



# The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

October 2014, Issue 3, Pilot Volume

## Take Action!

**Duck Stamp Price Increase Legislation – U.S. National** – Congress is currently considering a bill that would increase the price of the federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp to \$25. The price of the Duck Stamp is currently \$15 and has not increased since 1991. The stamp funds contribute to the protection of wetland habitats for the conservation of waterfowl and other wetland dependent species. Staff Contact: [Mark Hofberg](#)

- Who Should Act: U.S. Members
- Deadline for Action: End of congressional session, when the 113th Congress adjourns its 2nd Session; likely in mid- to late December
- Action to Take: Call or write your Senators and Representative to ask them to support increasing the price of the Duck Stamp to \$25
- Resources: [Wildlife Policy News](#)  
[Senate Bill S.2621](#)  
[House Bill H.R.5069](#)

**Conservation Funding Ballot Initiative – North Dakota** – A ballot initiative to provide more funding for wildlife conservation will be included on North Dakota's ballot this November. Measure 5 proposes allocating 5% of state tax revenues from oil extraction to conservation for the purposes of providing grants to public and private agencies. Grants would be used to implement activities that improve water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and recreation opportunities, among other things. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

- Who Should Act: North Dakota Members and supporting partners
- Deadline for Action: 4 November 2014
- Action to Take: Publicly support Measure 5 and vote YES on election day
- Resources: [North Dakotans for Clean Water, Wildlife, and Parks](#)  
[Ballotpedia Description](#)

**Appropriations – U.S. National** – Congress has passed a continuing resolution (CR) to fund the government at Fiscal Year 2014 levels until December 11, 2014. When Congress returns November 12, they will need to pass appropriations bills for important programs to continue to operate. The House and Senate Appropriations Committee have already approved bills to fund the USDA, EPA and the Department of the Interior, but all appropriation bills await action by the full House and Senate. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

- Who Should Act: U.S. Members
- Deadline for Action: 11 December 2014
- Actions to Take: Contact your Congressmen to pass an appropriations bill that adequately funds important wildlife and natural resource programs.
- Resources: [Wildlife Policy News, Interior and Environment Appropriations](#)  
[Wildlife Policy News, Agriculture Appropriations](#)

**Clean Water Act Rulemaking – U.S. National – Extended Deadline!** - The EPA has issued a new rule to clarify the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act. This rule provides more clarity to the definition of waters that are regulated by the Clean Water Act and ensures protections for many of our nation's waters important for wildlife conservation.

Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

- Who Should Act: U.S. Members
- Deadline for Action: 20 October 2014
- Action to Take: Provide comments on the proposed rule supporting the EPA in their efforts to protect our nation's waters
- Resources: [Wildlife Policy News](#)  
[Federal Register – proposed rule](#)  
[EPA CWA Website](#)

## Issue Spotlight

***Bighorn Sheep and Disease Dynamics*** - Domestic sheep and goats carry a form of pneumonia that is lethal to bighorn sheep and incidence of contact between the species is frequent, leading to mortality events in bighorn herds. The Government Affairs team was contacted by TWS members concerned with this management challenge, which presents the largest obstacle to bighorn sheep conservation. Staff researched the issue and worked with several TWS members to develop a fact sheet that consolidates information on the most current science, management tools, and federal action to support our [Position Statement on Livestock Grazing on Rangelands in the Western U.S.](#) This fact sheet can [currently be accessed here](#) and will be available on our website in the near future, along with our other fact sheets.

## On the Horizon

***TWS Annual Conference, Pittsburgh, PA – October 25-30, 2014*** – TWS's [annual conference](#) provides opportunities for networking and learning with fellow wildlife professionals. Tap into the latest scientific research, best practices in wildlife management, and evaluate new insights through plenary sessions, symposia, workshops, and working group meetings. Throughout the conference you can expand your network for career development and professional collaboration.

***Teaming With Wildlife Annual Fly-In Event, Washington, D.C. – February 24-25, 2015*** – Plan to join in the [Teaming With Wildlife's](#) annual event to advocate for increased State & Tribal Wildlife Grant Program funding. This Fly-In is an important event that raises awareness and favor for the program among your representatives in Congress. Training and materials are provided at the start of the fly-in. Look for registration information in future issues of this newsletter. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

## Trends to Watch

***Efforts to modify the Endangered Species Act*** – The U.S. House Natural Resources Committee recently held a [hearing on several proposed bills](#) that would make changes to the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The bills cover regional issues, such as delisting of the lesser prairie chicken, and reforms more national in scope, including a bill that would require more economic review when designating critical habitat. Ranking Democratic Representative DeFazio characterized the bills as piecemeal legislation aimed at gutting ESA. Chairman Hastings, on the other hand, saw

the bills as a way to increase transparency and fix an outdated law. You can expect efforts to make modifications to the ESA to continue, both through legislation and administrative rules.

## **CAC Activities**

***Albert Chapter – Wolf Bounty Review and Statement*** – There is ongoing discussion within Alberta and throughout Canada on the use of public and private bounties for predators. The Alberta Chapter recently reviewed and provided their perspective on the scientific basis of using bounties for wolves in response to a public query. The Chapter found that there is little scientific evidence to suggest bounties are an effective management tool or to indicate current bounty practices will jeopardize wolf or other wildlife populations in the area. The Chapter has decided not to challenge the provincial wildlife manager’s position on wolf bounties, but states that although bounties in the active management of wolves may be tolerated by local residents, it is generally ineffectual as a long-term control.

***Virginia Chapter – Hunting Over Bait Letter*** – The Commonwealth of Virginia is reviewing its policies regarding hunting over bait; the state currently prohibits hunting over bait but is exploring the possibility of changing that policy. The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries requested input on the review from the Virginia Chapter. Ecological and biological risks, including artificially increasing animal densities and facilitating disease transmission, were outlined in the Chapter’s letter asking the Department to continue their ban on hunting over bait.

## **Policy Training Opportunities**

### ***Conservation Affairs Network Annual Meeting***

*TWS Annual Conference, Pittsburgh, PA – Monday, October 27, 8:30am-10:30am, Room 313*

This meeting will allow all Section and Chapter CAC Chairs and active or interested 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. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

## **Toolbox**

***Policy Toolkit Released*** - TWS’s Government Affairs team has created a [Policy Toolkit](#) to assist subunit Conservation Affairs Committees (CACs) with the ongoing implementation of the Conservation Affairs Network. The Toolkit provides an overview of why, when, and how to best engage in wildlife policy issues to ensure the science-based perspectives of wildlife professionals are heard by decision-makers. New sections of the toolkit will be released later this month, and the entire toolkit will be available on TWS’s website in the near future. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

## **Policy Partnerships**

Developing effective partnerships with government agencies and non-governmental organizations is the best way for moving your policy positions forward. Meeting with partners to discuss common issues and concerns can help your subunit decide what steps need to be taken to address the issue. TWS recently attended the [American Wildlife Conservation Partners \(AWCP\)](#) summer meeting. This coalition meeting brought together several national conservation, scientific, and sportsmen’s organizations to discuss policy concerns and strategies related to

wildlife conservation priorities including endangered species listings, state wildlife funding initiatives, and proposed Clean Water Act regulations, among other issues.

The [AWCP Coalition](#) includes organizations like Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, National Wild Turkey Federation, and the Izaak Walton League of America. All of these organizations have local chapters and affiliations – look for ways that you can work collaboratively with these local groups to advance wildlife policy priorities in your region.

### **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.

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