



# The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

December 2014, Issue 4, Pilot Volume

## Take Action!

**Duck Stamp Bill – U.S. National** – The U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill to increase the price of the Duck Stamp from \$15 to \$25 in mid-November. There is an identical bill awaiting action in the Senate. Duck Stamps are an important source of funds for conserving wetland habitat for waterfowl and the price increase is necessary to keep up with rising land prices. The Government Affairs team promoted the bill through a coalition letter in April, and Senators should hear from Sections and Chapters to get regional perspectives. Staff Contact:

[Mark Hofberg](#)

- Who Should Act: U.S. Members
- Deadline for Action: End of congressional session, when the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress adjourns its 2<sup>nd</sup> Session; likely in mid to late December
- Action to Take: Call or write your Senators urging action and support for the Duck Stamp legislation
- Resources: [House Bill](#); [Senate Bill](#)  
[Coalition Letter](#), [Policy Brief](#)  
[TWS News story](#),  
[Action Alert](#)

**Appropriations – U.S. National** – Congress passed a continuing resolution (CR) in the fall to fund the government at Fiscal Year 2014 levels until December 11, 2014. Congress needs to pass Appropriations bills for important programs to continue to operate and avoid a government shutdown. The House and Senate Appropriations Committee have already approved bills to fund the USDA, EPA and the Department of the Interior, but all appropriations bills are awaiting 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 Appropriations bills that adequately fund important wildlife and natural resource programs.
- Resources: [Wildlife Policy News, Interior and Environment Appropriations](#)  
[Wildlife Policy News, Agriculture Appropriations](#)

## Issue Spotlight

**State Ballot Initiatives** – The midterm elections proved successful for state initiatives on conservation. Several states had ballot initiatives regarding conservation funding and securing rights to hunt and fish. Six states across the country had proposed different ways to bring in more money for conservation efforts, to the tune of several billion dollars. [Five of those measures passed](#) — California, Florida, Maine, New Jersey, and Rhode Island – while the measure in North Dakota failed. Both the North Dakota Chapter and the Florida Chapter actively supported

the initiatives in their respective states and worked as part of a larger coalition to get the measures approved.

Alabama and Mississippi voted on [ballot measures related to wildlife management](#) – primarily in regards to how hunting is managed and treated within the state. Both states approved constitutional amendments to ensure hunting and fishing rights for its citizens, a relatively common trend over the past several election cycles.

The success of these state ballot initiatives shows that conservation is not a single party issue. Most of these ballot measures were passed by substantial margins, regardless of party affiliation. Staff Contact: [Julia King](#)

## **On the Horizon**

***New elected officials at the state level*** – November’s U.S. elections resulted in turnover for many elected state offices. Several states will install new governors, delegates, and senators in the near future. Developing good relationships between your CAC and these officials will assist you in your future policy work. It would be a good idea to contact these new officials to make them aware of the pertinent wildlife issues in your state or region, and introduce them to your CAC and your goal of science-based wildlife management policies. TWS headquarters regularly sends a packet to new House members and Representatives that includes an introduction to TWS and a selection of our fact sheets and position statements. See our [Policy Toolkit](#) for more information on how to contact and meet with government officials. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

***Teaming With Wildlife Annual Fly-in*** – Teaming With Wildlife (TWW) is a diverse coalition of conservation groups, agencies, businesses, and sportsmen that support funding for the federal [State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program](#) and other wildlife conservation funding programs. TWW organizes an annual fly-in event to raise awareness and garner support for the program and overall wildlife funding among Representatives and Senators. The [2015 fly-in](#) will take place February 24-25. Register at the [TWW website](#) by February 20 to participate. Consider asking your state chapter or section to support your efforts to be a part of this important event on their behalf – we want a strong showing of wildlife professionals! Please contact [Keith Norris](#) if you plan to attend.

## **Trends to Watch**

***U.S. Senate changing hands*** – The U.S. Senate will be changing from a Democratic majority to a Republican majority this January as a result of the November elections. This means that the committee chairs, who have significant power over what bills make it to the Senate floor, will change hands as well. The Senate Environment and Public Works committee, which oversees the EPA, and the Energy and Natural Resources committee, which oversees the Department of the Interior, are two committees changing hands that could have a significant impact on wildlife policy and legislation. Look for more bills on the Senate floor that will impact the Endangered Species Act, federal land ownership, and oil and gas development on federal lands. Staff Contact: [Mark Hofberg](#)

## CAC Activities

**Maine Chapter involvement in black bear hunting debate** – The Maine Chapter of The Wildlife Society was successful in its opposition to a state ballot initiative last month. Question 1 on Maine’s ballot asked do “you want to ban the use of bait, dogs or traps in bear hunting except to protect property, public safety, or for research?” The Maine Chapter of TWS came out in opposition to the proposed ban because Maine’s wildlife professionals rely on those tools to manage the state’s bear populations. The Chapter was able to inform voters through the creation of a [position statement](#) on the 2014 black bear referendum. The [CAN Policy Toolkit](#) can provide guidance for chapters and sections interested in developing their own position statements. Staff Contact: [Julia King](#)

## Toolbox

**Policy Brief Series** – TWS’s Government Affairs Team has developed the [Policy Brief Series](#), a valuable resource on federal policies and programs regarding conservation. Each policy brief outlines key provisions in a particular policy and discusses its current status including recent appropriations and ongoing debates to alter the legislation. The *Policy Brief Series* is an excellent resource for the CAN and TWS members advocating for federal programs with their legislators. We encourage the CAN to use the *Policy Brief Series* as educational tools for students, prospective members, and legislators. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

**New TWS Website** – TWS has officially launched a new website. The new [wildlife.org](#) boasts a streamlined scheme designed to get you the information you need faster. The news section is now on the front page to highlight the actions we take at headquarters; new conservation, policy, and research stories; and local chapter news. CAN and policy resources - fact sheets, policy briefs, technical reviews, position statements, and the policy toolkit - can be accessed at [wildlife.org/policy](#). Staff 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, [keith.norris@wildlife.org](mailto:keith.norris@wildlife.org), 301-897-9770 x309



# 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.

Contact: Keith Norris, knorris@wildlife.org, 301-897-9770 x309



# The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

August 2014, Issue 2, Pilot Volume

## ***Take Action!***

**Conservation Reserve Program – National** – The Farm Service Agency is accepting comments on a draft Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (SPEIS) for the Conservation Reserve Program. The SPEIS examines the consequences of administering recent changes to the CRP due to the 2014 Farm Bill. For example, FSA must target sensitive land during enrollment in the program as well as provide for both managed and emergency harvesting and grazing on CRP acres. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

- Who Should Act: Everyone
- Deadline for Action: 8 September 2014
- Actions to Take: Provide Comments on the draft Environmental Impact Statement
- Resources: [Wildlife Policy News](#)  
[Draft SPEIS](#)  
[Federal Register – notice of availability](#)

**Clean Water Act Rulemaking – National – Extended Deadline!** - The EPA has issued a new rule to clarify the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act. This rule is critical to establishing protections for many of our nation's waters important for wildlife conservation.

Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

- Who Should Act: Everyone
- 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](#)

**Endangered Species Act Rulemaking – National – Extended Deadline!** - The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service proposed 2 rules and a policy to increase predictability during the process of making critical habitat designations. The 3 proposals will impact the definition of “adverse modification”, the scope and purpose of critical habitat, and policies for excluding areas from critical habitat designation. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

- Who Should Act: Everyone
- Deadline for Action: 9 October 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 Notice](#)

**SAFE Act Climate Change Legislation – National** – The *Safeguarding America’s Future and Environment Act* has been introduced into both the U.S. Senate (S. 1202) and House of Representatives (H.R. 5065). The SAFE Act codifies the *National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy* and encourages implementation within all agencies, authorizes USGS National Climate Change and Wildlife Centers, encourages states to develop plans that address climate adaptation, and otherwise makes efforts toward protecting our wildlife and other natural resources from a changing climate.

Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

- Who Should Act: Everyone, particularly those in coastal districts or other areas that will be greatly impacted by climate change
- Deadline for Action: End of congressional session, when the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress adjourns its 2<sup>nd</sup> Session; likely in mid- to late December
- Action to Take: Call your Senators and Representative to ask for their support of the SAFE Act and climate change legislation
- Resources: [House Bill Text and Co-Sponsors](#)  
[Senate Bill Text and Co-Sponsors](#)

## Issue Spotlight

***Invasive Species and the Lacey Act*** - The Wildlife Society recently submitted comments supporting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s proposal to list five non-native snake species as injurious under the Lacey Act. The [proposed policy](#) would ban imports and interstate commerce of these snakes to limit the damage they do to native wildlife. FWS originally proposed listing nine snake species in 2009, but only four made the final rule in 2010, including the notorious Burmese python.

