



THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Excellence in Wildlife Stewardship Through Science and Education

Since its founding in 1937, The Wildlife Society (TWS) has served the broad community of wildlife professionals who study, manage, and conserve wildlife and its habitats. These professionals, while varied in their work experiences and expertise, are united in their commitment to the scientific management and conservation of North American wildlife. Drawing upon more than 70 years of experience working on wildlife policy with federal, state, and local governments, TWS offers the following recommendations to the new administration and Congress.

Climate Change and Wildlife

Congress should pass comprehensive climate change legislation that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and allocates a percentage of the revenue generated through the auction of emissions credits to a natural resource adaptation program to mitigate the effects of climate change on fish and wildlife at both state and federal levels. Global climate change has extensive potential to affect wildlife throughout North America, either directly or indirectly, as species and habitats respond to changing conditions.

Funding for Wildlife Management and Conservation

Federal environment and natural resource programs, such as the National Wildlife Refuge System, should be robustly funded commensurate with their needs. Others, such as the State Wildlife Grants Program, that provide matching grants to states for wildlife management and conservation and leverage valuable conservation dollars should be assured a minimum annual funding level to enable states to effectively plan their future activities. In addition, state agencies should receive dedicated, assured funding from the federal government, from the Teaming with Wildlife Act, or a similar source.

The Farm Bill

The agencies should request and Congress should appropriate full funding for the conservation programs in the Farm Bill at their authorized levels. The Farm Bill is a major source of funding for conservation programs and practices related to farming and ranching in the U.S. These conservation practices improve water quality, protect and enhance habitat for fish and wildlife, and conserve open space while allowing farmers and ranchers to remain on their land.

Wetlands

The jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act should be restored to include intermittent streams and intrastate, geographically isolated wetlands, as it did before key Supreme Court decisions in 2001 and 2006. Wetlands have distinct biotic communities with diverse flora and fauna. They function as stabilizing forces of the physical environment by sustaining water tables to balance precipitation deficits, retaining excess surface water to diminish flooding, and reducing pollution in downstream waters by serving as settling basins for silt and chemicals. Wetlands also provide key habitat for many wildlife species.

Energy Development

Every form of energy development can have lasting effects on wildlife and habitat if not done responsibly, which should be considered and acknowledged at each step in the energy development process. The process for development of oil and gas on federal lands should be refined to consider



the effects of such development on wildlife and fish populations. In addition, the federal and state agencies responsible for managing wildlife on these lands during and after development should receive adequate funding to effectively assess and monitor the impacts. TWS encourages the creation and consistent implementation of guidelines for siting and monitoring wind energy development, as well as consistent mitigation strategies among states, provinces, and federal agencies. Biofuels production should not reduce the amount of land in conservation programs and should focus on the use of native plants, rather than crops such as corn, which is a poor wildlife habitat and requires massive amounts of water, fertilizer, and energy to grow, harvest, and convert to ethanol. TWS encourages research and development of wood biomass utilization technologies to address the wildfire and forest health concerns of western forests. Lastly, solar power development must take into account the potential loss of wildlife habitat in sensitive areas such as deserts and grasslands that house many vulnerable species.

Endangered Species

The Endangered Species Act should be strengthened to increase the effectiveness of threatened and endangered species conservation, through improvements to the law and its funding, administrative implementation, and integration with efforts by other parties, especially private landowners. The ESA is a fundamentally sound and vital tool in this nation's efforts to conserve biological diversity, and has been successful in achieving its primary goal of preventing species extinctions and delisting of some species and populations such as the Yellowstone grizzly bear.

Invasive Species

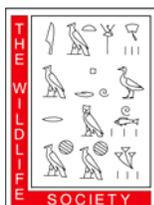
TWS encourages effective laws and regulations at the state and federal levels that control the spread of invasive species by (1) discouraging further introduction of invasive species for any purpose, including agricultural diversification, pet trade, and genetic engineering; (2) including strict husbandry standards for invasive species already present in agricultural diversification programs to prevent their accidental escape into the wild; and (3) including programs to monitor invasive species capable of modifying native wildlife habitat and affecting biological diversity. TWS also supports appropriate control programs that are cost effective and exhibit results within a reasonable time frame, without causing additional perturbations.

Hunting, Trapping, and Fishing Heritage

The hunting heritage of this country should be sustained through access programs that provide places for the public to hunt, trap, and fish, through educational programs to attract and retain hunters, trappers, and anglers, and through continued legal access to sporting arms and ammunition. Regulated and ethical hunting, trapping, and fishing are fundamental American traditions that profoundly benefit wildlife conservation. Indeed, hunting is a key component of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, which has developed in the U.S. and Canada. Through license fees, excise taxes on equipment, and other related spending, hunters, trappers, and anglers provide the primary source of funding for wildlife and habitat conservation. These important forms of outdoor recreation provide sustainable sources of locally harvested animal protein for millions of people and serve as an effective means of managing selected wildlife populations.

Federal Participation in Professional Societies

The federal conflict-of-interest statute should be amended to exclude professional and scientific societies, so that service in leadership positions within these organizations is encouraged. Full participation by a variety of individuals, including federal employees, in professional and scientific societies is essential for the conduct of science and the integration of research into management decisions.



THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

5410 Grosvenor Lane • Bethesda, MD 20814-2144
Tel: (301) 897-9770 • Fax: (301) 530-2471
E-mail: tws@wildlife.org