



# The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

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*The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network supports communication, collaboration, and coordination on policy engagement across our organization and participating chapters, sections, and working groups. The monthly CAN Newsletter highlights policy issues occurring at local, regional, and national levels, and provides opportunities for wildlife professionals to engage with those issues.*

## Take Action!

**Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) set for Senate action** – Senators Martin Heinrich (D-NM) and Thom Tillis (R-NC) [reintroduced](#) the [Recovering America's Wildlife Act](#) at the end of March. In hopes of positive floor deliberations on the legislation later this spring, we are asking TWS units to write to their Senators as soon as possible to request their support and cosponsorship of the bill. You can find a template letter requesting support from your Senator in [TWS' Dropbox folder](#). TWS staff are happy to provide units with the best point of contact in your Senators' offices to send the letter to. *Staff contact:* [Kelly O'Connor](#)

## CAC Activities

**Alabama Chapter comments on considerations for prescribed fire in response to EPA proposed rulemaking on air quality standards** – [The Alabama Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) submitted [comments](#) to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) during their [proposed rulemaking](#) on changes to National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for particulate matter (PM). The proposed rule addresses improving air quality by lowering allowable levels of PM. The Chapter's comments noted that changes to PM standards should not unintentionally limit the ability of landowners and habitat managers to apply prescribed fire to the landscape, and emphasized scientific consensus around prescribed fire as a critical tool for ecosystem maintenance and restoration. *CAC contact:* [Ray Metzler](#)

**TWS units lead support efforts for critical conservation funding** – Throughout the month of March, TWS units have been engaging with their U.S. congressional offices to urge robust federal funding for critical conservation programs. Unit outreach has included submitting appropriations request forms to support funding for the [State and Tribal Wildlife Grants](#) (STWG) program and National Wildlife Refuge System, contacting offices directly to request support for these programs, and sending requests for signatures on an [STWG Dear Colleague Letter](#) in the U.S. House of Representatives. TWS staff will continue to circulate opportunities for units to engage with efforts to support federal funding for wildlife conservation. *Staff contact:* [Kelly O'Connor](#)

## Federal Updates

*Increasing the Society's effectiveness through communication and collaboration*

**TWS continues engagement in fiscal year 2024 appropriations process** - In response to the release of the Biden Administration's Fiscal Year 2024 Federal Budget request and Congress' review of FY 2024 funding needs, TWS and conservation partners have been urging Congress to adequately fund federal conservation programs in the year ahead. In addition to requests for adequate funding of the [State & Tribal Wildlife Grants](#) program, TWS has also urged Congress to increase funding for the [National Wildlife Refuge System](#). As a member of the USGS Coalition, TWS has also been meeting with congressional appropriations to discuss funding needs for [USGS programs](#) like the Cooperative Research Units Program and Climate Adaptation Science Centers. Support for adequate levels of funding for key Department of the Interior programs was reflected in [TWS' House Interior appropriations testimony](#) submitted last month. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

**BLM conservation and landscape health proposed rule** – Earlier this month, the BLM [proposed a rule](#) that aims to increase resilience of ecosystems across public lands by providing clarification and guidance on conservation as a land use equal to other public uses on BLM lands. The proposed rule provides guidance on establishing the use of conservation leases by BLM as a mechanism that provides for protection and restoration of public lands. Through these provisions, the agency seeks to improve the management for multiple use and sustained yield as outlined in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. TWS staff is digging into the proposed rule and will let members know of opportunities for shaping the comments of TWS headquarters. Comments on the proposed rule are due by June 20, with the potential for an extension if BLM decides to conduct public meetings on the proposed rulemaking. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

**TWS member Mark Smith appointed to Wildlife Services FACA Committee** – The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently [appointed](#) TWS Member Dr. Mark Smith to the [National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee \(NWSAC\)](#). The NWSAC advises the Secretary of Agriculture on matters of public health and safety, conservation of natural resources, protection of agricultural resources from predation and other wildlife damage, and reduction of property damage due to wildlife. A 2018 recipient of the TWS Fellows Award, Dr. Smith is also a past-chair of TWS' [Wildlife Damage Management Working Group](#) and a past president of the [Alabama Chapter](#) and [Southeastern Section](#) of TWS. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

**TWS signs-on to conservation coalition 2023 Farm Bill recommendations** – TWS headquarters joined a diverse group of conservation partners in announcing conservation community [recommendations](#) for the upcoming drafting of the 2023 Farm Bill. The coalition made several recommendations addressing adequate and sustainable conservation funding. To face a changing climate, the coalition also advised the talents and practices of farmers, ranchers, and forest owners be supported and utilized through robust implementation of conservation technical assistance programming. *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 Kelly O'Connor at [koconnor@wildlife.org](mailto: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](mailto:koconnor@wildlife.org).