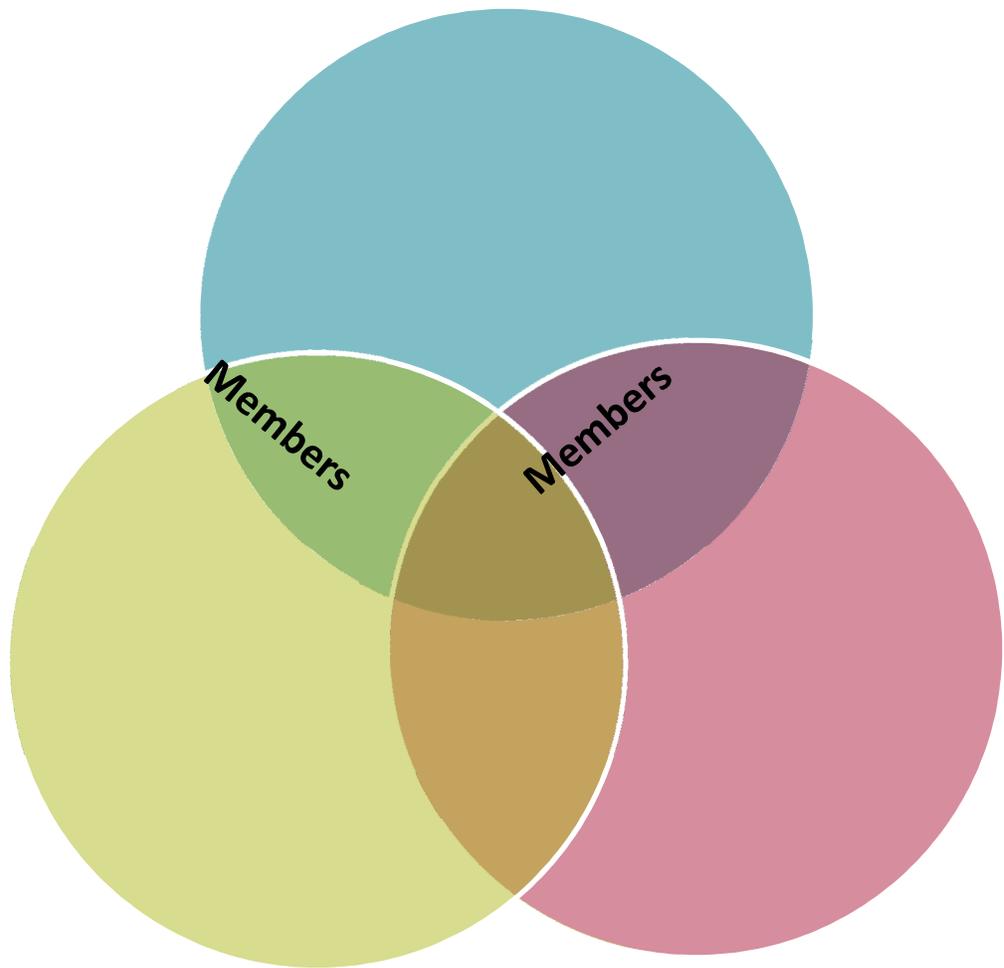


## **CREATING A CONSERVATION AFFAIRS NETWORK**

*A new vision for increasing The Wildlife Society's effectiveness in the realm of government affairs and partnerships*



**THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY**

Government Affairs & Partnerships Department

December 2013

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<a href="#">Introduction</a> .....	2
<a href="#">The Government Affairs Program</a> .....	3
<a href="#">Section Level Conservation Affairs Committees</a> .....	5
<a href="#">Chapter Level Conservation Affairs Committees</a> .....	7
<a href="#">How to Create a Conservation Affairs Committee</a> .....	9
<a href="#">Promoting the Conservation Affairs Network</a> .....	11
<a href="#">Appendix I: Terms of Reference Template</a> .....	12
<a href="#">Appendix II: Bylaws Template to Address Creation of a Conservation Affairs Committee</a> ....	16
<a href="#">Appendix III: A Review of Current Communication Tools</a> .....	18
<a href="#">Appendix IV: Contact Information</a> .....	21

## INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Government Affairs Program (GAP) of The Wildlife Society (TWS) is to engage wildlife professionals in the policy process and ensure that appropriate science is used to inform wildlife management and conservation policies, laws, and regulations, thereby ensuring that these are scientifically-based and practical where allowed.

The Program seeks to achieve this goal through:

- (1) providing timely, useable, science-based input to policy makers;
- (2) ensuring that all members of the wildlife profession are aware of the impact of policy on their work and are knowledgeable of current issues in wildlife policy; and
- (3) serving as an unbiased, science-based reviewer of wildlife management and conservation policies and strategies.

The GAP promotes science-based wildlife policy by providing professional input on wildlife issues, communicating official TWS policy positions to stakeholders, monitoring legislative and regulatory proposals, advancing wildlife conservation through coalitions and partnership efforts, providing policy tools and communication materials to subunits and members, and coordinating position statements, technical reviews, fact sheets and contracted peer reviews of scientific documents or management plans for federal and state agencies.

The following voluntary guidance is designed to assist subunits in strategic organization of Section and Chapter level Conservation Affairs Committees (CACs) and to clarify various roles and responsibilities at each organizational level (Parent Society, Section, Chapters) to maximize communication and support among subunits and the parent Society while increasing our effectiveness on conservation affairs related activities.

Currently, CACs (or related committees), if they exist, often operate in a vacuum, separate from TWS' GAP and other Chapters/Sections. The end result is duplication of efforts in certain areas, and a lack of attention and action due to limited resources in other areas. In addition, a general need for increased support, training, and communication has been identified by most subunits, but a forum does not exist to facilitate these important activities.

Most CACs, where they exist, do some or all of the following:

- Track major national policies and update their Executive Committee
- Track key state/provincial level issues and update their Executive Committee
- Advise their Executive Committee on recommended actions (letters, testifying, etc)
- Participate on state/provincial-level coalitions
- Establish state/provincial/regional MOUs
- Draft Position Statements/Resolutions for their Executive Committee approval
- Draft white papers on certain management and conservation issues
- Participate directly in advocacy events

# TWS' GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS & PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

## Policy Priorities

Every year TWS reassesses its Policy Priorities that guide the work of our Government Affairs & Partnerships Department. Priorities are approved by Council and presently (2013-14) include:

1. Climate Change & Adaptation
2. Endangered Species Recovery
3. Energy Development & Wildlife
4. Federal Employee Participation in Professional Societies
5. Funding for Wildlife Conservation & Management (*budget/appropriations, Farm Bill*)
6. Invasive Species Prevention & Management (*feral, exotic, and import/transport*)
7. North American Model/Public Trust Doctrine
8. Strategic Conservation Planning
9. Wetlands Conservation
10. Wildlife Health

## Roles and Responsibilities

The Government Affairs & Partnership Program is responsible for the following activities:

### Policy

- Monitor current events, legislative activities, and federal agencies in relation to TWS' 10 Policy Priorities on a national (U.S. and CAN), regional, and state-wide level (with a focus on the national level).
- Participate and engage in coalitions related to Policy Priorities.
  - With input from experts, draft and submit for approval:
  - Formal letters or comments to congress/parliament on a particular piece of legislation or issue;
  - Formal comments on management plans or regulatory changes on a *federal level* (usually identified in the federal register);
  - Formal comments on management plans or regulatory changes on a *state/provincial/regional level* that may set national precedence; and
  - Responses to Environmental Impact Statements (EIS), Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCPs), Vision Documents, Strategic Plans, or other formal documents that may benefit from the expertise of TWS and its members.
- Manage the TWS Action Center, which provides an easy process for members in the U.S. to send correspondence to members of Congress and the White House. Currently, TWS does not have advocacy software that facilitates grassroots communication with Canadian or Mexican federal governments.
- Position Statements:
  - Recommend topics to Council;
  - Facilitate Position Statement creation and vetting; and
  - Publish, distribute, and promote Position Statements.
- Support Sections and Chapters on policy initiatives.

### Partnership

- Engage in project/deliverable specific partnerships with agencies and/or organizations.
- Memorandums of Understanding:

- Identify opportunities with agencies/organizations for partnerships; and
- Draft and maintain MOUs and MOAs.
- Identify new coalitions for TWS engagement.

### Communications and Science

- Technical Reviews:
  - Recommend topics to Council;
  - Facilitate Technical Review creation process; and
  - Publish, distribute, and promote.
- Peer Reviews:
  - Identify or respond to Peer Review opportunities; and
  - Negotiate and facilitate formal reviews of science based documents upon request Develop fact sheets with input from topical experts.
- Coordinate policy-related press releases.
- Develop, edit, and distribute *The Wildlifer* (policy section), *Wildlife Policy News (WPN)*, and policy articles for *The Wildlife Professional (TWP)* and *Wildlife Society Bulletin*.
- Communicate with Section level CACs regarding issues of regional or local importance.

### **Recommended Coordination with CACs**

Under the framework of a Conservation Affairs Network the GAP team would not track regional or local issues, unless previously identified as having the potential to set national (U.S. or Canadian) precedence. Instead, GAP would rely on the CACs at the Section level to highlight for the headquarters those issues that require national/international attention. In addition, GAP would provide assistance and support to CACs when taking action on a more localized level, engaging in new partnerships, and developing new MOUs, among other things.

To ensure increased communication and collaboration, GAP would oversee an e-mail list for CAC chairs and Presidents and would produce bi-monthly updates (i.e. newsletters) to highlight issues or needs that have regional or localized implications.

# SECTION LEVEL CONSERVATION AFFAIRS COMMITTEES

## Policy Priorities

To maximize Section's effectiveness, regional policy priorities should be identified. Priorities can be identified through a number of mechanisms – surveying the membership, assessing frequency of certain current events, recommendations from the Section's Executive Committee. Each priority should be well articulated and a clear understanding for what the priority entails should be stated.

For example, the Society's priority for **Wildlife Health** includes issues related to wildlife disease, wildlife baiting and feeding, lead ammunition and other toxicity impacts, and wildlife health infrastructure.

Policy priorities can also be stepped down from those set by the Society. For example, the Society's priority of **Energy and Wildlife** can easily be tailored for the Western and Southwest Sections into **Solar Energy and Wildlife** or for the Northeast Section into **Marcellus Shale and Wildlife** or for the Northwest and Central Mountains and Plains Sections into **Oil and Gas Development on the Rocky Mountain Front**. Each of these priorities are broad enough for a regional focus, yet specific enough to provide some level of direction and focus for your CAC.

## Roles and Responsibilities (restructured)

The Section should serve as the leader for progress and coordination for the region and as a conduit for cross collaboration across regions. Additional resources may be needed for the Canadian Section due to its geographic expanse. The Section CAC may be responsible for the following activities:

- Monitoring:
  - current events that are pertinent to the region (both domestic and international as appropriate); and
  - activities occurring in regional field offices or with regional associations (i.e. Western Governors Association *or* USFWS Region 5)
- Participating and engaging in:
  - regional coalitions relating to the policy priorities as necessary (i.e. the Sportsmen's Alliance for Marcellus Conservation in the NE or Sportsmen for Responsible Energy Development in the Central Mountains & Plains Section);
  - regional gatherings for conservation leadership (i.e. the Southeast Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies Annual Meeting); and
  - project specific partnerships with agencies or organizations
- Drafting and submitting for approval by the Section's Board:
  - formal comments on management plans or regulatory changes on a *regional level* or that set *regional* precedence;
  - formal comments on legislation or regulatory changes to congress/parliament or federal agencies regarding *regional* issues of concern (i.e. the Missouri River Authorized Purposes Study, the Nutria Eradication and Control Act, *or* the USFWS Wind Energy Guidelines);
  - responses to EIS', CCPs, Vision Documents, Strategic Plans, or other formal documents that may benefit from the expertise of TWS and its members and that are important regionally (i.e. Wildlife Refuge CCPs); and
  - Position Statements and white papers:
    - Make recommendations to Executive Committee for development.
    - Identify and recruit technical experts to help with crafting the statement.
- Providing support to State/Provincial and Student Chapters on issues that require action but may not be able to be pursued on a Chapter level due to affiliations or conflicts of interest.

- Communicating regularly with GAP regarding:
  - actions/activities of the CAC;
  - issues that may set national precedence;
  - training and support needs.
- Solicitation of assistance for any policy related activities.
- Participate in conference calls, meetings or other information exchange outlets with Chapters, neighboring Sections, and GAP as needed.

### **Composition of Section CACs**

Addressing conservation affairs issues effectively is a substantial commitment for one person, but a reasonable commitment with the right team. Recommended positions in a Section CAC include the following:

**The Chair (or Co-Chair)** – The CAC Chair is responsible for serving as the liaison to the Section Executive Committee, Chapters within the Section, and to GAP. The chair is responsible for convening regular conference calls or meetings with the CAC membership and providing updates on those meetings to GAP, tracking regionally specific issues, ensuring that official comments or other documents are (1) consistent with TWS position statement and policies, and (2) finalized and distributed to the appropriate audiences. The Chair should also inform the GAP staff when an issue arises that he/she feels is national in scope or would set national precedence.

**The Vice Chair (or Co-Chair)** – the CAC Vice Chair is the second in command and is responsible for assisting the Chair in regular business activities *or* serving in the Chair’s capacity in the Chair’s absence. The Vice Chair should be viewed as someone to succeed the Chair in those duties. Depending on committee size and policy priorities, the Vice Chair should be assigned specific duties and topical responsibilities outside of their role as “successor”.

**Chapter Representatives** – CAC Chapter Representatives serve as the liaison between State/Provincial and Student Chapters and the Section CAC. They are responsible for bringing issues that may be of regional concern that occur in their Chapter to the attention of the Section CAC (i.e. wildlife privatization issues). They are also responsible for notifying the Section CAC when the Chapter is in need of Section assistance on state/provincial specific issues. These individuals may be the current Chair or Vice-Chair of the Chapter CACs, or their designee.

Section CACs should consider the appropriateness of additional representatives that can monitor issues in areas that do not have Chapters. They also may wish to consider the inclusion of non-TWS members who may have a unique skill set or desired expertise. For example, the Southwest Section may have an interest in appointing a Mexico Representative that focuses on cross-boundary issues of concern; or the Western Section may have an interest in appointing a “Pacific Islanders” position as their region may be influenced by conservation concerns in the Pacific Islands region beyond Hawaii; or the Canadian Section may have an interest in appointing a Northwest Territories Representative to capture the needs of a region of the country that does not yet have a Chapter.

## CHAPTER LEVEL CONSERVATION AFFAIRS COMMITTEES

Chapter level CACs should be tailored to meet the needs of the Chapter. It is recommended that policy priorities are set on a Chapter level, with a review of priorities for TWS and the appropriate Section(s) to help ensure some consistency, and to provide guidance to the Section CAC and Executive Committee. The following are recommendations for *Roles and Responsibilities* and *Committee Composition*, but Chapters are encouraged to tailor these more specifically to meet local needs, the size of the Chapter's range, member interest and motivation, and membership numbers.

### **Roles and Responsibilities (restructured)**

The organization level that may see the greatest benefit from a Conservation Affairs Network is the Chapter level. The Chapter should serve as the main point of coordination for addressing conservation and management concerns within Chapter boundaries (usually state/provincial) and perhaps neighboring states/provinces. The Chapter CAC does not need to track national issues unless they are having an effect within their area (i.e. ESA issues relating to wolves; Farm bill legislation). The Chapter CAC should be responsible for the following activities:

- Monitoring:
  - current events within the Chapter boundaries and neighboring states/provinces to anticipate possible issues; and
  - activities occurring at the state/provincial agency and legislative level (i.e. new management plans, programmatic changes, funding issues for the state/provincial agency).
- Participating and engaging in:
  - state coalitions as needed; and
  - project specific partnerships with agencies or organizations.
- Drafting and submitting for approval:
  - formal comments on management plans or regulatory changes on a *state/provincial level*;
  - formal comments to state/provincial and federal legislative representatives on issues of concern for the state/province (i.e. State Wildlife Grant Funding for the state fish and wildlife agency); and
  - responses to EIS', CCPs, Vision Documents, Strategic Plans, or other formal documents that may benefit from the expertise of Chapter members (i.e. Wildlife Refuge CCPs).
- Drafting Position Statement or white papers
- Communicating regularly with the Section CAC:
  - regarding issues that may set regional precedence;
  - regarding existing or emerging issues that involve neighboring states/provinces; and
  - to solicit assistance for any policy related activities.
- Communicating with GAP regarding issues that may set national precedence.
- Communicating with Section CACs regarding issues that may be more regional in nature.
- Participate in conference calls, meetings or other information exchange outlets with the Section and GAP as needed.
- Coordinate activities with Student Chapters within the Chapter boundaries.

## Composition of Chapter CACs

The composition of the Chapter level CACs needs to be tailored to meet the needs of the Chapter. For some Chapters, a single individual may suffice. For others, a team of individuals who represent different geographic areas or topics may be beneficial. For other Chapters that are comprised of multiple states/provinces, a Chair and representatives from each state/province may be necessary. Depending on the activity level of any particular CAC additional members may be added to meet the Chapter's needs. The following are two recommended structures for a Chapter CAC – area representation or topical representation. Other structures/representatives may be necessary to meet the needs of the Chapter. TWS staff are available to assist with structure development.

### Area Representation

Area representation is recommended for geographically larger Chapters that have a diverse set of policy priorities *or* those Chapters that are comprised of multiple states.

**The Chair** – The Chapter CAC Chair is responsible for serving as the liaison to the Chapter Executive Committee and to the Section CAC and also carries the title of *CAC Chapter Representative*. The Chair is responsible for participating in Section CAC conference calls or meetings and providing updates on what issues are affecting the Chapter. The Chair is also responsible for ensuring that official comments or other documents are (1) consistent with TWS position statement and policies; (2) finalized and distributed to the appropriate audiences; and (3) tracking *state-wide* issues of concern (including state/provincial legislation). Finally, if immediate assistance is needed from GAP, the Chair serves as the liaison or delegates the responsibility to the Chapter President.

**Area Representatives:** The Area Representatives are the general committee members of the CAC and are responsible for monitoring issues occurring within their specific region of the Chapter (i.e., Rhode Island Rep to New England Chapter or the Texas Panhandle Rep to the Texas Chapter). They communicate regularly with the Chair and recommend issues for action. The Area Representative is also responsible for assisting the Chair with facilitating formal comments on issues that arise within their geographic area. This may include the identification of experts within the Chapter to help draft position documents.

### Topical Specific Representation

Topical representation is recommended for those Chapters with clear policy priorities. Priorities should be set by the Chapter's Executive Committee prior to appointing the CAC and a single person selected to lead each priority issues along with the Chair.

**The Chair** – The Chapter CAC Chair is responsible for serving as the liaison to the Executive Committee and to the Section CAC and also carries the title of *CAC Chapter Representative*. The Chair is responsible for participating in Section CAC conference calls or meetings and providing updates on what issues are affecting the Chapter. The Chair is also responsible for ensuring that official comments or other documents are finalized and distributed to the appropriate audiences, and for tracking *state-wide* issues of concern (including state/provincial legislation). Finally, if immediate assistance is needed from GAP, the Chair serves as the liaison or delegates the responsibility to the Chapter President.

**Topical Representatives:** The Topical Representatives are responsible for monitoring issues related to their specific policy priority for the Chapter. They communicate regularly with the Chair and recommend issues for action. The Topical Representative is also responsible for assisting the Chair with facilitating formal comments on issues that arise related to their policy priority. This may include the identification of experts within the Chapter to help draft position documents.

# HOW TO CREATE A CONSERVATION AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Regardless of the Subunit level, there are common steps when creating a CAC or when modifying an existing committee to fit the new CAC format. The following guidance will provide you with tools and templates that can be used to easily and efficiently put your committee into action.

## **Step 1: Approve the Creation of a CAC (or Ad Hoc CAC)**

The Conservation Affairs Committee is a standing committee for your Section or Chapter. As such, the creation of a CAC or modification of an existing committee to become a CAC might first have to occur through a vote of your Section or Chapter's Executive Committee in accordance with your Section or Chapter's Bylaws. Depending on the specific needs of your subunit, your Executive Committee may have an interest with making the CAC Chair an official member of the Board. If this occurs, Sections or Chapters must observe the processes outlined in their individual Bylaws.

If your subunit would like to pilot a CAC, the President of your Section or Chapter has the authority to create an ad hoc committee. An ad hoc committee is a committee formed with a specific task or objective in mind which then is either dissolved or formalized once that task is complete. TWS recommends that your subunit first approve the creation of an ad hoc committee charged with developing your Conservation Affairs Committee.

## **Step 2: Launch the Ad Hoc CAC**

Once approved by the President and the Executive Committee, a Chair and Vice Chair (or Co-Chairs) should be selected to lead your ad hoc CAC. At least initially, the Chair and Vice Chair should be willing to serve for a two-year term to ensure that the CAC can get off the ground and meet the objectives outlined in the Presidential charge. It is also recommended that the Vice Chair be asked to succeed to the Chair position and then perhaps the Chair becomes a "Past Chair" to ensure consistency and maintain institutional knowledge. For Chapter level CACs, the Executive Committee should determine if it will be structured regionally or topically.

The Charge for the Ad Hoc CAC should include, but may not be limited to, the following:

1. Identify one representative from each Chapter. For Chapter CACs, identify one representative for each topic or region as deemed appropriate by the Executive Committee.
2. Develop a *Terms of Reference* document to guide future operations and needs of the Conservation Affairs Committee (see the Terms of Reference template in Appendix I for an example).
3. Develop a set of recommended changes to the bylaws if necessary (see the bylaws template in Appendix II for an example) or task this to an existing bylaws committee if appropriate.
4. Convene a survey or inquiry of the Section or Chapter membership to identify policy priorities of the subunit perhaps using GAP priorities as a guide.
5. Host regular (monthly is recommended) meetings either in-person or via conference call to accomplish goals and objectives outlined in the *Terms of Reference* document.
6. Host at least one meeting each year during the Section or Chapter's annual meeting that is open to the membership.
7. Submit the contact information of your CAC team to GAP for communication purposes (see the Contact Information sheet in Appendix III for necessary information).

### **Step 3: Develop the CAC's Terms of Reference Document**

The purpose of a *Terms of Reference* document is to establish the mode of operation for the CAC that will help ensure a consistent approach is taken when providing information and comments on emerging and ongoing wildlife management and conservation issues in the region. The *Terms of Reference* document is also intended to ensure continued contribution of unbiased and accurate information to government or other responsible organizations to help inform decision making and policy development, consistent with the goals and objectives of the subunit and TWS.

A *Terms of Reference* document should contain the following sections:

1. A **Background** statement about why the CAC was formed and what the purpose of the *Terms of Reference* document is.
2. **Objectives** of the CAC. Objectives should be overarching and realistic.
3. **Deliverable** of the CAC. Deliverables should be tangible and measurable.
4. Clearly articulated **Roles and Responsibilities** for the CAC as a whole, the members, the Chair, and the relationship with Subunit leadership and TWS headquarters office.
5. A breakdown of the **Operations of the CAC** that articulate the decision making process, product development and approval, and communications

TWS recommends that the *Terms of Reference* document be approved by the Subunit's Executive Committee and also provided to GAP for review (prior to approval). A template developed from the Canadian Section CAC *Terms of Reference* document can be found in Appendix I.

### **Step 4: Promote the CAC to all levels of TWS – Chapter, Section, and Headquarters level**

Success of the CAC hinges on the full integration and buy-in of all levels of a given subunit. If the CAC is at the Section level, all Chapters within the Section should have some form of buy-in at the Section level and should be given assistance by the Section to develop some form of a CAC on the Chapter level. If the CAC is at the Chapter level, the Chair should reach out to neighboring Chapters and to the Section to gain support and buy in from the region. Effectiveness is dependent on participation at all levels. Each subunit is different and depending on strengths and weaknesses, recruitment may occur in a variety of forms. Staff within GAP is happy to assist any subunit who is seeking to design an outreach and recruitment strategy for their CAC.

### **Step 5: Develop Recommended Changes to the Subunit's Bylaws**

If an equivalent committee does not already exist, the creation of a CAC may be a substantial operational change for the Subunit. As such, changes to the by-laws must be made, approved by the membership, and approved by TWS. Appendix II contains a template for recommended bylaws related to your CAC. If an equivalent committee or function already exists, creating a CAC may simply be an internal process of renaming the function or enhancing the charge.

### **Step 6: Approve the Ad Hoc Committee for Standing Committee Status**

Once a *Terms of Reference* document has been developed, the committee populated and revised bylaws are approved, the Committee is ready for final standing committee status within the subunit. This change requires a vote of the Subunit's executive committee.

## PROMOTING THE CONSERVATION AFFAIRS NETWORK

The following article can be used and/or modified for your Section or Chapter newsletter to help promote your new CAC and developing the Conservation Affairs Network. Feel free to make modifications to this article to meet the specific objectives or needs of your subunit.

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### *Creating a Conservation Affairs Network - A New Way of Doing Business at All Levels*

Things are changing in the world of Conservation Affairs for The Wildlife Society. In an effort to support and strengthen our subunits, the Government Affairs and Partnerships staff is working with members to develop a Conservation Affairs Network focused on the Section level. Traditionally, each TWS subunit has functioned independently when dealing with conservation affairs related issues – only engaging headquarters or neighboring subunits when deemed necessary. For some, this process has worked well. For others, the lack of a communication structure or standard guidance has created difficulties. Depending on the scale and complexity, volatile nature, or comfort and understanding of a particular issue and the players involved, many subunits and members have shied away from engaging in the conservation affairs arena. Although it is up to any given subunit to engage in conservation affairs, the lack of a cohesive effort hurts the engagement and effectiveness of many wildlife professionals.

TWS staff recognizes this difficulty and looks forward to working with our subunits to create a system of support that works! At the TWS Annual Conference in Portland, staff met with representatives from each Section to discuss how a Conservation Affairs Network could function. Essentially, the network features coordination at the Section level through the creation of Conservation Affairs Committees (CACs) comprised of representatives from each Chapter within the Section. The Section CAC would be responsible for tracking and taking action as appropriate on regional issues of concern, providing support to Chapters who need assistance addressing issues that are too volatile or difficult on a local level for direct Chapter involvement, and highlighting regional issues that may have national significance to headquarters to address. The Section CAC would also serve as the hub for subunit communication and collaboration for particular issues. Chapters would, of course, still function with autonomy and could tailor a system to address conservation affairs issues in a way that best meets the unique needs of the individual chapter.

The Conservation Affairs Network is still in the planning and assessment stage. If designed correctly, with the right member input and strong grassroots support, TWS' Conservation Affairs Network can help decrease workload for subunits currently engaged in conservation affairs, reduce duplicative efforts, increase resource sharing, increase communication and inter-subunit collaboration, and provide a mechanism to better engage all levels of our Society on critical issues that affect natural resource management and the wildlife profession.

If you are interested in learning more about conservation affairs or getting engaged with your Section or Chapter's CAC or the Conservation Affairs Network please contact your Section or Chapter President or TWS Government Affairs Staff ([laura@wildlife.org](mailto:laura@wildlife.org)) for more information.

## APPENDIX I: Terms of Reference Template for the CAC

The following Terms of Reference template is a recommended approach developing the purpose, charge, and side-bars for your Conservation Affairs Committee. This is only a recommended template to provide you with additional assistance and may or may not be sufficient for your subunit in its current form. It is highly recommended that your Terms of Reference Document is specifically tailored to meet the goals and objectives set by your Executive Committee and your membership.

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### SECTION/CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY CONSERVATION AFFAIRS COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

#### Purpose of the Terms of Reference

The purpose of the *Terms of Reference* document is to establish the composition and mode of operation for the [Section/Chapter] Conservation Affairs Committee that will help ensure a consistent approach is taken when providing information and comments on emerging and ongoing wildlife management and conservation issues in [State/Province/Region]. The document is intended to ensure the continued contribution of unbiased and accurate information to government or other responsible organizations to help inform decision making and policy development, consistent with the goals and objectives of the [Section/Chapter] and The Wildlife Society.

#### Background on the Need

Within the [Section/Chapter] of The Wildlife Society, there exists a need to periodically review and provide comments on developing and ongoing issues relevant to wildlife conservation and management in [State/Province/Region/Cross-border]. For this purpose, the Executive Committee committed to establish a [Section/Chapter] Conservation Affairs Committee (CAC) to manage the process of commentary on such issues. The CAC will coordinate the development and dissemination of information required to inform managers, policy makers, and the public concerning these issues. The CAC will also accept feedback from the membership with respect to which issues warrant the attention of the [Section/Chapter], and determine, in consultation with the Executive Committee, which issues will be undertaken for consideration and analysis.

The following goals and objectives are based on the need recognized by the Executive Committee and the CAC to ensure the use and integration of sound science and the best available information into the decision making process.

#### Objectives of the Conservation Affairs Committee

- 1) To clearly identify and describe the issues surrounding wildlife management across [State/Province/Region], and where appropriate, to contribute information relevant to decision making at all levels of government. This will occur through coordination with the [Section/Chapter] Executive Committee, and individual expertise within the [Section/Chapter];
- 2) To provide scientific and technical background information in a manner that is consistent with the goals and directions of the [Section/Chapter] and The Wildlife Society; and

- 3) To provide feedback to The Wildlife Society staff on wildlife management and conservation issues of particular relevance to [State/Province/Region], such that The Wildlife Society can undertake its mandate sensitive to the needs of the membership.

### **Deliverables of the Conservation Affairs Committee**

- 1) Assessment of wildlife management and conservation problems that would benefit from the background and experience of members of the [Section/Chapter] and Executive Committee.
- 2) Commentary on the state of understanding and science of wildlife management issues to relevant governments, such that decisions are made in light of the best available information of relevance to wildlife and the public.
- 3) Assistance with the production of “white papers” or position statements on [State/Province/Region] wildlife management issues, as identified by the [Section/Chapter] Executive Committee.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### ***Conservation Affairs Committee***

The CAC will be responsible for:

- General oversight and management of communication regarding wildlife management issues across [State/Province/Region] on behalf of the [Section/Chapter];
- Identifying issues to be considered, prioritizing such issues, and deciding what specific issues the CAC will address at any given time;
- For each issue referred to the CAC for consideration, collecting relevant information from expertise within the [Section/Chapter] and drafting comments on that issue for review by the [Section/Chapter] Executive Committee;
- Assessing the need for external review of CAC commentary and transparently coordinating the review in an open and consultative manner;
- Ensuring all deliverables of the CAC, in as much as possible, objectively assess policy options, and focuses on providing accurate and timely scientific information (including information on uncertainty) to inform decision making to the fullest extent possible;
- Ensuring all information provided by the CAC has been undertaken in a manner consistent with the best available information, consistent with the high standards of the [Section/Chapter] and The Wildlife Society; and,
- Submitting to the [Section/Chapter] for approval all final communications, commentary and information for the Section.

#### ***Committee Members***

New members of the CAC will be appointed by the Chair of the CAC based on their professional qualifications and interest in wildlife conservation issues in [State/Province/Region]. Consideration will be given to a potential member’s geographic location and area of expertise. Existing CAC members will review appointments and approve them by consensus. [Sections: *At a minimum, representation should include at least one member from each Chapter within the Section.*]

It is expected that Members of the Conservation Affairs Committee will not serve as representatives of their employers but rather as individual professionals working to advance the goals and mandate of the [Section/Chapter].

## ***CAC Chair***

As per the [Section/Chapter] bylaws, the Chair of the CAC is appointed on a(n) [annual/bi-annual] basis by the incoming President of the [Section/Chapter]. The primary role of the CAC Chair is to convene and coordinate the activities of the CAC. The CAC Chair will also serve as a primary liaison between the CAC and the Executive Committee of the [Section/Chapter] and TWS' Government Affairs and Partnership Program located in Bethesda, Maryland, USA. [Chapters: *The CAC Chair is also responsible for serving as the Chapter Representative at the Section level CAC.*] Specific accountabilities include:

- Support the CAC in confirming its terms of reference and priorities on an ad hoc basis;
- Approach and engage potential committee members on behalf of the CAC;
- Ensure that each CAC member understands their responsibilities and accountabilities;
- Oversee and coordinate the work of the CAC on behalf of the [Section/Chapter] Executive Committee, including:
  - Planning and scheduling CAC conference calls as needed;
  - Tracking CAC supported deliverables;
  - Ensure alignment of CAC deliverables with Section and The Wildlife Society position statements
- Ensure an efficient and appropriate flow of information between the CAC and the CSTWS Executive including providing progress reports to the Executive;
- Maintaining regular communications with staff at The Wildlife Society Headquarters regarding issues that may impact multiple subunits or set national precedence.

### ***Relationship with [Section/Chapter] Executive Committee***

The CAC will maintain a close relationship with the [Section/Chapter] Executive Committee to allow the efficient flow of information. Further, the [Section/Chapter] Executive Committee will work with the CAC to provide facilitation support to the CAC in order to reach consensus on particular issues.

### ***Relationship with The Wildlife Society's Department of Government Affairs***

The CAC will maintain a close working relationship with The Wildlife Society to allow the efficient flow of information and cross collaboration on key issues of interest to the subunit. Staff at TWS will regularly facilitate shared communication on national issues of concern to all CAC Chairs in order to facilitate more efficient actions and effective collaboration across subunits.

## **Operations of the Conservation Affairs Committee**

### ***Decision Making***

The CAC shall make decisions based on consensus, where consensus is defined as no substantive disagreement and may include agreement on a document that describes different perspectives on an issue.

When consensus cannot be reached the Chair of the CAC will inform the President of the [Section/Chapter].

Should there be a need to revisit a decision previously taken by the CAC, the person/group will do this in a timely way, along with an explanation as to why this is needed.

Final decisions or recommendations of the Committee will not be made by majority votes in committee. If a consensus cannot be reached, that will mean that the deliberations of the committee on this topic are finished.

Transparency, openness, and complete disclosure of information will be critical for the successful operation of the CAC. All information related to commentary generated by the CAC (e.g., position statement, correspondence with governments) will be made public.

The [Section/Chapter] will maintain final approval authority on communications, commentary and information issued on behalf of the Section.

### ***Submission Development and Approval***

In order to have consistent, high quality, and science-based submissions on wildlife management issues in [State/Province/Region], the CAC will strive to follow the following protocol for submission development and sign-off:

- (1) An issue is put forward to the Executive Committee and CAC by any member (or non-member) for consideration.
- (2) The Executive Committee and CAC weighs in on whether or not the [Section/Chapter] should prepare a statement, and how/to whom the statement should be forwarded.
- (3) Assuming the Executive Committee agrees the group or individual who brought the issue forward is invited to draft the text of the submission. If they are unwilling/unable to do so, the Chair of the CAC will do so, or find and appoint someone qualified to do so.
- (4) The submission will be edited and/or revised between the author and the CAC, and the final draft will be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval or final revisions.
- (5) The submission will be signed by the [Section/Chapter] President and the Chair of the CAC.
- (6) Should the [Section/Chapter] be drafting a position statement on a particular wildlife-related issue, the statement will be vetted with the Government Affairs staff before distribution.

### ***Meetings***

The CAC will work toward a goal of meeting monthly by phone, and once annually at the [Section/Chapter] annual meeting.

The CAC will host at least one public forum for the [Section/Chapter] membership at the annual meeting.

The Chair of the CAC will regularly interact via conference call or e-mail with The Wildlife Society's Government Affairs Department. Additional meetings to enhance coordination may be needed.

Approved by the [Section/Chapter] Executive Committee on DAY MONTH 20\_\_.

## APPENDIX II: Bylaws Template to Address Creation of a Conservation Affairs Committee

The following bylaws template is a recommended approach for integrating a CAC into an existing subunit's business operations. Additional responsibilities for the committee or specific changes to composition and structure can be added to Section 2 of the "Committees" Article based on the needs and desired outcomes for the subunit.

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### ARTICLE AA: MANAGEMENT AND FINANCES

#### Section #: Resolutions, Position Statements, and Public Statements -

##### Definitions.

- (a) POLICY - the existing body of principles found in the bylaws, minutes of previous executive board and membership meetings, previous position statements, and resolutions. Policy is broader than statements and resolutions in that it provides direction rather than specific action.
- (b) POSITION STATEMENT - describes the [Section/Chapter]'s position on a specific issues. A position statement recommends action and is primarily for internal documentation of the [Section/Chapter]'s position on a specific issue.
- (c) PUBLIC STATEMENT - a position statement in format suitable for external distribution (i.e. letters, formal comments, etc). Public statements are intended to stimulate action on a position of the on a specific issue.

##### Process.

Two or more members may submit resolutions or statements to the Conservation Affairs Committee (Article BB, Section 2D) for possible consideration by the [Section/Chapter] Executive Board. These shall be accepted or rejected by the board and, if involving new policy, prepared for submission to the membership. Such new items must be approved by two-thirds of the [Section/Chapter] membership voting or be made available for [Section/Chapter] member review and comment, and then approved by the [Section/Chapter] council. They must be transmitted to The Wildlife Society, the [Section] representative, and the [Section President OR Presidents of the Chapters within the Section], if approved. Actions falling within previously established [Section/Chapter] policies may be carried out by any [Section/Chapter] officer upon unanimous approval of the executive board.

On issues where there are no previously established [Section/Chapter] policies and that demand action on a reasonably short notice, the president, or designated representative, may present a public statement on behalf of the [Section/Chapter], provided that:

- (a) The concept of the statement be brought to the executive board's attention and is accepted by them prior to public issuing of the statement; and
- (b) Copies of the statement are sent to the membership within 15 days after public issuing of the statement.

Furthermore, the [Section/Chapter] may issue statements pertaining to subjects in its locale:

- (a) When the content of the statement falls within the established policy of The Wildlife Society; and
- (b) In the absence of existing position statements by The Wildlife Society.

**Society Policy.**

The [Section/Chapter] will not issue statements that may be in conflict with the policy of The Wildlife Society without prior approval of the Society’s Council. All statements will follow the [Subunit Policy Guidelines](#). The membership, The Wildlife Society, the section representative, and section president or presidents of the chapters within the section must receive copies of any resolution, position statement, or public statement within 15 days of such action.

**ARTICLE BB: COMMITTEES**

**Section 1: Appointments**

The [Section/Chapter] President shall consider suggestions of the executive board in appointing chairs of all regular standing committees, except the Nominating and Elections Committee (Article #, Section 1), and all special committees such as awards and hospitality. Committee chairs shall complete their committees with the president’s assistance. All committee chairs shall submit a written summary of committee activities to the president and the secretary-treasurer (or secretary) before the close of each annual chapter/section business meeting.

**Section 2: Duties of Standing Committees**

**Clause D - Conservation Affairs -**

This committee shall:

- (a) Review legislative proposals, administrative regulations, environmental assessments and impact statements, and other subjects or issues affecting wildlife or wildlife habitat within the organizational area of the [Section/Chapter] and make recommendations to the executive board for any action that should be taken by the [Section/Chapter];
- (b) Prepare white papers on critical wildlife issues, and other subjects or issues affecting wildlife or wildlife habitat within the organizational area of the [Section/Chapter]
- (c) Receive proposed position statements, resolutions, and public statements from two or more members at any time, and shall prepared, submit and recommend action on such items to the Executive Board in accordance with Article AA, Section #; and
- (d) Communicate with The Wildlife Society’s Director of Government Affairs to elevate local or regional issues that may have national or international significance or precedent setting.

The composition of the committee shall consist of:

- (a) At least three members, including the Conservation Affairs Committee Chair, appointed by the [Section/Chapter] and
- (b) One representative/liason from each [Chapter, Region, or Topical Priority] within the [Section/Chapter].

### APPENDIX III: A Review of Current Communication Tools

	<u>Google Groups</u>	<u>Wikispaces (Plus)</u>	<u>Wikispaces (Super)</u>	<u>Facebook</u>	<u>TWS Portal</u>	<u>Basecamp</u>	<u>Minigroup</u>
<b>Price</b>	Free	<u>\$5/month</u>	<u>\$20/month</u>	Free	Free	<u>\$20/month</u>	<u>\$5/ month</u>
<b>Help Desk</b>	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
<b>Group Privacy</b>	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Y</u>	Y	Y	<u>Y</u>	<u>Y</u>
<b>Privacy Options</b>	Y	<u>N</u>	<u>Y</u>	Y	N	<u>Y</u>	<u>Y</u>
<b>Site Organization</b>	Discussion	Projects (pages), posts, files	Projects (pages), posts, files	Discussion	Discussion	Projects, discussions, to-dos, files	Projects (groups), posts, tasks, events, messages
<b>User Limit</b>	100	Unlimited	Unlimited	250	Unlimited	Unlimited	500
<b>Project Limit</b>	10	1	1	1	1	10	<u>3</u>
<b>Discussion Limit</b>	Unlimited	<u>1 per page</u>	1 per page	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
<b>File Upload</b>	Y (25MB)	Y (20MB)	Y (50MB)	N	Y	Y ( <u>10MB</u> )	Y ( <u>10MB</u> )
<b>File Storage</b>	Y ( <u>10GB</u> )	Y ( <u>2GB</u> )	Y ( <u>5GB</u> )	N	N	Y (3GB)	Y (3GB)
<b>Email Notifications</b>	<u>Y</u>	<u>Y</u>	<u>Y</u>	Y	N	<u>Y</u>	<u>Y</u>
<b>Options to Limit Notifications</b>	<u>Y</u>	<u>Y</u>	<u>Y</u>	Y	N	<u>Y</u>	<u>Y</u>
<b>Potential Access Problems</b>	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
<b>Upgrades</b>	Y	Y	Y	N	N	<u>Y</u>	Y
<b>SSL Security</b>	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	<u>Y</u>