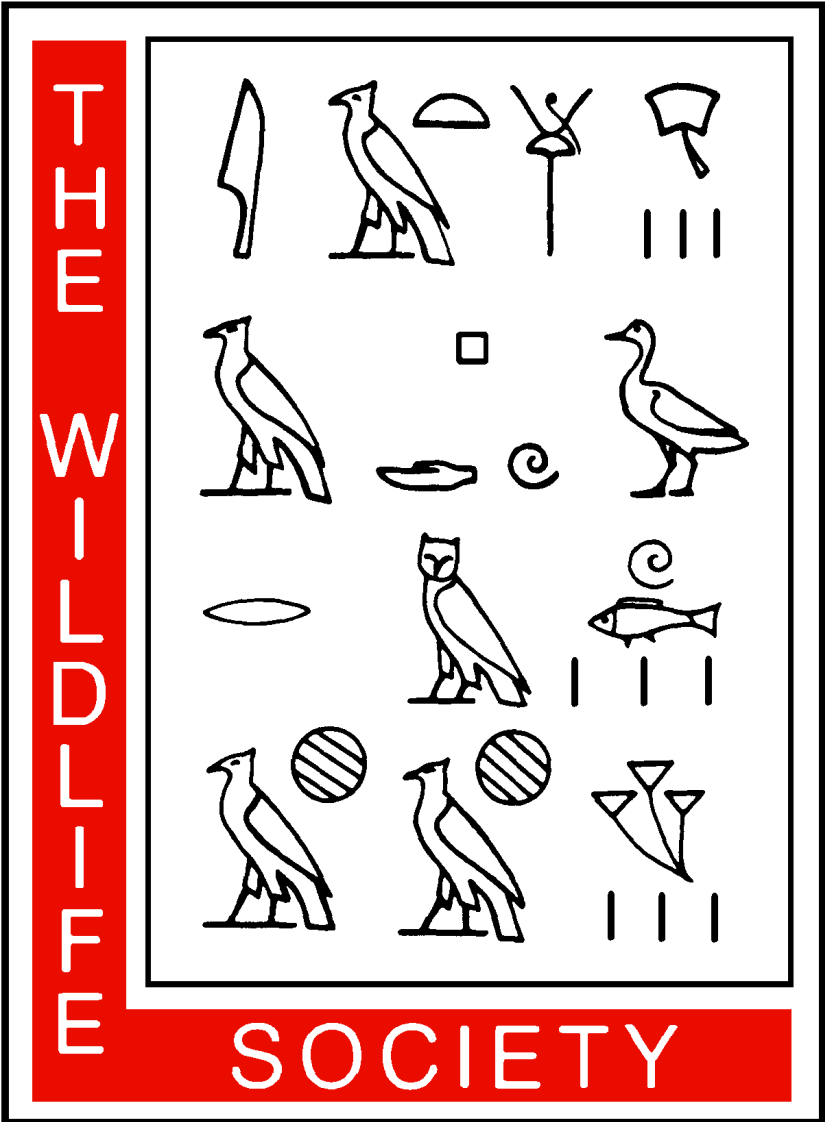


# Government Affairs & Partnerships

## Policy Engagement Documents

### Descriptions and Processes



Approved by TWS Council  
October 2015

The mission of The Wildlife Society is to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and their habitat through science-based management and conservation.

The Government Affairs & Partnerships program works to accomplish this mission by developing and supporting policies that empower, enable, and assist wildlife professionals in their work of wildlife management and conservation. The program works to ensure that wildlife professionals, and the knowledge they provide, inform wildlife management and conservation policies, laws, and regulations, thereby ensuring that these are scientifically-based and practical.

The Government Affairs & Partnership Program activities are directed and implemented through a series of policy engagement documents, including standing positions; positions statements; issue statements; letters, testimony, comments; fact sheets; and technical reviews.

Each type of document has a specific purpose and application, but all interact with each other to provide critical support for The Wildlife Society staff and members engaged in policy work on behalf of wildlife professionals.

This document provides an overview of each type of policy engagement document and how each type relates to another.

