

# The Washington Wildlifer

Newsletter of the Washington Chapter of The Wildlife Society

Mike Hall, Editor

Summer 2022



## In-person Meetings Are Back!

Hello, WA-TWSers –

All around us, wildlifers are leaving their dens (or dining rooms or bedrooms or wherever they've found space for working from home) and emerging, blinking, into the light.

Our parent organization, The Wildlife Society, will convene its [29th Annual Conference](#) this November, live and in-person for the first time in 3 years! Even better, the conference will be right here in Washington State, at the Spokane Convention Center. Next April, WA-TWS will be hosting our [2023 Joint Annual Meeting](#) (JAM 2023) in Grand Mound, WA, with support from the Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology (SNVB) and Northwest Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (NW PARC). Read on to learn more about these upcoming events.

Also in this issue:

- JAM 2023: [Student Activities and Lodging Incentives](#)
- 2022 WA-TWS Elections: [Get to Know Your 2022 Board!](#)
- 2022 Funding Recipients: [Scholarship and Research Grants](#)
- 2022 [Chapter Award Recipients](#)
- Check out the WA-TWS [Wildlife Webinars!](#)

## President's Message

Hello, WA-TWS!

The Chapter has been busy in 2022 and, continuing our work from the Spring 2021 newsletter, we are pleased to share some of the highlights to date!

If you haven't, please check out the live webinars we have that are put on by members of WA-TWS and invited guests. We've had great

presentations, and not only are they current and relevant, they are interactive and casual. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of the hour and get to know what other professionals in the field are doing. You can learn more about our webinars later in this newsletter.

Of course, the last few years have been incredibly challenging—for work, university, family, and self.

I can't imagine that I would have had the fortitude to make it through the pandemic as a student. Despite it all, Allison, Yasmine, and Taza all persevered with excellent work and submissions for WA-TWS scholarships and grants! Find out more about their achievements in—you guessed it—this newsletter.

We also recognize the contributions of professionals in the field, nominated and recognized by their peers in WA-TWS, in our Chapter Awards section.

I want to express to you my excitement for the upcoming national meeting, and I want to encourage anyone on the fence about attending or volunteering: Do it! I have a talk to give, at least one session to moderate, and various other activities. What's the best way to get to know and meet others in TWS and around the country? The national meeting! But if that's not a possibility, consider joining us in Grand Mound for JAM 2023. Opportunities will abound there, as well.

I wish to send a thank-you to all of the officers, board members, and members that keep us going. Without your help, we would not be nearly as successful as we are.

Additionally, I hope all of you are well and safe in these uncertain times.

Respectfully,  
Matthew T. Wilson, WA-TWS President



## 2022 TWS National Meeting

*Sara Hansen*

We have a lot going on in the leadup to The Wildlife Society's [29th Annual Conference](#) in Spokane this November! First off, thank you to everyone who responded to the call for session moderators. WA-TWS will be well represented throughout the conference as our members helped TWS fill nearly all of the remaining spots. Way to go, WA-TWS!!

I am also pleased to announce that the Chapter is sponsoring the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity,

and Awareness (IDEA) Working Group's [Out in The Field](#) (OiTF) Initiative at this year's conference. If you aren't yet familiar with OiTF, I encourage you to check out their website to learn more about their incredible work. OiTF's goal is to support wildlifers in the LGBTQIA+ community and their allies to foster a more inclusive and welcoming culture that embraces diversity in the wildlife field.

Here's the latest on WA-TWS sponsored events and opportunities at the conference:

- [OiTF 2022 Conference Travel Grant!](#)  
**Deadline to apply is Sept 24, 2022!!**
- Save the date! [WA-TWS Chapter Reception](#) is set for **Nov 7th from 7:30 to 9:30 pm**

**More to come!** New opportunities and updates will be posted at [watws.org](http://watws.org)



See you in November!

## 2023 WA-TWS Joint Annual Meeting

*Alex Pavlinovic*

We're looking forward to JAM 2023! The meeting will be held April 24 through April 29, 2023 at Great Wolf Lodge in Grand Mound, WA. The JAM Steering Committee invites you to submit abstracts for presentations and posters, workshop concepts, proposals for mini-symposia or panel discussions, and ideas for other facets

of the program. JAM 2023 will provide an excellent opportunity for our members to get together as a Chapter for the first time since 2019 and participate in a wide range of timely and informative workshops and sessions.

