



# 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.*

## On the Horizon

**Start planning engagement with TWS' 2025-2026 policy priorities** – Every other year TWS solicits feedback from unit, working group, and Conservation Affairs Committee (CAC) leaders on the most important policy topics for TWS to engage with during the next session of Congress. The process to develop TWS' policy priorities for 2025 and 2026 will begin in just a few months, making this the perfect time to start discussing critical legislative and regulatory issues facing wildlife and wildlife professionals. Appropriate TWS policy priorities will directly affect wildlife professionals and their work, have decision-making processes based at the national level, and revolve around issues in which TWS can fill a unique role. More information on identifying and defining policy priorities can be found in [Section 2.3 of the CAN Policy Toolkit](#). Please reach out to Kelly if your unit or working group needs assistance engaging with this process. *Staff contact:* [Kelly O'Connor](#)

## CAC Activities

**Western Section supports Bureau of Land Management's proposed removal of excess horses in California and Nevada** – [The Western Section of The Wildlife Society](#) submitted [comments](#) to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on its [Preliminary Environmental Assessment \(PEA\) for the removal of excess wild horses outside of the Montgomery Pass Wild Horse Territory \(MPWHT\)](#). The Section's comments supported the proposal to reduce feral horses in the target removal area as an action required to protect and sustain healthy public lands. The PEA reports that the number of horses outside the boundaries of the MPWHT has nearly doubled since 2015 and that horses are spending increasing amounts of time outside MPWHT boundaries. The proposed project area includes public lands along the California-Nevada state line in Mono County, CA. The Section's comments highlighted the negative impacts of excess feral horses on native wildlife and habitat, citing The Wildlife Society's [Issue Statement on Feral Horses and Burros in North America](#). *CAC contact:* [Kevin Hunting](#)

**Wisconsin Chapter joins partners to highlight impacts of proposed solar farm on greater prairie-chicken** – [The Wisconsin Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) co-signed a [letter](#) to the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin regarding the proposed Vista Sands Solar Project adjacent to [Buena Vista Wildlife Area](#) in Portage Co. The property is the primary site in Wisconsin offering critical habitat to the greater prairie-chicken, a state threatened species also listed as Vulnerable

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on the [UCN Red List of Threatened Species](#). The letter, led by the [North American Grouse Partnership](#) and supported by many conservation organizations, highlighted the likelihood of habitat fragmentation, degradation, and loss if the project moves forward as proposed. It also discussed the potential for cumulative impacts on the greater prairie-chicken beyond the state and provided science-based recommendations for avoidance and mitigation measures to ensure the long-term viability of the species in Wisconsin. *Chapter contact:* [Darren Ladwig](#)

**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](mailto:koconnor@wildlife.org)*

## Federal Updates

**TWS submits comments to the Bureau of Land Management on range-wide planning for greater sage-grouse in collaboration with units and working groups** – The Wildlife Society submitted [comments](#) to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in response to the agency’s [Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement for Greater Sage-Grouse Range-wide Planning \(EIS\)](#). Comments were developed in collaboration with – and co-signed by – several TWS units from across the affected planning area and working groups with expertise relating to the proposed actions within the EIS. They emphasized the critical need for action to reverse trends in greater sage-grouse population decline and loss of sagebrush habitat and provided science-based recommendations on topics including mitigation measures, sagebrush restoration, livestock grazing and drought management, and removal of feral horses and burros.

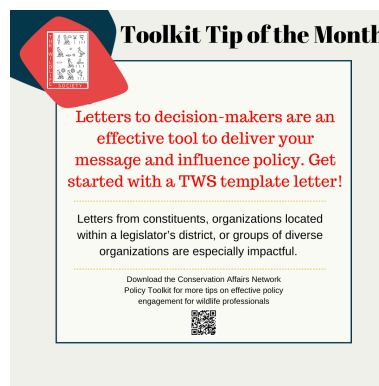
**Conservation organizations endorse the introduction of bipartisan bill to strengthen habitat connectivity and migration corridors** – The Wildlife Society joined more than 50 conservation organizations in [supporting](#) the introduction of the Wildlife Movement Through Partnerships Act. [Announced](#) by Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA), the bill would aim to improve collaboration across jurisdictions and support States, Tribes, and private landowners in their efforts to improve habitat connectivity and migration corridors (a summary of the legislation as currently proposed can be found [here](#)). Companion legislation in the House ([H.R. 8836](#)) has been introduced by Representatives Zinke (R-MT) and Beyer (D-VA).

**Markup of fiscal year 2025 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies spending bill passes House subcommittee** – The U.S. House Interior Appropriations subcommittee passed

a spending bill for FY2025 following [markup](#) at the end of June. The draft bill includes a 2% increase in funding for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) State and Tribal Wildlife Grants (STWG) program, returning to funding levels from FY 2023. This has been a notably difficult cycle for federal conservation funding overall, with many programs funded below the President's FY2025 budget request and FY2024 enacted levels. The draft bill included a \$144 million cut for the USFWS which could significantly impact fish and wildlife professionals if enacted. The bill will go to the House Appropriations committee and House floor in the coming weeks.

**U.S. federal agencies release climate adaptation plans for 2024-2027** – More than 20 U.S. federal agencies [released](#) climate adaptation plans intended to guide agency actions and expand efforts relating to climate change impacts through 2027. Actions included in the adaptation plans range from coral reef restoration (NOAA) to managing wildfire risks in sagebrush ecosystems (DoI), to providing more climate tools to nonfederal grantees to encourage investments in climate resilience measures (EPA).

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



## Updates from Headquarters

**Register now for TWS' 31st annual conference** – Join us in Baltimore for TWS' 31st annual conference from October 19-23. [Registration is now open](#), with early-bird rates available for members who register before July 17th. This year's conference will be held at the [Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor Inn](#), with closing festivities at the [National Aquarium](#). TWS policy staff will be offering a [workshop](#) on strategies for policy engagement on Monday the 21st from 1-5 pm. There will also be an in-person meeting for CAN participants, stay tuned for more details. We hope to see you there!



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*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](mailto:policy@wildlife.org)*