



# THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Leaders in Wildlife Science, Management and Conservation

## Conservation Affairs Network

July 2020, Volume 6, Issue 7

---

Recent issues are also available on [The Wildlife Society's website](#).

---

### Opportunities

**New TWS Action Center Campaign on U.S. Appropriations** – The Wildlife Society has just launched a new [action alert center campaign](#) for TWS members to learn more about and engage the [annual appropriations process](#). The campaign page provides educational resources on how the U.S. federal appropriations process impacts wildlife professionals, and provides an **easy-to-use tool for members to directly write their elected representatives on funding issues important to them**. This week, the U.S. House of Representatives began subcommittee consideration of the Interior and Agriculture appropriations bills, with the Senate hopefully following suit later this summer. Please consider sharing this tool with your unit's membership as soon as practicable to ensure legislators have a better understanding of the needs faced by wildlifers in their state, and be on the lookout for future TWS Action Center campaigns.

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

---

### Resources

**TWS policy toolkit available as webpages** – Individual sections of The Wildlife Society's [Policy Toolkit](#) can now be accessed as standalone webpages at [wildlife.org/policy/policy-toolkit](http://wildlife.org/policy/policy-toolkit) or by navigating through TWS' [policy resources](#) page. The toolkit provides TWS members and Conservation Affairs Committee Chairs with

information and guidance for policy engagement and advocacy at all levels of government.

*Staff Contact: Keith Norris*

---

## CAC Activities

**Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society** submits three letters during month of June:

- Easing Environmental Regulations and Policies in Alberta
- Proposed Cabin Ridge Coal 2020 Exploration Drilling Program (Application # A10104523) and Elan Coal Ltd. 2020-2025 Isolation South Coal Exploration Program (Application # A10104623)
- Cover Letter and Cumulative Effects of Land Uses and Conservation Priorities in Alberta's Southern East Slope Watersheds report

*CAC Contact: Mark Boyce*

**Colorado Chapter helps increase awareness of cheatgrass' impact on Gunnison sage-grouse conservation** – The **Colorado Chapter of The Wildlife Society** helped fund a new **10-minute film** about Gunnison sage-grouse (*Centrocercus minimus*), a federally listed threatened species. The bird's habitat is impacted by cheatgrass invasions, which promote wildfires and threaten the Gunnison Basin – the Gunnison sage-grouse's last refuge. Sam Liebl from Western Colorado University created the film, which details the Gunnison sage-grouse' plight and the people working to conserve the species and its habitat. The film came as part of a larger awareness and action campaign this spring on invasive annual grasses and wildfires in Western sagebrush ecosystems.

*CAC Contact: Erin Blair*

---

## Federal Updates

**Recovering America's Wildlife Act passes House of Representatives** – For the first time in the legislation's history, authorizing language for the **Recovering America's Wildlife Act** has passed the U.S. House of Representatives. The language was included as part of a package of amendments to the Moving Forward Act (**H.R. 2**), the House's transportation and infrastructure package. Due to the infrastructure package only including authorizing language, dedicated funding was not included in the amendment in order for it to be considered on the floor. Other changes to the legislation brought into the final legislative package include:

- Removal of all match requirements through FY 2025
- A small, voluntary incentive for states to incorporate plant conservation in their State Wildlife Action Plans
- Reporting requirements on tribal grants
- A specific reference to spending education and recreation funds in historically underserved communities

This groundbreaking step moves the legislation onto the Senate. Coordinating discussions on an infrastructure package and future COVID-19 stimulus legislation provide potential next steps for the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, with the continued goal of dedicated funding. Last month, TWS joined several other TWS organization units and NGOs in a [letter to Congress](#) highlighting the economic benefits of Recovering America's Wildlife Act in a future stimulus package. This follows a set of [recommendations](#) TWS provided to Congress in May on the importance of adequately funding wildlife conservation programming in response to the pandemic, particularly through enactment of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act.

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

**TWS and partners share FY 2021 U.S. federal funding priorities** – The Wildlife Society and other members of the environmental and conservation community coordinated on a broad set of [FY 2021 funding priorities](#) for consideration by U.S. congressional appropriators. The recommendations include robust funding for a variety of wildlife-related programs and policies, including the [State and Tribal Wildlife Grants](#) program, the National Wildlife Refuge System, and USGS Cooperative Research Units program.

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

**U.S. Appropriators release initial FY2021 numbers** – U.S. House Appropriations Committee released initial numbers in early July for FY2021 funding levels for federal agencies and programs, including those related to wildlife conservation and management. Appropriations subcommittees will begin [meeting](#) in early July to further debate these initial numbers.

The FY2021 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies draft funding [bill](#) includes \$36.76 billion, an increase of more than \$771M above FY2020 levels. This includes \$1.3B for the BLM, \$1.6B for the USFWS, \$3.22B for the NPS, \$3.13B for the USFS (outside of fire and LWCF), and \$9.38B for the EPA - all increases above FY2020 spending levels.

The FY2021 Agriculture draft funding [bill](#) includes \$23.98 billion in discretionary funding, an increase of \$487 million above FY2020 levels. This includes \$833M for the NRCS and \$1.07B for APHIS.

The Wildlife Society's government relations staff will continue to evaluate FY2021 proposals and [advocate](#) for funding levels that support wildlife professionals and science-based wildlife management and conservation.

*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](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).

---

**Increasing the Society's effectiveness through communication and collaboration**