



The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

January 2020, Volume 6, Issue 1

Resources

New Issue Statements Posted – The Wildlife Society's Executive Committee has approved updated TWS issue statements on [the Antarctic](#), [Wolf Restoration and Management in the Contiguous United States](#), [Scientific Peer Review of Agency Decision Processes](#), [Conservation and Management of Old-growth Forest on the Pacific Coast of North America](#), and [Baiting and Supplemental Feeding of Wildlife Species](#). These updated issue statements, along with all TWS policy resources, are available on our [website](#). *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

CAC Activities

Alaska Chapter submits comments on Tongass DEIS – The [Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) has submitted [comment](#) to the U.S. Department of Agriculture in response to their proposal to amend the current roadless rule in effect in Tongass National Forest in Alaska. Based on the statements and conclusions of the [Draft Environmental Impact Statement](#) released by the Department, the Alaska Chapter requests the Administration retain the 2001 roadless rule as it current stands. A decision on revisions to the rule are expected to be finalized by June. *CAC Contacts:* [Matt Kirchhoff](#), [Sophie Gilbert](#), [John Schoen](#)

California North Coast Chapter submits second letter on wind energy project; project vetoed – The [California North Coast Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) submitted a second [public comment letter](#) on December 16 on the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the Humboldt Wing Energy Project. The Chapter expressed concerns over the operational impacts to wildlife, particularly to migratory birds and bats. The controversial project was [vetoed](#) by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors on December 17. *CAC Contact:* [Lizzi Meisman](#)

Nevada Chapter submits letter on proposed U.S. Air Force expansion into National Wildlife Refuge – The [Nevada Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) sent the following [template letter](#) to two Senators and four Representatives regarding the U.S. Air Force's (USAF) Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) for expanding the Nevada Test and Training Range (NTTR) to adjoining public lands managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Chapter expressed several concerns, with the largest concern "due to the significant departure from existing wildlife and land management priorities under USFWS' stewardship as a national wildlife refuge to a management priority as a military training area." *CAC Contact:* [Jasmine Kleiber](#)

Federal Updates

First Session of Congress Wraps with FY 2020 Funding Bill – In mid-December President Trump signed a [funding package](#) into law that provides funding for federal agencies until the end of Fiscal Year 2020 in September. There were across-the-board increases provided to conservation programs of importance to wildlife professionals, including the U.S. Geological Survey's Cooperative Research Units program (\$5.6 million increase to \$24 million), the [State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program](#) (\$3 million increase to \$67.5 million), and the National Wildlife Refuge System operations and maintenance account (\$14.1 million increase to \$502.4 million). Congress expressed concern in the funding package with the lack of transparency in Bureau of Land Management [reorganization efforts](#), but did not bar the use of funds for relocating the agency's headquarters from Washington, DC to Grand Junction, CO.

With the [end](#) of FY 2020 funding discussions and the conclusion of the first session of the 116th Congress, TWS and our partners are now turning our attention to ensuring conservation programs are recognized in the FY 2021 funding discussions that will kick off in Congress over the next couple months. The conservation community is also still pushing towards full House consideration of the [Recovering America's Wildlife Act \(H.R. 3742\)](#), which [passed](#) the House Natural Resources Committee in mid-December. There is still time for your unit to send a [request](#) for cosponsorship of this legislation to your unit's House congressional delegation. Questions regarding appropriate points of contact in congressional offices can be sent to Caroline. You can check out an up-to-date list of House cosponsors to the bill [here](#). *Staff Contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)*

TWS Welcomes new USFWS Director – In mid-December the U.S. Senate voted to [confirm](#) Aurelia Skipwith as the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. TWS sent along a [welcome letter](#) to Skipwith at the news of her confirmation, which congratulates the soon to be Director and details several ongoing TWS-USFWS initiatives. When Skipwith begins her tenure early in the New Year, she will be the first permanent director of the Service since the start of the Trump Administration. This issue has not been unique to USFWS, with DOI agencies such as the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management also not seeing a permanent director since the start of the Trump Administration. *Staff Contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)*

BLM takes another step to the west – December 12 was the deadline for over 150 DC-based Bureau of Land Management employees to accept or decline orders from agency leadership to relocate to the western U.S. Shortly after the deadline, BLM Acting Director William Perry Pendley reported that over two thirds of those employees accepted their orders. This number is likely inflated though, as it has been understood that many BLM staff have accepted the order to relocate in an attempt to buy extra time

in finding a new DC-based position. TWS has [previously](#) expressed [concern](#) with the relocation and is continuing to monitor its status. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

CAC Activity and Contact Updates

Policy consultation – Do you want assistance with a wildlife conservation policy issue? Curious as to the various ways your organization unit can support federal efforts by TWS or engage on local level issues? Contact policy@wildlife.org.

Activity updates, success stories, and CAC Contact information – Does your CAC have a success story to tell? Is a new partnership developing at your organization unit? Do you have a new CAC Chair? Send it in! Let the CAN hear about it and help you in your work. Email Mariah Simmons at MSimmons@wildlife.org.