**Details, contact info, and additional updates are available on our [website!](#)**

### Become a JAM 2023 Sponsor

*Bruce Thompson*

Your organization can gain exposure to a wide and diverse audience, and you can gain satisfaction in the knowledge that you are helping make our 2023 Joint Meeting a success. Your sponsorship will help us provide technical program content, student engagement, and other learning opportunities. You can sponsor at any of the following levels:

- Platinum (\$2,400+)
- Gold (\$1,800 - \$2,399)
- Silver (\$1,200 - \$1,799)
- Bronze (\$500 - \$1,199)
- Supporting (\$100 - \$499)

You can also help by donating items for the raffle and/or auction.

Your sponsorship can support student participation or help bring a keynote speaker to the podium. All sponsors will be acknowledged in program materials and both visually and verbally during the meeting and associated events.

For more info, check out our [website](#) or contact the Joint Meeting Sponsorship Chair, Bruce Thompson ([bruce.thompson@watws.org](mailto:bruce.thompson@watws.org)).

The deadline is **15 February 2023**, so act soon!

## Student Activities and Incentives

Bruce Thompson

Students truly are the future of this profession and we have a lot of great [student-centered opportunities](#) in the works to support our student members at JAM 2023! From resume review sessions to networking and mentoring events to lodging support, there's something for everyone.

### Student Lodging Support

WA-TWS and our meeting partners will be sponsoring an opportunity for free lodging for students who are interested in attending JAM 2023.our April 2023 Joint Annual Meeting.

### Who's eligible?

- Undergrad and grad students in natural resources programs
- Special consideration will be given to students affiliated with WA-TWS, SNVB, or NW PARC

### What's in it for you?

- 3 nights at the venue hotel
- Networking opportunities with other students and wildlife professionals
- Glimpses into emerging wildlife science
- A behind-the-scenes look at the logistics of hosting a conference during your 4 hours of volunteer support before or during the meeting

### What's in it for us?

- An opportunity to meet and work with future wildlife professionals
- A bit of help with meeting logistics

Details about how to apply will be posted on [our website](#) later this fall. The application deadline will be in March 2023. Mark your calendar and watch the website and future newsletters for more info!

## Wildlife Webinars

Candace Bennett

You spoke, we listened! One of the biggest takeaways from our January member survey was an interest in having more Chapter-sponsored opportunities to interact with other wildlife professionals and learn more about projects going on in WA. In response, we began hosting a monthly Washington Wildlife Webinar Series this past April. We are so pleased to offer our members a new virtual platform to share wildlife research and projects happening in or connected to Washington State, and the response so far has been fantastic!

The webinars are open both to members and the public at no charge and are generally scheduled for the second Thursday of each month starting at noon. We have already learned about chronic wasting disease, epizootic hemorrhagic disease,

cetacean strandings, avian influenza, and human-wildlife conflict, and new speakers are always being added!

[Upcoming webinars](#) include:

- Adapting to change in the wildlife profession (Oct 11, 2022)
- Pollinator Ecology (Dec 8, 2022)
- Hummingbird Migration (Jan 12, 2023)
- Beaver eDNA (Feb 9, 2023)

In the works:

- Studying wolf populations using Autonomous Recording Units (ARUs)
- Multipart Federal Wildlife Law training

Please reach out at [secretary@watws.org](mailto:secretary@watws.org) if you are interested in presenting or have a topic idea!

# 2022 WA-TWS Elections

Sara Hansen

Congratulations and welcome aboard to our newly elected\* and appointed\*\* board members! Contact info and board bios are available [here](#). If you are curious about how the Chapter [operates](#) or potentially interested in joining the board next year, info about the [2023 elections process](#) and position details are available on our website!

Here's the [2022 WA-TWS Executive Board lineup](#):

## Officers

- Immediate Past President - Sara Hansen
- President - Matthew T. Wilson
- President Elect - Alex Pavlinovic\*
- Vice President - George Richotte\*
- Secretary - Candance Bennett\*
- Treasurer - Bruce Thompson

## Board Members-At-Large

- 1 - Merci Clinton
- 2 - Kris Ernest\*
- 3 - Jen Syrowitz\*
- 4 - Wendy Arjo\*\*

Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's Chapter elections!



## Get to Know Your Board

Alex Pavlinovic

A tip of the hat to Katy Stuart (WA-TWS President, 2018-2019) for coming up with some questions designed to offer a glimpse into the lives and minds of the folks who keep this organization humming. Of course we all appreciate the talents and energy these folks bring to WA-TWS, but don't you sometimes find yourself wondering, "What makes these people tick?"

To offer a glimpse into the minds of our board members, here are their responses to the following questions.

1. What do you do at your current job, and what is your job title?
2. What is your favorite wildlife species, and why?
3. Why are you excited to be a WA-TWS representative?
4. What is one interesting (non-wildlife related) thing about you?

...and if you find yourself thinking, "Hey, these seem like folks I'd enjoy hanging out with" (*insider tip: they are!*), that's easily achieved. Just join the board or a committee!

## Matthew T. Wilson, President



1. Greetings, fellow wildlifers! I've been the Statewide Waterfowl Specialist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for 8 years now. My job includes a wide variety of field work, office work, and cooperative projects. Primarily I am responsible for managing the state's waterfowl, mourning dove, and band-tailed pigeon banding and monitoring projects for the Pacific Flyway, as well as working on developing, implementing, and monitoring habitat improvement and restoration projects through our state "Duck Stamp" program.

2. In true *Bellrose* fashion, I am a fan of the ducks, geese and swans of North America (and really everywhere else!).

3. I have been a student and professional member of TWS for as long as I can remember, and was a student chapter member, secretary, and president at Utah State University. Only in the last few years have I been involved in WA-TWS, and it has been challenging with Covid-19, canceled meetings, as well as board members and members departing to new states and jobs. However, I am excited for the future of WA-TWS

and ready to contribute to where we are heading.

4. I was convinced to participate in an Olympic triathlon a few years ago by my sister, and now I have completed two half-Ironman races!

## Sara Hansen, Immediate Past President



Though originally from Kansas, I have worked throughout the country on over a dozen game and nongame projects for state, federal, and university organizations over the past 20+ years. My technical background and training is as a spatial population ecologist working on carnivore and ungulate movement and population dynamics. I most recently served as the Statewide Deer Specialist for WDFW over the past 8 years before following many of my fellow coworkers in seeking greener pastures.

I've been very active in TWS at all levels for more than 13 years, including service as a Student Chapter Advisor while in grad school, TWS Leadership Institute alum and mentor since 2014, and various board and committee positions with

WA-TWS over the last 8 years. I am currently also serving as the Chapter's NW Section Representative to help coordinate local and regional support for the upcoming Annual Conference in Spokane, and am running for a board position with TWS' Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Awareness (IDEA) Working Group.

### Alex Pavlinovic, President-Elect



1. I am a wildlife technician studying brown bears for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to accurately assess their population. Also, I am in my final year in the Master of Environmental Studies program at The Evergreen State College. With the support of Cascadia Research Collective and the Washington Chapter of the Wildlife Society, I conducted my thesis research titled, "Do boat activities affect the behavior of Sounders in inland waters? A study on gray whales (*Eschrichtius robustus*) in North Puget Sound."

2. This question is tricky because my favorite species is usually the one I am studying or working on. Currently, my favorite species is the gray whale, my master's thesis subject. They are a fascinating species because of their unique feeding strategies and record for the longest migration.

3. I am excited to get the opportunity to give back to WA-TWS. This organization has given me countless opportunities in the wildlife field, including moderating special sessions, being a

board member, and now being president-elect. Because of these opportunities, I have progressed in this field. I want to return the favor and help the organization flourish.

To give back to WA-TWS, the board and officers are working to create an excellent 2023 Joint Annual Meeting. We are also hoping to get regular newsletters to the members. Also, we hope to continue looking for further opportunities to involve the membership, such as the very successful webinars. Please feel free to reach out to me ([president.elect@watws.org](mailto:president.elect@watws.org)) if you can think of a way to better the chapter or to get involved. We especially need help with our 2023 Joint Annual Meeting.

4. I am trilingual, speaking Croatian and German.

### George Ritchotte, Vice President



1. I am an Associate Ecologist with Herrera Environmental Consultants, Inc., where I specialize in technical and regulatory issues for endangered species and aquatic resources. I perform habitat assessments, wildlife surveys, and wetland and stream delineations; develop biological assessments, NEPA documents, mitigation plans, and wildlife management plans; and ensure project compliance with federal, state, and local environmental regulations.

2. My favorite wildlife species is the black-capped chickadee. They pack a lot of personality in a little package. Because they're not shy, they're easily observable and provide some fun accessible wildlife viewing.

