

EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CONSERVATION LEADERS

The Boone and Crockett Club University Programs is designed to provide science-based knowledge from seasoned wildlife professionals and educators to college graduates in the wildlife field to better prepare the graduates for the responsible and wise management of wildlife in the future.

The Wildlife Society and Boone and Crockett Club's University Programs PROMOTING PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

The Boone and Crockett Club played an important role in the Annual Wildlife Society Conference this year in Reno, Nevada, which was held from September 29 through October 3. The annual conference is the largest gathering of wildlife professionals and students in the U.S. This year, the Boone and Crockett Club was the first partner of the Student Connections Initiative, a new program just launched by The Wildlife Society. The initiative is aimed to create valuable information and engagement opportunities with partners who have a strong commitment to assisting future wildlife professionals. Because of the Club's support, student membership dues are reduced by \$5 for each student over the next year. The Club will also be a sponsor of a weekly newsletter aimed at student and early career professionals.

At the conference, the Club was highly visible to students as a sponsor of the major student events in Reno. In addition to recognition at the competitive and entertaining student quiz bowl, the Club hosted and sponsored an undergraduate student leader's luncheon. There were about 125 student leaders (officers in student chapters of The Wildlife Society) from about 40 universities in attendance. Julie Tripp, Justin Spring, and Josh Millsbaugh hosted the event and Josh provided a 10-minute overview of Club activities. Josh highlighted the historical and recent contributions to conservation the Club has made and highlighted current

opportunities through University Programs and the Hunting for Sustainability Program at the University of Montana. Student response was overwhelmingly positive as was evident from the number of questions and students lined up to discuss activities and opportunities after the luncheon! The Club's booth similarly received a lot of traffic and questions from students and conference attendees.

In addition to undergraduate student activities, the Club's University Programs had a number of important events. The Club was well-represented by our graduate fellows who offered a couple dozen posters and talks in various symposia. Several important sessions, including one titled "Challenges of Balancing Stakeholder Engagement and Scientific Decision-Making to Inform Wildlife Policy" which was organized by our program at Michigan State University was well received. Speakers from this session and all University Program fellows participated in a Club sponsored luncheon. There were 25 fellows in attendance at the luncheon in addition to many professional members. Dr. Evelyn Merrill provided an excellent talk at the fellows' luncheon about the important role of personal relationships in professional careers. Club sponsored events ended with a social networking event for our fellows and professional members. We received a tremendous amount of positive feedback from general conference attendees, students, and our fellows about the important role the Club played in the conference! ■



ABOVE: Professional Member Wini Kessler spoke at the Student-Professional Networking event designed to connect natural resource students with mentors and potential employers, and vice versa. **BELOW:** Professional Member John Organ spoke on behalf of the Club as the sponsor of the Quiz Bowl finals.



RIGHT: Professional Members Jim Heffelfinger (left), Bronson Strickland (center) and Michigan State Associate Director of the Boone and Crockett Quantitative Wildlife Center, David Williams (right), presented at the B&C sponsored symposium titled *Challenges of Balancing Stakeholder Engagement and Scientific Decision-making to Inform Wildlife Policy.*



The Interplay of Politics and Science in Controversial Approaches to Deer-Disease Management.
David Williams, Chad Stewart



BELOW: Professional Member Josh Millsbaugh spoke at the Student Chapter Leaders luncheon. Students learned more about the Boone and Crockett Club and the opportunities through the University Programs. There were raffles and giveaway items students could take to learn more about the Club.



State Wildlife Agency Role in Combining Best Available Science and Stakeholders to Recover the Mexican Wolf
James Heffelfinger, James deVos

Frustration and Intrigue: Hunter Acceptance of Information Regarding Chronic Wasting Disease.
Bronson Strickland, Kevin Hunt



BELOW: A group photo of the Boone and Crockett Fellows in attendance. Professors and Fellows were able to network and share stories with B&C Members at the University Programs Fellows Luncheon. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Wini Kessler introduced Professional Member Evelyn Merrill as the presenter at the luncheon. She shared her insights around the challenges for couples and their relationships around dual careers and professions.

