



The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

Purpose

The Conservation Affairs Network enhances the effectiveness of our entire Society by increasing communication, collaboration, and coordination between our Chapters, Sections, and TWS headquarters. Establishing better connections among the individual units of TWS is part of a larger strategic effort that will propel our entire Society into the future as a stronger organization and make each of us more effective at achieving our mission.

Focus

The Conservation Affairs Network is being launched with an initial focus on wildlife policy issues at the national, regional, and local levels. Wildlife policy issues are currently addressed by all levels of TWS. However, policy activities of individual units are rarely communicated to others in the Society. Given the many similarities in wildlife policy issues among regions, this is an area in which more communication and collaboration could immediately increase our individual and collective effectiveness by allowing us to learn from and assist each other.

The Conservation Affairs Network is not about conducting more policy activities in each Chapter or Section. Rather its purpose is to grow the connections and promote collaboration that will make our actions more efficient and effective.

Framework

The Network creates direct linkages among Chapters, Sections, and TWS headquarters through the establishment of Conservation Affairs Committees (CAC) within each Chapter and Section. These committees are integrated with others in their geographic region through the Section CAC consisting of the Chapter CAC Chairs.

Regular communication via conference calls, emails, and newsletters will allow information to be shared throughout the Network. Each individual CAC will be made aware of activities and issues being addressed by other CACs in the Network, enabling CACs to coordinate and collaborate on their efforts.

Each CAC can determine its own communication needs. To get the Network started, the current recommendation is for Chapter CACs to host bimonthly conference calls with their committee members; for Section CACs host bimonthly conference calls with all Chapter CAC Chairs in their region; and for Section CAC Chairs participate in bimonthly conference calls with TWS Government Affairs Staff.

How to Get Connected

Nearly every TWS Section and several TWS Chapters have already engaged in the Network and are communicating regularly and collaborating on policy issues in their area. If your Chapter or Section is not yet engaged, we invite your Chapter or Section to become connected into the Network through your own Conservation Affairs Committee. Get started by following these steps:

1. Review information about the Conservation Affairs Network on the TWS website: www.wildlife.org/conservation-affairs-network
2. Ask your Chapter or Section to form an Ad Hoc or Standing Conservation Affairs Committee. If you already have a committee that address policy issues, there is likely no need to establish a new one.
3. Identify a Chair for your CAC (or related committee). The Chair is a critical position through which most of the communication among the Network occurs.
4. The CAC Chair should contact Keith Norris, TWS Assistant Director of Government Affairs (keith.norris@wildlife.org). He will ensure you get connected into the Network's communication channels and link you to the other CACs in your Section.

Resources Available

TWS has created several resources to help get the Conservation Affairs Network started and assist with policy engagement by our members. Check out all of these resources at wildlife.org/policy.

Conservation Affairs Network Primer - all you need to know about the vision, architecture, and processes of the Network (*available early February 2015*)

TWS Policy Toolkit – the what, when, why, and how to address conservation policy issues as a TWS Section or Chapter Conservation Affairs Committee or TWS member

Conservation Affairs Network Newsletter – a bimonthly publication that facilitates communication among the entire Network, bringing your attention to policy issues and activities of other CACs

Technical Review Series - scientific papers related to prominent topics and issues in wildlife science, management, conservation, and policy written by panels of experts

TWS Position Statements – authoritative statements on a variety of wildlife policy issues aimed at interjecting wildlife science into policy decision-making processes

Fact Sheets – information on the science surrounding various wildlife concerns at the intersection of policy and management considerations

Policy Brief Series – concise descriptions of the motivation, methodology, and result of federal wildlife policies and programs

Policy Priority Reference Lists – lists of articles published in TWS peer-reviewed journals related to the policy priorities of the Society.

For more information on the Network and how you Chapter or Section can engage in this strategic initiative, contact:

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