



Conservation Affairs Network Newsletter

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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.

On the Horizon

House Committee on Agriculture will meet to potentially advance a 2026 farm bill – Congress will take its first steps towards a new farm bill since early 2024, with a committee markup of a [draft 2026 farm bill on March 3, 2026](#). The Farm Bill is intended to follow a five-year cycle, however, Farm Bill programs and associated funding have been operating under annual extensions of the 2018 Farm Bill since the end of 2023. Mandatory spending under [Title II of the Farm Bill](#) accounts for the largest single source of federal funding for private lands conservation. This includes funding for programs like the [Conservation Reserve Program](#), [Conservation Stewardship Program](#) and [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#).

CAC and Working Group Activities

New Jersey Chapter opposes state feral cat colony bill – The New Jersey Chapter of The Wildlife Society [wrote](#) to members of the New Jersey General Assembly to oppose bill A3635, the "[Compassion for Community Cats Law](#)." The chapter grounded their opposition in TWS' [Issue Statement on Feral and Free-Ranging Domestic Cats](#). CAC contact: [Adam Bunger](#)

Iowa Chapter brings members to the State Capitol – The Iowa Chapter of The Wildlife Society and Iowa Conservation Alliance hosted their annual breakfast at the State Capitol to discuss natural resource policies with state lawmakers. Attendance at the event has continued to grow in recent years.



The Chapter also sent a letter to the bill subcommittee opposing [HF-2042](#), a bill proposing a study to merge the state's Department of Natural Resources and Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. The Chapter raised concerns that wildlife conservation, among other environmental quality work, may be marginalized with the merger.

Western Section CAC offers policy engagement opportunities at the Section's annual meeting – The Western Section of The Wildlife Society hosted its annual meeting the first week of February, during which the Section CAC tabled. The CAC signed up a number of new interested participants and hosted another installment of its successful postcard writing activity, which was initiated at the Section's 2020 conference. Booth visitors were encouraged to write a postcard to an elected official of their choice (U.S. or State) encouraging support of wildlife issues or thanking their elected official for support. The postcards were all nature-themed, and the event was well received as always. CAC contact: [Lisa Fields](#)

Activity updates, success stories, and contact information – Does your CAC or working group 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

Federal Updates

New executive order prioritizes glyphosate and elemental phosphorus production – On February 18, 2026, the administration issued the executive order, "Promoting the National Defense by Ensuring an Adequate Supply of Elemental Phosphorous and Glyphosate-Based Herbicides" ([91 FR 8703](#)). The EO uses the the Defense Production Act of 1950 to direct



federal agencies to reassess policies governing the use, review, and regulation of glyphosate and elemental phosphorus. Glyphosate is central to some of the most widely used herbicides in the United States

The wood stork is no longer listed under the U.S. Endangered Species Act – The wood stork (*Mycteria americana*) has been removed from the federal list of endangered and threatened wildlife, after 42 years on the list, making a comeback across the southern United States. [Read more in our coverage.](#)

Court ruling invalidates report central to climate rollbacks – A report which downplayed scientific consensus on the linkages between greenhouse gases and climate change was ruled as invalid in courts. In spite of the ruling, the report was used to propose removing greenhouse gases from vehicle emission standards under the Clean Air Act. TWS' Chief Program Officer Cameron Kovach [weighs in](#) on the legal landscape of the issue.

A scientific finding underpinning U.S. climate change policy is reversed – The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued [a rule](#) that removes the 2009 Greenhouse Gas Endangerment Finding and all subsequent federal greenhouse gas emission standards for vehicles. The agency describes its rule as the single largest deregulatory move in U.S. history. The 2009 Greenhouse Gas Endangerment Finding states that greenhouse gases “endanger public health or welfare”. [The EPA's press release states](#) that maintaining greenhouse gas emission standards is not within the agency's authority.

Sport fish and wildlife conservation receive robust federal funding – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has provided over \$1.2 Billion to support fish and wildlife conservation and outdoor access in annual apportionments through the Pittman–Robertson and Dingell–Johnson/Wallop–Breau Acts. “Through this partnership, Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration funding helps states to improve access to wildlife and wild places through one of the most effective conservation tools in the world.” said Service Director Brian Nesvik [in a USFWS press release.](#)

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

Tools and Resources

Listen: Understanding NEPA on TWS' “Our Wild Lives” podcast – In this [episode](#) of “Our Wild Lives,” TWS members Natalie Jacewicz, assistant professor of law at the University of San Diego and Cameron Kovach, Juris Doctor and TWS Chief Program Officer, break down the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and discuss what proposed changes could mean for the future of environmental review.



Policy office hours for TWS organization unit and working group leaders – TWS staff are pleased to offer a dedicated space to engage in policy conversations highlight the incredible policy efforts happening across our organizational units and working groups. **TWS Section, Chapter, and Working Group leaders** are invited to join our first Policy Office Hours on **Monday, April 6 from 2:00–3:00 PM ET.**

Please register for the meeting using the following link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/k3ydrVk5TIGGRx1QeQEqDQ>

This informal session is designed as a space for you to:

- Bring a policy question
- Share a topic
- Highlight policy efforts in your org unit or working group
- Or simply listen in and learn

If you already have a specific topic or question in mind, feel free to email it to us ahead of time so we can be prepared. The format is come-and-go. You're welcome to join at any point and do not need to stay for the full hour. Our goal is to create an open, supportive environment to discuss policy and showcase the important work being done across TWS.

We hope you'll join us and add your voice to the conversation!

Staff contacts: [Kelly O'Connor](#), [Kristi Confortin](#)

Updates from Headquarters

Call for proposals for TWS 2026 – The call for proposals for educational and training sessions for TWS' 33rd Annual Conference in Des Moines, Iowa, is now open through March 27. The conference will take place from Nov. 1–5, 2026. Proposals for education and training programs including workshops, symposia, field trips and panel discussions are invited. Proposals related to all aspects of wildlife ecology, management, policy, human dimensions and conservation are invited. Submit [here](#).

A first look at TWS2026 in Des Moines – What are the first three words that come to mind when you think about Des Moines? TWS Chief Program Officer Cameron Kovach [shares his experience](#) of twenty-four hours in Iowa's capital.