

September 24, 2026

ITEM 226-2002-R0926

Request for Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus of Ecology upon Dr. Alexander V. Zale; Montana State University

THAT

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Research Affiliate Professor Alexander V. Zale from the faculty in the Department of Ecology at Montana State University, the Board of Regents wishes to express its appreciation for his service to the University and the Montana University System.

EXPLANATION

Dr. Alexander V. Zale has led, coordinated, and administered a nationally recognized applied fisheries research program addressing topics and issues of concern to the State of Montana and the U.S. Department of the Interior for 32 years. Coming to MSU in 1994, Dr. Zale initially served as the Assistant Unit Leader of the Montana Cooperative Fishery Research Unit and an Affiliate Associate Professor in the Ecology Department. Since 2002, he has served as Montana Cooperative Fishery Research Unit Leader and Affiliate Professor in the Ecology Department.

Dr. Zale received a B.S. in Fisheries Biology from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in 1978, an M.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in 1980, and a Ph.D. in Forest Resources and Conservation from University of Florida in 1984.

In his 32 years at MSU, Dr. Zale consulted on issues related to fishery resources in Montana, the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, as well as internationally. He conducted research on native fishes, prairie fishes, Central American fisheries, thermal ecology, climate change adaptation, population dynamics and effects of exotic fishes, and effects of environmental degradation on recreational salmonid fisheries. He served on numerous task forces, technical committees, and Governor's Task Forces associated with fish conservation and riparian management for the State of Montana and Yellowstone National Park. Some of the species that he focused on included Yellowstone cutthroat trout, brown trout, and arctic grayling, but he also studied the lesser known prairie fishes and mussels. He served as the fish specialist on the University's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee for 22 years.

Dr. Zale taught graduate courses and seminars in fisheries and aquatic sciences. He was most well-known for his course entitled "Human Dimensions of Fisheries and Wildlife Management," which focused on helping students to recognize and understand the social as well as the scientific aspects of environmental issues. Dr. Zale advised or co-advised 45 graduate students, many of whom have gone on to work for state and federal management agencies. He has authored over 90 refereed publication and is the lead editor of a book entitled "Fisheries Techniques", now in its third edition.

Through his research, mentoring of professionals in the field of fisheries research, extensive service to MSU, and for the partnerships he cultivated by leading the Montana Cooperative Fishery Research Unit, Dr. Zale has left an enduring legacy. He was recently recognized with a Career Achievement award by the Montana Chapter of the American Fisheries Society.

For these and other contributions, the Board of Regents of Higher Education is pleased to confer upon Dr. Alexander V. Zale the rank of Professor Emeritus of Ecology at Montana State University and wishes him well for many years in the future.

ATTACHMENTS

None