

TWS POLICY AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Description and Process

Reviewed 4/21/2022

POLICY DOCUMENTS

The mission of The Wildlife Society (TWS) is to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and their habitat through science-based management and conservation.

As the society that represents and serves wildlife professionals and students, TWS has a responsibility to our members and the conservation community to address issues that affect the current and future status of wildlife in North America and throughout the world. To that end, a critical, long-standing function of TWS is to develop clear **policy documents** designed to educate and inform natural resource policy discussions.

TWS policy statements are consistent with the Purposes and Principles of TWS as stated in the bylaws and based on the best available science. Policy documents are approved according to Council-approved procedures and include positions statements, issue statements, letters, comments, and testimony.

TYPES OF POLICY DOCUMENTS

Position Statements

Position Statements are a concise summary that defines the issue, science-based background information, and most probable biological, social, and economic consequences. They also include TWS' policy on the issue and may provide a recommended course(s) of action.

Issue Statements

Issue Statements are a one-to-two-page specific application of a broader policy identified in a Council-approved Position Statement. Issue statements outline TWS' policies targeted at a specific issue or action and do so in an efficient manner in order to allow TWS to address critical issues that require a timely response.

Letters, Comments, and Testimony

Letters, comments and testimony are communications, often time-sensitive, directed at a particular person, organization, agency, or legislative committee that conveys TWS' policy positions and opinions on a specific policy-related issue being considered.

Sign-on Letters, Coalition Documents, and Joint Statements

On occasion it is beneficial to partner with other organizations to create synergy and build capacity to help advance TWS policies and priorities. In these instances, documents can take several forms, including “sign-on letters”, coalition documents, and joint statements. As a result of multiple organization involvement, processes involved for developing, approving, and revising these documents may be slightly modified to fit each situation. Generally, Policy Staff attempt to follow processes outlined in the most similar-styled TWS-originated document.

PROCESSES

Position Statement Process – New Documents:

1. Council may approve drafting a Position Statement, in response to a written proposal submitted to the CEO from any Active Member of TWS, a TWS Section or Chapter, a TWS Working Group, or TWS staff.
2. TWS’ President charges a committee with drafting the Position Statement, in consultation with other members of Council, and TWS staff.
3. The draft Position Statement is submitted to Council’s Position Statement Committee for their review. At that time, the document becomes the property of TWS and Council has the discretion to modify or edit the draft, or return it to the committee for further work.
4. The Position Statements Committee reviews the draft for consistency with existing TWS policy, makes necessary edits, and submits the draft Position Statement and their recommendation to Council.
5. Council votes whether or not to submit the draft to membership for comment, return it to the Position Statements Committee for further work, or to stop work with no further action.
6. If Council votes to submit for member comment, Active Members are notified via TWS’ official publication of record that the draft Position Statement is available for their review and comment for a period of at least 30 days.
7. TWS staff collects comments and the Position Statement Committee determines how they will be addressed. The Position Statements Committee may seek the originating committee’s advice on how to address and respond to specific member comments. After considering member comment and revising the draft statement, as necessary, the Position Statement Committee submits the revised document and their recommendation to Council.
8. Council may discuss and modify the revised Position Statement prior to voting to approve or reject.
9. Approved Position Statements are published in TWS’ official publication of record and posted on TWS’ website. It is also distributed by TWS staff to TWS

Sections/Chapters/Working Groups, other NGOs, state and federal agencies, and Congressional offices, as appropriate.

10. Approved Position Statements shall be marked with the month and year of their approval. These documents undergo a periodic review at least once every 10 years, or as designated by Council.

Position Statements Process – Reviewing Existing Documents:

1. Any Active Member or Working Group may request that Council review an existing Position Statement at any time via letter submitted to TWS' CEO. Council may decide to pursue or deny the request. Council may independently initiate the review of any Position Statement at any time.
2. The TWS President shall refer any Position Statement(s) up for review to Council's Position Statements Committee far enough in advance to allow them to conduct a thorough review of the document, solicit, receive and consider input from any Working Group they deem appropriate or from an advisory committee specific to the task approved by Council, develop a final draft policy document and submit it along with their recommendation to Council in time for Council's Fall Regular Meeting.
3. As part of any review, the Position Statements Committee will recommend one of three courses of action to Council – 1) Retain, 2) Revise, or 3) Rescind the Statement.
4. As part of their review of a given Position Statement, the Position Statement Committee will also evaluate all linked Issue Statements to determine if proposed changes to TWS policy language result in: 1) no need for any changes to the linked Issue Statement(s), 2) modest changes that can be completed by staff concurrently or in short order, or 3) a need for staff to fully evaluate the implications of proposed changes to Position Statement policy language on a given Issue Statement and report back to Council at a later date. These findings will be included in the Position Statements Report to Council. If an Issue Statement requires more than simple edits completed concurrently or in short order, the existing Issue Statement should be removed from the TWS website until its disposition is determined by vote of Council.
5. A simple majority vote of Council is required to retain, revise or rescind an existing Position Statement.
5. Any retained or revised Statement shall be marked with the month and year of said action and undergo a periodic review at least once every 10 years from that date, or as designated by Council.
6. If approved by Council, a retained or revised Statement is published in TWS' official publication of record and posted on its' website. It is also distributed by staff to TWS Sections/Chapters/Working Groups, NGOs, state and federal agencies, and Congressional offices, as appropriate. If a Position Statement is rescinded, it will be

marked with the date rescinded by Council and removed from the TWS website. Council will publish their decision and reasons for it in TWS' official publication of record.

