



**Wisconsin
Wetlands**
ASSOCIATION

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear wetland enthusiast,



I am grateful that you continue to strengthen our organization through your membership. It is your dedication as a member that makes Wisconsin Wetlands Association (WWA) better each year.

WWA accomplished so much good work this year. Our virtual wetland science conference was hailed by many as “one of the best” virtual conferences people attended. Our staff worked long and hard to assure the high standards we strive for were not compromised by hosting this event virtually, which protected the health and safety of membership, presenters, and sponsors. Our work in the Lake Superior Basin is being held as a national model for assessment/project methods. The videos WWA produced about the Oneida Nation and the Little Plover River Watershed Enhancement Project highlight our approach to working with communities. And our Wetland Coffee Breaks on Fridays provide an interesting and fun way to learn more about the wetlands we love.

I am so very proud to Chair this fine organization and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for being an active member of Wisconsin Wetlands Association.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alison Peña". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.

-Alison Peña

Major Donors (JULY 2020-JUNE 2021)

Individual Family & Gifts

\$2,500 or more

Anonymous (2)

John & Jeannie Endrizzi

H.J. Hagge Foundation Fund

*A component of the Community
Foundation of North Central
Wisconsin*

Robert & Elke Hagge

Tracy & Victoria Hames

R. Tod Highsmith & Joan Braune

Gary & Penny Shackelford

John Shillinglaw

Martin & Karen Voss

Thomas Wolfe & Patricia Powers

Gifts of \$500-2,499

Anonymous

Steven Antholt

Ben Arnold

Greg "Ole" Bauer

Jon R. Bergquist

Cheryl Brickman

Elaine Burke

Quentin & Mary Carpenter

Chad Cason

Doug & Sherry Caves

Christin Cleaver

Pat & Charles Cornwell

Richard & Jane Dana

Rainy & Daryl Davis

Cal & Ruth DeWitt

Marilyn & Richard Dodd

Linn A. Duesterbeck

Kristine & Jim Frater

Gary & Pamela Gates

Michael Gerard

Steve Glass & Sharon Dunwoody

Bill & Idy Goodman

Karen Grimmer

Duncan Highsmith & Ana Araujo

Brenda Hofer

Melissa Hornung

& David Hubanks

Heidi Kiesler

Henry & Jodi Kingdon

Jennifer Klink

Jann Kostecke

Chuck & Linda Lee

Roma Lenehan

Karen L. Leonard

Al Lustig & Janice Watson

Michael McLain

Mick Mlinar

Ursula Muehllehner

David Musolf & Roger Packard

Robert & Jane Pearson

Constance Pukaite

Kate Redmond

Kurt & Laurie Schmude

Carl Sinderbrand

& Maryann Sumi

Robert & Marsha Steffen

James & Barbara Syverud

Glenn Teschendorf

Tim Thousand

Marc & Marilyn Thwaits

Mark & Kathy Wendling

Kristin Westad

Sammis & Jean White

Levi & Janet Wood

Libby Zimmerman

& Jack Ferguson

Institutional Gifts

\$2,500 or more

Ashland County

The Brico Fund

The Brookby Foundation

Center for Large Landscape
Conservation

Forest County Potawatomi
Foundation

Fund for Lake Michigan

General Electric Foundation

McKnight Foundation

Patagonia - Chicago

Stantec

The Board of Regents of the

University of Wisconsin System

USDA-Natural Resources

Conservation Service

Village of Plover

We Energies Foundation

Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable

Growers Association

Wisconsin Public Service

Foundation

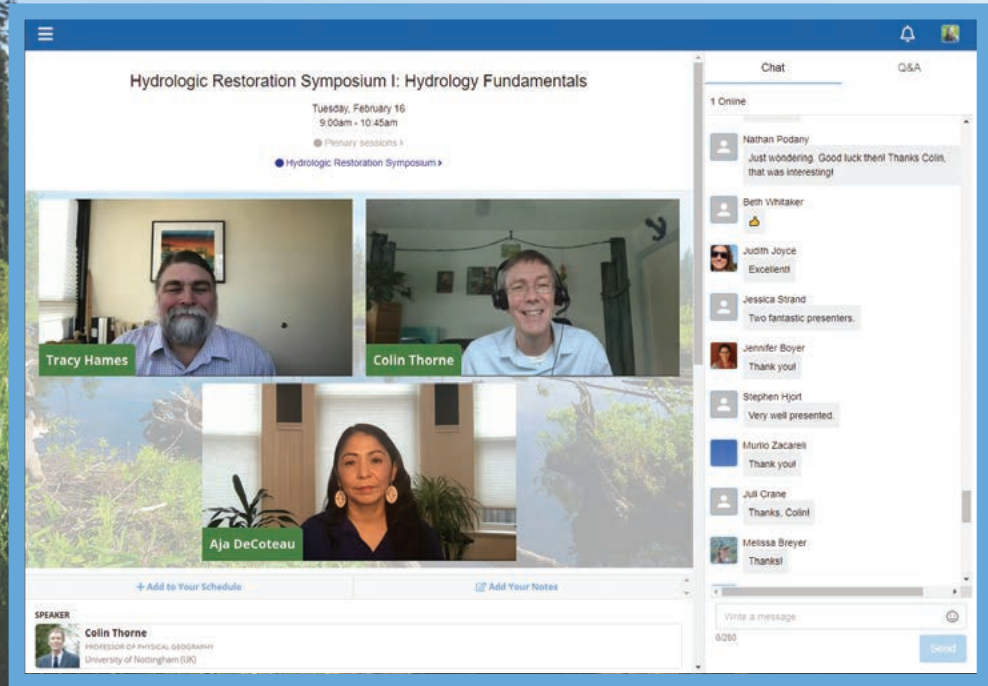
Wisconsin Coastal Management

Program

Wisconsin Tribal Conservation

Advisory Council

“This was the best virtual conference I’ve ever attended.”





Bringing wetland professionals together for learning and networking

The 2021 Wetland Science Conference—held virtually—featured a special symposium on watershed-based hydrologic restoration. Expert researchers and practitioners from around the country shared information and real-world examples of the importance and benefits of taking this systematic approach to healing our waters. While we all missed seeing each other in person, the virtual event platform provided many opportunities for connecting and networking.

- More than 500 people from 18 states and Ontario, Canada, attended the conference.
- Workshop attendees learned about topics including wetland soils, aquatic plants, and the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in conservation.
- Our wetland trivia night proved to be highly competitive—and a ton of fun.







Encouraging effective wetland restoration

In August 2021, Governor Evers signed WI 2021 Act 77 into law. The bill requires the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to establish a new general permit for hydrologic restoration. Over the course of two legislative sessions, WWA spent significant time advising the bill's authors on the issues and opportunities and worked extensively to ensure it passed with strong bi-partisan leadership and support.

- The new permit and associated outreach will advance WWA's efforts to increase understanding of the many benefits wetlands provide.
- Act 77 promotes practices that re-establish wetland, stream, and floodplain condition, connection, and function.
- This new legislation also encourages local governments and landowners to restore wetlands to solve problems.

Population status of Wisconsin's rare amphibians and reptiles



Rori Paloski
Wisconsin DNR



Wetland Coffee Break



WDNR's Rori Paloski joined us for a Wetland Coffee Break to discuss Wisconsin's endangered and threatened wetland herptiles.



Spreading wetland knowledge—online!

The Wetland Coffee Break brought more than a dozen virtual presentations to our community of wetland enthusiasts this year. Held live online on Friday mornings about twice a month, the Wetland Coffee Break covered a variety of topics this year, including wetland hydrology and soils, bioacoustic monitoring, upper watershed wetlands, and wetland amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mussels.

- A series of talks highlighted Wisconsin's six Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance, including the recently designated Lower Wisconsin Riverway.
- More than 800 people registered for Wetland Coffee Breaks this year from 28 US states and internationally.
- You can view recordings of all presentations at **[wisconsinwetlands.org/wetland-coffee-break](https://www.wisconsinwetlands.org/wetland-coffee-break)** and on WWA's Facebook page.



Erin O'Brien, WWA



Dave Slebert



Ken Bradbury



Matt Krueger, WI Land+Water



Sara Walling

Leaders from WDNR, DATCP, Wisconsin Land + Water, and the Wisconsin Geologic and Natural History Survey reflect on the focus group findings at WWA's 2021 Conference.



