



Official Ballot for 2022 Election of Directors

Board elections will be held at Wisconsin Wetlands Association's Virtual Annual Membership Meeting on February 15, 2022

This ballot is provided for members who wish to vote and are unable to attend the meeting.

Candidates

The following slate of candidates has been selected by WWA's Nominating Committee. Board members are elected to two-year terms. Please vote for up to 4 directors by marking their names:

___ **Alison Peña** (current member) 2 year term

___ **Jim Ruwaldt** (current member) 2 year term

___ **Nicole Staskowski** (current member) 2 year term

___ **Gretchen Benjamin** (current member) 2 year term

___ **ALL OF THE ABOVE**

Note: Candidate biographies are included on the second page of this ballot.

Continuing Board Members

No voting required this year for these members:

R. Tod Highsmith
Linn Duesterbeck
Sue Schumacher

Submission instructions

To submit this ballot by mail, mark your choices for the Board of Directors and mail to:

Wisconsin Wetlands Association
214 N. Hamilton St. #201
Madison, WI 53703

You can also submit your ballot by email to info@wisconsinwetlands.org.

Ballots must be received by 5:00 PM on Tuesday, February 14, 2022

WWA Board of Director Candidate Bios

Alison Peña managed the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service's Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) in Wisconsin from its inception in 1994 until her retirement in 2010, during which time she closed more than 580 easements and saw restoration completed on over 50,000 acres. She also helped to draft the new WRP manual and assisted other states in efficiency management of the program. In 1990, Alison co-founded the grass roots organization Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger, which has received national recognition for its work in trying to clean and restore the land of the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant. Alison currently serves as WWA Board of Directors Chair.

Jim Ruwaldt worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Wisconsin, Indiana, and South Dakota for 32 years. From 1996 until his retirement in 2009, he served as the Fish and Wildlife Service Wisconsin Private Lands Coordinator, supervising habitat restoration activities on private lands statewide. He has worked with numerous federal, state, and private organizations restoring wetlands, grasslands, and endangered species habitats, and has been involved with agricultural and natural resource policy making in Wisconsin. Jim currently serves as WWA Board of Directors Vice Chair.

Nicole Staskowski works for an environmental consulting firm and native plant nursery with a focus on ecological, restoration and regulatory projects. For more than 25 years she has worked in wetlands and natural areas throughout the Midwest, primarily in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Missouri. Nicole has spent time tromping through and doing research in wetlands and backwater areas in the Mississippi River floodplain, Ohio River floodplain, and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. Her favorite spots to work and play are the wetland communities in Wisconsin, particularly near her home in the Driftless area and the Lake Superior watershed where she has overseen several large-scale wetland restoration projects involving the reestablishment of boreal forest communities. Nicole has volunteered with land trusts and conservation organizations in both urban and rural areas, believing in the importance to protect wild and natural places and help people to know and understand them. With both a degree in Botany and passion for plants, Nicole enjoys observing and sharing the wonder of plants in the world around us.

Gretchen Benjamin is the Large River Specialist for the Midwest Division of The Nature Conservancy. Her work focuses on restoring and protecting ecological conditions in the Mississippi River and other national rivers, primarily by working with the Corps of Engineers. Prior to joining the Conservancy in 2008, Gretchen spent nearly 25 years serving as a field biologist, river planner, and Mississippi River Basin Supervisor for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. In her 38+ year career she has worked on restoration and policy for almost 2,000 miles of the mainstem Mississippi River. Gretchen is a founding board member of the Mississippi Valley Conservancy. She lives near the banks of the Mississippi River in La Crosse, Wisconsin.