



The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

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Opportunities

Conservation Affairs Network Training Session at TWS Annual Conference – TWS policy staff will host a CAN training session on **Tuesday, September 29 from 3-5 pm eastern** during TWS' virtual conference. The session will present and discuss best practices for engaging with policymakers and is open to CAN representatives as well as anyone interested in learning more about the policy engagement process.

This session is a supplement to our regular Conservation Affairs Network conference meeting, which will be taking place on **Monday, September 28 from 4-6 pm eastern**. Our 9/28 meeting will provide representatives the opportunity to meet and engage with other members of the network on issues of importance to their unit.

Conference registration is required to attend both events. Register and learn more about the conference at twsconference.org. Registration closes in late September.
Staff contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)

Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board to hold virtual meeting – The Bureau of Land Management recently [announced](#) the [National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board](#) will hold a virtual meeting **September 23-24**. This will be the first meeting in over a year for the board, which is made up of a diverse set of stakeholders that advise the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture on free-roaming horse and burro management issues. This meeting will provide an opportunity for board members and other stakeholders to comment on the recently released [report](#) the BLM sent to Congress on reducing free-roaming horse and burro population levels. Your unit can provide written comments for the board by submitting them to whbadvisoryboard@blm.gov. Unit representatives can also request to present oral comment during the meeting by reaching out to the same email address. Check [TWS' Horse Rich & Dirt Poor video](#) and [issue statement](#) on the subject to inform your comments. *Staff contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

Resources

TWS Action Center Home Page Launches – The Wildlife Society has just launched a [home page](#) for TWS action center campaigns. The page will serve as a platform to explore existing opportunities for TWS members to directly and easily reach out to their members of Congress. The page will be updated and expanded regularly to keep up with existing congressional actions and other wildlife policy issues. Please share this page with your unit membership to ensure robust engagement on issues of importance to the profession with members of the U.S. Congress and administration.

Staff contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)

CAC Activities

Oregon Chapter comments on petition to ban beaver trapping – The [Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) provided a [comment letter](#) and presented verbal testimony to the Oregon Fish & Wildlife Commission on May 25 on a petition to ban beaver trapping on all federal lands within Oregon. The Chapter's comments highlighted the need for additional research to be conducted and they recommended the development of a beaver working group to help resolve conflict and identify solutions to ensure the sustainable management and healthy beaver populations that are critical to riparian health. The Commission approved the development of a working group and is in the process of determining the scope and scale.

CAC contacts: [Meghan Martin](#) and [Leland Brown](#)

Federal Updates

DOI Invasive Species Draft Strategic Plan Released – The Department of the Interior [released](#) a draft strategic [plan](#) aimed at increasing cost-effective collaboration and coordination on invasive species prevention and management across Department agencies and in partnership with other entities. TWS staff is currently reviewing the plan and soliciting input from TWS members – please send Caroline any insights that you or your unit can provide on this draft strategic plan as soon as possible. Input from organization units and TWS members will be used to inform TWS' comments on the document. Written comments on the plan will be [accepted](#) by the Department of the Interior until **Friday, October 9**. The Department will also be holding a series of listening sessions on September 24 and 28, each from 4-6 pm eastern. You can register for those sessions [here](#). Staff contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)

New MBTA interpretation overturned in court – The [December 2017](#) Department of the Interior Office of the Solicitor interpretation of “take” under the [Migratory Bird Treaty Act](#), which sparked a regulatory rulemaking process and a prolonged legal battle, has been [struck down](#) in a U.S. District Court. The decision is almost certainly going to be appealed, but for now the Administration must reinstate the previous interpretation of “take” under the act to include both intentional and incidental taking of species. This decision puts the regulatory rulemaking process that was attempting to codify the 2017 memo into limbo, but recent indications are the administration plans to proceed with the rulemaking. TWS and several conservation partners continue to speak out against the [original memo](#) and [attempts to codify it](#). Staff contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)

A busy September expected before Congress heads out of town – Next week, the U.S. Congress will be returning from summer recess and will face two pressing issues: fiscal year 2021 [federal government funding](#) and COVID-19 economic stimulus discussions. Both political parties continue to promote their respective plans – which are more than a trillion dollars apart - on COVID relief legislation. But, there seems to be general agreement that a [continuing resolution](#) to extend current fiscal year 2020 government funding into the new fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, and likely beyond the election, is a politically safe bet for both parties.

Chances of a continuing resolution and COVID-19 relief bill being rolled into one legislative package has begun to pick up steam, though this has been more favorable with fiscal conservatives who are hoping for fewer bites at the apple on government spending. Both efforts present some limited opportunities to advance TWS' policy priorities related to the [Recovering America's Wildlife Act](#) and [funding for key federal agencies](#) and programs. Once these two major issues are settled, Congress is very likely to recess for the remainder of the election season. *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.