



Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society

“The mission of the Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society is to foster excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education among wildlife professionals in Canada”

June 3, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister,

As President of the Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society (CSTWS), I am writing to you on behalf of the many students and new professionals in the wildlife, environmental and natural sciences field. These are young people who need encouragement and opportunity to continue their dream of training as field scientists and employment for making our natural world a better place to live in. With the Covid-19 pandemic, despite the much-needed immediate relief offered by your government (e.g. Canada Emergency Response Benefit), there has been an abrupt halt to employment and opportunity for many university students in 2020.

The CSTWS represents over 700 wildlife professionals from across Canada and are part of a broader network of leaders in wildlife science, management, and conservation across North America and beyond. We were founded in 2007 as an offshoot of the U.S. based, 10,000 member The Wildlife Society. Our Mission is to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitats through science-based management and conservation

While we recognize and acknowledge the positive efforts of the Federal Government during this challenging time, our greater concern is what will happen in 2021 and beyond. There is much work to be done in managing biodiversity and understanding the impacts of climate change. There are long lists of species at risk and questions as to what it will take for their recovery. How do we keep invasive species from taking over natural habitats? We need a next generation of well-trained scientists and managers to ensure that the biodiversity of native plants and animals across Canada are maintained.

There are about 2 million students enrolled in Canadian universities. A significant number of these are enrolled in natural sciences/environment/wildlife programs. It has been estimated that many university students graduate with an average of \$28,000 in student loans. Many of these students and recent graduates work in seasonal and short-term positions that are subject to job insecurity during the best of times, let alone during this current period of Covid-19. While some government relief has been offered, it is critical that funding mechanisms and programs are in place beyond Covid-19 and into the future. It is through the continuation and expansion of such programs that will help advance and ensure the sound management of our natural resources that wildlife and other environmental professionals are best able to do in support of the public interest.



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You may be aware that the U.S. Congress has passed one stimulus bill and is currently considering an additional bill that will incorporate restoration and resilience jobs similar to the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s. That program put more than three million young adults to work restoring natural resources and building recreation infrastructure across the country. In Canada, we are aware that the Green Budget Coalition has proposed nature-based solutions including habitat protection and restoration programs. These proposed initiatives, and the continuation of government initiatives that provide and support research and science-based solutions are of key importance. Such initiatives will not only help maintain healthy ecosystems and biodiversity, but provide much needed employment.

In preparing this letter we reached out to a recent graduate student in the environmental sciences to secure feedback and insight into the current situation and beyond. The information provided by Jessica Lang (attached) highlights her personal experience with Covid-19 and suggested solutions going forward including: internships, funding for tuition, professional development training, and funding for research assistantships.

In summary, while government continues to address the current health and economic situation, we encourage you to consider the many student and new professionals working in the wildlife and environmental fields as you design and implement the next phase of stimulus. Investing in nature-based solutions to address Canada’s commitment to biodiversity conservation, wildlife management and climate change mitigation, while assisting our students and young professionals is a wise investment.

The Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society welcomes the opportunity to discuss many details of how to invest in next steps for managing and protecting our environment. Most importantly we must ensure that there is a next generation of skilled professionals to carry on after Covid-19 has run its course.

Yours Truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Dennis Brannen'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dennis Brannen
President
Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society

Attach: