and radio telemetry of sharp-tail grouse.

A few new activities were also added to the LSSU chapter's annual list. Students joined up with Soo College in Sault Sainte Marie, Ontario for some Elk telemetry as part of the Ontario Elk Restoration Project. Some of the upper classmen later put on a wildlife workshop for interested students of all majors. The workshop included telemetry and tracking skills.

Finally, the club has assisted with several conservation efforts such as assisting with the creation of a hiking trail for the Little Traverse Bay Conservancy. Since the club has aided in maintaining the trail and has adopted and maintaining part of the North Country Trail.

This has been a fun and busy year. New officers for the next year have already begun to plan activities for next fall. The LSSU Fisheries and Wildlife Club wishes the other student chapters a productive summer and maybe we will see you at the next TWS meeting in Anchorage or the next Midwest meeting in Omaha.

University of Minnesota - Crookston

by Larisa Skujins, UMC NCS Representative

This spring, the UMC chapter of the Wildlife Society has been busy. We've worked on a variety of community service projects in the Crookston area. We collaborated with the Park and Recreational Management class and the Natural Resources Club on the Winter Survival environmental education even with local 6th graders. Before the end of the semester, we will head to Glacial Ridge Wildlife Refuge for another environmental education day, helping over 200 students, mostly 4th through 6th graders, put together wildlife themed calendars. We have also helped Rydell National Wildlife Refuge with their annual Wood Duck box monitoring project this April.

With funds from the Minnesota Chapter of the Wildlife Society and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, as well as a grant from the University of Minnesota Beautiful U Day fund, the Nature Nook project is expected to progress through a day of volunteer work installing a pathway that would lead through the different biomes. Some of the funds also went to having trees planted in their respective biomes.

At UMC, we are always looking to improve our student-professional communication, so eleven of our members took the opportunity to attend the Minnesota Natural Resource Conference in Brainerd, Minnesota and had a wonderful time. We have also hosted a few local speakers. Mark Hanson, a research biologist for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Wetland Wildlife and Populations and Research Group in Bemidji, came and gave a presentation on linkages between landscape and wetland attributes important to wildlife. Earl Johnson, a district wildlife manager from Detroit Lakes also presented Bats in My Belfry, a lecture on the bats of Minnesota earlier this semester.

The Student Chapter is always looking for new projects and activities. If you have any suggestions or concerns please contact us and we will do our best to facilitate your needs.

Michigan State University

by Kevin Geyer, President

Spring 2006 has been very eventful for Michigan State University's Fisheries and Wildlife Club. We have been involved with the usual events that typify a year at MSU (with fundraising and educational outreach activities), as well as emerging issues dealing with the Club's Management Area.

Many educational events have been provided to club members, including a number of speakers to discuss the job market, and on becoming successful in today's wildlife arena. University professors have also presented some of their research to expose new fields of study to members. Outdoor experience has also been gained through work in the club's personal land owned on campus (our Management Area).

Last fall the club attended MSU's Autumnfest, an event for faculty, alumni, and students to celebrate Michigan agriculture and natural resources. The club won first place in the booth competition, having made an interactive model showing how point and non-point source pollution can affect the environment. This display is being used now by the club for teaching school children about the same topic. Other opportunities are being presented to local teachers where the club can become involved in making informational presentations to kids.

This spring the club has also partnered with a few other organizations for varying events. We participated in MUCC's (Michigan United Conservation Club) Outdoorama event, working with children to make arts and craft projects that taught them about the environment. We also worked with Spartans for Clean Water, a campus speaker series looking to increase awareness about water resources. The club cosponsored a presentation given by U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow on this topic.

Fundraising has also been a priority this semester, particularly for financing our trip next fall to the 2006 TWS Conference in Anchorage Alaska. As last year's national Quizbowl champions, we are excited to defend our title. Fundraising has included pop-can drives, cleanups of the MSU Breslin Center and Munn Ice Arena, and clothing sales.

Finally, we have been very busy working with the university in trying to maintain the integrity of our Management Area. The university has plans to build underpasses for road/pedestrian traffic beneath two railroad tracks on the south end of campus. Unfortunately, one of these underpasses will directly impact the Management Area and wetlands present within. The club has been in direct communication with university officials in trying to make this construction as

painless as possible for the surrounding habitat. This work has also led us to update our focus for the future of the Management Area. Preliminary plans have been made to remove much of the shrubby vegetation and install a native prairie. It's an exciting time for everyone to be involved!!

Northern Michigan University

by Erin Cooney, President

In the Fall of 2005 our members volunteered at the Marquette DNR deer check station. Before the official start of the firearm season we attended an informational session presented by Terry McFadden, the wildlife biologist for the Marquette area DNR. We learned how to properly age the deer and measure and record beam diameters. Working with the DNR has been a great opportunity for our members to see what types of jobs are out there in the wildlife profession and make connections that may be beneficial in the future.

