



The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

March 2019, Volume 5, Issue 3

Opportunities

State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Fly-in – The Wildlife Society, American Fisheries Society, and National Wildlife Federation are working alongside the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies on their annual fly-in in support of robust funding for the [State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program](#). The fly-in will be on **Wednesday, March 27**, and **TWS is seeking additional volunteers to meet with members of their Congressional delegation and speak on the importance of this program**. The State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program is the only federal program in the U.S. dedicated to the conservation of at-risk species at the state level. The fly-in helps convey to members of Congress how vital this funding is to wildlife professionals from their constituents. TWS staff is available to assist TWS members with setting up meetings, message training, and [engagement](#) with congressional staffers. Please contact [Caroline Murphy](#) if you are interested in attending or have any questions.

Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board nominations open – The Bureau of Land Management is [seeking nominations](#) for the Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board, a volunteer Federal Advisory Committee that provides advice and comment on the BLM and U.S. Forest Service's Wild Horse and Burro programs. Three out of the nine positions are open for nominations, and include the wildlife management, livestock management, and humane advocacy portfolios. Please let TWS staff know if you intend to submit a nomination for the wildlife management position and are interested in discussing coordination. **Nominations are due on April 1.**

Staff Contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)

On the Horizon

Free-Roaming Horse film to premiere 15 March – The Wildlife Society has worked with filmmaker Ben Masters and the Wild Sheep Foundation to produce a [documentary short](#) on the [impacts](#) of free-roaming horses and burros on native wildlife and U.S. public lands in the West. The film will be available on The Wildlife Society's [website](#) in late March. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

CAC Activities

Maine Chapter presents to joint standing committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife – TWS and [Maine Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) member Joseph Roy

presented to the State of Maine joint standing committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife on January 28, 2019. The event was a “meet and greet” for the newly elected/formed committee. *CAC Contact:* [Rodney Kelshaw](#)

Pennsylvania Chapter submits letters on species state listing – The [Pennsylvania Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) submitted [letters](#) on January 27, 2019 to the Pennsylvania Game Commission Board of Commissioners regarding the public comment for species state listing. The Chapter made recommendations on several species, such as the northern long-eared, tricolored and little brown bats. The Chapter advocated for science-based stewardship and offered suggestions for the Commission’s consideration when deciding which species to list. *CAC Contact:* [Reg Hoyt](#)

San Francisco Bay Area Chapter submits letter on proposed listing of fisher – The [San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) submitted [a letter](#) for consideration by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on March 1, 2019 for the proposed rule to list the West Coast distinct population segment (DPS) of fisher (*Pekania pennanti*) as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act. The comments address specific questions and information requests outlined in the USFWS Federal Register Notice 2018-28408, including information on toxicants, population trend studies, and the response of fishers to post-fire landscapes. *CAC Contact:* [Jeanne Chinn](#)

Federal Updates

Public Lands Package sent to President’s Desk – The Natural Resources Management Act (S. 47) is [awaiting President Trump’s signature](#) after passing both the House and Senate in February. The massive piece of legislation includes several provisions of relevance to TWS members, including permanent reauthorization of the [Land and Water Conservation Fund](#), reauthorization of the [Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act](#), and reauthorization of several multinational species conservation funds. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

Government funded through rest of FY2019; FY2020 funding process heats up – In mid-February the Trump Administration agreed to a [spending deal](#) proposed by House and Senate conferees that avoided yet another federal government shutdown. The funding levels are largely in line with the levels proposed by Congressional leaders in December 2018 that were eventually [rejected](#) by the President due to a lack of funding for a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. That impasse led to the [longest government shutdown](#) in U.S. history.

Progress on FY 2020 spending bills, which are set to take effect at the beginning of October, are starting in earnest in the House with several subcommittees already setting up subcommittee hearings. This movement is occurring despite the Trump Administration having yet to release their FY 2020 spending priorities. Department and agency-wide funding requests are expected to come out this week.

Bernhardt nominated as Secretary of the Interior – David Bernhardt, acting in the role of Secretary of the Interior since January 2019, was recently [nominated](#) by President Trump to serve in the Secretary's role in an official capacity. Bernhardt, who has done lobbying work in the private sector, served in the Department during the George W. Bush Administration, and served as Deputy Interior Secretary under former Secretary Zinke, is sure to face questions from Senators about his alignment with the previous Secretary's priorities. Confirmation hearings have yet to be scheduled.

Staff Contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)

WOTUS comment period begins – The new definition of “Waters of the United States” under the Clean Water Act was [released for public comment](#) in mid-February. This controversial new definition has been [available](#) since late last year, but the 35-day government shutdown caused a delay in its release and distribution for public comment. This rule would remove the stronger protections for certain hydrologically connected wetlands and intermittent streams provided for in the [2015 modification of the rule](#). The rule is open for public comment until **April 15**. Please let TWS Headquarters staff know if your unit submits comment or has any questions. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

North American Conference – The [84th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference](#) was held March 4-8, 2019 at the Sheraton Denver Downtown in Denver, Colorado. The Wildlife Society's semiannual Council meeting took place prior to the conference on March 3-4. During the meeting, [TWS Council](#) discussed various TWS governance priorities, including the Society's fiscal year 2020 budget, upcoming conference locations, and partnerships with outside organizations. TWS' next Council meeting will take place during the TWS/AFS [joint conference](#) in Reno, Nevada this September.

Tools

Archive of CAN newsletters now available in policy library – The policy library of [Your Membership](#) has been updated to include all historical CAN newsletters from 2014-2019. After logging in navigate to Resources > TWS Policy Library and search for “Document Type > CAN newsletter.”

Hot Topics

TWS staff is working to assist organization units dealing with contentious issues in their region with more direct connections to other units that have faced these issues.

Currently, two items of conversation among several units include:

- **State wildlife corridors bills** - Has your organization unit engaged with wildlife corridors legislation in your state legislature?
- **Predator killing contests** - Has your organization unit engaged on policy surrounding predator killing contests?

Please let TWS staff know if you or your organization unit has engaged or is interested in engaging in either of the above two topics. *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

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 organization 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 organization unit volunteers, be sure to update TWS staff of your new CAC Chairs. Email Mariah Simmons at MSimmons@wildlife.org with the new contact information to ensure continuity of communications in the Network.