



# The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

April 2021, Volume 7, Issue 4

## Opportunities

### **Advocate for the National Wildlife Refuge System via action center – TWS**

continues to advocate for federal programs important to the wildlife profession through the [U.S. federal appropriations process](#). [TWS' Action Center](#) now features a page about the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's [National Wildlife Refuge System](#). Members can use the action center to learn more about funding issues facing the refuge system, and reach out directly to their members of Congress in support of funding needs. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

### **Engage your members of Congress in support of conservation funding – TWS**

coordinated a virtual fly-in on March 30-April 1 for TWS unit leaders to directly engage their congressional delegations in support of adequate funding for the wildlife profession. Units are encouraged to continue reaching out to their congressional offices at any time regarding federal appropriations — particularly during the month of April. TWS circulated resources to help units prepare for successful meetings with congressional offices, including a [training webinar](#), a meeting request [form email](#), and a page of [talking points](#) that can be adapted to include regionally relevant examples and priorities. TWS staff are available to assist with identifying appropriate congressional staff and honing talking points. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

**TWS seeks input on federal DEI programming –** TWS staff requested feedback from TWS Committee and Working Group leaders regarding U.S. federal programming that supports Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts in our professional workforce. This information will be used to inform TWS' federal appropriations requests to Congress for the coming fiscal year. Thoughts, questions, and ideas in response to this request can be sent to [policy@wildlife.org](mailto:policy@wildlife.org).

### **USDA seeks public comments on implementing administration climate priorities –**

In response to President Biden's [Executive Order](#) on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking stakeholder input on developing a climate-smart agriculture and forestry strategy. USDA is specifically interested in responses to questions within four categories: (1) climate-smart agriculture and forestry, (2) biofuels, wood and other bioproducts and renewable energy, (3) addressing catastrophic wildfire, and (4) environmental justice and disadvantaged

communities. [Public comments](#) will be accepted until April 29. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

## On the Horizon

**FY2022 budget requests expected soon** – The U.S. Administration is expected to release its FY2022 federal budget requests to the U.S. Congress over the coming weeks. Activity within congressional Appropriations Committees is expected to start in the month of April and continue into May. TWS will keep members informed on the progress of the FY2022 [appropriations process](#), including opportunities for members and units to advocate for strong conservation program funding. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

**U.S. Administration details infrastructure plans** – President Biden released his infrastructure package proposal on March 31. The conservation community is exploring ways to advocate for the relevance of wildlife and habitat conservation to infrastructure planning, especially relating to the [Recovering America's Wildlife Act](#) and [tribal wildlife corridors](#). TWS will keep members informed on opportunities to engage with infrastructure planning that is beneficial to the wildlife profession. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

## Resources

**TWS resources on U.S. federal appropriations** – As the U.S. begins the federal appropriations season, TWS' policy brief on the [U.S. Congressional Appropriations Process](#) and TWS Policy Toolkit page on the [U.S. Federal Budgeting Process](#) are available for member and unit reference. The policy brief provides a short overview of the federal budgeting process and the toolkit page goes into more detail about its seven steps, including a description of their purpose and process and ways to get involved as a constituent. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

## CAC Activities

**Alberta Chapter requests federal review of Tent Mountain Alberta Coal Project** – The [Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) sent a [letter](#) to the Canadian Minister of Environment and Climate Change requesting a federal review of Montem Resources' Tent Mountain Project. The chapter believes that a federal review under the Impact Assessment Act is necessary to ensure that the environmental impacts of the project are adequately considered. *CAC Contact:* [Mark Boyce](#)

**Colorado State University Student Chapter engagement** – The [Colorado State University Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) signed on to a Colorado 30x30

College and University [sign on letter](#) asking the state's senators to support the U.S. administration's goal of conserving [30% of U.S. lands and waters](#) by 2030. The chapter also participated in a local [Vote Yes on 26](#) campaign to eliminate single-use plastic bags in Fort Collins. Chapter members distributed door hangers and reusable bags throughout local neighborhoods to increase support for the proposed ordinance.

