



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, working groups, and student chapters. The monthly CAN Newsletter highlights policy issues occurring at local, regional, and national levels, and provides opportunities for wildlife professionals and students to engage with those issues.

Take Action!

Help build support for the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) in the Senate – TWS and our partners are working to build support for the [Recovering America's Wildlife Act](#) in the U.S. Senate. In hopes of positive floor deliberations on the legislation, we are asking TWS units and members to write to their Senators 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

CACs lead outreach with Recovering America's Wildlife Act Senate cosponsors – The [Arkansas](#), [Michigan](#), and [South Carolina](#) Chapters of The Wildlife Society sent letters of thanks to Senators [Boozman](#), [Stabenow](#), and [Graham](#), respectively, following their recent cosponsorship of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act ([S. 1149](#)). Thank you letters help build relationships between TWS units and members of their state's congressional delegation, and encourage members of Congress to support wildlife conservation and conservation professionals in their state. A TWS [template thank-you letter](#) is available for other units interested in engaging with RAWA cosponsors. *Staff contact:* [Kelly O'Connor](#)

Federal Updates

Supreme Court releases WOTUS decision – The U.S. Supreme Court's [decision](#) on Sackett vs. EPA last month has resulted in significant limitations for protecting much of the nation's wetlands. The court found that wetlands are only protected by the [Clean Water Act](#) if they have a continuous surface connection with a larger body of water that makes it "difficult to determine

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where the ‘water’ ends and the ‘wetland’ begins.” The decision made clear that ephemeral waters are no longer protected by the Clean Water Act, and there is uncertainty regarding whether that also applies to intermittent waters that flow into a regulated body. The Biden Administration’s “[Waters Of The United States” rule](#), released by the EPA late last year, will likely have to be revised due to the Sackett ruling, though the outcomes are still unclear. Following the decision, the Army Corps of Engineers has paused approving key wetlands determinations pending guidance on the impacts of the ruling. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

Fiscal Responsibility Act signed into law – President Biden signed the “[Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023](#)” on June 3rd, avoiding a default on the country’s debt with only a few days to spare. The debt ceiling deal suspends the nation’s \$31.4 trillion borrowing limit, allowing the U.S. government to pay its bills until around January 2025. Notably, the deal aims to expedite the [NEPA review process](#) for energy and infrastructure projects by putting a one-year deadline on the production of environmental assessments and a two-year deadline on the production of environmental impact statements. Additionally, developers can take legal action against agencies if they do not adhere to the timelines. The deal also caps discretionary spending for six years, with across-the-board cuts for FY 2024 and FY 2025 [appropriations](#), and a one percent max increase over subsequent years. Further, the deal included a provision that codifies the approval of the [Mountain Valley Pipeline project](#), a natural gas pipeline that will run from northwestern West Virginia to southern Virginia, including through part of Jefferson National Forest. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

House releases Agriculture funding bill, Congress turns attention back to FY 2024 – The House Committee on Appropriations recently released the FY 2024 Department of Agriculture [funding bill](#). Notably, the bill proposes funding decreases for the [Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service](#) (APHIS), the [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS), and the [National Institute of Food and Agriculture](#) (NIFA). For more information on TWS funding requests for the Department of Agriculture, members can view [TWS’ House Agriculture Appropriations Testimony](#).

Now that Congress has moved beyond debt ceiling negotiations, a return to deliberations on FY 2024 program-specific spending will resume in earnest. To encourage these deliberations, the debt ceiling package included an incentive for Congress to pass FY 2024 funding bills before the end of the calendar year. If the twelve appropriations bills are not approved by January 2024, a continuing resolution that would cut spending by one percent across the board will be put into place. Members can check out TWS’ [Action Center](#) for updates on House and Senate funding proposals as they become available. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

Updates from Headquarters

TWS’ 2023 election period is now open! – TWS’ 2023 election period is now open for members to vote for the next TWS Council members. This year’s ballot includes two candidates for Vice President and candidates for the Central Mountains and Plains voting District and the Northeast Voting District Representatives. The newly elected Representatives will serve 3-year terms, and the newly elected Vice President will serve a 4-year term on Council as a member of

the Executive Committee, annually rotating through the positions of Vice President, President-Elect, President, and Immediate Past-President. They will be installed during the TWS Annual Conference in November. Members can vote for the next TWS Council members through the [membership portal](#) election tab and can view candidate statements [here](#). The election period closes June 30, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. EDT.

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.