The five-year delay in determining a final rule to list these 5 snake species as injurious highlights a common criticism of the 114 year old Lacey Act – it takes too long, and as a result invasive species continue to spread and threaten native ecosystems. Senator Gillibrand (D-NY) introduced the [Invasive Fish and Wildlife Prevention Act \(S.1153\)](#) which aims to reform the Lacey Act. It proposes to employ modern risk-assessment techniques and focuses on prevention of invasive species rather than recovery. TWS and a host of conservation and environmental organizations support this bill in its attempt to improve federal designation and prevention of invasive wildlife.

The Lacey Act was originally passed in 1900 as the first federal law aimed at protecting wildlife. Its purpose was to prohibit interstate transport of wildlife that had been illegally killed for commercial purposes. The functional role of the law has been modified over the years, and it is now the primary federal tool used to prevent and address the spread of invasive wildlife species. There are currently [236 wildlife species](#) listed as injurious under the Act.

## On the Horizon

***Horse & Burro Advisory Board Meeting – Riverton, WY – August 25, 2014*** – The BLM’s [National Horse and Burro Advisory Board](#) is scheduled to host its second meeting of the year in Laramie, Wyoming on August 25. Members of the public are invited to attend the meeting and provide testimony regarding the management of feral horses on BLM’s lands. This meeting is intended to focus on the non-native horse’s impact on rangeland ecosystem health. A tentative

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agenda and information on submitting testimony for the advisory board was [published in the Federal Register](#). TWS will be submitting testimony encouraging the reduction of feral horse and burro populations for the protection of native rangeland wildlife and the entire ecosystem.

## **Trends to Watch**

***Ranchers and the Forest Service Clash over Endangered Species Habitat*** – Ranchers in the American Southwest are in contention with the U.S. Forest Service over access to federal grazing land. The recent [listing of the New Mexico jumping mouse as an endangered species](#) prompted the Forest Service to limit access to some watering areas in order to protect the mouse's habitat. The issue was most notably discussed in a recent Congressional hearing entitled, "[Threats, Intimidation and Bullying by Federal Land Management Agencies, Part II](#)" and highlights a rash of hearings where congressmen have expressed concern over what they view as federal agencies infringing on private property and water rights. This is another instance of Congressional pushback against federal agency oversight of land management and endangered species protections.

***Contention over Federal Land Designation*** – Congressmen are concerned with the federal government's involvement in the designation of federal land. As mentioned in the [June 2014 CAN newsletter](#), contention over President Obama's use of the Antiquities Act to place more land in federal management has been growing. Recently, Representative Tipton (R-CO) and Representative Gardner (R-CO) [expressed concern regarding the potential for the Vermillion Basin](#) to become a national monument. The two representatives argue that the President should not designate lands without consulting Congress and local communities. This same argument was mirrored in the proposed [National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act \(H.R. 3409\)](#). This act aims to prevent refuge expansion unless a law through Congress is enacted to allow the designation. Representative Fincher (R-TN) co-sponsored the bill, stating that his support is a result of efforts taken by the FWS in his district to create a refuge despite pushback, only stopping when there was a large outcry from the public against the refuge.

While TWS does not have a position regarding 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.

## **Policy Partnerships**

Developing partnerships with diverse sets of organizations should be a priority for your organization in enhancing your government affairs activities. Partnerships that focus on specific policy issues can be leveraged to make more powerful and effective statements to policy makers. This month, TWS and several other organizations submitted comments to The Fish and Wildlife Service urging them to list five invasive snake species as injurious under the Lacey Act as part of the [National Environmental Coalition on Invasive Species \(NECIS\)](#). NECIS is a coalition made up of large conservation groups such as the National Audubon Society and The Nature Conservancy dedicated to preventing the spread of invasive species. A unified action like this in addition to individual comments is extremely effective in addressing policy issues. Agencies and politicians are more likely to respond positively on an issue when they receive a unified message from a large, diverse coalition.

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Partnerships are just as important at the local and regional level. Find organizations that share your priorities and make joint efforts to spread your message. TWS works with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) on many issues (including NECIS) at the national level; consider pursuing a partnership with the [TNC chapters in your region](#) on invasive species prevention or other land management and wildlife issues.

## **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 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. Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

## **Toolbox**

***Policy Toolkit Outline*** – The CAN Policy Toolkit is nearing completion. This toolkit is being created to assist you with engagement in the policy arena. The toolkit will provide insight into several aspects of policy engagement for TWS, including: managing communication within your CAC, communicating with policymakers, and understanding the policy process. [Check out the outline of all planned sections of the toolkit](#) and look for a full release of the packet within the next month. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

***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.](#)

## **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](#), [knorris@wildlife.org](mailto:knorris@wildlife.org), 301-897-9770 x309



# 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](#)

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## 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