

THE MONTANA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

62nd Annual Conference

“Cultivating Respect for Nature Without Destroying What We Seek”

February 6 - 9, 2024

Butte, MT

Greetings everyone and welcome to Butte, America! I feel like it was only a couple of months ago since we were together last February in Helena, and I had plenty of time to wrap my mind around planning a conference a year away. Yet here we are already! Thank you for the opportunity to serve as president-elect over the past year. I've enjoyed meeting and working with new people across Montana and other states, as well as learning more about TWS and the committed wildlife professionals in our Chapter. Getting to know the other Executive Board members has been especially notable. I'm excited for us to discuss, what I believe to be, an important conference theme, hearing different perspectives and connecting on common challenges - Cultivating Respect for Nature Without Destroying What We Seek. This year's conference theme brings us together for a conversation about the challenges of engaging people to protect and conserve wildlife and wild places without displacing and destroying them with unsustainable human presence and use. An ever-increasing population in Montana and rapidly spread exposure of locations across the state are compounding human impacts on the landscape. From housing developments on big game winter range, motorized vehicles creating new routes cross-country leaving little wildlife security, noxious weeds invading native sagebrush grasslands, packed trailheads and close proximity camping at mountain lakes, hunting spots popularized, shed hunters disrupting wintering elk herds, to litter and other human sign along trails and at camping spots. The list gets long quickly. Our plenary session includes seven panelists who will discuss projects and issues they're working on and their perspectives for facing these challenges.

President-Elect: Katie Benzel (Bureau of Land Management)