



# The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

April 2020, Volume 6, Issue 4

## Resources

**Recovering America's Wildlife Act apportionment estimates** – The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies released a [table](#) of estimated annual apportionments for each state and territory provided by the [Recovering America's Wildlife Act \(H.R. 3742\)](#) as currently proposed. Funding for each state is based 50% on proportion of its land and water, 25% on its human population, and 25% on its proportion of federally listed threatened and endangered fish, wildlife and invertebrate species. Also included in the table are the associated match funds that would be leveraged from each state/territory. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act was [passed by the House Natural Resources Committee](#) in December and is currently awaiting full House consideration.

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

**TWS policy statements available as webpages** – TWS standing positions, position statements, and issue statements can now be accessed as webpages at [wildlife.org/position-statements](#), or by navigating through TWS' [policy resources page](#). Website visitors can also download the statements as PDF files. Position statements and standing positions have all been formally adopted by The Wildlife Society Council following member review and comment periods. *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

## Opportunities

**Support the Great American Outdoors Act by signing-on** – In early March, President Trump [threw his support](#) behind permanent funding of the [Land and Water Conservation Fund](#) (LWCF) and the establishment of a National Parks deferred maintenance backlog fund. Soon after, [The Great American Outdoors Act](#) (S. 3422) was introduced in the Senate. The bill proposes permanent funding for LWCF at \$900 million per year and would establish a fund to address the deferred maintenance backlog on Department of the Interior and U.S. Forest Service lands that has reached nearly \$20 billion dollars. TWS chapters and sections can join TWS in support of the Great American Outdoors Act by signing this [letter](#) circulating within the conservation community. Sign-ons are being accepted on a continual basis. To learn more about this legislation and the context of the proposal, please see TWS staff's [legislative brief](#) on the subject. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

## CAC Activities

**Alberta Chapter submits letter on sale of native grassland** – The [Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) submitted a [letter](#) to the Premier of Alberta and the Minister of

Environment and Parks on March 25 expressing their opposition to the sale of the quarter section of Crown-owned native prairie near Taber, Alberta. If the land is converted to use for intensive agriculture it will undoubtedly result in the loss of habitats for native grassland wildlife. The Chapter made several requests in the letter, including a review of the Public Lands Act to include clear, prescriptive measures that define under what scenarios Crown Land will be considered for sale, requirements for the sale process and future land management, and how potential ecological impacts and habitat loss will be prevented or mitigated. CAC Contact: [Mark Boyce](#)

**Iowa Chapter supports wildlife disease bill** – The [Iowa Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) engaged their membership on [HF2458](#), an act relating to the management of the spread of diseases in animals. The Chapter encouraged its members to contact Representative Matt Winschitl and ask him to forward the bill, which would protect the state's wildlife and especially their white-tailed deer herd. CAC Contact: [Katy Reeder](#)

**South Dakota Chapter submits comments on BLM NOI grazing regulations** – The [South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) submitted [comments](#) to the Bureau of Land Management on February 28 regarding the Notice of Intent to revise its livestock grazing regulations. The Chapter outlined recommendations for four issues to be identified and considered as separate and distinct relevant issues in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). One issue outlined was concerns that the use of science-based management to restore rangeland health and enhance wildlife habitat will decrease in the new regulations, and emphasis on livestock production will increase. In last month's newsletter, TWS staff highlighted headquarters [comments](#) submitted with the assistance of TWS' [Rangeland Wildlife Working Group](#) on the Notice of Intent. CAC Contact: [Mark Norton](#)

**TWS, seven units submits comments on revised MBTA regulations** – In March, TWS submitted [comments](#) to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in opposition to [proposed revisions](#) to the implementation of the [Migratory Bird Treaty Act](#) (MBTA). The January 2020 proposed revisions on the MBTA would codify a [Department of the Interior opinion](#) stating that unintentional, or incidental, take of migratory birds is not a violation of the MBTA prohibition on taking or killing migratory birds. In its comments, TWS highlighted the threat that incidental take poses to migratory birds and the need for a federal permitting process that authorizes incidental take by industry when best management practices are followed. TWS also signed-on to [comments from a group of conservation organizations](#) opposing the proposed MBTA regulations. Several organization units expressed concerns with the revisions as well, including the [Western Section](#) and the [Alaska](#), [Colorado](#), [North Dakota](#), [Oregon](#), [Sacramento-Shasta](#), and [San Francisco Bay Area](#) Chapters. Staff Contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)