### **Sign-on Letters, Coalition Documents, and Joint Statements**

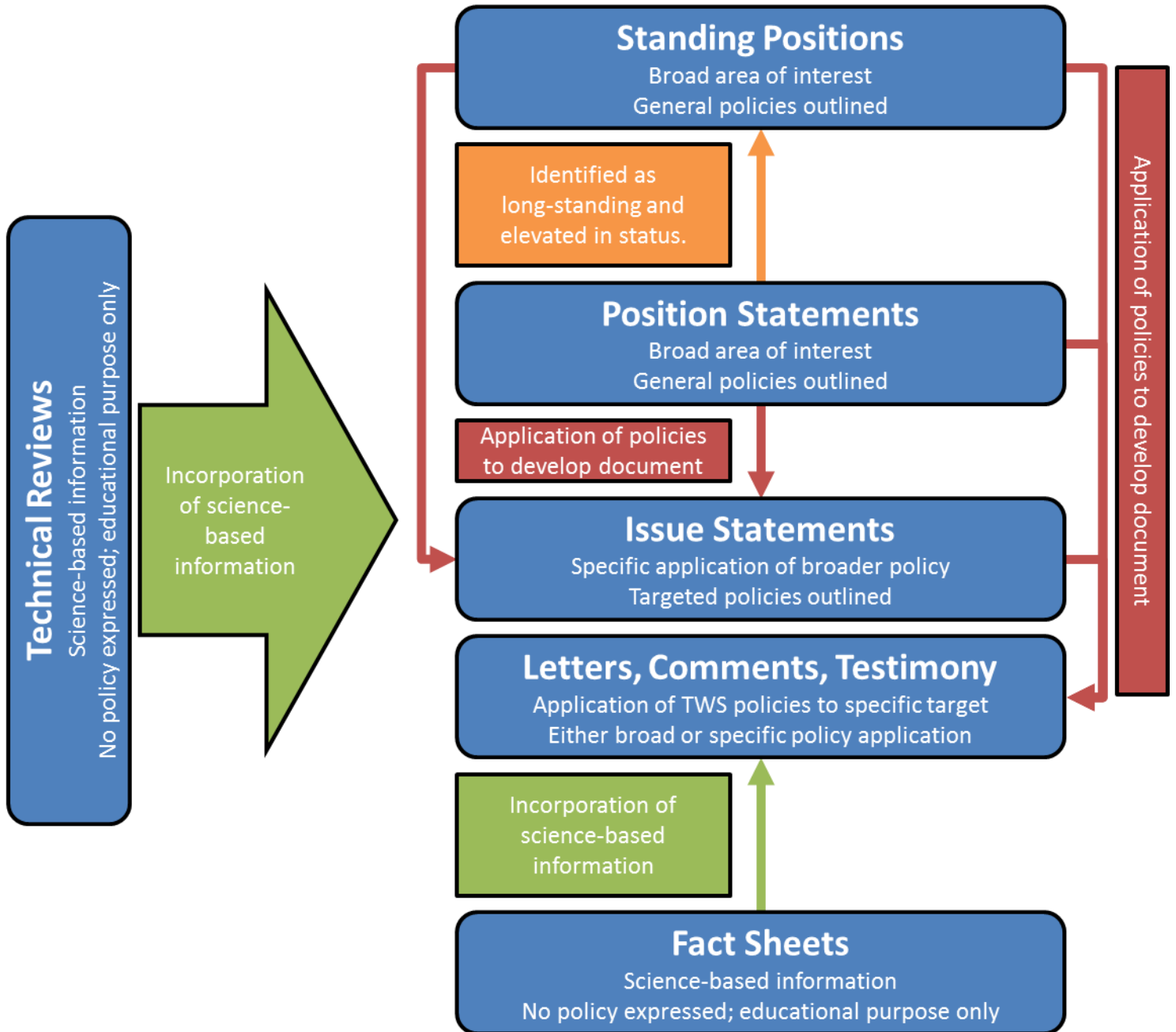
Additional to policy engagement documents originated by The Wildlife Society (TWS), Government Affairs staff partner with other organizations to advance The Wildlife Society policy positions and priorities. Occasionally, it is beneficial to issue policy engagement documents that involve multiple organizations. These documents can take several forms, including “sign-on letters”, coalition documents, and joint statements.

As a result of multiple organization involvement, processes involved for developing, approving, and revising these documents may be slightly modified to fit each situation. Generally, Government Affairs & Partnership staff attempt to follow processes outlined in the most similar-styled TWS-originated document.

### **A Note on Approving a Document**

Policy engagement documents are approved via multiple avenues depending on the specific type of document, including: Council vote, Executive Committee of Council vote, and staff approval. Approval for each type of policy engagement document can occur in person, via email, or by phone, unless otherwise noted.

