
THE NORTHWEST SECTION OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY AND MONTANA: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Julie A. Cunningham*, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Bozeman

Scott Brainerd*, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Fairbanks, AK

At this 2017 meeting of the Northwest Section and the Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society, this talk will present the past, present, and potential futures of the Northwest Section as it relates to Montana and to the Parent Society. Many members today will remember the Section's dedicated meetings and high level of professional involvement and wonder "where are we now?" For others, this talk may be their introduction to the Section and how to be involved. The Northwest Section has shared deep roots with our Montana wildlife heritage, with common leaders and common vision, since the inception of our profession. Originally composed of Montana, Alaska, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, British Columbia, and Alberta, the Section had powerful and well-attended annual meetings with themes including

foundational concepts in game bird and big game population and habitat management and policy. Professionals representing an array of agencies, entities, and universities gathered to share the latest scientific findings, mentor students, and address environmental challenges. A Parent Society reorganization in the early 2000's led to formation of a Canadian Chapter and the Section lost connection with British Columbia and Alberta. Since that time, the Section has been through a period of reformation. With well-represented member states, an enthusiastic board, and increased dues, the Section's vision for the future is bright. Future directions will include focus on building student chapters and bringing student conclaves to the Northwest, supporting policy stances on issues that cross state lines, and increasing communication between our member states.