



The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

June 2024, Volume 10, Issue 6

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.

Engagement Opportunities

Thank members of Congress for supporting the National Wildlife Refuge System and State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program – In recent months TWS staff have asked CACs to reach out to their members of Congress requesting support on Dear Colleague Letters (DCLs) for the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) and State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program (STWG). With letters for both programs now finalized in the U.S. House ([NWRS](#), [STWG](#)) and Senate ([NWRS](#), [STWG](#)), we encourage units to thank their members of Congress who supported these critical programs. TWS staff are available to help craft thank you letters and to identify appropriate staff contacts as needed. *Staff contact:* [Kelly O'Connor](#)

CAC Activities

South Dakota Chapter supports increased funding for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program – [The South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) wrote to Senators Thune and Rounds requesting their support for increased funding for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program (STWG) in fiscal year 2025. They asked both senators to add their signatures to a STWG Dear Colleague Letter led by Senators Whitehouse (D-RI) and Crapo (R-ID). *CAC contact:* [Mark Norton](#)

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

Increasing the Society's effectiveness through communication and collaboration

TWS finalizes FY2025 appropriations engagement – The Wildlife Society urged Congress to provide increased funding for key federal conservation programs for fiscal year 2025 via testimony submitted to the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees overseeing programs in the U.S. Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture. Visit [TWS' Appropriations Action Center](#) to learn more about our engagement with the U.S. congressional appropriations process and our funding requests for FY25. Written testimony for FY25 and previous years can be found in the [TWS policy library](#).

Additionally, TWS joined partners on several recent sign-on letters relating to funding for U.S. federal conservation programs. These efforts include:

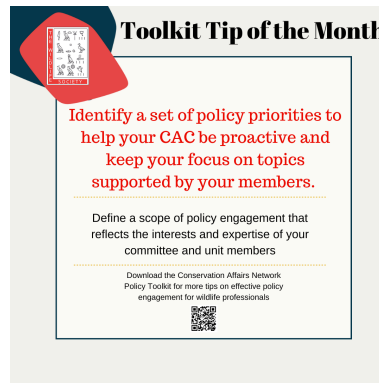
- [FY2025 Migratory Bird Programs Appropriations Request](#)
- [American Wildlife Conservation Partners support for funding to maintain, conserve, and enhance migration corridors in FY2025](#)
- [American Wildlife Conservation Partners FY2025 Bureau of Land Management Wild Horse and Burro Program appropriations request](#)
- [Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement \(CARE\) FY2025 request for the National Wildlife Refuge System](#)
- [American Wildlife Conservation Partners & TRCP Policy Council appropriations request for fish and wildlife research programs](#)

Conservation organizations continue to oppose inclusion of greater sage-grouse rider in appropriations bill – TWS joined with a number of conservation organizations to [oppose](#) the inclusion of a rider preventing the U.S. Department of the Interior from using federal funds to determine the greater sage-grouse's listing status under the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA). This rider has been included in appropriations bills for the past decade and fundamentally undermines the science-based processes that implement the ESA. The letter also encouraged increased congressional funding for programs related to sagebrush and sage-grouse management.

U.S. Farm Bill advances in the House, but major challenges to enactment lie ahead – House Agriculture Committee Chairman Thompson (R-PA) introduced [draft bill text](#) for the U.S. Farm Bill (formally H.R. 8467, the “Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2024”) on May 21. The bill underwent committee markup just two days later, and following debate and amendment was advanced to the House floor for eventual consideration. Notably, the bill would direct funds from the Inflation Reduction Act toward conservation programs but would remove the IRA's requirement that conservation be targeted at climate-smart programs and greenhouse gas emission reduction, a direction opposed by House Democrats. It introduces a new Forest Conservation Easement Program (FCEP), reauthorizes existing programs like the Feral Swine Eradication Program and the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP) at higher funding levels, and maintains a 10% allocation for wildlife in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Stabenow (D-MI) released a [detailed plan](#) for the Senate's draft Farm Bill which emphasizes climate change adaptation throughout. The plan proposes increasing the acreage cap in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and prioritizing native grasslands within CRP. It also reauthorizes

programs like the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program and the Feral Swine Eradication Program. The Farm Bill will require bipartisan support to pass both the House and Senate. We'll continue to update members on the legislation's progress throughout the year.

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



Updates from Headquarters

TWS President testifies on possible policy changes affecting wolves in Wyoming – TWS President Bob Lanka provided testimony to the Wyoming Legislature's Joint Travel, Recreation, Wildlife, and Cultural Resources Committee regarding a recent incident involving the killing of a gray wolf in the state. President Lanka recommended a modification to current statute to forbid intentionally running down and running over predatory animals (the legal designation for wolves across much of Wyoming) with automotive vehicles, motorized wheeled or over-snow vehicles. This testimony follows a [letter](#) on the incident to Wyoming's Governor Mark Gordon signed by President Lanka and 23 past TWS presidents.

Vote for your next TWS Council Members – Elections are currently underway for TWS Vice President and candidates for Canadian, Southeastern, and Southwest Voting District Representatives. All TWS members can vote for the next Vice President, and members residing within a relevant Voting District can vote for that Representative. To vote, log in to your TWS member portal and click the Election tab!

Job openings with The Wildlife Society – TWS is currently seeking qualified candidates for the position of [Digital Communications Manager](#) and [Internal Affairs Writer](#). Both positions are full-time remote, and applications may be submitted until **June 9**. Questions and applications can be directed to TWS Operations Coordinator [Kristi Confortin](#).

Hannah Henry completes policy internship with TWS – TWS' current Joe Burns Memorial Wildlife Policy Intern Hannah Henry will conclude her internship at the end of the month. She is moving on to begin her PhD work at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Many thanks to Hannah for her great work during her internship!

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