



# The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

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## Opportunities

**New policy priorities set for TWS** – TWS Council approved new policy priorities for the Society to pursue during the 117<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congress. These priorities were developed based on recommendations from TWS units and represent a framework for policy engagement in 2021-2022. The five priorities are:

- Advance efforts to enact dedicated federal funding for U.S. state and tribal fish and wildlife agencies to effectively perform at-risk species conservation work.
- Support robust annual appropriations for U.S. federal cooperative science programming, including the U.S. Geological Survey's Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units program and Climate Adaptation Science Centers, and other conservation programs that promote federal, state, and private partnership in wildlife science, conservation, and management.
- Support adequate funding for U.S. federal land management efforts, including land management and conservation accounts within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System.
- Advance regulatory and legislative efforts to reinstate the longstanding interpretation of "take" under the U.S. Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
- Support chapter and section efforts through continued enhancements to the Conservation Affairs Network and engagement of the Network and TWS working groups.

Thank you to all units that provided input for consideration in this process. Conservation Affairs Network contacts and unit presidents will receive a letter from Council's Policy Priorities ad hoc Committee that will provide more details on the decision making process. TWS staff have started operationalizing these priorities, and will begin distributing web-based resources to CAN contacts in the coming weeks. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

**Sign-on opportunity: coalition support for Recovering America's Wildlife Act reintroduction** - TWS units are encouraged to sign an [Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife](#) coalition support [letter](#) promoting reintroduction of the [Recovering America's Wildlife Act](#). TWS worked with AAFW partners to draft the letter, which asks members of Congress to sponsor the legislation when it is reintroduced to the U.S. House of Representatives in the coming weeks. **The deadline to sign-on is this Friday, February 5.** *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

## Resources

**National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy review report published** – In coordination with the National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Network, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies has published a new [report](#) that takes an in-depth review of implementation of the [National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy](#) first published in 2012. The new report emphasizes the need for additional focus on the role of people in climate adaptation efforts and includes the latest available climate science to inform recommendations for the future. Bob Newman and Tracy Melvin, leaders in TWS' [Climate Change and Wildlife Working Group](#), were part of the writing team. The report and associated fact sheets are available through the [National Fish, Wildlife, & Plants Climate Adaptation Network](#). *Working Group contacts: [Robert Newman](#), [Tracy Melvin](#)*

## Federal Updates

**Changes to ESA consulting requirements proposed** – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service have proposed changes for how the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management must consult on potential effects to threatened and endangered species. The new [rule](#) would update the consultation process under Section 7 of the [Endangered Species Act](#). If finalized, the agencies will no longer be required to initiate new consultations each time new information reveals potential effects of their existing land management plans on protected species or critical habitat. Instead, the agencies will consider the information when authorizing specific actions. Both agencies must develop and periodically update broad land management plans, a process that typically takes years to complete and does not generally authorize specific actions. Under the rule change, new information will be considered in smaller action-specific consultations until the land management plans are updated as scheduled. The [public comment period](#) for the new rule is open until **Thursday, February 11**. *Staff contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)*

**President Biden implements series of executive actions** – President Biden signed a series of executive orders that focus national attention on issues of conservation and climate change. The President tasked federal agencies with recommending steps that can be taken to conserve 30% of the nation's land and water by 2030, requested that strategy be created for a Civilian Climate Corps that will improve community resiliency, established climate change as a national security threat, and created a White House task force to direct greenhouse gas policies. The orders also placed a moratorium on new leases for fossil fuel production on federal lands. President Biden also reversed a previous executive order that caused many diversity trainings in federally-funded programs to be discontinued, a decision that [TWS strongly supports](#). Learn more by reading TWS' standing position on [Workforce Diversity within the Wildlife Profession](#). *Staff contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)*

**Department of the Interior leadership takes shape** – Members of the [new leadership team](#) for the Department of the Interior have been announced. Martha Williams, former Director of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, has been tapped as Principal Deputy Director for the Fish and Wildlife Service and currently exercises the authority of Director. Other appointments include former Everglades Foundation COO and VP Shannon Estenoz as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks. The nominee for Interior Secretary, Representative Deb Haaland (D-NM), currently remains a member of the House, and confirmation hearings for her appointment are not yet scheduled. *Staff contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)*

## **On the Horizon**

**FY2022 appropriations budgets expected soon** – The new Administration has not yet released its budget for FY 2022 [Congressional appropriations](#). A “skinny” budget providing agency-wide funding requests is expected in February, with more information to follow in the coming weeks. TWS will keep members informed on the progress of the FY 2022 appropriations process, including opportunities for members and units to advocate for strong wildlife program funding. *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 Beyers at [MSimmons@wildlife.org](mailto:MSimmons@wildlife.org).