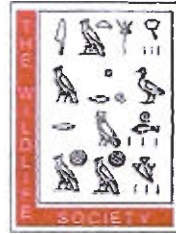


# THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

## ALASKA CHAPTER & NORTHWEST SECTION



1 September 2009

To: Thomas M. Franklin  
President, The Wildlife Society  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership  
555 11th Street, NW, 6th Floor  
Washington, DC 20004

Cc: Michael Hutchins, Executive Director/CEO and  
Darryl Walter, Director of Membership Marketing and Conferences  
The Wildlife Society  
5410 Grosvenor Lane  
Bethesda, MD 20814

Re: Action request regarding TWS member contact information and privacy

Dear President Franklin:

On 7–8 April 2009, the Alaska Chapter and Northwest Section held a joint annual meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska. At that meeting, members unanimously passed a resolution directing the executive boards of each group to draft a joint letter to Council requesting that it address their concerns regarding the availability and use of TWS member contact information.

Concerns about privacy relative to member contact information arose after discussions late in 2008 with TWS staff. We were informed that TWS lacks a formal policy about distributing contact lists and that TWS receives many requests for access to member contact information. Apparently, most inquiries are from section or chapter officers, but they also get them from other members. We were told that TWS always checks to make sure the person making the request is an active member, but that TWS also occasionally sells access to their membership list to some conservation organizations and publishers as a fund raising mechanism. Members used to be asked if they wanted to allow access to their contact information. However, we learned that member names now are included automatically in the TWS directory through the electronic application process. This directory may be accessed by any member in good standing.

Based on our discussion of this issue with our members, these practices are not in accord with what they expected regarding the use of their personal contact information. We appreciate the interest there may be in using member contact lists for TWS business, and we certainly support fund raising efforts by the Society. However, we believe member privacy cannot be ignored or sacrificed to meet those purposes.

Therefore, we strongly urge Council to correct these oversights as soon as possible and to make TWS members aware of the problem and the corrections. In that regard, we provide the following suggestions to help resolve this issue:

1. Ask all members when they renew their membership or become members for the first time whether or not they agree to have their contact information made available to other TWS members and to outside organizations.
2. Provide the names of the outside organizations buying or renting contact lists so that members know how their personal information will be used.
3. Develop and publish a formal policy regarding TWS member privacy and the use and distribution of contact information.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Best Regards,



Howard Golden  
Alaska Chapter President

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