



The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

June 2014, Issue 1, Pilot Volume

Take Action!

Clean Water Act Rulemaking – National – The EPA has issued new rules to clarify the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act. These rules are critical to establishing protections for many of our nation's waters important for wildlife conservation. Staff Contact: [Laura Bies](#)

- Who Should Act: Everyone
- Deadline for Action: 21 July 2014
- Actions to Take: Provide comments on the proposed rules, supporting the EPA in their efforts to protect our nation's waters
- Resources: [TWS Action Alert](#)
[Wildlife Policy News](#)
[Federal Register – proposed rules](#)

Wildfire Disaster Funding Act – National – Wildfire suppression efforts during the past several years have consumed a large portion of federal agency budgets, far more than what has been allocated toward suppression programs. Agencies have been forced to borrow funds from other programs important to wildlife management activities in order to pay for suppression efforts. The bill (S. 1875, H.R. 3992) allows suppression activities for extreme wildfires to be funded in a manner similar to other natural disasters, like floods and hurricanes. This allows federal emergency dollars to be used to fight fires and keeps agency funds available for other programs. Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

- Who Should Act: Everyone
- Deadline for Action: 21 July 2014
- Action to Take: Contact members of Congress to express your support for the proposed legislation
- Resources: [Wildlife Policy News](#)
[Infographic](#)
[Letter from CBO to Senators](#)

Endangered Species Act Rulemaking – National – The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service proposed new rules to increase predictability during the process of making critical habitat designations. The 3 rules will impact the definition of “adverse modification”, the scope and purpose of critical habitat, and policies for excluding areas from critical habitat designation.

- Who Should Act: Everyone
- Deadline for Action: 11 July 2014
- Action to Take: Provide comments on the proposed rules to ensure they support the use of sound science in endangered species protection
- Resources: [Wildlife Policy News](#)
[Federal Register – “adverse modification” definition](#)
[Federal Register – scope and purpose of critical habitat](#)
[Federal Register – exclusion of habitat](#)

*Increasing the Society's effectiveness in wildlife conservation policy
through communication and collaboration*

Issue Spotlight

Controlled Substances Act impact on wildlife management activities – The Controlled Substances Act (CSA) limits the possession and use of several drugs utilized by wildlife managers and researchers in their daily activities. Interpretation of the CSA by the Drug Enforcement Administration is having detrimental impacts on the work of wildlife professionals. The CSA, as currently written and interpreted, requires drugs to be stored and administered within a single building; essentially, this means that in order to sedate a bear for wildlife research, you must first get the bear into your office. Several state wildlife agencies have been handicapped by DEA regulations regarding the use of these drugs. TWS Government Affairs & Partnerships staff is working with an AFWA task force to address the issue and provide some relief to state agencies. Be on the lookout for future action opportunities to help us address this issue and make improvements for wildlife professionals. Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

Trends to Watch

State Attacks on the Endangered Species Act – Several states have begun attempts to declare “state sovereignty” over non-migratory wildlife within their borders seeking to thwart ESA protections in their states. Most recently, this action has been undertaken in Arizona (2012) and Kansas (2014). These states have proposed state constitutional amendments (AZ) or legislation (KS) to try to push through these measures. Neither state has been successful, but with contention over ESA regulations growing, you need to be on the lookout for similar attempts to undermine federal protection for species in your states.

More Information: [TWS News Article](#), [Kansas Legislature SB276](#)

Public Land Management Authority – Contention over federal public lands, particularly in western states, continues to grow and receive attention. The [Bundy cattle issue in Nevada](#) and the [4-wheelers riding in Utah](#) both indicate strong resistance from members of the public toward federal oversight of public lands. Along a similar line, western states have met [to discuss taking over federal lands](#) as a result of a high percentage of federal land ownership. Most recently, there has been a stir over President Obama’s [use of the Antiquities Act](#) to place more land in federal management by designating areas as national monuments. We are tracking these issues to see how they might impact wildlife conservation efforts. While we do not have a position on federal vs. state management of lands, we want to ensure that whoever manages the land does so in a manner that respects wildlife and other natural resources. Watch these issues to determine when and if your CAC should take action to ensure wildlife resources are managed appropriately in your region.

Toolbox

Conservation Affairs Guidance Document – The establishment of your Conservation Affairs Committee has the potential to be a bit intimidating. This guidance document provides a simple framework to help you get started, including identifying the CAC’s purpose, outlining Chair responsibilities, creating a framework for communication, and providing a template for potential bylaw changes and a terms-of-reference document. Refer to it often during this establishment phase of your committee. [Access the guidance document here.](#)

Policy Priorities for TWS – The Wildlife Society Council annually determines policy priority areas. These priorities help direct the activities and scope of issues that are addressed by TWS Government Affairs staff. Having this focus helps ensure that we maintain effective actions and have an impact on those issues most important to wildlife professionals. Take some time to discuss potential policy priorities for your Conservation Affairs Committee to focus their efforts – either on a state, regional, or national scope. For guidance, review the [TWS Policy Priorities](#).

Elected Official Look-up – Knowing who your elected officials are and how to communicate with them is crucial to being an effective policy advocate. CACs need to develop a relationship with and regularly communicate with elected officials and their staff in order to increase their influence on legislative activities that impact wildlife conservation. The Wildlife Society contracts with VoterVoice to administer our Action Alerts; part of this service includes an elected official look-up function. You can use this service to search for your region’s elected officials and major newspapers. [Find elected officials from your state](#)

Policy Partnerships

Developing effective partnerships with government agencies and non-governmental organizations is the best way for effectively moving your policy positions forward, particularly on contentious issues. TWS Government Affairs staff works regularly [in coalitions with other organizations](#) to address policy issues on a national level; look for ways to establish and grow partnerships with other organizations on a state or regional level. Leverage those partnerships to strengthen your voice for science-based wildlife conservation. Future issues of this newsletter will highlight specific partnership opportunities you might want to explore.

Policy Training Opportunities

Conservation Affairs Network Annual Meeting

TWS Annual Conference, Pittsburgh, PA – Time and date TBD

This meeting will allow CAC Chairs and active members to discuss the implementation of the Conservation Affairs Network and current wildlife policy issues being addressed by their CAC. Opportunities for improving the Network, membership involvement, and policy engagement will be discussed. Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

Request for Material

The success of the Conservation Affairs Network and TWS’s policy program depends upon your involvement! Send us any relevant policy issue within your region or state that you need assistance addressing. If your CAC has successfully engaged in a policy issue, we want to hear about it! We want to hear your stories, issues, concerns, upcoming policy issues, and action items for inclusion in this bi-monthly newsletter and other Network communications. Contact: [Keith Norris](#), 301-897-9770 x309