



The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

May 2022, Volume 8, Issue 5

Feedback Requested

Please take a few minutes to help improve the CAN by filling out [this brief member feedback form](#) by May 31, 2022. Your responses will inform future policy resource development and engagement opportunities. *Staff contact:* [Kelly O'Connor](#)

Take Action

Engage with legislators in support of robust conservation funding! – As the annual federal [appropriations process](#) moves forward in the U.S., TWS members are encouraged to reach out to legislators and advocate for robust conservation funding in fiscal year 2023. Robust funding in key program areas like the [State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program](#), [Cooperative Research Units Program](#), and the [National Wildlife Refuge System](#) enable wildlife professionals to provide on-the-ground support for wildlife populations and their habitat. TWS members should engage with their Representatives and Senators to communicate the importance of funding wildlife conservation programs through TWS' appropriations [action center](#) or National Wildlife Refuge System [action center](#). *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

CAC Activities

TWS Chapters continue to build support and positive momentum for the Recovering America's Wildlife Act - Engagement with Congressional offices regarding the Recovering America's Wildlife Act continued leading up to a markup on the legislation in the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. You can read more about the markup in [TWS' coverage of the vote](#).

- The [Alabama Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) contacted Senator Shelby's office to encourage his attendance of the markup and request his support for the legislation. They also provided a copy of a [letter in support of one of Senator Carper's proposed amendments signed by The Wildlife Society and the American Fisheries Society](#). CAC *Contact:* [J. Ryan Mitchell](#)
- The [South Carolina](#), [Illinois](#), and [San Francisco Bay Area](#) Chapters of The Wildlife Society contacted their respective EPW committee members to thank them for their past support of the legislation and to request their attendance at the markup using [resources distributed through the CAN](#). CAC *Contacts:* SC - [Beau Bauer](#); IL - [Scott Meister](#); SFBA - [Patricia Valcarcel](#)
- Student chapters and members also play a critical role in advocating for wildlife conservation policy. [The University of Tennessee at Martin Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) crafted [letters to all 11 members of Tennessee's Congressional delegation](#) thanking existing cosponsors and requesting additional cosponsorship. The

Increasing the Society's effectiveness through communication and collaboration

[University of Maine](#) and [UC Davis](#) Student Chapters of The Wildlife Society also offered opportunities for their members to take action in support of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act.

North Dakota Chapter comments on proposed residential housing development - The North Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society submitted [comments to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Omaha District](#) on the proposed City of Horace River's Edge Development Project and its related impact to existing wetlands. The Chapter's comments included recommendations for appropriate wetland mitigation actions, as well as buffering practices along the Sheyenne River which is adjacent to the proposed development. CAC Contact: [Sarah Hewitt](#)

Federal Updates

Recovering America's Wildlife Act heads to the Senate floor – The U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works recently [advanced](#) the [Recovering America's Wildlife Act \(S.2372\)](#) to the Senate floor in a 15-5 bipartisan vote. The committee approved a major amendment to the legislation that would provide a multi-year ramp up in funding for state fish and wildlife agencies, starting with \$850 million in the first year of the program, and increasing to the originally proposed \$1.3 billion annually by the bill's fourth year in operation. Tribal funding would not be subject to this ramp up, with \$97.5 million annually provided to tribes. Cost savings from the multi-year ramp up would amount to \$750 million over four years. Under the newly adopted language, this \$750 million would go toward the establishment of the Endangered Species Recovery and Habitat Conservation Legacy Fund, used to conserve species under the U.S. [Endangered Species Act](#). As the bill advances to the Senate floor, TWS and partners are refreshing outreach and education materials regarding the legislation. The National Wildlife Federation recently hosted a briefing on the bill entitled *Recovering America's Wildlife Act – Crossing the Finish Line*, which can be viewed at this [link](#). Staff contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)

Administration highlights distribution of State and Tribal Wildlife Grants FY 2022 funds– The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently announced the distribution of \$56 million in fiscal year 2022 funding to states and territories through the [State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program](#). This funding will support efforts to conserve imperiled species and their habitats through implementation of states' wildlife action plans. Support for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program has been reflected on Capitol Hill – a [letter](#) signed by 165 bipartisan House members was circulated in favor of awarding the highest level of funding possible for the STWG program in FY 2023. A similar letter to the Senate is currently open for sign-on, with a deadline of May 18 for Senate offices to join. Reach out to Kelly for more information if your unit would like to discuss supporting this letter with your Senator. Staff contact: [Kelly O'Connor](#)

TWS continues engaging in fiscal year 2023 appropriations process – TWS and conservation partners have been advocating for robust federal conservation funding in FY 2023. In addition to STWG engagement, TWS has also sought to elevate the funding needs of the National Wildlife Refuge System and USGS cooperative science programming. As a member of the USGS Coalition, TWS has been meeting with congressional appropriations staff to discuss

the importance of robust funding in USGS conservation program areas like the Cooperative Research Units Program and Climate Adaptation Science Centers. Support for high levels of funding for key Department of the Interior programs was reflected in TWS' Senate appropriations [testimony](#) for DOI circulated in April. If you or your organizational unit are interested in getting involved in the appropriations process, check out TWS' general appropriations [action center](#) or National Wildlife Refuge System [action center](#). *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

Administration launches the “America the Beautiful Challenge” – The White House recently [launched](#) a nationwide “[America the Beautiful Challenge](#)” to invest \$1 billion in conservation projects consistent as part of President Biden’s America the Beautiful initiative over the next five years. Through this challenge, the administration hopes to facilitate the distribution of federal and private philanthropic contributions to accelerate land, water and wildlife conservation efforts across the United States. Monetary contributions toward the [America the Beautiful](#) Challenge will be distributed through a new grant program [administered](#) by the [National Fish and Wildlife Foundation](#). Key focus areas of the initiative include conserving and restoring rivers, grasslands, forests, coasts and wetlands; creating wildlife corridors; building climate resilience; and expanding equitable access to the outdoors. The ultimate goal of the challenge is to raise and distribute \$1 billion for community projects in these focus areas over the next five years. The request for challenge proposals will open in early May. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

Updates from Headquarters

TWS town hall series – TWS HQ hosted a virtual town hall series for organizational units throughout the month of April. TWS working groups, sections, chapters, and student chapters convened over Zoom to discuss what they were working on, swap advice with other TWS members, and work towards strengthening TWS as a whole. Topics discussed included TWS’ [DEI Vision](#), member retention and participation, and involvement in policy. For recordings of the town hall sessions, contact Mariah Beyers (msimmons@wildlife.org).

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 Kelly O’Connor at koconnor@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 Kelly O’Connor at koconnor@wildlife.org.