*Chapter Contact: [csutws@gmail.com](mailto:csutws@gmail.com)*

**Illinois Chapter opposes new feral swine legislation** – The [Illinois Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) submitted a [letter](#) to the Illinois House Agriculture and Conservation Committee in opposition to proposed legislation that would affect feral swine management in the state. The bill would reclassify feral swine and allow them to be hunted “at any time.” The chapter believes that this change would undermine existing efforts that have been effective in eliminating feral swine populations. The letter includes a copy of the [TWS Fact Sheet](#) on feral swine. *CAC Contact: [Scott Meister](#)*

**Indiana Chapter opposes reductions in wetland protections** – The [Indiana Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) submitted a [letter](#) to the Indiana House Committee on Environmental Affairs in opposition to proposed legislation that would repeal existing protections for isolated wetlands in the state. The chapter recommended that the summer study committee consider and develop alternative actions that meet the needs of both wetland protection and economic growth. *CAC Contact: [Jarred Brooke](#)*

**Nebraska Chapter opposes changes to state wildlife conservation funding** – The [Nebraska Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) submitted letters in opposition to proposed legislation that would affect funding for the state Game and Parks Commission. The chapter [opposed a bill](#) that would require the commission to provide compensation for property damage caused by wildlife because it would detract from funds allocated to other conservation and research activities and jeopardize the commission's eligibility for federal [Pittman-Robertson funds](#). Along similar lines, the chapter also [opposed a bill](#) to state intent regarding appropriations to the commission for wildlife conservation. *CAC Contact: [Eric Zach](#)*

**Nevada Chapter urges support for feral horse, burro management** – The [Nevada Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) sent a [letter](#) to the Coalition for Healthy Lands, Wildlife and Free-roaming Horses in support of a [Senate Joint Resolution](#) it is leading in the Nevada legislature. The Resolution urges the U.S. Congress to provide increased funding to reduce [feral horse and burro](#) populations to appropriate management levels. The chapter also [encouraged its members](#) to express their support of the resolution. *CAC Contact: [Ian Dudley](#)*

**Southern California Chapter, TWS units support MBTA rulemaking revision** – The U.S. administration [recently reviewed](#) new rules that prevent the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from regulating incidental or accidental take of migratory species listed under the [Migratory Bird Treaty Act](#). In response to the comment period extension, the Southern California Chapter of The Wildlife Society submitted [public comments](#) urging USFWS to rescind the rule. TWS and the Illinois Chapter, Michigan Chapter, North Central Section, Northwest Section, and Western Section signed on to a [letter](#) urging the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to reconsider the rule. See below for additional federal updates on the MBTA. CAC Contact: [Lisa Fields](#), Staff contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)

## Federal Updates

**Interior revokes internal guidance on Migratory Bird Treaty Act** – The U.S. Department of the Interior has [revoked its internal guidance](#) that excluded incidental take of protected birds from enforcement under the [Migratory Bird Treaty Act](#). TWS previously asked the department to [reconsider the opinion](#) and [opposed subsequent rulemaking](#) efforts to codify it. New rules codifying the opinion went into effect on March 8, but the department is expected to issue a proposal to revoke the rule in the coming weeks. TWS will keep members and units updated on opportunities to advocate for the longstanding interpretation of “take” under the MBTA. Staff contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)

**Haaland confirmed as U.S. Interior Secretary** – Former New Mexico Representative Deb Haaland was sworn in as the 54<sup>th</sup> U.S. Secretary of the Interior on March 15. Secretary Haaland, an enrolled member of the Pueblo of Laguna, is the first Native American to serve as [U.S. Secretary of the Interior](#) and in the U.S. Cabinet. With Haaland officially installed, the Senate can move forward with considering nominations for other Interior Department leadership positions, including agency directors. Staff contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)

**TWS, others submit Interior mitigation recommendations** – TWS joined a coalition of conservation, hunting, and private lands organizations to [provide recommendations](#) to the U.S. Department of the Interior on the implementation of reliable mitigation policies. The [letter](#) emphasizes that proper mitigation techniques can reduce conflicts between conservation and land use activities and support the decision-making of public and private land managers. The recommendations focus on the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and note the importance of using a full mitigation hierarchy when addressing both intentional and incidental impacts to bird species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Staff contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)

## Other News from Headquarters

**TWS Awards nominations open** – TWS is accepting nominations for the [2021 TWS Awards](#) until May 1. The awards honor professional excellence, recognize outstanding achievement, and highlight contributions to wildlife science and management. View the complete list of TWS Awards and find out how you can nominate deserving peers and colleagues at [wildlife.org](#). For questions, please contact [awards@wildlife.org](mailto:awards@wildlife.org).

**Climate Adaptation Leadership Awards nominations open** – The National Fish, Wildlife, & Plants Climate Adaptation Network is accepting [nominations](#) for the 2021 [Climate Adaptation Leadership Awards](#) until May 16. These awards recognize exemplary leadership by federal, state, tribal, local and non-governmental entities to reduce climate-related threats and enhance the resilience of the nation's fish, wildlife and plants and the communities that depend on them. These efforts help address the goals of the [National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy](#).

## 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).