



# The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

October 2017, Volume 3, Issue 3

## CAC Activities

***TWS 2017 Annual Conference and CAN Annual Meeting*** – The 2017 CAN annual meeting took place September 26, 2017 in Albuquerque, NM during the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society. [Meeting minutes](#) and the [PowerPoint](#) that was presented are available.

***Manitoba Chapter submits letter on Action Plan for the Woodland Caribou, Boreal Population*** – On September 25 the Manitoba Chapter of The Wildlife Society [submitted a letter](#) to the Canadian Wildlife Service, providing comments and concerns on the recently released [Federal Action Plan for the Woodland Caribou](#) (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*), Boreal Population in Canada. The letter also referenced TWS's Standing Position on [Threatened and Endangered Species](#). CAC Contact: [C-Jae Breiter](#) and [Jonathan Weins](#)

***Western Section to host workshop on working with local governments*** – The Western Section of The Wildlife Society will be hosting a workshop November 3-4, 2017 titled, "How to Work with Local Governments: A Workshop for Biologists." This 2-day workshop goes into the steps it takes to coordinate with municipal, county, special district, and joint powers authorities as a consultant, conservationist, agency biologist, or researcher. Instructor and TWS member Ken Mierzwa brings decades of experience to the topic, covering everything from ethics to CEQA implications and more. Visit the [Section's website](#) for more information.

CAC Contact: [Kelly Holland](#)

***Minnesota Chapter and Wetlands Working Group submit comments on Clean Water Rule*** – The EPA and USACE has proposed to rescind the 2015 definition of "Waters of the United States" published on July 27, 2017 in the [Federal Register \(82 Fed. Reg. 34899\)](#). On September 27 the Minnesota Chapter of The Wildlife Society's Wetlands Committee and the Wetlands Working Group [submitted a letter](#) to express objections to this proposal. CAC Contact: [Styron Bell](#)

***Idaho Chapter develops position statement on federal land transfer*** – The Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society developed a [position statement](#) on federal land transfer to state management/ownership. The Chapter stated that the transfer of federally-owned and -managed public lands to state ownership is likely to hinder science-based wildlife management efforts and for these reasons, and others, the Chapter is opposed to this transfer of management authority.

CAC Contact: [Robert Magill](#)

***Northeast Section submits letter of National Monuments and Marine National Monuments*** – In response to Executive Orders 13792 and 13795, the U.S. Department of the Interior is considering abolishing or reducing the size of 27 National Monuments and Marine National Monuments designated or expanded since 1996 under the Antiquities Act of 1906. On August

22, the Northeast Section of The Wildlife Society, in consultation with its Chapters, [submitted a letter](#) opposing this effort and requested that these National Monuments be retained in their current size and protection. *CAC Contact:* [Eric Schradling](#)

***Southwest Section submits letter requesting withdrawal of Amendment #54 to the FY18 House Appropriations Bill*** – Amendment #54 would prohibit the humane euthanasia of unadoptable horses held in BLM holding facilities. On September 4 the Southwest Section of The Wildlife Society [submitted a letter](#) to Representative Lujan Grisham requesting that she consider withdrawing Amendment #54 to the FY18 House Appropriations Bill. *CAC Contact:* [Jim Ramakka](#)

## Federal Legislative Updates

***Fiscal Year 2018 Appropriations*** – In September of this year, President Trump signed into law a continuing resolution that funds the government at Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 levels through December 8, 2017. This move averted a government shutdown when FY2018 started on October 1. On September 14 the House passed an FY2018 omnibus bill, though its equivalent in the Senate has yet to be introduced. Topline budget numbers are slowly coming out of both chambers as well. The full House passed their resolution in early October, and the Senate resolution is awaiting a full floor vote after passing committee. As the appropriations process is well underway without these top-level numbers though, these budget resolutions are interpreted instead as the general wishes of each chamber. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

***Sportsmen's Legislation*** – Two legislative packages related to sportsmen's land access have been making headway in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress. One of these bills, the Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement Act, or SHARE Act ([H.R. 3668](#)), was passed out of the House Committee on Natural Resources and sent to the full House on September 18. This legislation includes provisions that would exempt lead (Pb) fishing tackle from regulation under the Toxic Substances Control Act, require the BLM and USFS to keep lands open to the public for hunting, fishing, and shooting unless specifically closed, reauthorize the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act, and allow states to reallocate up to 10% of Pittman-Robertson Section 4(b) dollars to build or expand public target ranges. Although this bill has passed through committee, it is unlikely that it will be heard before the entire House anytime soon. The inclusion of language in this legislation relating to the easing of restrictions on silencer purchases has proven to be a sticking point for opponents of the legislation in the wake of the Las Vegas shooting.