Evaluating wetland policy and program opportunities

As part of our efforts to increase state investments in wetlands conservation, WWA collaborated with University of Wisconsin Extension, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection to evaluate barriers to and opportunities for watershed-scale wetland and floodplain restoration in Wisconsin. We conducted three focus groups to gather input from dozens of professionals with relevant technical, policy, and program expertise. Among other things, the evaluation found:

- Strong agreement that wetland and floodplain restoration can help address Wisconsin's water management challenges.
- A high need for more projects to demonstrate watershed-scale wetland assessment and restoration approaches.
- Great ideas for ways to strengthen Wisconsin's policies and programs to better support watershed-scale hydrologic restoration work.
- A particular interest in collaborations among individuals and agencies working in agricultural landscapes.



Kakahunihe “She Makes a Blanket” (Vickie Cornelius, Bear Clan, Oneida Nation) shared how wetland conservation is not only restoring nature on the Oneida reservation, but is also helping to revitalize Oneida culture.



Sharing inspiring stories of communities and wetlands

WWA works with communities to help them see how wetlands can be part of the solution to their water-related challenges. We emphasize a watershed and community-based approach to help them determine the best courses of on-the-ground action. This year, to inspire more communities to do the same, we created videos highlighting two communities already taking this approach: the Oneida Nation and the Village of Plover.

- The Oneida Nation's work is improving water quality, alleviating flooding, and providing habitat—while also revitalizing their culture.
- The Little Plover River Watershed Enhancement Project engages community partners to identify and implement voluntary actions to help improve river flows.
- See the videos at wisconsinwetlands.org/updates/wwa-communities-wetlands-project.





Elevating consideration of wetlands for Natural Flood Management

WWA's Natural Flood Management (NFM) work is being held up as a model with both statewide and national implications. We're developing methods for assessing opportunities where wetland restoration can reduce flooding upstream of vulnerable infrastructure. The core project includes a FEMA-funded Fluvial Erosion Hazards Assessment and demonstration projects. As attention and momentum grows, so too do the investments and engagement of key partners.

- WWA has provided Ashland County with much-needed capacity to manage multiple hydrologic restoration-focused projects and grants.
- WWA helped the United States Geological Survey develop methods to better consider headwater wetlands and non-perennial streams in watershed assessment work.
- Our work has also inspired a new collaboration with Association of State Floodplain Managers to model and evaluate the costs-benefits of NFM projects.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Alison Peña – *Chair*
Jim Ruwaldt – *Vice Chair*
R. Tod Highsmith – *Treasurer*
Tim Jacobson – *Secretary*
Gretchen Benjamin
Linn Duesterbeck
Susan Schumacher
Nicole Staskowski

STAFF

Tracy Hames
Executive Director

Katie Beilfuss
Outreach Programs Director

Emily Buck
Communications & Events Manager

Samantha Foster
Member Services Assistant

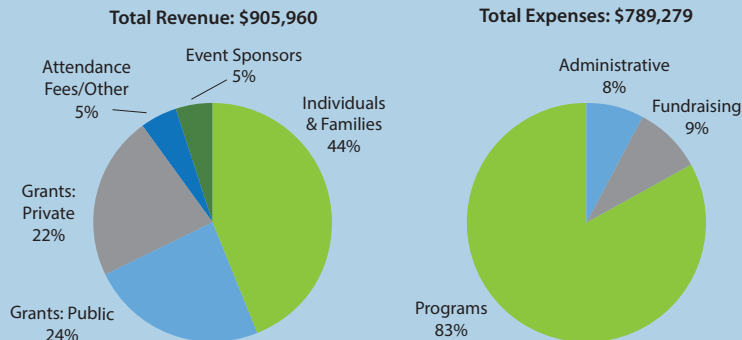
Jake Lakowske
Office Manager

Kyle Magyera
Local Government Outreach Specialist

Erin O'Brien
Policy Programs Director

Jennifer Western Hauser
Policy Liaison

Fiscal Year 2021 (July 2020-June 2021)



Wisconsin Wetlands Association is dedicated to the protection, restoration, and enjoyment of wetlands and associated ecosystems through science-based programs, education, and advocacy.



@WIWetlandsAssoc



facebook.com/WisconsinWetlands

www.wisconsinwetlands.org

214 N. Hamilton St, Suite 201
Madison, WI 53703
608-250-9971

