

JOINT PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY STATEMENT

Our Federal Workforce and the Conservation of America's Natural Resources

Our professional societies represent tens of thousands of professionals and students that have dedicated their careers – their lives – to researching, conserving, and educating about America's incredible natural resources that have fueled the success of our country and its quality of life.

These professionals are managers of our oceans, forests, waterways, rangelands, grasslands, and lakes, fish and wildlife populations, and the waters, habitats, and ecosystems all species and people depend on. They are field specialists that restore degraded habitats, improve water quality, and assist ranchers, forest owners, and farmers with conservation efforts, scientists working to understand the natural world to inform management decisions; and educators for the public, decision-makers, and future generations.

The recent and continued termination of federal employees in the U.S. deeply concerns us and should be alarming to all Americans. These professionals are our neighbors, friends, and community members, and serve as stewards of public trust resources across the nation.

The termination of federal employees with probationary status is especially troubling and unduly impacts early career professionals – the next generation beginning their careers in civil service for our land management agencies, fish hatcheries, forest nurseries, national parks and monuments, research facilities, and academic institutions. These actions have and will set back the landscape of career development for our professions for years, perhaps decades.

The very foundation of natural-resources conservation in this country indeed rests on science to inform decisions supported by a strong workforce of professionals to ensure sustainable use and enjoyment for all citizens. Our continued system of federal investment in natural resource conservation returns enormous health dividends for the country and the world and is an economic engine for our national, state and local economies.

According to a report by Southwick and Associates in 2013, the \$38.8 billion of direct spending on conservation efforts - 60% of which comes from the federal government - generates \$93.2 billion of total economic activity. That means every dollar spent on conservation in the US has a positive return of 2.4 times its original investment. Additionally, the economic contributions of conservation support over 660,000 jobs with \$41.6 billion of income (salaries and wages) while adding \$59.7 billion to the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The resulting economic activity returns \$12.9 billion in the form of tax revenues to the state, local, and federal governments which in effect represents a "conservation rebate" relative to the public's investment.

We support the need to audit federal agencies, their budgets and work. However, workforce reduction efforts should engage the citizens that benefit from sound natural resource management and their legislative representatives responsible for appropriating taxpayer dollars to fund these positions.

Federal bureaus and agencies have long experienced declining funding and resources for staff to fully support private lands conservation and manage our system of public lands. Indeed, current staffing levels are significantly less than what is needed to do so. Continued layoffs and other recent attempts to further erode what is needed to manage our natural resources will have long-term devastating impacts on everyone across this great nation who relies on the management of our private and public lands and waters for their livelihoods and well-being.

Our professional societies stand strong and united in our support for the federal workforce. The value they bring to conservation, science, and stewarding our public trust resources cannot be overstated – all which benefits every American citizen.



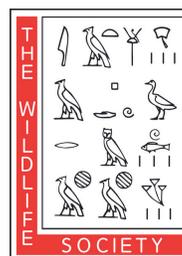
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