

THE MONTANA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

64th Annual Conference “Coordination and Collaboration in Conservation”

**February 24-27, 2026
Missoula, MT**

As your President-elect, I wanted to be sure to wish you all the warmest of welcomes to our 2026 Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society’s conference! This annual event has meant a great deal to me throughout my career. I began attending as a student in 2008 and have come to appreciate the incredible benefit it provides to its members. Not only is it a vital source of professional networking and crucial avenue for sharing important research & conservation throughout our state, but it fosters coordination and builds confidence in students and early-career professionals. As the Wildlife Management Program manager for the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, I can’t help but look-back over my career and see the direct impact this conference and its attendees has had in preparing me for my current position. That shy-but-inquisitive fresh sprite hiding behind her colleagues at her first MT TWS conference in Helena didn’t get where she is today on her own, but instead grew in the knowledge shared by role-models in this field; hoping that one day I could be where they were. My connections grew each year as I worked on new projects and felt more comfortable with each passing conference... before I knew it, their smiling familiar faces were there to greet ME each year, not just my colleagues. Knowing the impact that this conference has on both professionals and conservation in our field, it has truly been an honor ensuring that the integrity, professionalism and, let’ be honest, FUN that we have all come to expect from these annual gatherings has been upheld. We have weathered quite a few ‘unprecedented storms’ over the last decade (wait... SARS-CoV-2 entered the scene 7 years ago already?!?!), but I know that whatever we collectively face in the future, wildlife and their habitats are in the hands of capable people who are passionate about our natural resources. This conference wouldn’t be a success without you, the attendees, speakers and presenters, so please, accept my personal thanks for being part of this great week.

All the best,

Kari Kingery, President-Elect (Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes)