



# The Idaho Chapter of the Wildlife Society

## OFFICERS

Ernie Ables - President  
Jim Unsworth - Vice President  
Michael Gratson - Secretary  
Martha Wackenhut - Treasurer

Editors - Michael Gratson, Gregg Servheen

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

There is a saying that one should never begin a speech with an apology. However, I feel very badly about missing the Post Falls meeting and being absent at a critical time. Being elected President of the Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society is an honor I take seriously. You have placed trust in me and my intentions are to earn your confidence by working hard and representing the Chapter membership in the best manner possible. Thank you Paul Moroz and Jim Unsworth for filling in for me.

At very few junctures in the history of wildlife and natural resources conservation have there been so many dramatic and profound events proceeding simultaneously. We are witnessing changing philosophies in federal land management agencies, some of which bode well for wildlife and some which cause us concern. Public attitudes toward wildlife resources convey the need to address all species in our management activities. Public input also reminds us that traditional uses such as sport hunting and other consumptive harvests are under attack. We are told that we have had too narrow a perspective in the past and must adjust. At the same time few have come forward with the financial means of discharging this greater responsibility.

Wildlife populations and habitats are also under more severe pressures than ever before. As human populations continue to grow and expand into geographical areas previously lightly impacted we are faced with major conflicts. Many of these conflicts are occurring in the West and in the State of Idaho. It is likely that our geographic local will be the site of major land use decisions

that will set courses of action which will last for generations. Such thoughts and possibilities are frightening as well as professionally exciting. We as wildlife professionals are in a position to provide highly valuable input that may alter policies and land management practices. To have any significant influence though, we must be heard.

As professional wildlifers and for most of us, as members of agencies that manage wildlife populations and habitats, we are duty bound to maintain a high level of professionalism and scientific objectivity. We can not become involved with personal crusades nor advocacy positions that deviate from standards of conduct established by our parent organization. We can and should, however, actively and purposefully provide the best scientific information available on any issue or proposed action that has the potential for affecting wildlife, either positively or negatively. Sometimes we have the opportunity to provide such input as members of our employing agency. At other times we may provide input as private individuals. I am proposing that we do the same as members of the Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society. If you agree with this proposed course of action I suggest the following procedures.

Whenever a member of the Idaho Chapter becomes aware of an opportunity for providing input on an issue affecting wildlife, that person would seek a representative of the Idaho Chapter who is qualified to offer scientific or management information by virtue of his/her professional field of expertise or else feels comfortable addressing the issue. This representative would state that he/she was speaking on behalf of the Idaho Chapter of TWS. Particulars of each input either verbal or written should be sent to the President of the Idaho Chapter and kept on file as a record of our activities.

I realize that one person might not represent the collective view of the membership on any given issue. The alternative would be to do nothing since there is no reasonable mechanism for obtaining consensus on the large number of issues that arise. I believe that we should place confidence in our professional colleagues. Please let me know what you think about this approach. I have seen it work in another state and greatly improve the visibility and influence of the state chapter. Having participated in such activities, I have experienced feelings of nervousness as well as deep satisfaction in the knowledge that I was acting on behalf of the resource. I believe we as members of TWS and as wildlife professionals have a moral obligation to actively represent the resource that has been entrusted to us.

Regardless of what we can or can not accomplish I am excited and enthusiastic about our chapter and look forward to serving you in the next 2-year term of office. With the team of Jim Unsworth as Vice-President, Mike Gratson as Secretary, Martha Wackenhut as

Treasurer and both Mike Gratson and Gregg Servheen as co-editors of the Newsletter, the coming year looks especially bright. Of course Paul Moroz our highly capable past President is always willing to help and I would frequently be at a loss without his knowledge and advice. To all our members; let me hear from you.

## **MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS MEETING OF THE IDAHO CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY, MARCH 5 1994, TEMPLINS, POST FALLS, ID**

President Paul Moroz called the meeting to order at 1543 hours.

The 1993 minutes of the general business meeting were read and accepted.

Geoff Hogander read a report of the treasury balance as of January 1, 1994. Balance was \$5100.00. Current priorities for expenditures are as follows: 1) Chapter business and newsletter, 2) education, 3) research, and 4) awards.

### **Committee reports:**

#### **Conservation Affairs:**

- 1) response to wolf reintroduction EIS via comments and letter
- 2) testified at hearing and IDFG commission on bombing range issue
- 3) discussed Idaho Wilderness bill and legislation
- 4) helped out with the rare animal meeting

#### **Membership Committee:**

- 1) no recent activity

#### **Newsletter:**

- 1) published 4 newsletters
- 2) complimentary copies went to IDFG, BLM, and USFS field offices one time

#### **Nominations Committee:**

- 1) got a slate of candidates together for this election
- 2) will report on winners later

#### **Education:**

- 1) no recent activity

### **Old business:**

A discussion occurred about whether we should have a policy on personnel affairs - whether it was proper for the Chapter to support members on professional and job-related matters and ethics. An ad hoc committee formed last year discussed this issue and decided that any members requesting help from the Chapter should be given direction on where to go for help, for example the AFSEE.

A discussion occurred about the Inland Empire Natural Resource Youth Camp. It was decided that the Idaho Chapter and the Washington Chapter will each contribute \$100 each year for 5 years.

President Paul Moroz thanked the executive officers - Alan Sands, Justin Naderman, Geoff Hogander, and Jack Connelly and other members for their help the last 2 years.

New business:

The new officers were announced.

- 1) President - E. Ables
- 2) Vice President - J. Unsworth
- 3) Treasurer - M. Wakenhut
- 4) Secretary - M. Gratson

Next, a discussion occurred about where and when to hold next years annual meeting. Jack Connelly asked about Boise. Barry Keller suggested Pocatello or Idaho Falls in conjunction with the NW Science society, about March 9-12.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to let Barry look further into the matter and serve as the local chairman of the annual meeting.

A letter was received on the Idaho Agro-Forestry initiative. This will be passed on to the new president.

Information on lynx is requested from members by Washington State University. The IDFG Conservation Data Center will respond to the request on behalf of the Chapter.

Paul Moroz presented information on the 4-H Wildlife Habitat judging contest. Should we give \$ to send kids to the Nationals? Discussion about this occurred and a motion was made, seconded, and passed to donate \$500, with the provision that the Chapter be given credits on news releases, etc.

Geoff Hogander reported that we had committed to donate \$100 per year for 5 years to the Idaho State University Edson Fichter Scholarship fund.

Paul Moroz was requested to provide a review and comment (using Chapter members) on the Columbia River Basin Mitigation report. Much discussion occurred on just what this was all about and how much time it could take. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to have Jim Peek talk to T. Franklin about this and have the final decision, to be made by the executive committee, published in the newsletter.

Discussion occurred about National TWS Awards Nominations, which recognize individual TWS chapters for excellence. A motion was made, seconded, and passed that Paul Moroz should look into this.



To the editor:

I am writing in response to the recent editorial "Whose Biology Is It, Anyway?" from perhaps the unique perspective of having worked on both sides of the issue. I have worked as a state biologist in Vermont and Maine and I am now a contracting or consulting biologist.

I can appreciate the author's frustration in seeing what he may consider the most interesting or important work going to consulting biologists, while he is perhaps buried in paperwork and losing contact with the resources he must manage. I felt this same frustration myself as a state biologist. However, I believe there is another side of the issue that should be considered in this debate.

Many people who employ consultants are not really sure how to use them. Consultants should be used in two cases: 1) when a particular expertise is required but lacking in-house; and 2) when the short-term work load exceeds the capacity of existing staff. I believe the author's argument is that neither of these cases should exist in a state management agency. He believes that 1) state biologists are, or should be, the best trained; and 2) if he wasn't so buried in paperwork, there wouldn't be a shortage of staff. To a degree, this viewpoint has merit. I agree with his overall premise that a management biologist should be out there managing his or her district. Some degree of paperwork, however, is inevitable for everybody, even consultants, and your goal should be dealing effectively with this reality. Consulting biologists can be part of the solution.

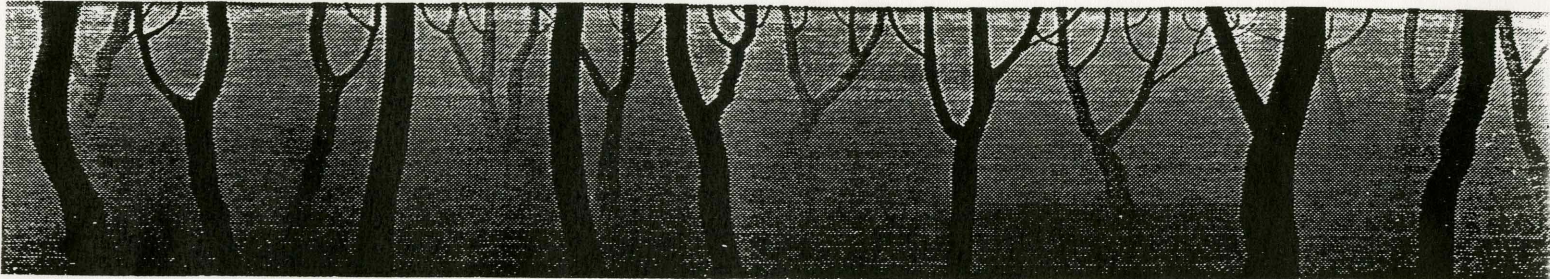
Consultants, by definition, need to be experts in their field, impeccable in their methods, and absolutely confident in their conclusions (there is this thing called professional liability...). If you don't think your consultant meets these qualifications, you should have a talk with them. My point is there are some good biologists in the consulting field. Which brings up a minor aside. If you polled consulting biologists, I am certain the vast majority of them would rather have your job. Remember the guys sitting next

Discussion about the Idaho Wilderness legislation occurred. Lisa Lombardi requested that members provide information on areas potentially covered by the Wilderness bill and handed out Input Criteria to members. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to get this off the ground and moving.

Jim Peek gave an update on the new TWS annual meeting to be held this fall.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to adjourn the annual business meeting.

Secretary - M. W. Gratson



## MEMBERSHIP PROFILES

Levi Mohler - 343-0520

**Employer:** retired from the the Idaho Department of Fish and Game since 1974

**Education:** University of Northern Colorado; Iowa State Univeristy

Came to Idaho Department of Fish and Game in 1954 as chief of game management from Nebraska, where he was state big game manager. He spent 11 years as chief of game management and then moved to director of research for Idaho Fish and Game, where he worked 9 years. Levi maintains his membership in the Idaho Chapter of the Widllife Society as a way to keep in touch with what is going on with wildlife management in the state.

John Crawford - 376-5856

**Employer:** retired from the Bureau of Land Management since 1986

**Education:** Oregon State University; University of Idaho

Originally worked for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game as regional game bird biologist beginning in 1958. Then moved to Alaska to work as a research biologist on moose and as the regional supervisor out of Ketchakan. Worked for the BLM from 1966 to 1986, when he retired. John still does some consulting and has been a memeber of the Idaho Chapter since 1956 and believes it is important to continue support for the society.

to you at all those state tests? You are one of the lucky ones that gets to be a state biologist, the job we all dreamed of in college. Consulting has its advantages, but it is also a risky field with a great many stress factors.

Used effectively, consultants can be very liberating (i.e., get them to do the boring stuff). You should rarely turn over a project to a consultant and wait for a report at the end of the contract period. You need to be involved in designing, planning, and executing the study. Use them as a tool. For example, you have an idea for a study that needs to be performed in your district. Indeed, as the biologist for that district, you best understand what you need to manage the resources. You can frame the study and then use a consultant to bring it to life.

The consultant brings your ideas to life, but it is your idea. You can insert yourself in the process anywhere that you want and your schedule allows (i.e., maybe you like to do literature reviews; perhaps data analysis is your forte; you may relish the days in the field). Perhaps you want to do the entire study, which may be the author's point. If you do, you will likely bury yourself in one project, when dozens of projects may be needed in your district. Use consultants effectively, and you can have several of your projects up and running at the same time. If it isn't possible to follow these suggestions (e.g., you aren't involved in planning or using consultants), then you have a legitimate issue to discuss with your supervisor.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that I sympathize with the author's frustration and that I agree with his overall premise. My point is that he may be happier and more productive by focusing his energy on learning to use consultants effectively. We're good biologists, diligent in our work, and we care about the resource just as much as you. And, we probably sat next to you when you took your state tests.

Sincerely,  
Michael E. Thompson  
Certified Wildlife Biologist

## Editorial

### Forest Health = Ecosystem Simplification

For those of you unable to attend the recent wildlife society meeting in Post Falls, you missed a very interesting panel discussion on forest health. Dr. Jay O'Laughlin presented the U of I Policy Analysis Group's findings on forest health. Dr. Leon Neuenschwander, also from the U of I, presented his analysis on the issues as related to fire frequency and management. Cal Groen, chief of the Natural Resource Policy Bureau for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, expressed fish and wildlife concerns related to managing for forest health. Jim Peek, presented

insights from years of management and research experience. As moderator (I think), Steve Mealy managed to present his point of view as the forest supervisor on the Boise National forest. Representing the view of Boise Cascade was Dr. John Haufler.

There was some interesting information regarding the cycle of insects, disease, and tree species distribution in the forests and how this culminated in a need to manage forests by cutting them down or thinning them out. However, the arguments relating to forest health questions, insect and disease impacts to forests, fire frequencies and suppression, shifts in tree species distribution, and the "need" to "manage" trees threatened by these problems spoke only to trees. All the information presented said trees were the ones that insects and disease were killing, that fire suppression had affected trees, and that trees would be harvested. The trees were the ones, by analysis, that were showing higher than "normal" mortality rates. The trees were showing a shift in species abundance and distribution.

The fatal flaw and the leap into the abyss for much of the forest health arguments comes when this information is applied as part of an ecosystem management scenario. There is no doubt that the effects of disease, fire suppression, and insects on trees could and do have an effect on the ecosystem. There is no doubt that there have been and need to be some tough decisions made about forest health and how to manage it (or whether to manage it). But tree information is a very small measure of the ecosystem. It is information based on the measure of trees; based on trees as volume; based on trees as a standing crop. Jay O'Laughlin provided an important insight when he stated that wildlife and fish were considered in the forest health analysis but they were eliminated because there was not enough information.

First, we need to ask where is the information on fish and wildlife? Is it that there is no information at all? Or is it that it does not compare with the information available on trees? I suspect it is a bit of both. As wildlifers what are we doing to increase that level of information? Is it possible that we have been mitigating impacts to fish and wildlife so long that we think that is all there is to wildlife management outside of research?

Second, action is now being taken to "manage" forest health without fish and wildlife information. Whether or not we have the information does not change the fact that we are experimenting with an ecosystem. An ecosystem that is responding to changing conditions in fires, insects, and disease. Its response is to increase tree mortality, change species distribution, and increase fire threat.

To presume our infinite wisdom will save the forest and ecosystem from itself as it responds to insect, disease, and fire frequency changes is a paradox when we do not even have the information to know what a forest is. To prescribe a solution for saving the forest that fulfills mostly human needs (board feet) is a lie we



want to call ecosystem management. Not only does this approach get us no closer to answering the hard questions, it provides a wrong answer and misinformation to the public that natural resource professionals like us will have to overcome in the future. If it is information we are lacking, then the choice other than no action is to design management we can monitor and use the results of these actions to increase the amount of information we do have (adaptive management). If we cannot do either of these it is a crap shoot.

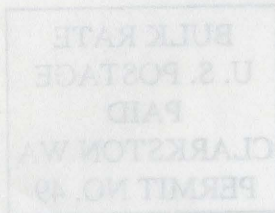
**GS**

### **Upcoming Meetings**

June 18-23, 1994. 75th Anniversary Meeting of the American Society Mammalogists, Washington, D.C., Don Wilson, Biodiversity Programs MRC 180, National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C. 20560. 202/786-2944; FAX: 202/786-2934.

August 29-31, 1994. Sustaining Rangeland Ecosystems, La Grande, OR., John Tanaka, Blue Mountains Natural Resources Institute, 1401 Gekeler Lane, La Grande, OR 97850. 503/963-7122. FAX: 503/962-6504.

September 21-25, 1994. First Annual Conference of the Wildlife Society: Excellence in Wildlife Stewardship Through Science and Education, Albuquerque, NM., Harry E. Hodgdon, The Wildlife Society, 5410 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814; 301/897-9770; FAX 301/530-2471.



IDAHO CHAPTER  
THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY



**IDAHO CHAPTER  
THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY**



JUSTIN NADERMAN  
IDAHO DEPT. FISH & GAME  
1515 LINCOLN ROAD  
IDAHO FALLS ID 83401

**BULK RATE  
U. S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
CLARKSTON WA  
PERMIT NO. 49**