### Conceptual Model of Policy Engagement Documents



## **Standing Position**

### **Description**

A former TWS position statement that has been identified as a long-standing, foundational position of the Society. These generally broad topic statements are fundamental to wildlife conservation and/or the wildlife profession and are expected to be long-lasting positions that rarely need review or alterations. All standing positions are summarized in the Standing Positions Overview document.

### **Purpose and Use**

Describe foundational positions on which The Wildlife Society firmly stands. Standing positions are used to direct policy activities of The Wildlife Society and are essential to incorporating wildlife-related issues into decision-making processes.

Standing positions provide a broad basis for developing letters, comments, testimony, and issue statements. Specific issues mentioned in a standing position may be described in more detail via a Fact Sheet and/or Issue Statement.

### **Format**

Each standing position is a brief document that provides science-based information on context and background of a topic and then outlines specific positions of The Wildlife Society related to that topic.

### **Process**

#### *Development*

All standing positions begin as a TWS position statement that is later identified as a longstanding, foundational position which has withstood the test of time. The Wildlife Society Council members or staff can propose a Position Statement be elevated to a Standing Position.

Identifying a standing position should be a rare occurrence.

#### *Approval*

Identified position statements are elevated to a standing position by a majority vote of The Wildlife Society Council.

#### *Expiration*

No set expiration date.

#### *Review, Revision and Renewal*

Standing positions are reviewed upon request by a TWS member, staff, or Council member. Council reviews the request and votes to initiate a review. If a review is granted, Council (and/or an identified Ad Hoc Committee) will evaluate all elements of the standing position and, if determined appropriate, will suggest possible changes. Any changes must be approved by a majority of TWS Council to take effect. *Note – changes to standing positions should be a rare occurrence, as the fundamental nature of a standing position is its invariability over time.*

## Position Statement

### Description

A carefully prepared and concise exposition on a wildlife issue that defines the issue, contains factual background data, describes the most probable biological, social, and economics results of alternative actions, and may also contain a recommended course(s) of action.

Position Statements are generally broad in scope, covering a general topical area.

### Purpose and Use

Express the position of The Wildlife Society relative to particular topics. These statements are used to direct policy activities of The Wildlife Society and are essential for incorporating wildlife issues into decision-making processes.

Position Statements provide a broad basis for developing letters, comments, testimony, and issue statements. Specific issues mentioned in a position statement may be described in more detail via a fact sheet and/or issue statement.

### Format

Each position statement is typically a two-page document that provides science-based information on context and background of a topic and then outlines specific policies of The Wildlife Society related to the topic.

### Process

See [A Guide to TWS Position Statements](#) for a full description of the Council-approved process. TWS [Bylaws, Article IX](#), also governs position statement development.

### *Development*

The Wildlife Society Council approves drafting a position statement in response to a proposal from a TWS member, Council member, or staff member, often in response to the release of a technical review. The statement is drafted by staff and/or a designated committee and then submitted to TWS Council who approves posting the statement for member review and comment. Members can review and comment on the document for 60 days. Members' comments are incorporated and a new draft is submitted to Council for their consideration.

### *Approval*

Approved by a majority vote of Council and date-stamped upon approval.

### *Expiration*

Set to expire 5 years after the date of approval.

### *Review, Revision and Renewal*

Review process begins 6 months prior to expiration, or sooner if deemed necessary. A TWS Council subcommittee reviews the statement and recommends an action to TWS Council. TWS Council then votes to retain, revise, or rescind the statement.

## **Issue Statement**

### **Description**

A specific application of a broader policy identified in a standing position or position statement. Issue statements outline The Wildlife Society's policies targeted at a specific issue or action and do so in an efficient and timely manner to allow The Wildlife Society to address critical issues that require an immediate response.

### **Purpose and Use**

Explain The Wildlife Society's position regarding a specific issue, action, or topic. Provide an efficient and effective way for The Wildlife Society to address particular policy concerns.

Issue statements are used to direct policy activities of The Wildlife Society and provide a basis for letters, comments, and testimony.

### **Format**

Each issue statement is a one-to-two page document that provides a brief overview of the specific science-based information on an issue and outlines specific policies and/or recommendations of The Wildlife Society related to the topic.

### **Process**

#### *Development*

Drafted by The Wildlife Society staff and topical experts and initiated with or without specific direction of Council. Drafted statements are reviewed by experts as determined by TWS staff.

#### *Approval*

Approved by a unanimous vote of the Executive Committee of Council and date-stamped upon approval.

#### *Expiration*

No set expiration. Issue statements are linked to parent position statement(s) or standing position(s) which provide the policy upon which they are based. If a parent document(s) expires or is rescinded, the issue statement also expires or is rescinded.

#### *Review, Revision and Renewal*

No scheduled review; renewal is linked to renewal of parent document. Issue statements can be reviewed and revised upon request of TWS Council, TWS members, or staff. Any proposed revision must be approved by a unanimous vote of the Executive Committee of Council to take effect.

## Letter, Comment, and Testimony

### **Description**

Communication directed at a particular person, organization, or agency that conveys The Wildlife Society's position on a specific piece of legislation, agency activity, or other policy-related issue.

Positions taken and advocated for in these documents are generated from standing positions, position statements, and issue statements. The science-based information in fact sheets and technical reviews also provide useful information that is often incorporated.

### **Purpose and Use**

Advocate for particular policy outcomes; implement The Wildlife Society's policies identified in standing positions, position statements, and issue statements.

Visibly and actively express the opinions of TWS as they apply to decisions being made by administrators and policy-makers. Communicate wildlife science and advocate for the inclusion of science-based information and processes in decision-making.

### **Format**

Each document is written on The Wildlife Society letterhead and generally signed by the President. Length varies depending on the situation, but is generally one to four pages. Typically, these documents are addressed to an individual person, group of people, or particular agency(ies).

### **Process**

#### *Development*

Documents are generally drafted by The Wildlife Society staff and reviewed by the President; review can be delegated to the Executive Director. Input can be solicited as deemed necessary or appropriate.

#### *Approval*

Approved by the President or their designee.

#### *Expiration*

No expiration. The nature of the document establishes timeliness to its applicability.

#### *Review, Revision and Renewal*

No renewal of a letter, comment, or testimony. Each individual document starts the development and approval process anew.

## **Fact Sheet**

### **Description**

Provide science-based information on a particular, specific topic. These usually relate to The Wildlife Society position statements or standing positions and provide particular information for broader topics covered in those documents. Fact sheets do not make policy statements or advocate for particular outcomes.

### **Purpose and Use**

Educate and inform public, The Wildlife Society members, and policy-makers of specific issues and/or decisions and their effect on wildlife and wildlife professionals.

Content from a fact sheet often assists and supplements letters, comments, and testimony submitted by The Wildlife Society.

### **Format**

Generally a two to four page document that follows a pre-determined template. Fact sheets may include figures, tables, and/or other graphics as needed to convey desired messages.

### **Process**

#### *Development*

The Wildlife Society members, Council, or staff initiate development by identifying a need and use of a fact sheet. The Wildlife Society staff draft the fact sheet and experts review and/or assist as needed.

#### *Approval*

Approved by the Director of Government Affairs and date-stamped upon approval.

#### *Expiration*

No set expiration.

#### *Review, Revision and Renewal*

Reviewed and updated on a regular basis by Government Affairs staff.



## Technical Review

### **Description**

A comprehensive review of science-based information on a specific topic. Technical reviews are white papers that strive to examine all pertinent peer-reviewed publications and other scientific information on a topic relevant to wildlife conservation and management decision-making.

### **Purpose and Use**

Educate and inform public, The Wildlife Society members, and policy-makers of science-based information about a particular topic.

Content from technical reviews often forms the basis for developing position statements and provide much of the scientific information for issue statements; letters, comments, and testimony; and fact sheets.

### **Format**

Generally 15-30 published pages, with style and usage dictated by [A Guide to TWS Technical Reviews](#) and [Journal of Wildlife Management](#) guidelines.

### **Process**

See [A Guide to TWS Technical Reviews](#) for a complete description of the Council-approved process.

### *Development*

The Wildlife Society members, organizational units, Council members, or staff can propose a Technical Review. Council votes on proposals. An approved proposal initiates forming a Technical Review Committee charged with writing the document and a Council Subcommittee which oversees the Technical Review Committee.

The Technical Review Committee drafts the document and submits the draft to The Wildlife Society Government Affairs staff. Staff ensures the document follows appropriate format and works with the Technical Review Editor to finalize the document.

### *Approval*

A final draft is reviewed by the Council subcommittee, which recommends approval or disapproval of the final draft by Council.

Council receives the recommendation from the Council subcommittee and votes on whether to approve the white paper for publication in The Wildlife Society's Technical Review Series.

### *Expiration*

No set expiration date.

### *Review, Revision and Renewal*

No renewal or review necessary after publication.