Issue Statements

1. Issue Statements are drafted by TWS Staff and approved by Council by a simple majority vote. In the case of a particularly time sensitive Issue Statement, Council may review and approved said statement at a Special Meeting of Council, or at said meeting, Council may delegate the authority to approve the specific Issue Statement in question to TWS' Executive Committee for a limited period of time.
2. Issue Statements do not have a set expiration date. However, they are linked to the Position Statement(s) that provide the policy upon which they are based. Hence, if any of these documents are revised or rescinded, the Issue Statement(s) dependent upon them must be modified in order to be consistent with the revised policy or rescinded. The review of Issue Statements is conducted by Staff consistent with the language in Paragraph 4 of the Position Statements section.
3. Any Active Member or Working Group may request that Council review an existing Issue Statement at any time via letter submitted to TWS' CEO. Council may decide to pursue or deny the request. Council may independently initiate the review of any Issue Statement at any time.
4. If Council decides to pursue a member or Working Group request to review or if Council decides to independently initiate a review of an Issue Statement, said review will be undertaken by staff. Staff shall conduct a thorough review of the document, consider all input received from a member or Working Group that resulted in Council's vote to review, solicit, receive and consider input from any member or Working Group(s) they deem appropriate, and develop a final draft and recommendation for Council's consideration.
5. As part of any review, staff will recommend one of three courses of action to Council – 1) Retain, 2) Revise, or 3) Rescind the Issue Statement.
6. A simple majority vote of Council is required to retain, revise or rescind an existing Issue Statement.
7. If approved by Council, a retained or revised Issue Statement is published in TWS' official publication of record and posted on its' website. It is also distributed by staff to TWS Sections/Chapters/Working Groups, NGOs, state and federal agencies, and Congressional offices, as appropriate. If an Issue Statement is rescinded, it will be marked with the date rescinded by Council and removed from the TWS website. Council will publish their decision and reasons for it in TWS' official publication of record

Letters, Comments, and Testimony

1. Letters, comments, and testimony are generated by TWS Staff, written on TWS letterhead, reviewed by TWS' Chief Executive Officer and Council's Executive Committee, approved and signed by the President or a designate.
2. Positions taken and advocated for in these documents are generated from and consistent with all policy statements contained within Position and Issue Statements.
3. Science-based information in fact sheets and technical reviews is often incorporated into these policy documents. Other forms of input can be solicited as deemed necessary or appropriate.

Sign-on Letters, Coalition Documents, and Joint Statements

1. Sign-on letters, coalition documents, and joint statements are generated by TWS Staff in concert with other organizations, reviewed by TWS' Chief Executive Officer and Council's Executive Committee, approved by TWS' President or designate, and generally signed as "The Wildlife Society."
2. Positions taken and advocated for in these documents shall be consistent with all policy statements contained within Position and Issue Statements.
3. As part of the above review process, TWS Staff will ensure said consistency and advise the Executive Committee if a document is in any way inconsistent.

Archival Responsibilities

All Council approved Policy Documents shall, upon revision or revocation by Council, be permanently archived in their original form by TWS staff in such a manner that they can be easily retrieved and provided electronically to Council or staff upon request. Archived documents shall be marked with the date originally approved by Council and the date the specific document was revised or rescinded by Council. In addition, all Letters, Comments and Testimony as well as all Sign-on Letters, Coalition Documents and Joint Statements shall also be permanently archived in such a way that they are also retrievable and available for future use.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Periodically The Wildlife Society Council charges a committee to develop a Technical Review on a wildlife management or conservation issue of concern. These reviews are published as a TWS Wildlife Monograph only after undergoing peer-review and being accepted by the Editor-in-Chief (EIC). Technical Reviews consist of a review of relevant peer-reviewed literature and possibly some gray literature, as well as the identification of research needs and information gaps. Technical Reviews are designed to educate and inform TWS members, policy-makers, and others involved in the wildlife policy process. In the past, Technical Reviews did, on occasion, include TWS policy statements. Moving forward, they retain their role of providing a review of relevant science and possibly existing national policy but do not address TWS policy or make

policy recommendations. However, content from Technical Reviews often forms the basis for developing Position Statements and provide much of the scientific information used in other TWS Policy Documents, and fact sheets.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Development of a Technical Review requires a clear articulation of roles and responsibilities. Specifically, the responsibilities of those involved with developing a Technical Review are:

1. **TWS Council:** Council is responsible for approving the concept of developing a review and an associated budget that covers the cost of full open-access publication. Council shall include the full cost of open access publishing as a line item in their approved budget for the appropriate fiscal year even if at the beginning of the process an individual or group comes forward with a promise of full funding. During the course of Technical Review development, TWS' Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or designee should attempt to cover as much of the open access cost as possible via member or outside donations.
2. **TWS President:** The President is responsible for appointing the Technical Review Council Committee and the Committee chair. This committee will include at least one member of Council who will serve as the Liaison if the chair is not a member of Council and may include one member of TWS Staff.
3. **Technical Review Advisory Committee:** The Committee is responsible for (1) meeting the goals, objectives, and outcomes described in the Committee charges, and (2) writing the Technical Review and working with the journal EIC to bring the draft to publication.
4. **Council Liaison:** The Council Liaison is responsible for maintaining regular contact with the Technical Review Committee Chair, TWS staff, and the EIC to facilitate the document development process, enhance communications, and submit a Report by the deadline established for at least each Regular Meeting of Council.
5. **Technical Review Committee Chair:** The Chair is responsible for (1) working with TWS' President and Council Liaison to establish Committee charge(s) including all interim and final deadlines for draft submission to the EIC of Wildlife Monographs, (2) making sure efforts stay on schedule, (3) ensuring that all drafts meet publication format guidelines, (4) supplying photos, figures, or other support materials, (5) working with the EIC during the peer-review process to bring the draft to publication, and (6) providing timely updates to the Council Liaison.
6. **Monograph EIC:** The EIC carries out normal EIC duties and functions.
7. **TWS Staff:** Staff assist with the publishing process as they would for any other Monograph and work with the EIC and TWS' publisher to promote the Monograph.

PROCESS AND TIMELINE

The process of producing a Technical Review for publication as a Wildlife Monograph can be divided into the five steps shown below. **On average, a Technical Review should take no longer than 52 weeks (12 months) to complete the initial draft and submit it to the Editor-in-Chief of Wildlife Monographs for peer-review once the proposal is approved by Council.**

STEP 1: Proposal

- A proposal for a Technical Review may be submitted to TWS' CEO by any Active Member, Organization Unit, Working Group, or staff. To be considered, requests must be submitted no later than four (4) weeks prior to the Fall Regular Council meeting so it can be included in Council's backup materials. Proposals should include:
 - (1) A description of the need;
 - (2) a concise explanation and justification for the topic meriting a technical review;
 - (3) an explicit statement of the relation of the topic to the work of the Society.
- Council will vote on all properly submitted proposals; if the proposal is approved by a majority vote, committee formation will begin. The approval or rejection decision will be communicated to the submitting party by the CEO. If approved, the CEO will notify the journal EIC so that person can begin the process of selecting reviewers.

STEP 2: Committee Formation

Timeline: To be completed within six weeks of Council's vote to approve.

- Within two-weeks of Council's approval, the President, with the advice of Council, appoints the Chair of the Technical Review Committee and the Council Liaison.
- Within four-weeks of Council's approval, the President works with the Committee Chair and Council Liaison to finalize committee charges. These charges, at a minimum, address the end product, timeline, and TWS' ownership of copyright.
- Within six weeks of Council's approval, the President, with the advice of Council and the Committee Chair, appoints the members of the Technical Review Committee. Committee members typically represent a broad range of expertise on the topic and are members of The Wildlife Society (although exceptions may be made if outside expertise is needed). In some instances, geographic distribution or employer diversity of committee members also may be important. Technical Review Committees generally consist of 6-8 members, although they may be smaller or larger depending on the issue and the discretion of the President.

STEP 3: Technical Review Committee Work

Timeline: Begins with committee formation for duration of 46 weeks (one year from Council approval)

- Within three weeks of Committee formation, the Committee Chair convenes the first meeting of the committee to begin the process.
- Within five weeks of Committee formation the Chair finalizes the timeline, and assigns and coordinates the work of the committee members.
- In addition to normal Committee duties, the Council Liaison meets with the Committee Chair at least every two months to ensure progress and after each meeting reports that progress to the President and Executive Committee.
- Within one year of the Council vote to approve (approximately 46 weeks from committee formation) the Committee prepares a draft document and submits it to the EIC.
- If extenuating circumstances prevent on-time submission of a draft manuscript, the Committee Chair must provide a report explaining reasons for the delay to the Council Liaison and include it as part of the Committee's Report to Council. Council may consider a motion to extend the deadline and budget, or terminate or redefine the project. Council may also recommend the President replace the Committee Chair, the Council Liaison or both, or add or replace Committee members.

STEP 4: Peer review and Publication

Timeline: Begins with submission of draft to Editor-in-Chief of Wildlife Monographs. There is no set timeline for this process outside the requirements for any submission to Wildlife Monographs.

- The EIC will administer the peer-review process as would be done for any submitted Monograph trying to minimize the time from submission to publication.

SAMPLE FOREWORD

Presidents of The Wildlife Society occasionally appoint committees to study and report on select conservation issues. The reports receive full peer-review and, if accepted, are published as an open access document in TWS' Wildlife Monographs. When published as such, Technical Reviews consist of a review of relevant peer-reviewed literature and possibly some gray literature, as well as the identification of research needs and information gaps. Position Statements and other TWS Policy Documents may be based on the science presented in the Technical Review.