



THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Leaders in Wildlife Science, Management and Conservation

January 29, 2019

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear President Trump and Congressional Leaders:

Now that the partial government shutdown is over, we hope and expect that you will work together to maintain operational status of all government agencies. The Wildlife Society is concerned about the impacts caused by the previous partial government shutdown, and of the potential impacts of a future shutdown, on the ability of our members to perform their critical duties related to science-based wildlife management and conservation.

The Wildlife Society serves to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitat through science-based management and conservation. Founded in 1937, TWS and our network of affiliated chapters and sections represents more than 15,000 professional wildlife biologists, managers, and educators dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship.

Many of our members are dedicated and passionate federal employees who were furloughed during the shutdown. Many others are equally dedicated and passionate university researchers, state agency biologists, and private consultants that work in natural resource conservation – non-federal professionals that often rely on federal employees for key collaborations and partnerships. All of them, and the work they are trying to accomplish on behalf of wildlife conservation, are negatively impacted by a lapse in federal appropriations. Robust funding for key agencies in the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and others is critical to enabling wildlife professionals to perform their public service and their globally important work of sustaining wildlife populations and their habitat.

The detrimental effects of the government shutdown will be felt for some time. Important, long-term wildlife research projects conducted by or in partnership with federal agencies were effectively paused, threatening their ability to produce quality results or to even continue. Habitat

restoration projects and other on-the-ground management activities did not move forward and are now behind schedule, preventing needed habitat management work to support wildlife populations and enhance public enjoyment of these resources. The education and training of new wildlife professionals has been disrupted, and valuable partnerships among federal agencies and others dedicated to resource conservation were not being upheld.

Many wildlife conservation and management activities conducted by our members are seasonal. Field work conducted in the winter months cannot be performed in the summer, and vice versa, due to the natural history (e.g. migration) of wildlife and the seasonality of the natural world. The inability to perform key aspects of a field research project in a timely manner, to secure a permit for upcoming research, or to work with federal agency partners to strategically plan and implement field research jeopardizes entire projects. Wildlife management information gleaned from long-term ecological studies conducted by our members is put completely at risk by a federal government shutdown.

Our members and others in the wildlife conservation community are also personally impacted by a shutdown. Many federal scientists and managers are not paid during a shutdown, including entry level professionals who rely on regular paychecks to keep up with living expenses. Private consultants and other contractors that work alongside federal agencies also have to forgo pay. Additionally, wildlife professionals are mission-driven and devoted to the conservation and management of the nation's wildlife. Beyond their paychecks, the inability to do their jobs during a shutdown takes a great personal toll.

We encourage you to work together on fiscal year 2019 and fiscal year 2020 appropriations to prevent another government shutdown. Doing so will empower the employees and partners of natural resource agencies responsible for science-based wildlife conservation and management to continue their public service, to the benefit of wildlife and the American people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darren Miller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Darren A. Miller, PhD, Certified Wildlife Biologist®
President