



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

The Conservation Affairs Network Goes to Washington – This year's annual conference in Baltimore (October 19-23) offers members easy access to Washington DC. TWS staff would like to offer CAN participants an opportunity to visit the Capitol to learn more about U.S. federal legislative processes and network with other wildlifers interested in shaping policy. If you're joining us in Baltimore, please take a few minutes to [fill out this poll](#) by **August 20** to help facilitate planning for this event. *Staff contact:* [Kelly O'Connor](#)

CAC Activities

Alberta Chapter comments on provincial changes to grizzly bear management – The [Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) (ACTWS) recently submitted a [letter](#) to the Minister of Forestry and Parks of Alberta voicing concerns about changes to grizzly bear hunting regulations in the province. In a [Ministerial Order](#) issued earlier this month, the Alberta government introduced regulatory changes to allow hunting of grizzly bears involved in human-bear conflicts or located in "areas of concern" (a term not defined in the above-referenced Ministerial Order). ACTWS' letter pointed to the tenuous status of grizzlies in the province, which were listed as [Threatened](#) in Alberta in 2010. They noted that many Bear Management Areas (BMAs) lack updated population estimates which should form the basis for a science-based management strategy. To further emphasize the need for science-informed decision-making in the context of these management changes, the letter cited the lack of evidence for the use of hunting as a tool to reduce human-bear conflicts. The Chapter highlighted strategies to manage human-bear interactions identified in the [Alberta Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan](#) and urges the Government of Alberta to prioritize implementing that plan. *CAC contact:* [Mark Boyce](#)

TWS chapters support movement on a U.S. Farm Bill – The [Iowa](#), [South Dakota](#), and [Texas Chapters](#) of The Wildlife Society all signed a recent [letter](#) to congressional leaders urging movement toward the passage of a new Farm Bill. Hundreds of state and nationally-based organizations and businesses – including The Wildlife Society (see Federal Updates below) – spoke to the urgent need to pass a Farm Bill before the end of this session of Congress.

Leadership opportunities across Section Conservation Affairs Committees – There are currently vacancies for the role of Section Conservation Affairs Committee (CAC) Chair in the

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Northwest and Southeastern 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

Hundreds of organizations call for the passage of a 2024 Farm Bill before the adjournment of the 118th Congress – [The Wildlife Society joined with a diverse group of organizations](#) in a letter to U.S. House and Senate leadership highlighting the urgent need to pass a [Farm Bill](#) before the end of the year. Private lands conservation across the country depends on federal funding authorized under Title II of the Farm Bill. Stakeholders worry that if a Farm Bill is not passed before the 118th session of Congress adjourns, the political and logistical constraints associated with a new Congress will severely limit progress toward enacting a new Farm Bill.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announces lead-free pilot program at seven National Wildlife Refuges – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will [begin implementing a pilot program](#) to test voluntary, incentive-based efforts to increase the use of lead-free ammunition by hunters. The program was developed in coordination with the [Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Council](#), a federal advisory committee of state, non-governmental, and industry partners including TWS' CEO Ed Arnett. Hunters choosing lead-free ammunition on refuges included in the pilot program will be reimbursed for the cost of their ammunition. The program aligns with TWS' [support](#) for policies that reduce wildlife exposure to lead used for hunting and fishing.

FY 2025 appropriations process continues with mixed results for conservation programs – Spending bills to fund conservation programs in both the U.S. Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture made progress in both chambers of Congress over the last month.

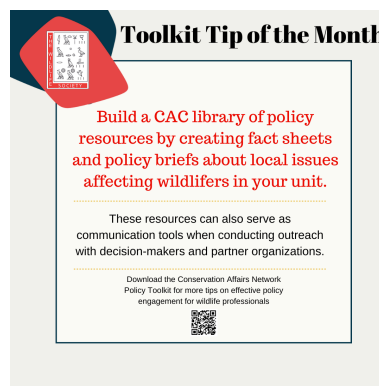
The House passed its spending bill for Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies ([H.R. 8998](#)) in late July. The legislation proposes funding levels below FY24 enacted funds and the President's FY25 budget request for many programs across the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Geological Survey, Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management. It does include a two percent increase in funding for the [State and Tribal Wildlife Grants](#) program, returning that program to FY23 funding levels. The Senate's draft Interior spending bill ([S. 4802](#)) passed the Appropriations Committee the following day, proposing funding levels matching the President's budget request across many programs. Both the House and Senate are proposing decreased funding for the [National Wildlife Refuge System](#) (NWRS) compared to FY24 enacted levels. TWS supported the President's requested \$602.33 million for refuges in our FY25

appropriations testimony. The House's proposed \$504.25 million falls below the past three years of enacted funding levels for the NWRS.

Legislation to fund programs in the Department of Agriculture has passed Appropriations Committees in both the House ([H.R. 9027](#)) and Senate ([S. 4690](#)). Proposed funding levels for programs of interest to TWS members are similar between the two bills with a notable exception in the Natural Resource Conservation Survey's **Conservation Technical Assistance** (CTA) program. The Senate's bill includes \$839.995 million for the CTA program compared to the House's proposed \$759.495 million. Both bills fall short of the President's requested \$869 million – and TWS' requested \$900 million – for the program.

Visit [TWS' appropriations action center](#) for a detailed look at how FY25 funding proposals across the House and Senate compare to TWS' appropriations requests.

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



Updates from Headquarters

Applications open for Native Student Professional Development Program – Calling Native college or graduate students in the natural sciences! The Wildlife Society (TWS) Native People's Wildlife Management Working Group (NPWMWG) has announced the [2024 Native Student Professional Development \(NSPD\) Program](#), where up to 10 individuals will be selected to attend [The Wildlife Society's 31st Annual Conference](#). This will include complimentary conference registration, mentorship, one-year TWS & NPWMWG membership, a travel stipend, wildlife career panel discussion, networking events, and professional development. [Apply Today!](#)

The application deadline is **August 18, 2024**. Learn more about the program on the [Native People's Wildlife Management Working Group web page](#).

TWS' new strategic plan is now available – TWS' strategic plan for the next five years and beyond is now [available online](#). The plan reflects member feedback, interviews, and working sessions, and focuses on three mission-driven priorities for our society. Members can also access background documents from the planning process via the member portal.

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2024 TWS election results – TWS members have [elected](#) Evelyn Merrill as the new Vice President. Al Arsenault, Lisa Muller, and Kathy Granillo have been elected as the Canadian, Southeastern, and Southwest Representatives respectively. Congratulations to all participating candidates from this election cycle.

Register now for TWS' 31st annual conference – Join us in Baltimore for TWS' 31st annual conference from October 19-23. [Registration is now open](#). 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 offer a [workshop](#) on strategies for policy engagement on Monday the 21st from 1-5 pm. We hope to see you there!



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