



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 – TWS and our partners are gearing up for continued action in support of the recent Senate [reintroduction](#) of the [Recovering America's Wildlife Act](#). In hopes of positive floor deliberations on the legislation later this spring, we are asking TWS units and members to write to their Senators as soon as possible to request their cosponsorship of the bill.

- For TWS unit engagement:
 - You can find a template letter requesting cosponsorship from your Senators 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.
 - You can use TWS' updated [social media guidance](#) to post about the current version of the legislation on your unit's social media accounts.
- For TWS member engagement:
 - Share this [phone call script](#) with unit members and encourage them to call their senators to request cosponsorship of the bill (or thank any senators who have [cosponsored](#) the legislation).
 - Encourage members to write to their Senators directly using this [Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife action center](#).

CAC Activities

TWS Units support Senate advancement of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act – A total of 14 TWS units signed on to a [letter](#) to U.S. Senate leadership requesting the advancement and passage of the [Recovering America's Wildlife Act \(S. 1149\)](#) organized by the Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife. For other units interested in joining this effort, additional signatures for the letter will continue to be added on a rolling basis. Please reach out to Caroline Murphy if your unit is interested in signing on. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

Central Mountains & Plains Section and North Dakota Chapter collaborate on engagement with baiting and supplemental feeding legislation – The [Central Mountains & Plains Section of The Wildlife Society](#) worked closely with the [North Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) (NDCTWS) to submit [written testimony](#) in opposition to [House Bill No. 1151](#) in the North Dakota Legislature. This testimony supplemented individual testimony submitted by several members of NDCTWS. As written, the bill would have prohibited the North Dakota Game and Fish (NDGF) Department from issuing rules or adopting policies that prohibited

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baiting practices on private property, preventing NDGF from implementing science-based deer management practices. The Section's testimony highlighted recent science on the impacts of baiting on deer and elk populations, specifically how this practice increases the risk of transmitting diseases like Chronic Wasting Disease and Bovine Tuberculosis. Testimony also emphasized NDGF's authority to manage wildlife populations using the best-available science. HB 1151 was ultimately defeated by the North Dakota Senate in early April. *CAC contact:* [Daly Edmunds](#)

Tennessee Chapter approves new position statement on the protection of wildlife in Tennessee – Members of the [Tennessee Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) voted in March to finalize a new [position statement](#) on the protection of wildlife in the state and the authority of wildlife officers on private lands. The position statement is in response to a [case](#) in the Tennessee Court of Appeals (Western District) addressing the ability of wildlife officers to enter private properties without a warrant to investigate violations of wildlife regulations. In the position statement, the Chapter emphasizes the role that state wildlife officers play in preventing illegal take and overharvesting, as well as enforcing both state and federal wildlife regulations and addressing public safety concerns. Reducing the authority of state wildlife officers results in negative impacts to wildlife populations and members of the public. *Chapter contact:* [Erin Patrick](#)

Federal Updates

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 fiscal year ahead. In addition to [requesting support](#) for adequate funding for key Department of the Interior programs, TWS has also [urged Congress](#) to increase funding for conservation programs in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Several congressional budget hearings have already taken place regarding FY 2024 appropriations, including the House Natural Resources Committee [Department of the Interior budget hearing](#), the Senate Appropriations Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies [Department of the Interior budget hearing](#), and the Senate Appropriations Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies [Department of Agriculture budget hearing](#). Draft text for Department of Interior and Agriculture congressional funding proposals is expected out this summer. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

USFS releases Mature and Old-Growth Forests Report and notice of proposed rulemaking for Forest Service functions for climate resilience – In response to [Executive Order 14072](#), also known as *Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities and Local Economies*, the US Forest Service has released an [inventory of mature and old-growth forests](#) across all Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands. The report provides definitions and an initial inventory of mature and old-growth forests on more than 100 million acres of public lands, part of the department's strategy for combating climate change. As part of this strategy, the USFS recently published an [advanced notice of proposed rulemaking and request for comment](#) seeking input on how the Forest Service can develop new policies or build

on current policies to improve their ability to foster climate resilience, while also recognizing that impacts are different in different places across the country. TWS staff is currently reviewing the ANPR, and invite CAN representatives to coordinate with their broader units to provide any comments. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

Updates from Headquarters

Approaching Deadline for TWS' 30th Annual Conference Proposals – The deadline for contributed oral presentations, contributed posters, and student research in progress posters for the 30th annual conference in Louisville, Kentucky is May 7th. Visit twsconference.org for details.

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.