

ABSTRACTS

THE MONTANA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY AND THE MONTANA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY 2009 JOINT CONFERENCE

ADAPTING FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT TO HUMAN DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE IN MONTANA

FEBRUARY 9 – 13, 2009
KALISPELL, MONTANA

Nearly 400 members of the Montana Chapters of the American Fisheries Society and The Wildlife Society gathered in Kalispell, Montana, February 9-13, 2009 for a joint meeting. The meeting's theme was "*Adapting Fish and Wildlife Management to Human Demographic Change in Montana*", recognizing that successfully solving looming fish and wildlife management challenges such as climate change and expanding energy development can only occur when human demography is included in solutions. The meeting began with two continuing education workshops designed to provide both scope and solutions to elements of the theme: *Human Demographic Impacts: Invasive Species and Other Species of Concern*, and *Human Demographic Impacts: Solutions to Fish and Wildlife Management Challenges*. Then, the plenary session, titled *Learning from the past, but focusing on the future – adapting fish and wildlife management to Montana's new demographics* presented both the progression of fish and wildlife management in Montana in response to human demographic changes over the last century, as well as a context for future changes. The plenary session concluded with panel discussions that provided perspectives from both public and private entities spanning most aspects of fish and wildlife management. A consistent message to the audience was that human demographic change is modifying some fundamental tenets of fish and wildlife management, and therefore will require development of both new models of management and collaboration, and different skill sets among future managers. Although this change presents challenges, it likewise offers exciting opportunities for disparate disciplines and groups to work together to solve these challenges. As such, it was very appropriate that the topic was addressed by a joint meeting of the two largest professional fish and wildlife societies in Montana.

After the plenary session, a day of three joint concurrent sessions ensued. Presentations were grouped in topics of mutual concern to both fish and wildlife managers. Consequently, both topics and attendees were diverse and interdisciplinary. The abstracts of those presentations at the 2009 joint meeting demonstrate the wide reaching, important and timely work conducted by Montana's fish and wildlife professionals. Based on this and past examples, there is no doubt that the dedicated individuals, agencies, and organizations represented by the Montana Chapters of The Wildlife Society and the American Fisheries Society will continue to strive to meet the challenges posed by a changing future.

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