3. I'm excited to be a WA-TWS representative because I'm passionate about wildlife conservation and a strong believer in the Washington Chapter's mission. Conservation ecologists face unique challenges these days conserving biodiversity in the face of habitat loss and climate change, and the Washington Chapter provides an essential platform for promoting awareness and supporting wildlife professionals and students.

4. I spent 3 years in the Peace Corps, working with a national park helping develop their ecotourism infrastructure. Is that too wildlife-related? I have two German short-haired pointers. Kind of wildlife-related too, though I don't know if you can call an animal that sleeps on goose down comforters "wild." And I brew my own ginger beer, which reminds me that I need to get another batch going.

### **Candace Bennett, Secretary**

Hello, members! I am pleased to be your Washington Chapter Secretary since 2020. During my time, I have helped to launch our new website and created our monthly WA-TWS Wildlife Webinar Series.



A little about me: I have been a wildlife biologist for more than a decade, predominantly working on human-wildlife conflict and various research projects. During my personal time, I am a professional and published wildlife photographer. I love spending time outdoors with my giant dogs (a Newfoundland and two bloodhounds) or hiking to remote locations all over the world.

### **Bruce Thompson, Treasurer**

1. I am retired after a 40-year career that involved research, manager, administrative, and academic roles with a variety of state and federal wildlife and natural resources agencies.



2. I don't have a sole favorite species, but I revere the least tern for all of the effort I directed toward it during my doctoral degree. I also see the bighorn sheep as something of a deity for wildlife and wilderness values; it gets my attention when I want to transfer thoughts to things and places wild and rejuvenating.

3. I have been aligned with TWS for 5 decades with many committee and officer assignments

through the years, including President of 3 state chapters and President of Parent TWS. I am most excited about having continued opportunities to see and work with next generations of wildlife professionals who also see value in keeping TWS focused on wildlife conservation and management needs at many geographic scales.

4. I am the go-to “Fix It Guy” for my kids and grandkids when they have something that isn't functioning and needs some work that they either can't or won't do themselves!

## Board Members At Large

### Merci Clinton



1. I am a wildlife biologist/wetland ecologist at the geotechnical engineering firm Shannon & Wilson. My job duties include work in the field (wetland delineations, habitat assessments, wildlife surveys, etc.) and in the office (Biological Assessments, Incidental Harassment Authorization Applications, state and federal permitting, etc.)

2. This one is a hard one to pin down, I have always had a fondness for birds, shorebirds in particular, which were a focus during my master's work.

3. I appreciate the opportunity to network with and learn from other WA-TWS members.

4. I am fluent in Hungarian, and I am an avid gardener.

### Kris Ernest



1. I am Professor of Biology at Central Washington University. Teaching is my primary responsibility, and includes General Biology, Mammalogy, Conservation Biology, Field Techniques, and Biomes of the Pacific Northwest. My research centers around wildlife connectivity in the I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East Project. That means I do monitoring and research to understand how wildlife (small mammals, in my case) respond to highways and how effective the new wildlife crossing structures are in reconnecting populations across the highway. A team of undergraduate and graduate students helps me in this work.

2. I love small mammals in general, and pikas in particular. Pikas are mostly diurnal, they

vocalize, they make big haypiles of vegetation to eat in winter – all of which makes them easier to find and observe than many other small mammals. Any day I see a pika or hear an “eep” is a great day for me.

3. I have learned so much from other wildlife biologists, and want to give back to that community. We all do better science, and have more fun at it, when we collaborate with others. I am excited to work with people from various agencies and organizations around the state of WA.

4. I just got a kayak and am excited to ply some of the waters of our beautiful state.

## Jen Syrowitz



1. I am the Conservation Program Manager at Conservation Northwest, working to protect, connect, and restore wildlife habitat. I work primarily in our Forest Field program on forest health and resilience as it benefits terrestrial and aquatic species.

2. I've worked closely with and am endeared to the great gray owl (majestic and gentle) and greater prairie chicken (tough and hilarious).

3. I've been engaged with TWS since 2009 and continue to enjoy the people involved and the challenges created as the profession evolves.

4. I'm Canadian :)



## Wendy Arjo



1. I am a program manager and the senior wildlife biologist for AGEISS Inc., an environmental consulting firm. I manage several federal contracts that AGEISS holds. Services we provide for task orders under these contracts include natural resources, cultural resources, and environmental services. I provide senior technical oversight for field projects and reporting, as well as developing integrated natural resources management plans, endangered species management plans, and NEPA documents.