Currently the NMU student chapter of The Wildlife society is working to put together a bird house monitoring program. Last winter our members built 11 bird houses from donated wood. The houses will be painted and hung around campus for students, faculty and visitors to enjoy. The student chapter will continue to clean and monitor the houses, keeping a log of what species of birds are nesting in them. We also hope to have an official student chapter website up and running by the end of the semester.

From April 17-22 we will be participating in Earth Week with various other campus organizations. On Monday, April 17th we will be setting up an Endangered Species of Michigan information table with a poster and various handouts on a number of different endangered plants and animals in Michigan. On April 22nd our members will be participating in the Earth Day Parade here in Marquette to help promote our organization and show our support for preserving and protecting the Earth.

We also volunteer for various campus and community projects such as the UP 200 and Make a Difference Day in addition to having guest speakers attend our meetings. If there are no big events around campus we often have a social event to get the group together and enjoy an afternoon of hiking or snowshoeing. We have been working more closely with the fisheries organization (Fish Heads) with the hopes of increasing our group membership as well as interest in the wildlife and fisheries professions. Last month we painted a wall mural on campus to promote our organizations.

Michigan Tech

by Nathan R. Bowersock, President

Michigan Tech's Chapter of The Wildlife Society has been relatively inactive for the last 5-10 years, but now is active again thanks to some newly enthused wildlife and applied ecology students. This year we joined forces with the Society for Conservation Biology to work on a number of projects. Last fall we helped clean a section of highway in the Upper Peninsula (U.P.) of Michigan and are looking to do so again this summer. We also have put on educational programs for elementary students at the local library both in the fall and spring. In the fall we talked to about 8 kids about how/why birds migrate and this spring we put on a program about looking for "Signs of Spring" and had a turnout of over 30 kids!

Another thing our chapter wanted to do was open up communication with other student chapters in the North Central Section of TWS. Before we could do so the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point chapter beat us to the punch, but this has allowed our two chapters to get to know one another and to open up talks with other colleges such as Purdue, the University of Minnesota, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Before our chapter returns home after another great semester in the U.P., our chapter and the Stevens Point chapter are going to do some activities up in the Keweenaw Peninsula. We hope to catch the raptor migrations that pass over the mountains of the Keweenaw and to see some of the few virgin white pines that survived the clear cutting of Michigan's grand forests. Hopefully this fall we can make our way to our first TWS conference (ever) as a student chapter.

University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point

by Matt Schuler

In the last year, the UWSP Student Chapter has been very busy. In September, we helped with Duck banding at the Mead Wildlife Refuge. Over 150 people attended this very popular event over a three day period. We also continued our societal research on cougars, wolves, fishers, deer, small mammals, flying squirrels, and grey squirrels. During the hunting season, we sent ten volunteers to Buckhorn State Park and ten volunteers to Sandhill Wildlife Area to help with the learn to hunt deer workshops. The Raptor Education Group Inc. became a very popular place for volunteers as well, attracting over thirty student volunteers in the fall semester alone. Beyond our research projects, we have had many different and diverse speakers come to our meetings. Some of these presenters include, Travis Booms, a Ph. D. candidate from Alaska talked about gyrfalcon research, Dick Thiel from Sandhill talked about wildlife education and the opportunities available at Sandhill, and Scott Hassett, Secretary of the DNR talked about the future of jobs in Natural Resources. Our society also conducted and participated in many social events, such as our fall

picnic, bowling, intramural kickball, and the traditional broomball game between the Wildlife Society and the Student Chapter of the Society of American Foresters and Fire Crew.

We have been very busy during the spring semester as well. We have started an initiative to work with other student chapters in our section; which has been very successful so far. We have participated, or are going to participate in events with UW-Madison, MTU, and hopefully Northern Michigan University. Our research continued through our otter, wolf, cougar, fisher, grey squirrel, small mammal, prairie chicken, deer, crane, wild bird, and waterfowl research projects. We have also added two new research projects to our list, the woodcock project and the woodpecker project. We continued to volunteer at Sandhill Wildlife Area, the Raptor Education Group, and expanded to the Buena Vista Wildlife Area, and the Houston Nature Center in Minnesota.

Our society again participated in a lot of social events such as intramural dodge ball and volleyball. We continued the tradition of competing with the SAF and Fire Crew in the spring broomball tournament. We have had many speakers present at our meetings including Adrian Wydeven, a Conservation Biologist with the WDNR and Chip Lovell, a regional biologist with the USDA, and we are looking forward to Dr. Chris Vaughan from UW-Madison in May, who will be talking about his macaw research in Costa Rica. We have many societal events coming up towards the end of the semester, including bird banding at the Hartman Creek Banding Station, a trip to Brockway Mountain with MTU, UW-Madison, and UW-Richland Center to watch the hawk migration, the Sandhill Open House, the Annual Prairie Chicken Festival at Buena Vista Marsh, searching for wood turtles in Monroe County, WI, and our annual Spring Picnic. We are also getting ready for the National Conference in Alaska, and the Midwest Conference in Omaha and starting our planning for the North Central Section Student Conclave which we will be hosting in the spring of 2007. We are looking forward to an exciting fall semester and working closely with other student chapters in our section to put on great programs for our members.

