



**THE
WILDLIFE
SOCIETY**

Funding The Future Invest in Wildlife Science

Wildlife science forms the backbone of effective conservation, policy, and sustainable natural resource management that works. Wildlife professionals continue to be limited in their ability to innovate and implement this science by a lack of sufficient funding. When engaging with policymakers, this resource will help you convey your message with credibility, urgency, and inspiration to lawmakers in your region, drawing on the experiences of policy intern Kaylyn Zipp on Capitol Hill.

This guide provides a practical framework for TWS members to effectively message:

- The need for consistent and adequate funding for wildlife science
- The impacts of funding cuts on species, landscapes, and communities.

People & Community Centered

Connect your research and discussions to the people, economies, and issues where the policymaker is from. Demonstrate a clear connection between the economy, constituent health, or larger scale issues and the research you are highlighting.

This Moment. This Place.

Focus on the immediate impact of funding when speaking with legislators. It is crucial to clearly establish your connection to their district and communicate the local and immediate implications of funding for science or its absence. Emphasize the real-time impacts on communities, health and disaster relief, etc.

Be Clear

Be clear in your “ask”. What you want from the lawmaker (i.e., a specific change to a bill like the removal of specific language)? Be clear in the story you tell. Policy makers are busy individuals who often juggle multiple tasks. Boiling the information down to key points is important.

YOU ARE ESSENTIAL

Your voice, lived experiences, and perspective are essential to the policy discussions with your lawmakers. Policymakers want/need to hear from people with firsthand experience, practical knowledge. When you share your perspective as a biologist, land manager, researcher, or student, you’re putting a human face on wildlife science. You help decision-makers understand the real-world value of funding, research, and science-informed policy.

YOUR STORY IS POWERFUL




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Show me how:

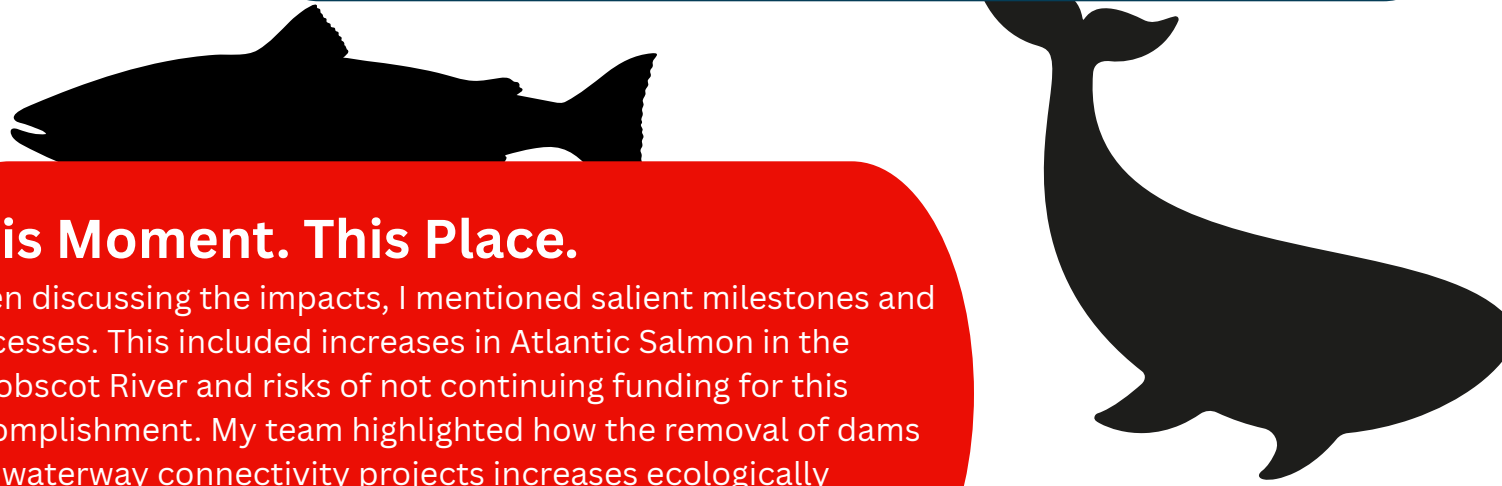
The following examples illustrate these concepts in action, showing how each idea can be applied to clarify its meaning and enhance your ability to use it effectively.

People & Community Centered




I am an early-career researcher living and going to school in Maine. When speaking with policymakers, I was most effective in communicating with House and Senate representatives in the state where I currently reside, as I am a voting constituent. **My vote matters.** I spoke with them about State and Tribal Wildlife Grants, as well as cuts to the National Fish Passage Program and the potential impact of losing that grant funding. My team and I discussed the species, work, and linkages we were familiar with, such as birding festivals, events, and tourism, as well as ecotourism related to whales, fisheries, and puffins.

This Moment. This Place.



When discussing the impacts, I mentioned salient milestones and successes. This included increases in Atlantic Salmon in the Penobscot River and risks of not continuing funding for this accomplishment. My team highlighted how the removal of dams and waterway connectivity projects increases ecologically important forage fish, which are the backbone for many economically important species and ecotourism to the state

Be Clear



Legislators and their staff are busy individuals, processing lots of information within a day. Meetings were held in their offices as well as in the hallways, which were often filled with distractions. Our meetings lasted anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes. It was helpful to have simple, straightforward points that we wanted to convey in each meeting.