**TWS, two units submit comments on proposal to revise NEPA** – Also in March, TWS joined several other professional organizations to submit [comments](#) in opposition to the [proposed regulatory changes](#) to the [National Environmental Policy Act \(NEPA\)](#). In

January, the White House Council on Environmental Quality proposed to expand exclusions from NEPA and limit the timeline and page limits for environmental assessments and impact statements, respectively. It also proposed to remove the requirement to consider cumulative or indirect environmental impacts from federal projects analyzed under NEPA. This would effectively exclude considerations of the climate change impacts of a project. TWS comments express concern that the revisions would be harmful for natural resource management. The [Western Section](#) and the [Alaska Chapter](#) also submitted comments on NEPA revisions. Both units opposed the arbitrary limits proposed in the regulations and emphasized the purpose and function of scientific analyses under NEPA. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

**Wyoming Chapter submits comments on proposed Raven Solar Energy Project –** The [Wyoming Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) submitted [comments](#) to the Bureau of Land Management on March 12 in regards to the proposed Raven Solar Energy Project (Raven Solar). The Chapter supports responsible renewable energy development as a strategy to address growing energy demands, but believes it should be done in a manner that avoids and minimizes impacts as much as possible, and offsets unavoidable impacts through scientifically-defensible compensatory off-site mitigation. *CAC Contact:* [Tony Mong](#)

## Federal Updates

**TWS advocates for wildlife research, management, conservation funding –** After the President's [budget request](#) for FY 2021 was released in February, TWS began making appropriations requests to both congressional offices and committees to advocate for wildlife conservation funding in FY 2021. TWS submitted House and Senate Appropriations Committee testimony on [appropriations for the Department of the Interior](#), which includes important program areas for wildlife professionals like the U.S. Geological Survey's Cooperative Research Units. TWS also signed-on to coalition-led appropriations testimonies; the [Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement](#) requested robust funding for U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System and the [National Environmental Coalition on Invasive Species](#) made a variety of funding requests for programs that address invasive species. As the spring and summer progress, Congress will look to these appropriations testimonies as it works to write and pass the [12 appropriations bills](#) that will fund the federal government in FY 2021. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

**TWS garners congressional support for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants –** In February and March, TWS and organization units reached out to members of Congress to ask for their support for robust funding for [State and Tribal Wildlife Grants](#) in FY 2021. TWS emphasized that this program is the only federal program that directly supports states in their efforts to keep wildlife species common and prevent at-risk species from

becoming threatened or endangered through implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans. Through the efforts of TWS, units, and partner organizations, a [Senate Dear Colleague Letter](#) to the leadership of the Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee earned 46 sign-ons from U.S. Senators and a similar [House letter](#) to the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee received 177 U.S. Representatives' sign-ons. Additional opportunities for unit outreach are now being explored by TWS staff.

Staff Contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)

## **Congratulations!**

**Texas Chapter awards Stephen F. Austin State University the Texas Student Chapter of the Year, emphasizing their policy work** – During the February meeting of TWS' [Texas Chapter](#), the student chapter at Stephen F. Austin was awarded recognition as the Texas Student Chapter of the Year. The SFASU Student Chapter was recognized for its leadership, activities, and wildlife management and conservation policy advocacy efforts. The student chapter was especially involved over the past two years in helping gain support among Texas' elected representatives for the [Recovering America's Wildlife Act](#). The SFASU student chapter was recognized on [TWS' website](#) and in the [local media](#).

## **Update from TWS on COVID-19**

**TWS advises units to postpone or cancel in-person meetings** – TWS President Gary White and CEO Ed Thompson sent a [letter](#) to organization unit leaders advising the cancellation or postponement of planned meetings, events, or conferences in light of the COVID-19 outbreak. Units are encouraged to hold virtual meetings rather than in-person ones to keep members and their families safe during the pandemic. A [spreadsheet](#) of canceled and postponed TWS-related events is available online.

Staff Contact: [Mariah Simmons](#)

## **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](mailto: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](mailto:MSimmons@wildlife.org).