

MONTANA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

54th ANNUAL MEETING, 2016

***Wildlife Restoration
Celebrating Conservation Success and
Facing Future Challenges***

February 23-26, 2016

Missoula, Montana

**Mark Ruby, President 2016-17
Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society**

Introduction

This year's theme was Wildlife Restoration: *Celebrating Conservation Success and Facing Future Challenges*. The subject is one of the most challenging aspects of wildlife management. The focus is intentionally broad, as the success of conservation and management of our wildlife species is dependent on the synergy of many political, ecological, biological and social components that play a role in species conservation. There are many future challenges facing Montana's wildlife species such as a growing human population or a changing climate. To help build future solutions, we can keep an eye on past successes. We should do this not only to draw important lessons on science, management or policy from our peers or predecessors, but also to remind ourselves how much the future can benefit from the hard work of those that came before us.

The perspective from the past is an important one. We get to celebrate the conservation success of the agency biologists, university researchers and leaders that worked together to incorporate sound scientific management of wildlife to restore Montana's game populations in the early 1900s. Today we have a healthy population of wolves, compared to 30 years ago when managers questioned their presence at all. As we look to future challenges, our annual conference is a great forum to share experiences, collaborate and better define and learn how and where we can manage Montana's wildlife for future generations. About 350 wildlifers attended this year's conference.

The banquet speaker was Harold Picton, Emeritus Professor of Wildlife Management in the Department of Ecology at Montana State University. He is a charter member of the Chapter and served as its president in 1967. The title of his talk was, "The Pittman-Robertson Revolution: Skim Milk on the Hills, Drugs in the Swamp and Salting from the Air" It was received with a standing ovation.