2. My favorite species is really a toss-up between my favorite predator (coyote) and prey (mountain beaver). Although both of these species are survivors, one is a very well-known species and one not so much, but both were interesting to conduct research on.

3. My favorite part about being involved with TWS and WA-TWS is the ability to interact with students and new professionals.

4. I volunteer as a coach for JBLM. Nothing like teaching 3- and 4-year-olds how to share a soccer ball during a game.

# Scholarships and Research Grants

Merci Clinton (Scholarships) and Tony Fuchs (Grants)

WA-TWS is pleased once again to award the Fitzner Scholarship to an exceptionally well qualified undergrad pursuing a wildlife-related degree here in Washington.

## Richard E. Fitzner Memorial Scholarship: Allison DeCracker



*Allison DeCracker*

Allison is a fourth-year major in Biology: Evolution, Ecology, Conservation at the University of Washington. She is currently the co-president of the Biology Honor Society, and she is the lead undergraduate research assistant in the Abrahms Lab, where she studies the impacts of climate change on African predator ecology and human wildlife conflicts. Currently, Allison is interning in the Conservation Genetics lab at the Beckman Center for Conservation

Research, studying the population genetics of red diamondback rattlesnakes. After graduating this spring, she hopes to pursue a PhD in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, with the end goal of becoming a Conservation Genetics researcher and college professor.

## Research Grants: Yasmine Hentati and Taza Schaming

We received many excellent applications for the latest round of research grants and, after careful review and consideration, we awarded funding to two exceptional applicants.

We awarded Yasmine Hentati \$1,305 for her study to help answer the question, “Is the concentration of heavy metals in waterways throughout the Seattle/Tacoma area linked to increased infection of protozoan parasites in river otters?” The funds covered the costs of DNA extraction.



*Yasmine Hentati*

The other study we funded is Taza Schaming's "Using audio recording devices and multi-season occupancy modeling to evaluate Clark's nutcracker occurrence in whitebark pine habitats in Washington for recovery efforts." We provided \$1,195 from the grant fund to cover her travel expenses.

Thanks to all that participated in our research grant program. We are looking forward to seeing the results of the grant recipient's research!



Taza Schaming (Photo: Cornell Lab)



## Chapter Awards

Bill Vogel

Our 2022 awards were presented virtually during our annual business meeting on April 28, 2022. We are happy to tell you a little about these people (below).

**William H. Lawrence**

**Special Achievement Award**

**Molly Alves**



Molly Alves is a leader in the wildlife community, and her passion for beaver restoration ecology drives one of the most successful beaver translocation programs in Washington: the Tulalip Beaver Project. Until 2012, beaver relocation was illegal in Washington State. Molly worked to change that through legislation known as the Beaver Bill. When it was enacted into law (RCW 77.32.585), the Beaver Bill legalized beaver relocation statewide. Her leadership in other ways was also instrumental in establishing beaver relocation as an available tool for resource managers in western Washington. She shares her expertise and skills with beaver-relocation groups across the Pacific Northwest and the world. She is a keystone leader in the world of beaver conservation and watershed restoration, and she goes above and beyond to share the importance and benefits of this foundational species.

**Leadership Awards**

This year, we recognize two people for their career-long contributions: Melvin Walters and Paul Dahmer.

## Melvin Walters



Mel Walters has had a long, successful career as a Wildlife Biologist with Puget Sound Energy (PSE). He has been instrumental in the development of environmental and wildlife programs at PSE, including a program to identify and remove polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) transformers from PSE's system. Mel has worked to protect osprey from powerline hazards by installing osprey nest platforms to provide safe alternate nesting sites. He also installed platforms at PSE-owned reservoirs to protect osprey nests from lake fluctuations. He conducted spotted owl surveys and habitat mapping related to hydroelectric projects. Mel led the development of PSE's nationally recognized, company-wide Avian Protection Program, which was one of the first such programs in the Pacific Northwest. To reduce bird collisions and electrocutions, he led the effort to install avian protection devices on approximately 300 poles and spans each year, as well as incorporating avian-safe construction practices in new and upgraded lines.

