



The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

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Resources

STWG 20th Anniversary Report – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies released a [20th Anniversary Report](#) highlighting the successes of the [State and Tribal Wildlife Grants](#) program. The report details conservation recovery stories made possible through funding provided by the program. The Wildlife Society, the American Fisheries Society, and the National Wildlife Federation are helping promote the report as a way to further advocate for increased funding for wildlife conservation. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

CAC Activities

Southern California Chapter submits letter on USACE Nationwide Permits – The [Southern California Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) submitted a [letter](#) to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Nov. 10 regarding the proposal to reissue and modify the USACE Nationwide Permits. The Chapter requested that no action be taken to change the existing language for General Condition 19 *Migratory Birds and Bald and Golden Eagles*. *CAC Contact:* [Lisa Fields](#)

South Dakota Chapter policy engagement – The [South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) submitted the following comment letters during the month of September 2020:

- [Comment Letter on FWS ESA Habitat Definition](#)
- [Comment Letter on SDGFP Sage Grouse Management Plan update](#)
- [Comment Letter on Fort Pierre National Grasslands Prairie Restoration Research](#)

CAC Contact: [Mark Norton](#)

Federal Updates

The 117th Congress begins – Members of the 117th U.S. Congress are settling in to what is likely to be an extremely challenging and tumultuous month given the recent riots in the Capitol building, a contentious presidential transition, and a turnover in control of the U.S. Senate. Legislative business and committee hearings have not yet gotten into full swing, with the Senate still determining their committee arrangements following the two Georgia Senate runoff races. The switch of Senate control to the Democratic Party changes the calculation for President-elect Biden as to what can be legislatively accomplished in the coming Congress, with initiatives such as sweeping climate change legislation expected to play a more prominent role in the chamber. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

President-elect Biden fills in cabinet nominations – The incoming Biden-Harris Administration has [announced](#) nominations for several Cabinet-level positions, including Representative Deb Haaland (D-NM) to lead the U.S. Department of the Interior. If confirmed by the Senate, Representative Haaland would be the first Native American to serve in the position. The incoming Administration has also nominated Tom Vilsack to lead the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This would be his second stint in the position, having previously served as Agriculture Secretary for the entirety of the Obama Administration. The EPA Administrator, which if confirmed will be held by Michael Regan, currently the NC Department of Environmental Quality Secretary, will also likely be elevated to a cabinet-level position. Nominations for assistant secretary, agency director, and other intra-department positions that require Senate confirmation are still being announced. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

Reintroduction of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act expected soon – The past Congress saw great advances in efforts to pass the [Recovering America's Wildlife Act](#). The bill ended the session with 185 bipartisan House sponsors, markup and passage out of the House Natural Resources Committee, and authorizing language for the bill passing the entire U.S. House of Representatives. The legislation will be reintroduced for the new Congress in the coming weeks. The legislative text for the bill is shaping up to largely be the same as the language introduced in the 116th Congress, with the addition of [text](#) that was added to the bill during the House Natural Resources Committee markup. TWS is updating and exploring additional resources for units looking to engage in support of the legislation. Please let Caroline know if your unit has ideas on TWS materials that would be helpful for engagement in the coming Congress. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

MBTA rulemaking finalized – The December 2017 Department of the Interior Office of the Solicitor [interpretation](#) of “take” under the [Migratory Bird Treaty Act](#) has now been [codified](#) into [regulation](#). Overturning decades of precedent, the solicitor’s opinion and the final regulation set to go into effect on February 8 states that only purposeful take of listed species is unlawful under the Act - incidental or accidental taking of species is not enforceable. The Wildlife Society strongly opposed this interpretation and proposed rule. Now that the regulation is finalized, reversal by the incoming administration will prove more difficult and require a new rulemaking process to be undertaken. However, an August 2020 court decision striking down the solicitor’s opinion calls into question the legality of the rule itself. The current administration has stated their intention to appeal the decision, although this appeal could be dropped by the incoming administration. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

Updates from Headquarters

New interns begin their work with TWS – TWS' headquarters office has two new interns to work with TWS members and staff over the coming six months. Ally Moser Scott, AWB®, has been brought on as the 2021 Joe Burns Memorial Wildlife Policy Intern. Ally recently finished her M.S. in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison where she studied prey availability for the American marten. Ally will be active in communications with the Conservation Affairs Network, and among her other duties will assist in the drafting of this monthly newsletter. Akea Cader is also joining us as the Society's very first Operations and Outreach Intern. Akea recently finished her B.S. in Fish and Wildlife Conservation with a minor in Japanese from Virginia Tech. During her undergraduate career she served in a variety of tech positions and was also an Inclusive Excellence Student Fellow, acting as the fish and wildlife student representative on a student advisory panel for increasing inclusive pedagogy. We look forward to working with them both!

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 Beyers at MSimmons@wildlife.org.