

The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

September 2025, Volume 11, Issue 9

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.

On The Horizon

BLM moves to rescind the Public Lands Rule – The Trump administration has announced its proposal to [rescind the Public Lands Rule](#), formally known as the Conservation and Landscape Health Rule, which aimed to give conservation equal priority with other land uses on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands. In [a recent press release](#), the administration asserts that BLM exceeded its statutory authority when originally implementing the rule. TWS staff intend to solicit member feedback on the proposed rulemaking in advance of the **November 10** comment deadline. Members interested in providing input should reach out via policy@wildlife.org.

Request for Feedback

CAC status report for Section and Chapter Presidents – TWS staff are asking all current Chapter and Section presidents (or other unit board members) to fill out [this brief survey](#) to help us understand which units have an established Conservation Affairs Committee (CAC) or other policy engagement-focused committee, and what, if any, support needs TWS units have to establish a CAC. A follow-up survey will be distributed to CAC Chairs. Please submit one response per unit by **September 23, 2025**. Thank you to all of the units who have participated in the survey so far!

CAC and Working Group Activities

New CAC content submission form – Conservation Affairs Committees, units and working groups can now share updates on their policy engagement for inclusion in the CAN newsletter using [this form](#). Each month, you'll receive an email with a request to submit content for the CAC Updates section of the CAN newsletter. This section of the newsletter highlights unit-led policy activities including written correspondence, oral testimony, policy-focused training and workshop opportunities, new policy resources, approved issue statements, and other related items.

Federal Updates

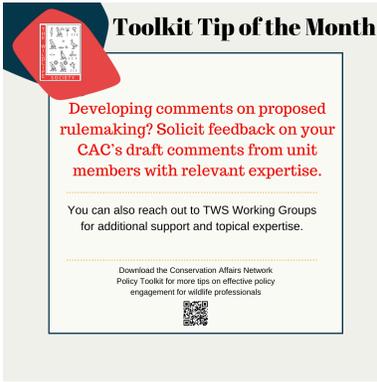
Increasing the Society's effectiveness through communication and collaboration

TWS provides comments on proposed USDA reorganization – In August, [the USDA released its reorganization proposal](#), emphasizing cost reduction and administrative efficiency through a nationwide consolidation of regional offices and research facilities. TWS [provided feedback](#) to the USDA, highlighting how the proposal would impact programs implemented by conservation professionals in the US Forest Service and other USDA agencies.

Process begins to end Roadless Rule – The USDA is moving [to repeal the 2001 Roadless Rule](#), which limits road construction, maintenance and use, as well as timber harvest across the National Forest System (NFS). The [notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement](#) is open for public comment through **September 19, 2025**. A draft EIS and proposed rulemaking are expected in early 2026. Rescission of the Roadless Rule could impact the management of nearly 45 million acres of inventoried roadless areas across the NFS, including the Tongass National Forest in Alaska, which is the most expansive intact large-tree, old-growth temperate rainforest on Earth. In the absence of this rule, decisions about road building and logging in inventoried roadless areas would shift to local forest officials.

Expansion of hunting and fishing access at national wildlife refuges and hatcheries – The [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) has opened or expanded hunting and fishing access to 87,000 acres within the NWRS and the National Fish Hatchery System. For the first time, hunting opportunities will be available at Southern Maryland Woodlands National Wildlife Refuge and at the Grasslands Wildlife Management Area in California. The change affects a total of 16 units across the NWRS.

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



Toolkit Tip of the Month

Developing comments on proposed rulemaking? Solicit feedback on your CAC's draft comments from unit members with relevant expertise.

You can also reach out to TWS Working Groups for additional support and topical expertise.

Download the Conservation Affairs Network Policy Toolkit for more tips on effective policy engagement for wildlife professionals



Tools and Resources

New TWS policy brief: The Big Beautiful Bill's Impacts on Wildlife Conservation –

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To advance TWS' policy priority of robust and sustained funding for wildlife conservation, staff recently published a [briefing resource](#) on conservation issues and programs impacted by the passage of the [Big Beautiful Bill Act \(H.R. 1\)](#).

Updates from Headquarters

TWS2025 pre-registration closes Sept. 19 – Pre-registration for TWS' 32nd Annual Conference in Edmonton, Alberta, closes this **Friday, Sept. 19**. On-site registration will be available, but rates will increase by \$50. [Register now](#).

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