



# The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

February 2015, Volume 1, Issue 1

## Take Action!

***State & Tribal Wildlife Grants Program, Dear Colleague Letters*** – The State & Tribal Wildlife Grants Program supports states in keeping wildlife off of the endangered species list. The President proposed funding at \$70 million for Fiscal Year 2016. Contact your Representative and Senators to encourage them to support the program by 1) signing onto the Dear Colleague letters and 2) submitting a programmatic request for the program. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

- Who Should Act: U.S. Members
- Deadline for Action: 13 March 2015
- Action to Take: Call or write your members of Congress urging them to support the State & Tribal Wildlife Grants program by signing the Dear Colleague Letter and making a programmatic request for at least \$70 million in FY2016
- Resources: [State Wildlife Grants Program Policy Brief](#)  
[Teaming With Wildlife website](#)  
[TWS Action Center](#)

## CAC Activities

***Teaming With Wildlife Fly-In*** – The Western Section, Minnesota Chapter, and TWS Government Affairs Team participated in the Teaming With Wildlife Fly-In last week by sending representatives to Washington, D.C. to meet with members of Congress. This annual event focuses on supporting increased funding levels for the [State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program](#), the country's only federal program focused on helping the states keep species off of the endangered species list. Check out [www.teaming.com](http://www.teaming.com) for more information on the Fly-In and encourage your Chapter or Section to be involved next year. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

***Virginia Chapter Opposes Feral Cat Legislation*** – The Commonwealth of Virginia had several bills introduced in its legislature that had the potential to impact feral cat management in the state. The bills proposed allowing Trap-Neuter-Release programs and the establishment of “community cat programs”. The Chapter CAC responded by writing letters and providing oral testimony that outlined the impacts feral cats have on native systems and how these programs would not reduce feral cat populations. The Chapter's efforts were successful, and each of the proposed bills was defeated. [Read more about the legislation and the Chapter's response on TWS's website.](#) Virginia Chapter CAC Contact: [Nelson Lafon](#)

***Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota Chapters, and TWS HQ sign letter commenting on wetland determinations in Prairie Pothole Region*** – The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) is revising procedures for State Offsite Methods (SOSM) for wetland determinations in the prairie pothole region. Several sportsmen's and conservation groups, along with TWS Chapters and HQ signed onto a letter encouraging the NRCS to maintain accuracy of

data and to use spring imagery in wetland determinations. [Read more about the issue on TWS's website](#). Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

***Missouri Chapter CAC Addressed Several Legislative Proposals that Could Reduce Funding*** –

The Missouri General Assembly received comments from the Missouri Chapter of TWS in opposition to several legislative proposals. In the letter, the Missouri Chapter opposed the passage of legislation that would reduce the conservation sales tax from 1/8<sup>th</sup> to 1/16<sup>th</sup> of a percent – this sales tax reduction would cut the Missouri Department of Conservation's funding by ~\$53 million annually. Other legislation would require the conservation sales tax to be re-approved by citizens every 10 years; change the composition of the state's Conservation Commission; eliminate hunting, fishing, and trapping permit fees for Missouri residents; and restrict the Department of Conservation and the Conservation Commission from providing funding to 501c(3) organizations. Missouri Chapter CAC Contact: [Tom Kulowiec](#)

***The Western Section is Commenting on Changes to Scientific Collecting Permit changes*** –

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is revising the Scientific Collecting Permit (SCP) regulations to implement statutory changes. The Western Section will be submitting comments on behalf of their members to help guide the regulatory changes. In particular, the Section expects to focus on issues associated with the application and amendment processing time, among other items. More information is available on the Western Section's [website](#). Western Section CAC Contact: [Steve Juarez](#)

***Oregon Chapter Hosting a Lead (Pb) Workshop Summer 2015*** - The Oregon Chapter is planning a non-lead shooting demonstration in summer 2015. This event will demonstrate how lead and non-lead ammunition performs in different media (e.g., water, gel) and what this means for both human and wildlife health. Attendees will be provided with non-lead ammunition for typical rifle calibers to try at the range. Northwest Section CAC Contact: [Leslie Bliss-Ketchum](#)

***TWS Staff Discusses CAN at Chapter and Section Meetings*** – TWS Government Affairs Staff are attending Chapter and Section meetings this winter and spring to discuss the Conservation Affairs Network. Staff are stressing the importance of the Network in building connections among the various elements of the Society and creating a stronger Society for the future. [Read more about the discussions on TWS's website](#). Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

## **Trends to Watch**

***Challenges in Managing Captive Cervids*** – Several states - including Missouri, Indiana, and West Virginia – have recently faced challenges to the management of captive white-tailed deer. The Wildlife Society has a [position statement](#) that supports state wildlife agency authority over captive wildlife and recognizes several biological and social concerns raised by captive cervid management. West Virginia [recently transferred management of deer farms](#) from the Department of Natural Resources to the Department of Agriculture. Indiana is in an ongoing battle [over high-fence hunting preserves](#) in their state. Missouri is [once again battling](#) to maintain management of captive deer in their Department of Conservation rather than in their agricultural agency. Kentucky [recently banned captive deer imports](#) from Indiana citing disease-risk concerns. Be on the lookout for similar issues associated with captive cervid and other captive wildlife in your state or province. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

## Issue Spotlight

***New Congress and Legislatures*** – The start of the new year came with the initiation of new legislative sessions in many states and the U.S. Congress. At the national level there has been a [change in leadership](#) due to a shift toward Republican control of both the House and Senate for the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress. These changes, and those at the state level, could have an impact on wildlife management and policy issues in your area. [Check out](#) the natural resource and wildlife committee leaders in your area and consider reaching out to them. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

## On the Horizon

***North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference - March 8-13, Omaha, Nebraska*** – Wildlife and conservation professionals will be meeting in Omaha, Nebraska for this annual conference to discuss various policy and management issues. The Wildlife Society's Council will also meet during the conference (March 7-8).

***Budget discussions at federal and state levels*** – Budgets at the U.S. federal level and in many states have been [proposed](#) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 by the Executive Offices in the past several weeks. Legislatures and Congress are now in the process of considering the proposals, debating funding levels, and drafting appropriations bills. Budgets not only include critical funding for wildlife and natural resource conservation, but may also include “riders” that can dictate policies which impact the ability of wildlife managers to do their work. Learn more about the typical state and federal budgeting process and how you can support wildlife management through the budgeting process in the [Policy Toolkit](#). Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

## Toolbox

***Policy Priority Reference Lists*** – The Government Affairs Team developed a new resource designed to help you review the science around specific policy issues. The [Policy Priority Reference Lists](#) include published articles from TWS peer-reviewed [publications](#) - including the Journal of Wildlife Management, Wildlife Society Bulletin, Wildlife Monographs, and Technical Review Series – related to [our ten policy priorities](#). These lists serve as quick reference guides to help you find the science and ensure wildlife policies are science-based. Staff Contact: [Colleen Hartel](#)

***Overview of Conservation Affairs Network document*** – A document which outlines the purpose, focus, architecture, and functions of the Conservation Affairs Network has been created to help guide the establishment and activities of the CAC in your Chapter or Section. [Use this document](#) as a guide for discussions at your Chapter or Section meetings this year. 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