Mel facilitates positive relationships with agencies, nongovernmental organizations, customers, and the general public. He has coordinated with and supported local wildlife rehabilitation centers and programs and helped develop a cooperative program with the

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) for swan protection and recovery of dead, lead-poisoned, or injured swans, which includes testing for lead poisoning and avian diseases. Through his membership in the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC), Mel has contributed to industry-standard documents (*Suggested Practices for Avian Protection on Power Lines* and *Reducing Avian Collisions with Power Lines*), and he has continued to be a leader in the field throughout his career. Because of Mel's outgoing personality, directness, and expertise, he is widely known throughout PSE, the wildlife conservation community, and the utility industry as "the Bird Guy."

## Paul Dahmer



Paul Dahmer currently serves as the Lands Stewardship and Operations Section Manager for the Lands Division of the WDFW. Through his 30-year career with the agency, Paul has provided solid legislative bill analysis and testimony, while also supporting and directing

budgeting, contracting, and reporting for all WDFW-managed lands. Paul serves as a key liaison with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) on interagency agreements supporting WDFW's on-the-ground forest restoration and fire response work. His contribution to the effort included finalizing an agreement with the WDNR that allows WDFW prescribed fire teams to work for WDNR on fires (within WDFW capacity) and maintain key certifications that are central to retention of marketable skills and career development. In addition, he has worked with the Prescribed Fire Team to develop and finalize Standard Operating Procedures for the Prescribed Fire Program. Paul leads a team of experts, each leading their own teams related to a diverse range of stewardship needs, including the Weed Team, Cultural Resources Team, Forest Management Team, and Prescribed Burn Team. He also leads the WDFW range and vegetation ecologist positions that oversee and advise WDFW working lands permits and monitoring. Paul is a key contributor to team morale and the strategic approach for the entire Lands Division, and he has the respect of his colleagues in Olympia and across the state for his collaborative and value-added approach. He is a phenomenal manager who provides direction and empowers and supports his employees' good work while anticipating and addressing potential structural challenges.

## Conservation Awards

This year, we recognize two people for their contributions to conservation: Scott Pearson and William Ritchie.

### Scott Pearson

Scott Pearson, WDFW research scientist, is a leader in the scientific community when it comes to everything from streaked horned larks to tufted puffins and marbled murrelets to seals and sea lions. His expert panel and committee leadership includes actively participating with

the Puget Sound Partnership, Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team, Pacific Seabird Group, Alaska Groundfish Group (concerning bycatch of seabirds), and the Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program's Marine Birds Working Group, just to name a few.



Scott has been and continues to be a leader in streaked horned lark conservation. His work was the foundation for understanding problems with lark reproductive success and identifying mortality factors so that management can focus on reducing those mortality factors. He led the development of a ground-breaking monitoring strategy for lark occupancy and population trends in Washington that has now been in place for many years. His monitoring work along the Columbia River was the foundation for what is now a strong program working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to use the placement of dredged material to its best effect to create lark habitat and avoid detrimental impacts of placement. Paul is a leader in the scientific world, successfully collaborating with others and grappling with complex ecological questions and then translating those results into a format readily understood by laypeople and policy leaders.

## William Ritchie



Some of you may remember Mr. Ritchie when he was known as Bill and was the lead guy for murrelets at WDFW. If you wanted to get trained in identifying murrelet habitat or in conducting murrelet surveys, you probably spent time with William at the Nemah site. When an attendee was having difficulty with a topic or a field skill, he would devote sincere time to helping that person succeed. Mr. Ritchie was an incredibly valuable resource for WDFW and other folks in the world of marbled murrelets. He is one of those people that creates a relaxing environment in the midst of contentious issues. He can advocate for a controversial resource while maintaining a high level of credibility. He is truly talented.



In 2009, Will moved over to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), where he has significantly contributed to the conservation of critical habitats at the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge. To date, his efforts in coastal dune habitat have restored approximately 500 acres of suitable nesting habitat for federally threatened western snowy plovers and streaked horned larks. Will also leads the Refuge's coastal prairie restoration effort. He has developed innovative approaches to establishing larval host plants (early blue violets) and nectar species for the future release of federally threatened Oregon silverspot butterflies. Will has worked with The Nature Conservancy and other partners to develop a forest management plan in the South Willapa Bay Conservation Area to use timber harvest and ecological restoration to enhance future marbled murrelet habitat. He continues to educate people and work cooperatively with a variety of stakeholders, and he remains a friendly face for conservation.