The Hunting Heritage and Environmental Legacy Preservation for Wildlife Act, or HELP for Wildlife Act ([S. 1514](#)), has a more promising future on the Hill. While this legislation includes many similar provisions to the SHARE Act, such as the exemption for lead (Pb) fishing tackle and the amendment to Pittman-Robertson Section 4(b) dollars, it steers clear of the language that has resulted in the SHARE Act being held up. The HELP for Wildlife Act has been passed out the Senate Committee of Environment and Public Works and is awaiting consideration by the full Senate.

***Species at Risk Act Legislation Introduced*** – On September 22, Richard Cannings, MP (South Okanagan — West Kootenay) introduced [Bill C-363](#): An Act to amend the Species at Risk Act (SARA). This bill would clarify the language within SARA that details the amount of time that the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada has to determine if listing a species under the act is necessary. According to Cannings, the current version of SARA was interpreted by the previous Conservative government as being too vague, which allowed them to ignore listing recommendations coming in from the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. If passed, this legislation would create a new and explicitly stated timeline for evaluating these recommendations.

## Tools

***Bird Conservation Human Dimensions Factsheet*** – A [Human Dimensions information sheet](#) was released by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative’s Human Dimensions Subcommittee in August. The document explains the what, why, and how behind the field of human dimensions as it relates to bird conservation. It also provides an example of how human dimensions have been integrated successfully into a shorebird conservation effort in Nebraska.

***TWS Farm Bill Policy Priorities*** - As Congress begins work on the next Farm Bill, TWS has teamed up with partner organizations on documents for Congressional Offices to utilize and to explore the perspectives of the wildlife profession in relation to this important legislative package. These documents can also assist chapters and sections in talking with their local partners about the future of Farm Bill conservation programs. See documents below:

- [TWS Endorsement of AFWA Farm Bill Priorities](#)
- [North American Bird Conservation Initiative’s State of the Birds Report](#)

## Opportunities

***BLM Opens Up Sage-Grouse Plans Comment Period*** – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has just issued a “[Notice of Intent to Amend Land Use Plans Regarding Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation](#)”. This notice comes after the Department of the Interior took up a review of the 2015 Sage Grouse land management plans that helped result in a “not warranted” ESA listing decision for the bird. This notice of intent is accompanied by an open comment period; a first step in the regulatory process to readjust these BLM and Forest Service land management plans. Alongside the comment period, the BLM also announced the suspension of the Environmental Impact Statement that was being prepared on the withdrawal of 10 million acres from new mining claims; stating that the initial withdrawal was a mistake. Those interested in commenting on this notice can do so until **November 27, 2017**. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

***Recovering America’s Wildlife Act Sign-On Letter*** – With the pending reintroduction of [Recovering America’s Wildlife Act](#), TWS and partner organizations are looking for more regional and state sign-on for the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act [Letter of Support](#). Organizational units currently signed-on include: ARTWS, The Western Section of TWS, GATWS, UGA Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society, METWS, MNTWS, MSTWS, NETWS, the Northeast Section of TWS, NCTWS, the Southeastern Section of TWS, UT Martin

Student Chapter of TWS, VATWS, and the Central Mountain & Plains Section of TWS. Headquarters staff will be hosting a fly-in shortly after the bill drops. Be on the lookout for information regarding chapter and section involvement at the event. *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

***Wild Horse & Burro Advisory Board Meeting*** – The [Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board](#), which advises the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture on horse and burro management practices on western rangelands, will be meeting in Grand Junction, CO on October 18-19. The meeting of this body is part of an overall thawing of the Spring 2017 freeze that Interior Secretary Zinke placed on all Department of the Interior advisory panels. Those interested in submitting advisory board testimony can do so until **October 18**. *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

## **Request for Submissions**

Do you need assistance with a wildlife conservation policy issue? Does your CAC have a success story to tell? Is a new partnership developing at your organizational unit? Send it in! Let the CAN hear about it and help you in your work. *Staff Contact:* [Mariah Simmons](#)

## **CAC Contact Information**

***Update TWS HQ on Conservation Affairs Committee Point of Contacts*** – As your Sections and Chapters have new elections and appointments of officers, board members, and other organizational unit volunteers, be sure to update TWS staff of your new CAC Chairs. Email Mariah Simmons at [MSimmons@wildlife.org](mailto:MSimmons@wildlife.org) with the new contact information to ensure continuity of communications in the Network.