

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.



2020 BOONE AND CROCKETT FELLOW OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD IN GRADUATE RESEARCH

University of Montana's Christopher Hansen has been selected as the second annual winner of the Boone and Crockett Fellow Outstanding Achievement Award in Graduate Research. The award highlights and strengthens the connection between students and the Boone and Crockett Club that supports them.

The Boone and Crockett Club's University Programs offers educational and professional development opportunities that prepare future scientists, decision-makers, and leaders to address the enormous challenges facing wildlife conservation. The Club established the annual Boone and Crockett Fellow Outstanding Achievement Award to recognize a graduate student whose research advances the Club's mission and informs natural resource management and policy decisions in North America. Awardees are selected on the basis of the relevance and significance of their research, the quality of their work, and their commitment to leadership, effective communication, and outreach.

Joshua Millsbaugh, Boone and Crockett Professor of Wildlife Conservation at the University of Montana, said, "Chris is exactly the type of student we want to attract to our Boone and Crockett University Programs. He is hard-working, motivated, creative in his research and has a proven ability to work with a broad range of people. He also has the capacity to bridge the gap between rigorous field studies and the development of effective land management decisions. His work at the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Ranch and along the front range in Montana will help inform our understanding of grazing and big game while simultaneously providing huge dividends for education and outreach. This award appropriately recognizes his leadership, quality of research, and broader contributions to wildlife and land management." ■

BOONE AND CROCKETT FELLOW PROFILE

CHRISTOPHER HANSEN

PH.D. STUDENT - UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

THESIS TITLE: Conservation benefits of sustainable land use on mammal communities

Chris Hansen is a fourth-year Ph.D. candidate whose research explores the conservation benefits of sustainable land use on mammal communities, specifically focusing on rangelands and urbanization. Chris obtained his Bachelor of Science degree in Biology at Truman State University and his Master of Science degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences at the University of Missouri, where he managed a research project developing a monitoring protocol for ruffed grouse in South Dakota.

Throughout his career, Chris has worked on a wide variety of research projects that included estimating black-backed woodpecker demographics in South Dakota, identifying the influences of wind energy development on sage-grouse in Wyoming, and quantifying the effects of oil and gas development on mule deer in North Dakota. During this time, Chris published 9 peer-reviewed scientific articles and gave multiple presentations at state and national wildlife conferences.

In 2017, Chris began his Ph.D. studies in the Wildlife Biology Program at the University of Montana. Since beginning his dissertation work, Chris has co-authored 6 additional research articles and one book chapter that have either been published or submitted to peer-reviewed journals. In addition to his dissertation work, Chris has been heavily involved in other communication and outreach projects, including helping mentor students with undergraduate research projects and teaching novice hunters about hunting, land ethics, and conservation through the "Hunting for Sustainability" program. Chris hopes to use the education and experience he obtains through this program to conduct wildlife research and apply that knowledge towards wildlife management and well-informed policy.



B&C Fellow Christopher Hansen with his daughters.



One of Chris's projects involves the analysis of over 21,000 BLM grazing allotments in the western U.S. to evaluate trends in grazing patterns and vegetation resources over the past 30 years. He is using state-of-the-art, and recently developed technology, as the basis of his work. Additionally, he is working with many landowners on the front range in Montana to assess finer scale patterns of grazing and how the broader mammal community responds. Such work will provide critical information on the relationship between grazing and mammal communities in the western U.S. and inform land management and policy decisions. *Fair Chase* readers are familiar with Chris's research because he has provided his remote camera photos from the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Ranch for each issue of *Fair Chase* over the past couple years. See page 78.



IN MEMORIAM

The Boone and Crockett Club's University Programs Committee mourns the loss of Dr. William "Bill" Porter, who passed away from cancer on October 23, 2020, at the age of 69.



After a distinguished 30-year career at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Bill came to Michigan State University in 2010 to become its first Boone and Crockett Professor of Wildlife Conservation. During his time at MSU, he founded the Boone and Crockett Quantitative Wildlife Center, developed and taught courses focused on wildlife policy and leadership in natural resources, and mentored 6 post-doctoral scholars, 13 Ph.D. students, 4 M.S. students, and numerous undergraduate students.

Bill's work at Michigan State focused on applied science aimed directly at wildlife conservation. He was dedicated to making a difference in four key areas: land-use change, emerging wildlife diseases, shifting weather patterns, and sustainable management of wildlife. His research spanned many species of interest to the wildlife community, including deer, wolves, bears, woodcock, songbirds, and his first ecological love: the wild turkey. This year's cover of the Boone and Crockett University Programs Annual Report is a tribute to Bill and his favorite game species.

Bill was equally devoted to producing the next generation of wildlife conservation leaders. He fostered creative problem solving in his students and emphasized training in collaborative leadership and effective communication skills. When he was not teaching or meeting with students and collaborators, Bill was sharing his vast knowledge of wildlife conservation by publishing more than 150 journal articles and book chapters on topics ranging from the history of the land conservation movement to white-tailed deer movement behavior.

Bill was a champion for wildlife conservation, a valued colleague, a talented mentor, a loyal friend, and a dedicated husband, son, father, and grandfather. He leaves a legacy that will shape wildlife management and policy for years to come.

Bill speaking at the University Programs retreat at the TRM Ranch in 2018.



Learn more about each University, their programs and students in the 2020 University Programs Annual Report available online. If you would like a printed copy please contact Boone and Crockett Club Headquarters at (406) 542-1888 or email Karlie@Boone-Crockett.org