

THE MONTANA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

63rd Annual Conference

“Conservation Policy: Getting Involved, Staying Engaged, and How TWS Can Help”

March 4 - 7, 2025

Billings, MT

Greetings everyone and welcome to Billings! It's been a while since we were “out east” in Montana, and we're looking forward to seeing a different part of the state than we've been accustomed to for the last decade or so. For many of us—myself included—MTTWS is something we look forward to all year, and I certainly felt the pressure as your president-elect to give you all a memorable, informational conference. Looking back, it probably wasn't the smartest thing for me to pick conservation policy as the theme, host it far away from Helena during a legislative session, and do so on the heels of a massive federal administration change...but here we are. Conservation Policy Despite the aforementioned challenges, I do feel this year's conference theme couldn't be more timely. Not only are we watching a slew of wildlife-related bills move through the Montana Legislature, but we are also facing drastic changes to federal programs that have the potential to affect conservation goals for years to come. I think many of us, as we sit at our desks or hike in the field, feel like we don't have a voice in the issues that will affect our jobs, our research, and our futures. Often, because of who we work for, we aren't allowed to have a voice. But that's part of what the Wildlife Society does, by supporting wildlife professionals and allowing us to come together as one to be that voice, leaning hard on its legacy of science-based wildlife management. Our plenary speakers will help us understand the processes involved in conservation policy, as well as avenues for engagement individually and through TWS. We are also trying a hybrid panel session this year, for the first time, in order to allow some folks who couldn't come all the way to Billings to be involved. So we thank you for your patience and understanding for any technical glitches!

President-Elect: Rebecca Mowry (Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks)