



The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

October 2024, Volume 10, Issue 10

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

Help identify TWS policy priorities – A [formal request for input](#) on TWS' upcoming policy priorities was sent to all CAC Chairs, Chapter and Section Presidents, and Working Group Chairs on October 8. TWS Council's Policy Priorities Committee seeks member feedback to help identify the most important issues facing wildlife and/or wildlife professionals for TWS to engage with in the coming years. Please consider joining us in person (see conference agenda below) or virtually (invitation forthcoming) to learn more about the process of developing policy priorities and brainstorm possible priorities. You can also email policy@wildlife.org with questions and suggestions for policy priorities.

Ask Congress to pass a bipartisan Farm Bill in 2024 – The National Wildlife Federation is coordinating a sign-on letter for organizations interested in supporting a bipartisan 2024 Farm Bill. Passing legislation before the end of the year would maximize the likelihood of increased, long-term funding for conservation in the new Farm Bill. **You can read and sign the letter [here](#).** Signatures are requested by **October 15, 2024**.

On the Horizon

Policy engagement at TWS' 31st annual conference – The plenary theme of TWS' [31st annual conference](#) is "Merging Science, Policy, and Culture to Advance Conservation". There will be many opportunities for conference participants to learn more about conservation policy and engagement strategies for wildlife professionals throughout the conference. For an overview of policy opportunities in Baltimore, take a look at this [agenda at-a-glance](#).

Agenda at a Glance: Policy Opportunities at the Annual Conference

Saturday 19	Sunday 20	Monday 21	Tuesday 22	Wednesday 23
<p>Council Meeting 10:00 AM, Paca</p> <p>Updates from TWS' policy program</p> 	<p>Plenary 8:30 AM - 12:00 PM, Holiday</p> <p>Merging Science, Policy, and Culture to Advance Conservation</p> <p>Panel Discussion 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM, Key 1</p> <p>State and Federal Agency Perspectives on Interfacing Science, Culture, and Policy to Advance Conservation</p>	<p>Symposium 8:30 AM - 10:15 AM, Key 2</p> <p>Wildlife in Public Policy</p> <p>Panel Discussion 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM, Key 1</p> <p>Perspectives from Non-Governmental Organizations on Merging Science, Culture, and Policy to Advance Conservation</p> <p>Workshop 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM, Paca</p> <p>The Wildlife Professional's Guide for Engaging in the Policy Arena</p>	<p>CAN Meeting 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM, Business Office</p> <p>Brainstorming session for new TWS policy priorities</p> <p>Panel Discussion 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM, Key 1</p> <p>Conserving Wildlife through Farm Bill Policy, Now and in the Future</p>	<p>CAN Field Trip 7:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Capitol Hill</p> <p>Tour of the Capitol and visits with member offices and Department of the Interior staff</p> 

Join TWS policy staff and other CAN participants on Tuesday morning (October 22) from 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM to brainstorm ideas for TWS' future policy priorities. This meeting will take place in the conference business office and is open to all interested members whether or not you're currently engaged with the CAN.

CAC Activities

Alaska Chapter joins TWS in letter opposing Ambler Road Project amendment in the National Defense Authorization Act – [The Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) (AKTWS) and TWS submitted a letter to congressional leadership opposing the inclusion of an Ambler Road Project amendment added by the Senate Armed Services Committee to the Senate's version of the National Defense Authorization Act (S. 4638). The amendment - introduced by Alaska Senator Dan Sullivan - would have forced the approval of the Ambler Road, an industrial access road that would pass through the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. AKTWS provided [extensive comments](#) on the potential impacts of the project to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) last year in response to the agency's draft environmental impact statement for the project. The BLM released its Record of Decision preventing the construction of the proposed road earlier this year. These comments were included in the letter to congressional leadership. CAC contact: [Tim Fullman](#)

Hawai'i Chapter launches Conservation in Action project – The [Hawai'i Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) recently launched its [Conservation in Action project](#) to support the creation of a network of conservation professionals interested in taking action on policies impacting natural resources in Hawai'i. The network is intended to gather and share information on relevant

policies and engagement opportunities, as well as provide resources on how to take action (e.g. how to write testimony on a piece of legislation). CAC contact: [Patrick Chee](#)

Leadership opportunity in Section Conservation Affairs Committee – The Northwest Section seeks a member interested in serving as Section Conservation Affairs Committee Chair. Section CAC 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 this opportunity 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

TWS Action

The Wildlife Society and nearly 50 other regional and national conservation organizations – including several TWS chapters – recently [endorsed](#) the introduction of the **North American Grasslands Conservation Act** ([H.R. 9945](#)). Representatives Mace (R-SC), Davids (D-KS), Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Thompson (D-CA) introduced the bill in the U.S. House on October 8, 2024. Modeled after the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), the legislation would create a voluntary, incentive-based program to conserve critically imperiled grasslands across America. [TWS last endorsed the bill](#) when it was introduced during the 117th Congress. Coalition efforts to support the bill will now shift to the introduction of a bipartisan counterpart in the Senate.

