



# The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

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## CAC Activities

***TWS Arizona and New Mexico Chapters plenary on “How to be an Advocate for Conservation”*** – The [Arizona](#) and [New Mexico](#) Chapters of The Wildlife Society will host their joint annual meeting February 1-3, 2018 in Flagstaff, AZ, which will include a plenary on “How to be an Advocate for Conservation.” Please refer to the [agenda](#), [speaker bios](#), and [meeting flyer](#) for more information. *CAC Contact:* [Jon Hanna](#)

***TWS Minnesota Chapter submits letter on roadside habitat to MN DOT*** – The [Minnesota Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) [submitted a letter](#) to the Minnesota Transportation Department emphasizing the importance of roadside habitat as a wildlife corridor in response to the state’s request for comments on roadside haying and mowing activities. *CAC Contact:* [Styron Bell](#)

***TWS Montana Chapter developing position statement on transfer of federal lands*** – [The Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#)’s Executive Board drafted a chapter stated [position regarding the transfer of federal lands to the State of Montana](#). The statement is currently out for review with Chapter members. For questions and comments on this position please contact Mark Ruby at [mttws.pastpres@gmail.com](mailto:mttws.pastpres@gmail.com).

## Federal Updates

***Recovering America’s Wildlife Act Reintroduced*** – Legislation that would drastically increase the funding available for state-identified species in need of additional conservation and monitoring efforts has been reintroduced to the U.S. House of Representatives. “Recovering America’s Wildlife Act” ([H.R. 4647](#)), reintroduced by Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE), would dedicate \$1.3 billion in annual funding from existing oil, gas, and mineral extraction royalties towards these at-risk species, known as Species of Greatest Conservation Need. TWS Headquarters is taking part in efforts on Capitol Hill to recruit cosponsors to this legislation. Be on the lookout for future communication on the subject from headquarters. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

***US Government Remains Open Through Holidays; New Funding Cliff Looms*** – Congress passed a short-term spending package on December 21 to fund the federal government at fiscal year 2017 levels until January 19. On January 3, Congress reconvened for its second session with few public insights on how they would be moving forward with negotiations on a fiscal year 2018 spending deal. With Democrats requesting parity between increases in defense and non-defense spending as well as thorny discussions surrounding the inclusion of language to address

the expiring Deferred Actions for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, common ground seems unlikely to come easily. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

***Government of Canada sets up seven new marine refuges*** – The Government of Canada [recently established](#) seven new marine refuges off the coasts of Nunavut, Newfoundland, and Labrador totaling 145,598 km<sup>2</sup> (56215.7 mi<sup>2</sup>). The marine refuge designation prohibits certain types of fishing and boating activities, depending on the area. This announcement means that 7.75% of Canada’s oceans are now under some form of protective status, with a stated goal of reaching 10% by 2020.

## **Opportunities**

***Sign-On Letter in Support of American Prairie Conservation Act*** – The National Wildlife Federation is seeking local, state, and regional organizations to sign-onto a letter (see email attachment) in support of the recently introduced American Prairie Conservation Act ([S. 1913, H.R. 3939](#)). This legislation would expand upon the 2014 Farm Bill sodsaver provision, which discourages native grasslands conversion into croplands by reducing federal assistance on crop insurance premiums for producers that convert. The American Prairie Conservation Act would increase the area managed under the sodsaver provision to nationwide; currently the program is active in only six states. TWS signed-onto this letter of support, and we encourage sections and chapters that support this legislation to also sign. **Please fill out this [google form](#) if your chapter/section would like to sign-on** (letter attached to CAN Newsletter email). The sign-on deadline is Wednesday, January 17. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

***Hunting and Shooting Sports Conservation Council (HSSCC) Establishment, Call for Nominations*** – A new advisory council that will advise the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture on wildlife and habitat conservation endeavors that “benefit wildlife resources; encourage partnerships among the public, sporting conservation organizations, Federal, state, tribal, and territorial governments; and benefit recreational hunting and recreational shooting sports” has just been established. The HSSCC has a similar charge to that of the [Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council](#) (WSSCC), which is being dissolved in order to make way for this new body. The Fish & Wildlife Service’s [announcement](#) of the new body tasks the HSSCC with recommending ways to implement recent Secretarial orders and shifts more of the body’s focus towards shooting sports, though they were often a topic of discussion within the WHHCC. Comments regarding the establishment of the Council are due by January 12; nominations for appointees to the Council are due by January 29. *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

***Invasive Species Advisory Committee Call for Nominations*** – The Interior Department is seeking new appointees to serve on the Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC). This committee advises the National Invasive Species Council, a conglomerate of federal agency and department heads tasked with cross-government coordination on the prevention, eradication, and control of invasive species. ISAC works to provide recommendations on and ensure effectiveness of these coordinations. [Nominations](#) are due by February 26.

*Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

***USFS Seeks Comment on National Environmental Policy Act Procedures*** – The US Forest Service is requesting public comment on ways to modify the agency's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedures in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of NEPA analysis conducted. The Service cites in part a dramatic shift in budget and staff priorities away from restoration-related activities towards accounts such as fire suppression causing a need to reevaluate how efficiently these procedures are being conducted. [Comments](#) are due to the Service by February 2. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

## **Request for Submissions**

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

## **CAC Contact Information**

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