Non Reporting Student Chapters

University of Minnesota - Twin Cities

Hocking College

Iowa State University

Central Michigan University

Ohio State University

Ball State University

Purdue University

St. Cloud State University

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Missouri Western State College

Central Missouri State University

First Annual “Beginning Your Professional Journey” workshop a Resounding Success!

by Rebecca Christoffel

The first annual “Beginning your Professional Journey” workshop, a full-day professional development workshop for undergraduate students majoring in Fisheries and Wildlife, was a resounding success.

Thank you! to our many sponsors: The Wildlife Society through the WIN program; The Wildlife Society, North Central Section; American Fisheries Society, North Central Division; and Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference Steering Committee. And thank you to the many professionals who volunteered their time and expertise during the workshop!

The workshop was held in conjunction with the annual Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference last December in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Forty-four students registered for the workshop. At the start of the day, each student participant was presented with a binder full of resource materials for their use as they prepare for their first post-baccalaureate positions and a supply of “business cards” to be used while networking with professionals during the conference.

“Beginning your Professional Journey” consisted of four sessions. Mike Pagel, Natural Resources & Sciences Employment Specialist at University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, kicked off the day with a presentation entitled, “10 Ways to Cut your Journey Short.” Students were given advice in an entertaining and memorable fashion on how *not* to land a position in graduate school or as an employee. This was followed by a presentation and discussion of resume` construction and other professional correspondence issues. After a mid-morning break, participants then heard from academic and employer panels. The academic panel consisted of four speakers from various academic institutions who presented information on the requirements for getting into graduate schools, and tips for developing a dialogue with a faculty member with which a student would like to work. The employer panel consisted of four individuals from various employment sectors including federal and state agencies, an environmental consulting firm and a non-profit organization. Panel members discussed the desired skill sets, variety of positions, and current and predicted opportunities within their organizations. Each panel presentation was followed by an interactive question and answer period. Following the lunch break, Mike Pagel and Rique Campa, Professor of Fisheries and Wildlife at Michigan State University, co- led a session on interviewing. The day’s final session was led by Patricia Stewart, Chief Communications Officer for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Pat gave a presentation on networking and its importance in Fisheries and Wildlife. Students were

given an opportunity to practice their networking skills with professionals at the workshop and prepare for the Conference reception being held later that evening. Closing remarks were provided by Jim Schneider, Academic Adviser for the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife at Michigan State University, followed by a drawing for gift cards from Staples. Lucky winners could use these cards to purchase necessary supplies for their applications to jobs or graduate school or their current studies.

Students and professionals alike greatly appreciated their participation in the workshop. Selected student comments in reply to the question, “Was your presence and participation at the workshop worth the time and money that you invested in it? Why or why not?” included:

“I feel 100% more confident about my job and school application skills.”

“...I found this workshop very valuable...I found the speakers today to be inspiring and gave me a more proactive approach to my ‘professional journey’.”

“I would highly recommend continuing this at future conferences.”

One student stated that the workshop was the best \$10 investment they ever made!

All student participants indicated that they would recommend this workshop to others. Students were asked to use the backside of their evaluation forms to share any other comments that might be helpful in improving future workshops. These comments will be used by co-organizers in preparing for the 2006 “Beginning your Professional Journey” workshop.

Speakers and professional leaders at the workshop were also asked to evaluate the workshop and provide input on making the workshop a more meaningful experience for future speaker and professional leader participants. All professional participants indicated that they would recommend participation in the workshop to their peers, and seven of nine respondents indicated exclusively positive feelings about their participation in the workshop. Many thoughtful suggestions were provided for improving the workshop experience for both professionals and students. And two professionals immediately volunteered to help with this workshop in 2006!

Plans are underway for the 2006 “Beginning your Professional Journey Workshop” to be held at the start of the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference in Omaha, Nebraska. If you plan to attend the conference and would like to be involved in the workshop as a professional leader or potential session leader, please contact Jim Schneider (schne181@msu.edu) or Rebecca Christoffel (chris317@msu.edu). We look forward to seeing you in Omaha!

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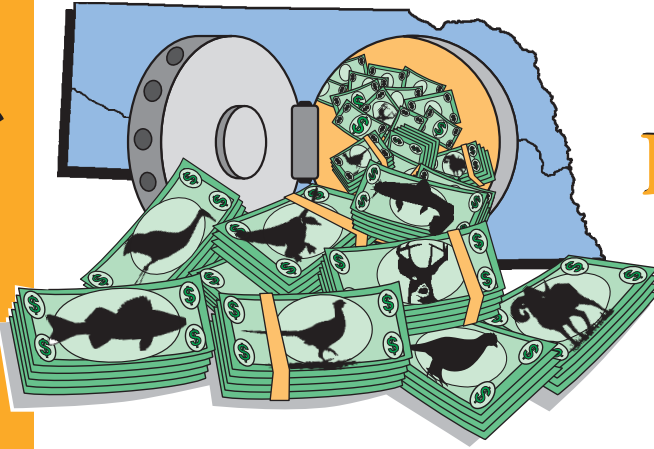
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