



# The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

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## CAC Activities

***TWS, organizational units signed onto letter supporting native grasslands via sodsaver*** – The Wildlife Society and several organizational units signed onto a widely distributed letter in support of the [American Prairie Conservation Act \(S. 1913, H.R. 3939\)](#). This legislation would adopt a nation-wide “sodsaver” program - meaning that crop insurance premium subsidies would be reduced for producers that convert native grasslands to non-native plantings. This standard is currently only in place within six states in the Prairie Pothole region. The American Prairie Conservation Act is considered a “marker bill” – or a bill that is released in order to be eventually considered within a larger package such as the Farm Bill. It is possible that language for the upcoming Farm Bill will be released by the House Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry committee in as little as a few weeks’ time. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

***Minnesota Chapter submits letter on MN DNR draft sustainable timber harvest analysis*** – [The Minnesota Chapter of The Wildlife Society submitted comments](#) in support of a Sustainable Timber Harvest Analysis (STHA) released by the MN DNR. The comments aim to support actions that will sustain wildlife habitat and biodiversity, manage forest ecosystems, and serve Minnesota’s citizens for the long term. *CAC Contact:* [Styron Bell](#)

***Montana Chapter featured in local news outlet*** – [The Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) was recently featured in the [Montana Standard](#) for their opposition to the transfer of Montana’s federal lands to the state, county, private corporations, or individuals, on which the Chapter recently developed a [position statement](#). *CAC Contact:* [Amy Seaman](#)

***TWS works alongside Alaska Chapter to submit comments on National Petroleum Reserve*** – TWS Headquarters staff and the [Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) recently worked together on [comments](#) provided to the Bureau of Land Management for consideration as the agency is undertaking a review of the Integrated Activity Plan for the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A). These [comments](#) lay out the importance of balancing the needs of wildlife populations with that of energy development in the area, and stress the need for wildlife protections within designated “Special Areas” of the NPR-A. *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

## Federal Updates

***U.S. appropriations, budget discussions continue*** – The U.S. federal government was shut down for three days in late January due in large part to differences of opinion over how to proceed on the future of the Deferred Actions for Childhood Arrivals program. A short term funding deal

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was struck on January 22 that [ended the shutdown](#), but in its place came a new government funding deadline of February 8. In the time since, Congress has made no apparent progress on a long-term fiscal year 2018 spending deal, and the only spending package expected to get a floor vote before the next funding deadline is another short term measure.

With the government still operating under fiscal year 2017 funding levels, the Trump Administration is expected to release its proposed budget for fiscal year 2019, which begins on October 1 of this year, on February 12. A budget in brief, which is likely to relay top-level, department-scale funding requests, is due out on February 5. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

***DOI changes course on offshore drilling*** – In early January the Department of the Interior proposed a [drastic revision](#) to the current five-year outer continental shelf energy leasing plan. If finalized, this outline would supplant the 2017-2022 plan finalized during the Obama Administration with the Trump Administration’s 2019-2024 vision, and open up more than ninety percent of the outer continental shelf to oil and gas leasing. Comments can be [submitted](#) on this proposal until **March 9**. There will also be several [public meetings](#) held on the proposal through early March.

***Zinke announces first official plans for DOI reorganization*** – In mid-January the Department of the Interior [released a draft map](#) that provides the first concrete details on Zinke’s vision for all nine Interior bureaus to be administratively run through the same common regional boundaries. The map was published in part to solicit stakeholder and federal employee comment, and more finalized plans are expected in the President’s fiscal year 2019 budget proposal. The budget could also shed light on other unconfirmed aspects of reorganization, such as how the Department will try and incorporate Zinke’s goal of having one common regional manager in charge of all department operations within each region. *Staff contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

## **Tools**

***Recovering America’s Wildlife Act toolkit*** – The [Alliance for America’s Fish and Wildlife](#) has developed a [Google Drive](#) filled with fact sheets, sample letters, and other resources that organizational units can utilize in their engagement with third parties on the importance legislation. Chapters and Sections can also add resources to this toolkit by emailing [cmurphy@wildlife.org](mailto:cmurphy@wildlife.org). See information about the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act webinar below where we will be discussing additional uses of these resources. TWS will also be launching a webpage dedicated to this campaign on [wildlife.org](http://wildlife.org) in the coming days. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

## **Opportunities**

***AFS/TWS Webinar on Recovering America's Wildlife Act grassroots advocacy*** – TWS will be joining the American Fisheries Society and other partner organizations in a [webinar](#) titled “Support of the [Recovering America's Wildlife Act](#) – A Guide to Grassroots Advocacy”. This webinar, hosted by AFS, will be covering the fundamentals of a congressional field visit, the elements of a successful in-district meeting with a member of Congress, and how to prepare and deliver an elevator speech to spur a decision-maker into action. TWS’ government relations staff has been actively engaged at the federal level on efforts to pass this legislation, and is in the process of coordinating these efforts with interested Chapters and Sections. Interested members can RSVP for the webinar [here](#). *Staff contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)*

*\*You do not have to be a member of American Fisheries Society in order to sign up for the webinar*

***Environment and Climate Change Canada releases proposal for revised migratory bird hunting regulations*** – Environment and Climate Change Canada has just released [three reports](#) detailing proposed changes to migratory game bird hunting regulations as well as the scientific basis for these proposed changes. These modifications, which are considered by the ministry every two years in coordination with provincial and territorial governments, set hunting seasons and bag limits for game species protected under the Migratory Bird Convention Act of 1994. Comments on these proposed changes are [due by February 26](#).

***State and Tribal Wildlife Grants fly-in*** – The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, along with the National Wildlife Federation and TWS, will be hosting a fly-in on April 11 for wildlife professionals to meet with their congressional delegation in Washington, D.C., on the importance of adequate funding for the [State and Tribal Wildlife Grants](#) Program. If you are interested in sending someone to represent your organizational unit for this fly-in, please email [cmurphy@wildlife.org](mailto:cmurphy@wildlife.org) to coordinate planning efforts. *Staff contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)*

## **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.