

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

National Wildlife Federation Hosts “Voices for Conservation Rally” in Washington, D.C. – Wildlifers located in and around Washington, D.C. are invited to participate in a [rally](#) supporting conservation professionals and science programs at the Department of the Interior that are being impacted by the shutdown of the federal government, cuts to federal funding, and other policies targeting the federal workforce.

CAC and Working Group Activities

South Carolina Chapter engages with federal and local transportation policies – In late September, the South Carolina Chapter of the Wildlife Society wrote to the U.S. Department of Transportation to support continued and expanded funding for the Discretionary Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program, a component of the surface transportation reauthorization bill. The Chapter's [letter](#) points to the role of the Pilot Program to date in improving wildlife habitat connectivity and reducing wildlife vehicle collisions (WCVs)

In October, the Chapter submitted a [letter](#) to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on a proposed highway extension in Horry County, SC. The county is one of the fastest growing in the U.S., and the alternative routes currently proposed for the extension have significant potential impacts to private lands with conservation value, as well as state or federally protected lands, including the Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge. The Chapter's letter requests that, if the highway extension proceeds, the ACOE identify a route that, at a minimum, does not directly impact the National Wildlife Refuge or state conservation lands. *Chapter contact: [Anna Huckabee Smith](#)*

Western Section comments on DOI and USDA rulemaking – The Western Section of The Wildlife Society submitted comments to the USDA in response to the proposed rescission of the Roadless Rule. The Section made several requests to the USDA as work proceeds to develop a draft EIS on its proposal, including that the Department should consider an alternative where the existing rule remains in place with

amendments to address increased management flexibility. They also provide recommendations on the impacts to wildlife that should be assessed across all proposed alternatives.

The Section also provided comments to the DOI regarding Improving Visitor Services in National Parks. Their comments focus on the role of the NPS in providing science education for visitors, and emphasize that these services should be informed by the science on issues including climate change, adaptation, and evolution. They also highlight land management programming within the NPS and the needs of the NPS staff charged with implementing these programs. [CAC contact: Lisa Fields](#)

Central Mountains and Plains Section voices support for regional conservation organization in letter to the DOI – The Central Mountains and Plains Section of The Wildlife Society wrote to the Secretary of the Interior in response to the termination of DOI agreements with The Bird Conservancy of the Rockies. The latter organization was recognized by the Section with its 2025 Group Achievement Award. In the letter, the Section highlighted the many ways in which The Bird Conservancy of the Rockies supports collaborative conservation efforts in communities across the western USA, all of which are negatively impacted by the termination of agreements with the USFWS, NPA, and BLM. [CAC contact: Mark Lindvall](#)

UC Davis Student Chapter hosts conservation policy letterwriting event – Nearly 90 students participated in a recent letterwriting event hosted by the UC Davis Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society. The event was intended to provide participants with the resources and support needed to write to their elected officials about conservation policy issues. Some of the issues highlighted included the California Migratory Bird Protection Act and California Endangered Species Act, as well as the ongoing federal government shutdown. *Student Chapter contact: Kiera Heberlien*

Federal Updates

Coalition urges swift passage of bipartisan farm bill – The Wildlife Society and partners urged members of Congress to pass bipartisan Farm Bill in [a sign on letter](#) sent to House and Senate leadership. The letter focuses on the Farm Bill's vital role in conserving bird habitat, supporting rural economies, and sustaining working lands.

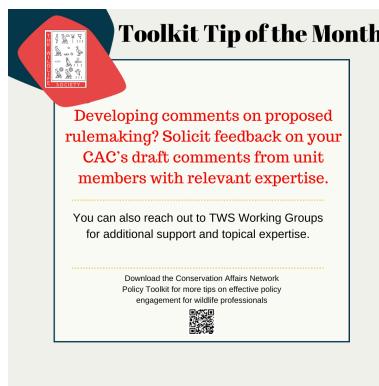
TWS issues statement on the U.S. government shutdown – On Oct. 1, the U.S. federal government largely ceased operations when Congress was unable to reach agreement on the federal budget for the coming fiscal year. TWS issued a [formal statement](#) in support of our members, partners, and thousands of other conservation professionals in the federal workforce impacted by the shutdown.

Support for the Wetlands Conservation and Access Improvement Act of 2025 –
The Wildlife Society and partners [voiced support](#) for the bipartisan Wetlands Conservation and Access Improvement Act of 2025 ([H.R. 2316](#)) in a letter to Senate Environment and Public Works Committee leadership. The bill reauthorizes critical funding for the [North American Wetlands Conservation Act](#).

TWS comments notice of intent tied to the rescission of the Forest Service's Roadless Rule – The Wildlife Society [provided comments](#) to the USDA in response to the [formal initiation of rulemaking](#) to rescind the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule. Our comments urge the USDA to balance the desire to enhance management flexibility with the need to manage and conserve undisturbed habitats for sensitive species of wildlife. TWS strongly opposes the proposed exclusion of the Tongass National Forest from Roadless Rule protections in the Forest Service's Notice of Intent. The Tongass National Forest is a globally significant old-growth ecosystem that must remain a high priority for conservation in order to preserve ecological function.

Government slashes funding for environmental groups encouraging diversity –
The U.S. government [has cut \\$14 million in funding](#) to environmental groups that highlight diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in their strategic plans, action items or websites.

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



Tools and Resources

Policy discourse at TWS 32nd annual conference – There were two CAN-focused events at the recent TWS annual conference in Edmonton, Alberta: our annual in-person meeting for CAN participants and a policy and communications roundtable open to all participants interested in discussing issues related to wildlife and conservation policy. If you were unable to attend either meeting but are interested in reviewing the issues we discussed, notes from both events are available [here](#).

Updates from Headquarters

Introducing the “Our Wild Lives” podcast – The Wildlife Society has launched a new podcast bringing listeners into the heart of wildlife conservation. Each episode of the show, released weekly, will share stories from wildlife professionals around the world. New episodes will be released weekly wherever you get your podcasts.

JFWM legacy collection – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ceased publication of the Journal of Fish and Wildlife Management (JFWM) after 15 years of production following federal government cuts and reorganization. This decision left many peer-reviewed manuscripts that had been accepted or were in the final stages of revision without a destination for publication. Recognizing the importance of preserving and sharing this research, The Wildlife Society offered to publish these vetted manuscripts as a special section of The Journal of Wildlife Management (JWM; November 2025 issue). This Virtual Issue presents that collection of work and increases the visibility and accessibility of this research. Although some of the subject matter overlaps with the usual scope of JWM, this issue contains additional areas of focus such as studies on fish, mollusks and plants. We hope this issue not only provides a platform for this research but also fosters broader connections across taxa and management disciplines. This virtual issue will be free to read for the next three months.

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