

# The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

July 2025, Volume 11, Issue 7

*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.*

## Take Action

**Support Sustained Funding for Wildlife Conservation** – Help amplify TWS' advocacy during the FY26 congressional appropriations cycle with your members of Congress. With deep cuts proposed by the administration across a number of crucial federal conservation programs, your voice and expertise is needed now more than ever. Staff are updating TWS' [Appropriations Action Center](#) with new resources to support your engagement, including letter templates, program-specific talking points, and budget proposals from the House and Senate. Units can now use [this reporting form](#) to easily log any outreach efforts. *Staff contact:* [Kelly O'Connor](#)

## CAC Activities

**Western Section comments on the need for evidence-based environmental regulations across the Department of the Interior** – The [Western Section of the Wildlife Society](#) submitted [comments](#) to the DoI in response to a broad call for public feedback on existing regulations suitable for modification or repeal. Their comments emphasize that regulatory reform should only be undertaken when opportunities are identified to make regulations more effective, or otherwise when regulations are in conflict with the Department's mission to "protect and manage the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage". They also emphasize the benefits of science-based regulations as mechanisms for implementing wildlife conservation. *CAC contact:* [Lisa Fields](#)

*Note: The DoI has [extended the public comment period](#) for this Request for Information through **July 21** for units interested in submitting comments.*

**Alaska Chapter continues to highlight wildlife needs in engagement with potential development in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska** – The [Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) submitted [comments](#) to the BLM on its Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A) Integrated Activity Plan (IAP). This follows the Chapter's comments on the BLM's IAP Environmental Impact Statement in 2020. In their comments, the Chapter emphasizes "the importance of balancing future development in America's Arctic with conservation measures to safeguard the outstanding wildlife and habitat in the region." They highlight potential impacts to wildlife, subsistence users, and the broader landscape that could result following some of the BLM's proposed Alternatives, and propose

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

several modifications to the Required Operating Procedures in the EA. CAC contact: [Tim Fullman](#)

**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

**Supreme Court rules to allow reduction of the federal workforce** – The U.S. Supreme Court has cleared the way for federal layoffs by [lifting a court-ordered injunction](#) that had temporarily halted any reduction-in-force (RIF). The Court ruled that the Trump Administration lawfully issued its executive order “Implementing the President’s ‘Department of Government Efficiency’ Workforce Optimization Initiative” and related implementation guidance issued through the Office of Personnel Management and the Office of Management and Budget. TWS stands with our members and colleagues affected by recent federal workforce reductions and is committed to advocating for you and [providing resources](#) to support your professional and personal well-being during this time.

**TWS asks members of Congress to support federal conservation professionals** - TWS sent three letters to the [Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works](#) and [Committee on Energy and Natural Resources](#), as well as the [House Committee on Natural Resource](#), to urge Congress to support conservation professionals in the federal workforce. We included specific requests to:

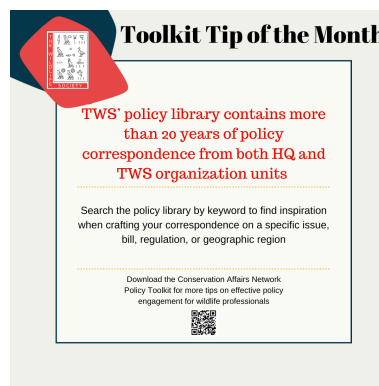
- Prevent further personnel reductions across natural resource agencies.
- Increase oversight to ensure that executive actions do not undermine agencies' ability to fulfill their legal mandates.
- Support funding increases to federal conservation programs that account for inflation and growing demands on our public lands.
- Provide clear regulatory authority to agencies, where needed, to implement the intent of environmental laws.

**One Big Beautiful Bill passed into law** - On July 4th the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBA; [H.R. 1](#)) was signed into law. Prior to its enactment, the Senate removed a [public lands sell-off provision](#) due to pushback from conservationists, land managers and interest groups. Although rescinding of the provision was viewed as a success by many, the bill still contains a number of

problematic components, including [\\$265 million](#) in funding cuts to the National Park Service, mandates to increase drilling and leasing on public lands, and termination, modification, or restriction 15 programs providing tax credits for clean energy.

**TWS submits formal appropriations testimony on Interior and Forest Service programs -** TWS submitted [testimony](#) to congressional appropriators urging strong FY2026 funding for key programs that support wildlife management, habitat restoration, and ecological research. Our testimony asks that instead of cuts, Congress maintain FY25 funding levels as an absolute minimum for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Geological Survey.

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



## Updates from Headquarters

**Early-bird rates extended for annual conference** – The Wildlife Society's 32<sup>nd</sup> [Annual Conference](#) in Edmonton, Alberta, will take place Oct. 5-8. We have extended early registration through **July 15** to provide more time for members and wildlifers to take advantage of the discount. After July 15, registration will only be available at the regular rates. Visit [twsconference.org](https://twsconference.org) to register today, learn more about the conference and check out the video message from TWS CEO Ed Arnett above for a special invitation and a sneak peek at what's in store!

*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)*