



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

Support increased funding for U.S. federal conservation programs in fiscal year 2025 –

The window to submit testimony to the House and Senate appropriations subcommittees charged with setting annual funding levels for U.S. federal agencies and programs – including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), APHIS Wildlife Services (APHIS), National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) – is coming to a close. CACs are encouraged to **submit funding requests to the relevant subcommittees** using TWS' written testimony as a template. A guidance document including links to TWS' testimony and additional appropriations resources can be found [here](#). Due dates for each subcommittee are as follows:

- Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies (USFWS, USGS, BLM, USFS)
 - House: May 10
 - Senate: May 15
- Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies (APHIS, NIFA, NRCS)
 - House: May 10
 - Senate: May 8

Staff contact: [Kelly O'Connor](#)

CAC Activities

CACs unite to develop collaborative comments on BLM utility-scale solar planning –

TWS' [Western](#) and [Southwest](#) Sections, [Montana](#), [Nevada](#), [New Mexico](#), [Oregon](#), and [Sacramento-Shasta](#) Chapters, and [Renewable Energy Working Group](#), joined with TWS staff to develop [comments](#) on the Bureau of Land Management's recent [draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement \(PEIS\) for Utility-Scale Solar Energy Development](#). The final comments highlight the expertise of all participating CACs and members. This is the first instance of TWS policy correspondence developed in collaboration with, and co-signed by, a diverse group of CACs, and is a significant achievement furthering TWS' current [policy priority](#) of empowering unit and working group engagement with renewable energy policy. Staff contact: [Kelly O'Connor](#) (CAC contacts linked where referenced above)

Florida Chapter submits programmatic requests for key programs in the Department of the Interior – The [Florida Chapter of the Wildlife Society](#) submitted requests for increased

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funding in fiscal year 2025 for the National Wildlife Refuge System and USGS Cooperative Research Units program to Representative Wasserman Schultz (D-FL). The representative serves on the House Committee on Appropriations, making the Chapter's requests a valuable addition to TWS' overall [appropriations](#) engagement. CAC contact: [Jay Exum](#)

Illinois Chapter engages with Senate delegation to support the Recovering America's Wildlife Act – The Illinois Chapter of The Wildlife Society wrote to [Senator Durbin](#) (D-IL) to request his cosponsorship of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA; S. 1149). The Chapter's letter highlighted key species of wildlife in the state that would benefit from the dedicated funding to implement State Wildlife Action Plans provided by RAWA. The Chapter also wrote to [Senator Duckworth](#) (D-IL) thanking her for her continued support for, and cosponsorship of, RAWA. Senator Duckworth has cosponsored RAWA for the past two sessions of Congress. CAC contact: [Claire Johnson](#)

Leadership opportunities across Section Conservation Affairs Committees – There are currently vacancies for the role of Section Conservation Affairs Committee (CAC) Chair in the **Northwest, Southeastern, and Canadian sections**. Section Chairs communicate policy engagement activities and issues of interest from across the section's jurisdiction to the section's board, provide coordination and support to chapter CACs, and meet every other month with TWS staff and other section CAC Chairs to coordinate on regional and national policy issues. Please reach out to Kelly if you have any questions about these opportunities or are interested in serving as a Section Chair. Staff contact: [Kelly O'Connor](#)

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 koconnor@wildlife.org

Federal Updates

Department of the Interior finalizes Public Lands Rule – The U.S. Department of the Interior [finalized rulemaking](#) guiding the management of landscape health across Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands. The rule establishes restoration and mitigation leasing to facilitate these practices on public lands managed by the BLM and defines conservation as a valid use of public lands alongside activities such as resource extraction, grazing, and energy development. TWS submitted [comments](#) to the BLM on the draft Public Lands Rule, supported by the expertise of the [Rangeland Wildlife Working Group](#).

TWS' Invasive Species Working Group supports nominations of Dr. Steve Johnson Federal Advisory Committee – The Wildlife Society's [Invasive Species Working Group](#) (ISWG) worked with TWS staff to identify a nominee for the [Invasive Species Advisory Committee](#) (ISAC), which provides direction to the [National Invasive Species Council](#). With the support of the ISWG, TWS submitted a [nomination](#) for Dr. Steve Johnson, a Certified Wildlife Biologist® and Full Professor at the University of Florida. Dr. Johnson is a past chair of the ISWG with over two decades of experience in invasive species ecology and management. Identifying

opportunities for service on federal advisory committees is yet another way for wildlife professionals to engage with conservation policy.

The Wildlife Society joins with American Wildlife Conservation Partners organizations on recent sign-on efforts – As a participating organization in the [American Wildlife Conservation Partners](#) (AWCP), The Wildlife Society supported several recent sign-on efforts. AWCP organizations [wrote](#) to Chairwoman Mallory of the Council on Environmental Quality requesting a commitment to a net gain pledge for wetlands across the country. The letter recommends immediate actions to produce fast and meaningful results in wetlands conservation.

TWS also joined AWCP organizations in [expressing concerns](#) over the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for Utility-Scale Solar Energy Development, specifically potential conflicts with critical big game habitat in the preferred alternative identified in the PEIS. This letter supplements TWS' comments to the BLM.

Finally, AWCP organizations including TWS submitted a [letter](#) to leadership in the House and Senate appropriations subcommittees on Interior, Environment, and Related agencies requesting a pause in the restriction on the sale of horses and burros by the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Wild Horse and Burro (WHB) Program. The request highlights the current overpopulation of horses and burros on public lands and in long-term holding facilities, emphasizing the resulting ecological damage and financial expense.

TWS signs comments developed by Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership and other partner organizations on BLM solar energy rulemaking – The Wildlife Society joined with the [Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership](#) and other partners in the conservation community to submit additional [comments](#) to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on their Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for Utility-Scale Solar Energy Development. These comments provide detailed technical recommendations on avoidance of big game migratory corridors and aquatic habitats during project siting, as well as concerns around the preferred alternative identified by the BLM.

Questions on any items covered in this month's Federal Updates can be sent to [Kelly O'Connor](#)



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Updates from Headquarters

Current and past TWS presidents condemn wolf abuse in Wyoming – TWS' president, president-elect, and 23 past presidents wrote a [letter](#) to Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon condemning recent events involving the killing of a gray wolf in the state. The letter emphasizes TWS' positions on the [responsible human use of wildlife](#) and ethical hunting principles outlined in the [North American Model of Wildlife Conservation](#). The authors call for changes to state laws that would make it illegal to pursue, harm, or kill wildlife with vehicles in the future.

Keith Norris, Director of Wildlife Policy and Communications, concludes tenure with TWS – TWS' Director of Wildlife Policy and Communications Keith Norris will finish his time with headquarters staff in early May. Keith has been with TWS since 2014 and played a crucial role in the development of the Conservation Affairs Network. The TWS policy team wishes him well in his new role!

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 policy@wildlife.org