

Conservation Awards Committee

Committee Members: K. Lyons (Chair), H. Ali, J. Gonzalez-Maya, C. Jacques, M. Tewes, S. Wisely

Mission:

This Committee administers two awards, the Aldo Leopold Conservation Award and the Murie Family Award. These awards were established by the ASM Board of Directors in 2002, but until 2020, the Murie Family Award was known as the William T. Hornaday Award. The Aldo Leopold Award was created to recognize a well-established individual who has made a lasting scientific contribution to the conservation of mammals and their habitats. The Murie Family Award was created to recognize a current graduate/undergraduate student or early career researchers with 5 year of their terminal degree, who has made a significant contribution to the conservation of mammals and their habitats.

Information Items:

The Conservation Awards Committee solicits nominations for the Leopold Conservation Award and the Murie Family Conservation Award. This year we received 2 completed nominations for the Leopold award. The committee members were unanimous in recommending Dr. Matthew J. Kauffman for the 2024 Aldo Leopold Award. Dr. Kauffman is a wildlife conservation biologist who specializes in understanding and preserving migration routes for mammals. He has been a leader in bringing together stakeholders to protect migration corridors for mammals in the intermountain west. In addition, he has extended his efforts to the global scale by starting the Global Initiative on Ungulate Migration in 2023 and beginning the efforts to create of global database of ungulate migrations to map seasonal ranges and migration corridors. Finally, his conservation work is underpinned by rigorous science; he and his colleagues have published many important papers expanding our understanding of ungulate migrations. Thus, Dr. Kauffman has contributed substantially to the conservation of ungulates through the conservation of imperiled migration routes, the acquisition of new knowledge regarding our understanding of ungulate migrations, and through public education and outreach. The Award will be presented at the Awards Ceremony at the 2024 Meeting in Boulder, Colorado.

The Conservation Awards Committee also received 5 nominations for the Murie Family Conservation Award. After reading, ranking and discussing the 5 nominations, the committee decided to recommend that we award the 2024 Murie Family Conservation Award to Dr. Saeideh Esmaeili. Dr Esmaeili received her Ph.D. in 2020 from the University of Wyoming where she focused on the resource and space use by wild ungulates. Over her career, she has worked with the Iranian Department of the Environment on conservation issues for Asiatic cheetah, Jabeer gazelles, sand cats, and the onager. Most recently, she has been working to document the timing and movement of onagers for use in expanding the national park where the onager's remaining populations are. In addition, she has been training Iranian DOE staff in capture and immobilization techniques, telemetry techniques, and data analysis. Her work is

underpinned by rigorous science as she has been publishing her research in both ecology and conservation journals. Her work has also been disseminated to the public through a documentary and articles in the popular press. Thus, Dr. Esmaili has contributed substantially to the conservation of multiple species of endangered mammals, the training of local stakeholders, the acquisition of new knowledge about the resource and space use of wild ungulates, and through public outreach. The Award will be presented at the Awards Ceremony at the 2024 Meeting in Boulder, Colorado.

(1) No budget is needed for plaques and travel as these have been reassigned to the Vice President.

(2) Soliciting nominations for this award is a challenge. We put out calls two times this year on mammal-L and Ecolog-L listservs. We would appreciate suggestions from the board for other venues to advertise these important awards.

Action Items:

(1) To aid in soliciting additional nominations, we request permission to draft an email to be sent by the President in early January 2025 to ASM membership.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Lyons, Chair

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