



# 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.*

## Engagement Opportunities

**Tell members of Congress to support State and Tribal Wildlife Grants** – A Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) supporting FY26 funding for the USFWS State and Tribal Wildlife Grants (STWG) Program is now open for signatures. You can encourage your members of Congress in the US House of Representatives to share their support for this critical conservation program by signing on to the DCL. Use this [TWS email template and guidance](#) for easy outreach to member offices. TWS staff are available to help connect you with office staffers as needed. The deadline for signatures is **April 24, 2025**. Please let TWS staff know if you make this request of your MOC! *Staff contact:* [Kelly O'Connor](#)

**Share input on forest health, ESA legislation** – TWS staff are soliciting member input on two pieces of legislation making their way through Congress: The [Fix Our Forests Act](#) (H.R. 471) and [ESA Amendments Act of 2025](#) (H.R. 1897). Members with relevant expertise are encouraged to work with their CAC to collate feedback by the **end of the month**. Please provide any written feedback to [policy@wildlife.org](mailto:policy@wildlife.org). If you've never reviewed draft bill text, here are some [tips and suggestions](#) for getting started. *Staff contact:* [Kelly O'Connor](#)

## CAC Activities

**TWS units comment on USFWS proposed listing of the monarch butterfly** – The [Western Section and Oregon Chapter](#) of The Wildlife Society, as well as the [North Carolina Chapter](#) of The Wildlife Society, submitted comments to the USFWS on the proposed listing of the monarch butterfly. The USFWS' current proposal is to list the monarch as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Both sets of comments highlight relevant data on the biology, range, and population trends of the species, which support the need for ESA listing. The Western Section and Oregon Chapter provided additional expertise specific to critical habitat needs for the species, which occur entirely within California in the Service's current proposal. Their comments suggest that, based on current data and projected future conditions, the western population of the monarch butterfly may merit a listing status of endangered. The North Carolina Chapter's comments also support the USFWS' proposal to list the species and focus on management strategies to stabilize monarch butterfly populations. *CAC contacts:* [Lisa Fields](#) (Western Section), [Trent Gianella](#) (ORTWS), [Sau Silwal](#) (NCTWS)

**Western Section opposes removal of regulations implementing National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)** – The Western Section of The Wildlife Society submitted [comments](#) to the Council on Environmental Quality opposing the [removal of NEPA implementing regulations](#). As stated in the Section’s comments, the regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act “ensure that federal agencies are consistent in their implementation of NEPA and that they fully evaluate the environmental impacts of their actions where those actions risk having the most impact – in particular, where unique geographic areas or threatened or endangered species are present...” They highlight that removing these regulations will result in the inconsistent application of NEPA across agencies and costly delays to projects. *CAC contact:* [Lisa Fields](#)

**Alabama Chapter opposes state bill impacting management and ownership of captive cervids** – The Alabama Chapter of The Wildlife Society [wrote](#) to members of the Alabama Legislature in opposition to [House Bill 509](#). The bill would limit the authority of Alabama state agencies to kill, test, and restrict the transfer of captive cervids due to disease except under limited circumstances, and would establish that captive cervids in the possession of game breeders are the personal property of those individuals. The Chapter’s comments emphasize that the legislation would weaken Alabama’s ability to monitor and respond to chronic wasting disease (CWD) in both captive and wild cervids. In establishing private ownership of wildlife species the bill also violates the principle of wildlife as a public trust resource. *CAC contact:* [Ray Metzler](#)

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

## Federal Updates

The Wildlife Society [opposed](#) the removal of existing regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act. Our comments recommended that the Council on Environmental Quality turn to Congress for clarity regarding the long-held interpretation of NEPA and CEQ rulemaking authority.

The Wildlife Society and the Southeastern Section of The Wildlife Society joined with other coalition members in [opposing Alabama HB509](#), as covered in detail in the CAC Updates above.

*Increasing the Society’s effectiveness through communication and collaboration*

TWS, as a partner in the National Cooperator's Coalition, submitted testimony to the House Interior Appropriations subcommittee [urging robust appropriations](#) for the USGS Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit program in FY26. TWS also supported increased support for bird conservation under the [USFWS Migratory Bird Program](#) and increased funding for the [National Wildlife Health Center](#) in letters to appropriators.

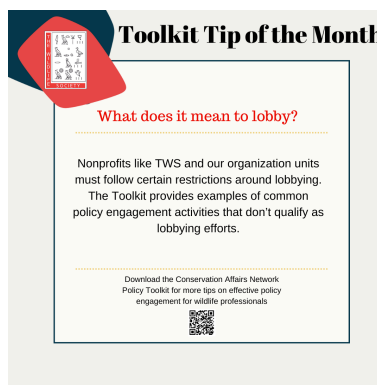
#### **Bills of note –**

- [ESA Amendments Act of 2025 \(H.R. 1897\)](#): Proposes amendments to the U.S. Endangered Species Act, including incentives for private landowners, consideration of economic impacts of listing, and implementation of permitting processes.
- [Fix our Forests Act \(H.R. 471\)](#): Establishes requirements for managing forests on federal lands.
- [Habitat Connectivity on Working Lands Act of 2025 \(H.R. 2235\)](#): Utilizes the U.S. Farm Bill to provide additional incentives to private landowners to increase habitat connectivity.
- [American Prairie Conservation Act \(S. 1209\)](#): Expands the sodsaver program nationwide in the interest of protecting native grassland habitats.

#### **Rules, Regulations, Executive Orders, and more –**

- [Interior Secretary announces actions tied to Alaska's resources](#): The Secretary of the Interior has [announced](#) initial steps to expand resource extraction and energy development in Alaska.
- [Directing the Repeal of Unlawful Regulations](#): A [Presidential Memorandum](#) instructing federal agencies to repeal existing regulations that are inconsistent with the administration's priorities, notably without advance notice or traditional public comment processes.
- [Extension of public comment periods for USFWS proposals](#): The USFWS has extended the public comment period for its [proposed listing of the monarch butterfly](#) and [proposed revised listing of the grizzly bear](#) in the lower-48 States.

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



## **Tools and Resources**

*Increasing the Society's effectiveness through communication and collaboration*

**TWS Issue Statement on Feral and Free-Ranging Domestic Cats** – Thanks to the leadership of TWS' Invasive Species Working Group, a revised issue statement on feral cats is [now available online](#).

**TWS Position Statement on Responsible Human Use of Wildlife and Their Habitats** – TWS' Council approved [this revised position statement](#) at the Spring 2025 Council meeting.

**New project showcases the local impacts of federal workforce reductions** – The [Impact Map](#) provides data from across the U.S. on policy, funding and workforce changes and their localized effects.

## Updates from Headquarters

**Next TWS member listening session TODAY** – The Wildlife Society will hold its third listening session on Tuesday, April 15 from 3-5 p.m. ET for members wishing to further discuss the federal employee terminations, details of TWS' advocacy approach and to share their stories with others. [Register here](#).

*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)*