## Stewardship Award

### WDFW Forest Health Team

From 2014 through 2021, the WDFW Forest Health Team enhanced and restored ecological function on 20,066 acres of WDFW forestlands. That's an area wider than a football field stretching from Seattle to Bakersfield, California! The work included 211,000 tons of fuel reduction from sales to lumber and paper mills, multiple prescribed burns and slash pile burning. The activities included 8,067 acres of non-commercial thinning, 6,376 acres of commercial thinning, and 5,456 acres of prescribed burning (almost all of which were follow-up treatments to commercial thinning). Although WDFW owns less than 1% of State forested lands, from 2017-2020 the Team carried out 11% of the forest restoration treatment activity in Washington. These amazing accomplishments have been possible only because of this group of professional and dedicated team members that



put in long, often irregular hours, often camping on-site, to get the job done. WDFW foresters and prescribed fire staff have decades of experience. The WDFW Prescribed Fire Team (a subgroup of the Forest Health Team) is the only state-agency prescribed fire unit. The Forest Health Team has actively collaborated with WDNR, Washington State Parks, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and WDFW's wildlife area managers to create efficiencies and get more done for fish and wildlife.

Working in partnership, and at this scale, helps reduce wildfire threats, protect water quality and supply, and improve wildlife habitat for at-risk species. The dedicated group of individuals in the Forest Health Team has worked diligently to enhance and restore WDFW lands. In doing so, the team has improved forest ecological integrity, increased wildfire resiliency, and



decreased the likelihood of catastrophic wildfire, protecting people, state forests, state infrastructure, as well as important wildlife habitats. The following individuals have contributed to these achievements as part of WDFW's Forest Health Team: Clay Sprague, Cynthia Wilkerson, Paul Dahmer, Richard Tveten, Rod Pfeifle, Brian Mize, Ben Hartmann, Sara Ashiglar, Matt Eberlein, Duane Vanwoert, Drew Delozier, Taylor Phillips, Mike Surratt, Kenny Terrile, Ryan Miller, Tyler Cave, Pilar Castro, Seth Midkiff, Micah Anderson, Thomas Dellarocco, Sean Forbes, Maurice Major, Margaret Rennie, Lisa Nelson, and Lynn Needham.

## Foresight Award

### Leland Brown, Chris Parish, Mick Cope, and Dave Whipple

Sometimes conservation progress requires not only foresight, but partnerships and patience as well. We are delighted to recognize the vision, teamwork, and persistent efforts of four wildlife biologists who were instrumental in adding WDFW to the growing list of agencies that support the North American Non-Lead Partnership. This nomination is based on first-hand observation by members of our Chapter.

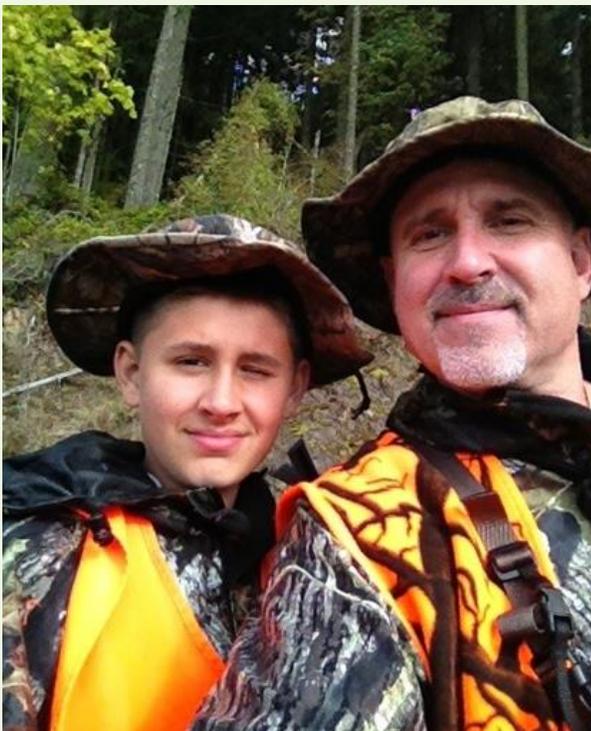
From 2016 through 2018, WA-TWS hosted presentations and discussions at our conferences, as well as a small group session in Olympia, to discuss the issue of education regarding non-lead bullets for hunting big game and other species. Consistent with TWS policy, our approach emphasized conversion through education, not through regulation. We achieved considerable agreement, but the timing was not quite right for WDFW and others.

Non-lead bullets continued to be a topic of discussion within WDFW for a number of years. Throughout that process, Mick Cope (Wildlife Program Deputy Director) and David Whipple

(Hunter Education Division Manager) were supportive and eager to learn more. In 2017, with the help of two biologists (one State biologist on the east side and one Federal biologist on the west side), all hunter education instructors attending In-Service Trainings were given a presentation on non-lead bullets. Meanwhile, the conversations continued.



*Mick Cope*



*Dave Whipple and his son, Sam*

In 2017, the Oregon Zoo and the Peregrine Fund, along with the Institute for Wildlife Studies, founded the North American Non-Lead Partnership (Partnership). Leland Brown (Oregon Zoo) and Chris Parish (Peregrine Fund) have been striving to initiate the next effort where hunters and shooters can be leaders in conservation. For decades, hunters and shooters have contributed to conservation through the Pittman Robertson Act and many other efforts. Now the Partnership is taking steps to reduce the amount of lead in the environment and in the meat and carrion of hunted animals. Leland and Chris are truly dedicated to this effort.



*Leland Brown*

In the past year, the WDFW officially became a Supporting Member of the Partnership. The Partnership now includes the wildlife agencies of Washington, Arizona, Utah, and New Mexico, as well as the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (representing 13 State and 3 Provinces) and more than 30 conservation

organizations. WDFW's participation in the North American Non-Lead Partnership would not have been possible without the effort, expertise, and leadership shown by Leland and Chris along with forward-thinking leadership from WDFW Director Kelly Susewind, Wildlife Program Director Eric Gardner, and members of the Fish and Wildlife Commission, among others. We note the diligent involvement of Mick Cope and Dave Whipple for their unwavering commitment, and we thank Jeff "Bernie" Bernatowitz (WDFW), who was the presenter for the east side In-Service Trainings in 2017.



*Chris Parish*

## Partnership Award

### Karen Holtrop and Cheryl Bartlett

Karen Holtrop, Olympic National Forest (ONF) wildlife biologist, and Cheryl Bartlett, ONF forest botanist, have worked together for more than 10 years to improve habitat for pollinators and other early seral species. Since the mid-2000s, Karen has surveyed extensively for Taylor's checkerspot butterflies, a species that was listed as endangered under the ESA in 2013. She has participated in numerous reviews of the status of the species, and she has designed projects to

protect, restore, and create habitat for Taylor's checkerspots. Cheryl, meanwhile, has been in charge of the ONF's invasive weed program since 2011 and the native plant program since 2013.



*Karen Holtrop*



*Cheryl Bartlett*

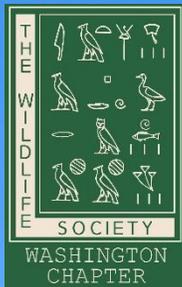
Both Karen and Cheryl have developed numerous partnerships to increase the amount of survey and habitat work completed on ONF. Through her work with butterflies, bumblebees, beetles, and other pollinators, Karen has developed long-term partnerships with staff at

WDFW, Olympic National Park, USFWS, the Washington Conservation Corps, the Student Conservation Association, and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, among others. Cheryl's work restoring native plant communities has benefitted from partnerships with the 10,000 Years Institute, the noxious weed boards of the four counties on the Olympic Peninsula, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Olympic National Park, Rare Care, and the Center for Natural Lands Management, among others.

Because Cheryl and Karen have been on the ONF for so many years, their respective programs are well established. Efforts to restore habitats for common species and species of concern have benefited from their synergy. For example, Karen has informed Cheryl about plant species crucial for Taylor's checkerspots and other butterflies. Cheryl has incorporated this information into the ONF's native plant program, overseeing the

collection of native seed for larval host plants and nectar plants for butterflies. The seed is then sent to local nurseries for use in restoration projects.

Each year, Karen and Cheryl have collaborated to remove invasive weeds, plant seed, plugs, and live stakes of native species, and monitor restored areas for use by wildlife. Their teams have accomplished this work across hundreds of acres on decommissioned roads, timber harvest landings, and early seral communities such as pre-commercially thinned stands. In addition to their contributions to habitat restoration and management, both Cheryl and Karen have supervised many interns and seasonal employees over the years. They enjoy sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm for wildlife and plants with others. While the habitat work is essential today, the educational aspect of their work is crucial for the conservation of tomorrow.



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Please send ideas to [president.elect@watws.org](mailto:president.elect@watws.org)  
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