



# The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

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## Opportunities

**Help promote the Recovering America's Wildlife Act with a new t-shirt** – The Wildlife Society is joining with other members of the [Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife](#) to raise awareness and support for the [Recovering America's Wildlife Act \(H.R. 3742\)](#) through the launch of a coalition [t-shirt campaign](#). TWS members can check out [recoverwildlife.com](#) to purchase 100% recycled material t-shirts for \$25.00. Funds raised from shirt sales will go to support advocacy efforts by the Alliance and its partners that work towards passage of the Act. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

**Support the Great American Outdoors Act** – In early March, [The Great American Outdoors Act \(S. 3422\)](#) was introduced to the U.S. Senate. The bill would provide permanent funding for the [Land and Water Conservation Fund \(LWCF\)](#) at \$900 million per year. It would also establish a fund to address the nearly \$20 billion deferred maintenance backlog on Department of the Interior and U.S. Forest Service lands. While Congress is currently focused on responding to the coronavirus, TWS continues to support opportunities that help advance the bill. TWS chapters and sections can join TWS in support of the Great American Outdoors Act by signing this [letter](#) circulating among 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](#)

## Resources

**Updated Farm Bill policy brief available online** – TWS has updated its policy brief on [Title II Conservation Programs in the Farm Bill](#) to reflect legislative and regulatory changes stemming from the most recent 2018 Farm Bill. Visit the [policy brief series](#) on TWS' [policy resources page](#) to view briefs on a host of wildlife management and conservation policies in the U.S. and Canada. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

## CAC Activities

**Alberta Chapter asks questions of Environment and Parks Plan** – The [Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) sent a [letter](#) to the Alberta Environment and Parks Minister seeking transparency on the scientific and social data that informed the new [Optimizing Alberta Parks](#) plan. This newly released document includes plans to fully or partially close 20 Alberta parks and change management practices at another 164 sites. The Chapter says that the reasoning behind these decisions is unclear. In addition to requesting background information, the Chapter also highlighted public opposition to park closures and emphasized the importance of outdoor recreation in Alberta. *CAC Contact:* [Mark Boyce](#)

**Nebraska Chapter responds to conservation funding decisions** – In February, the [Nebraska Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) sent a [letter](#) to the [Nebraska Environmental Trust Board](#) after they voted to revise their Grants Committee's [January recommendations](#) on conservation funding. The Chapter asked that the Board respect its own ranking system for projects and reinstate the Grants Committee's original recommendations. The Board created [revised recommendations](#) that funded projects the Grants Committee had ranked lowly while selectively zeroing out funding for several highly ranked projects. The projects that lost funding were related to conservation easements and land acquisitions, which the Chapter says have been important contributors to both conservation and agricultural economies in Nebraska.  
*CAC Contact: [Eric Zach](#)*

## Federal Updates

**TWS advocates for USDA conservation funding** – The Wildlife Society made a [suite of recommendations](#) to congressional agriculture appropriators considering funding of USDA conservation programs in Fiscal Year 2021. This includes TWS' stand-alone [testimony to the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee](#), which provided recommendations for the funding of APHIS-Wildlife Services, National Institute of Food and Agriculture formula grants, and Natural Resources Conservation Service private lands conservation operations. TWS also supports [full funding](#) for private lands conservation under various [Farm Bill conservation programs](#). Finally, TWS submitted [testimony](#) with other members of the [National Environmental Coalition on Invasive Species](#) on USDA programs that support the coalition mission to prevent the spread and establishment of invasive species. The outlook for FY 2021 appropriations bills is uncertain, with congressional appropriators still determining a path forward for handling appropriations bills while managing the coronavirus response.

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

**TWS opposes U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service public comment period on scientific study** – The Wildlife Society recently responded to an unprecedented action the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service took in February to open a public comment period on a peer-reviewed study published in the *Journal of Wildlife Management*. In [comments](#) provided to USFWS, TWS opposed the public comment period because it undermines scientific peer-review for publication in the Journal while also politicizing science. Further, TWS found public comment on peer-reviewed science to be inappropriate because it could promote alternative “hypotheses” that have no empirical support but can work to confuse the science of the study. The JWM article focused on a model that shows how careful design of seismic surveys for oil and gas resources in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge can minimize impacts on denning maternal polar bears. USFWS solicited public comments on the “value of the model and the associated methodology” in the study. *Staff Contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)*

## **TWS Responses to COVID-19 Pandemic**

### **TWS signs on to letter to World Health Organization and United Nations**

**Environment Programme** – The Wildlife Society has joined with conservation and zoological organizations from around the world to alert the World Health Organization and United Nations Environment Programme to issues surrounding the wildlife trade and spread of zoonotic diseases. The [letter](#) delivered to these bodies supports targeting bans and restrictions to illegal, unsustainable, and risky wildlife markets that threaten human health and biodiversity. The letter states that holistic and equitable solutions are required to improve human and planetary health and reduce zoonotic pandemic risk. The letter also acknowledges that in addition to wildlife trade, biodiversity loss, land conversion and industrial agriculture also drive pandemic risk.

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

**TWS collects feedback on pandemic's impacts to wildlifers** – To better serve members during the coronavirus pandemic, The Wildlife Society recently conducted member outreach to gain insight on the pandemic's impacts to wildlife professionals. The [feedback form](#) sent to members also solicited suggestions for how TWS can best support members and their work. TWS headquarters staff is in the process of analyzing and assessing the feedback received from members. News stories that highlight impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on wildlife professionals and students will be published on [wildlife.org](#). *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

## **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).