



The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

February 2023, Volume 9, Issue 2

Engagement Opportunities

Welcome members of the 118th Congress – For any units interested in connecting with their newly-elected or returning members of the U.S. Congress, TWS staff will be distributing welcome letters to members of the House Committee on Natural Resources, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, and new appropriators in the House and Senate. Check [this spreadsheet](#) to see if this includes any members of your unit's congressional delegation (note that some committee assignments are still being finalized).

Please reach out to Kelly if your unit is interested in joining TWS in signing onto a letter to target offices. Letters will be sent on a rolling basis, and we will continue updating the spreadsheet as additional committee assignments are made public. If your unit would like to send a letter to an office not listed on our spreadsheet, please feel free to adapt TWS' [template welcome letter](#) to highlight unit-specific resources. Reach out to TWS staff if your unit needs assistance in determining appropriate congressional office contacts. *Staff contact:* [Kelly O'Connor](#)

Sign-on to request Congressional leaders keep intact the US' \$20 billion investment in climate-smart agriculture and conservation technical assistance – The passage of the Inflation Reduction Act last year allotted significant funding for private lands conservation programs in the years ahead. Congress is set to take an additional look at this conservation funding as it reviews U.S. farm policy more broadly during this year's drafting of the 2023 Farm Bill. We invite units to join TWS in signing onto a conservation community [sign-on letter](#) requesting Congress maintain the climate-smart agriculture and conservation technical assistance funding as set out in the Inflation Reduction Act. The deadline for sign-on is February 14. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

CAC Activities

Hawaii Chapter supports efforts to conserve threatened and endangered forest birds on Maui – The [Hawaii Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) submitted [comments](#) to the National Parks Service in support of the proposed action alternative described in the recent [East Maui Mosquito Suppression Environmental Assessment](#). The Chapter's comments emphasized the negative consequences that the no action alternative would have on native species, and supported the validity of the data and methods supporting the project. *CAC contact:* [Patrick Chee](#)

Western Section CAC engagement opportunities at the Section's upcoming annual meeting – The [Western Section of The Wildlife Society's](#) Conservation Affairs Committee will be hosting a table during the [Section's 2023 Annual Meeting](#) (February 7-10) where visitors can

learn more about policy engagement across the Section and its chapters, sign up to join the CAC, learn how to identify and correspond with their members of Congress, and submit suggestions on policy items for the Section to engage with. *CAC contacts:* [Kelly Holland and Lisa Fields](#)

UMaine policy engagement featured on TWS website – The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act tabling event, hosted as a joint effort between the [University of Maine Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) and the [Maine Chapter of the Wildlife Society’s](#) Conservation Affairs Committee (CAC) and highlighted in the [December 2022 CAN newsletter](#), was featured in a recent [TWS web article](#) written by CAC Chair Kyle Smelter. The web article focuses on the role that TWS’ student members and chapters play in speaking to the need for dedicated funding for at-risk species conservation, and offers suggestions on resources for other student chapters interested in holding similar events. *CAC contact:* [Kyle Smelter](#)

Are you interested in sharing stories of your unit’s policy engagement with TWS’ broader membership? TWS staff is available to help units develop web and social media content highlighting the work that you do for the Conservation Affairs Network. Reach out to Kelly if you’re interested in developing content for TWS’ communications channels. Staff contact: [Kelly O’Connor](#)

Federal Updates

Framing the National Nature Assessment – The White House’s Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) issued a [Request for Information](#) in Fall ‘22 to inform the framing, development, and implementation of the country’s first National Nature Assessment (NNA). The development of the NNA is tied to the Biden Administration’s [Executive Order 14072 on Strengthening the Nation’s Forests, Communities, and Local Economies](#). The NNA is intended to assess the status and trends of America’s waters, wildlife, and ecosystems. TWS staff is currently coordinating with partners to determine appropriate avenues to provide feedback on NNA scoping. The deadline for responses to the Administration is March 31. Units interested in informing TWS’ partner engagement should contact TWS staff before the end of February. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

NEPA releases greenhouse gas emissions guidance – The White House’s Council on Environmental Quality issued [interim guidance](#) to inform how US federal agencies consider greenhouse gas emissions and climate change within [National Environmental Policy Act](#) reviews of proposed federal actions. The guidance directs agencies to quantify a proposed federal action’s projected greenhouse gas emissions, provide a best estimate for the social cost of the action’s projected greenhouse gas emissions, consider reasonable alternatives, and consider climate change effects. The new guidance aims to enable federal agencies to make informed decisions that align with climate action goals. The public comment period for the interim guidance ends on March 10. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

Delays in Federal rulemaking for ESA listings – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently announced delays of the effective date for two final rulings. The effective date for the [final ruling](#)

listing two distinct population segments (DPS) of the lesser prairie chicken (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*) under the [Endangered Species Act](#) was delayed from January 24, 2023 to March 27, 2023. The effective date for the [final ruling](#) reclassifying the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) as endangered under the Endangered Species Act was delayed from January 30, 2023 to March 31, 2023. The reasoning provided for both delays was to provide time for finalization of conservation tools and guidance documents. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

Updates from Headquarters

Welcome to the new wildlife.org – TWS launched a newly-designed [wildlife.org](#) on February 1. The new web design is focused on making resources for wildlifers at all stages of their career easier to access. For members of the CAN and other TWS members interested in policy engagement, you'll find all of our existing policy resources under the "Wildlife Professional Resources" tab at the top of the website. We're also pleased to feature the CAN Policy Toolkit on the new homepage. If you have any questions about where to find policy resources on the new website, please reach out to Kelly. You can send comments about the website to membership@wildlife.org.

Upcoming council review of TWS 2023-2024 policy priorities – Members of TWS Council will meet in February to review and approve policy priorities developed by Council's Policy Priorities Committee. TWS staff will provide updates on the final priorities and their implementation following this Council meeting. *Staff contact:* [Kelly O'Connor](#)

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.