TWS joined other members of the American Wildlife Conservation Partners in [supporting](#) the **Wildlife Movement Through Partnership Act** (H.R. 8836) introduced by Representative Zinke (R-MT). The bill would codify Secretarial Order 3362 (Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big-Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors), expand its focus, and provide funding for collaborative conservation efforts targeting key migratory corridors.

Our society also signed a letter written by the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership [opposing](#) the **Ambler Road Project amendment** in the National Defense Authorization Act detailed in CAC Activities above. The letter was signed by a number of national conservation groups and coalitions, as well as Alaska-based businesses.

Federal Updates

Congress passes continuing resolution, avoiding government shutdown – Congress and President Biden passed legislation to extend funding for the federal government through December 20, 2024 ([Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025](#)). The continuing

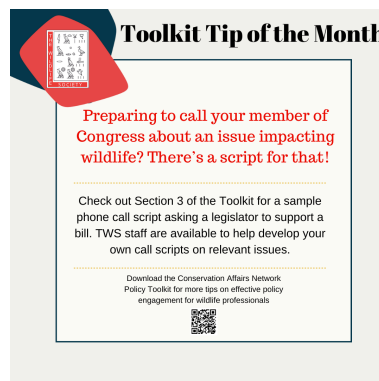
resolution will temporarily prevent a harmful government shutdown. The House and Senate now have until after November's federal to reconcile differences in [spending bills](#).

U.S. Farm Bill expires without replacement or extension – The 2018 Farm Bill was originally set to expire September 30, 2023. Congress extended the legislation through September 30, 2024, but failed to pass either a 2024 Farm Bill or another extension of the legislation before its expiration. Mandatory spending under [Title II of the Farm Bill](#) accounts for the largest single source of federal funding for private lands conservation. Critical programs like the Conservation Reserve Program will be negatively impacted if Congress cannot make progress toward passing a new Farm Bill. TWS recently joined with a large coalition of organizations [calling for](#) a new bipartisan Farm Bill before the close of the 118 session of Congress.

WILD Act passes in the Senate – The U.S. Senate unanimously passed the Wildlife Innovation and Longevity Driver (WILD) Reauthorization Act ([H.R. 5009](#)), returning the bill to the House for final approval. The bill would [reauthorize](#) funding for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's [Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program](#), and several species conservation bills like the Marine Turtle Conservation Act. The legislation will now return to the House for final approval before it goes to the President's desk to be signed into law.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service supports expanded efforts to recruit students from diverse backgrounds into conservation careers – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) finalized a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with several universities intended to "[aid the Service in creating a workforce that reflects the diversity of the American People](#)." Bowie State, Alabama A&M, and Bethune-Cookman Universities join a larger consortium of universities across six states focused on creating and implementing strategies to connect diverse students with careers in the USFWS and the broader conservation community. The partnership is driven by Executive Orders 14035 ([Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Work Force](#)) and 14041 ([Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity through Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#)).

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



Tools & Resources

Increasing the Society's effectiveness through communication and collaboration

Solar Beneficial Management Best Practices Database – The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies has released a standardized, searchable [database of solar-wildlife guidance documents](#) published by state fish and wildlife agencies. Stakeholders can utilize this database to support engagement with local solar energy policy facilitation of wildlife-friendly solar siting and operations.

Wildlife for the 21st Century Volume 7 – American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP) has released the 7th volume of recommendations to enhance the conservation of fish and wildlife populations for the next presidential Administration and the next two sessions of Congress. [W21 Volume 7](#) includes 9 major recommendations. The Wildlife Society led the development of recommendations on mitigating wildlife and habitat impacts resulting from energy development and operations.

Updates from Headquarters

See you in Baltimore – Staff have been busy preparing for another successful TWS annual conference. To all our members joining us in Baltimore, safe travels and see you soon!



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