

# 2024-2028 STRATEGIC PLAN

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## Mission Statement

We are dedicated to the protection, restoration, and enjoyment of wetlands and associated ecosystems through science-based programs, education, and advocacy.

## Vision Statement

We envision a state where wetlands are healthy and plentiful and support ecological and societal needs and where citizens care for, appreciate, and interact with these natural resources.

## Niche Statement

As the leader for wetlands in Wisconsin, WWA focuses on advancing wetland conservation. Our work prioritizes providing tools and expertise to help others protect, manage, and restore wetlands. We actively engage in opportunities to advance wetlands as solutions to critical water management concerns at a watershed scale in ways that can be adapted across Wisconsin and beyond.

## Values

**Collaborative:** Working toward healthy wetlands across the state requires building new constituencies for wetland conservation. We create state and local partnerships to integrate wetlands into new and existing efforts.

**Enthusiastic:** People who understand wetlands are more likely to care for them. We share our love of wetlands by helping people to experience, learn about, and enjoy wetlands.

**Non-partisan:** WWA's government relations work focuses on building broad support for wetlands that will persist as legislative bodies and administrations change hands. We will work with anyone interested in advancing our wetland conservation agenda, regardless of political affiliation.

**Impact-driven:** Our work is most meaningful when it generates landscape-scale improvements to wetlands and watersheds. We continually evaluate, test, and adapt our activities and approach to achieve the greatest possible positive impact.

**Science-based:** WWA routinely gathers and disseminates the best available information about how wetlands work and how to care for them. We take an interdisciplinary approach, combining our wetland expertise with knowledge from experts in related fields to ensure the best outcomes for wetlands and watersheds.

**Solution-oriented:** We strive to understand diverse perspectives, priorities, and needs. We seek wetland conservation outcomes that respect this diversity.

## Strategic Priorities

The key areas of focus for the next 5 years

- **Build and Expand Wetland Programming** - Wisconsin Wetlands Association will maintain, evaluate, and expand its high-performing programming with an emphasis on creating the enabling conditions needed to implement wetland conservation across the state.
- **Plan for Strategic Growth** - Wisconsin Wetlands Association must grow to effectively achieve our vision. We will proactively identify and plan for future needs and will emphasize diversification of revenue sources to make sure those needs are met in a fiscally stable way.
- **Improve Internal Operations** - Wisconsin Wetlands Association will enhance internal operations to prepare for anticipated growth. Adopting more efficient ways of working will help deliver on our mission.
- **Develop Organizational Leadership** - Wisconsin Wetlands Association will examine and strengthen its organizational structure and processes to ensure we cultivate and sustain effective organizational leadership at the board, staff, and volunteer levels.

## Strategic Priority: Build and Expand Wetland Programming

Wisconsin Wetlands Association will maintain, evaluate, and expand its high-performing programming with an emphasis on creating the enabling conditions needed to implement wetland conservation across the state.

### Strategic Activities

#### **Policies & Program Supports**

- Support enactment of policies that enable—and remove barriers preventing—wetland conservation.
- Increase the capacity of state, tribal, and local agencies to incorporate wetland protection and restoration into their work.
- Support and promote wetland conservation efforts—informed by watershed conditions—that restore hydrology to solve problems.

#### **Training and Workforce Development**

- Continue to collaborate with state, tribal, and local agencies through grant-funded initiatives to deliver strategic training programs.
- Evaluate additional training needs of our audiences.
- Explore creation of programming designed to build a robust wetland conservation workforce in the state.
- Build connections to achieve mission-relevant workforce development needs.

#### **Engagement and Community Building**

- Because engagement and community-building drive our other strategies, establish these activities as a core responsibility of all staff.
- Develop and deliver programming to help increase awareness and understanding of wetlands and their importance among landowners, decision-makers, and other key audiences.
- Develop partnerships to broaden the number of communities and diversity of sectors engaged in wetland work.
- Build connections and wetland community identity by sharing positive stories of people engaging in voluntary wetland conservation work.
- Invest in work to better understand gaps and opportunities to connect with more diverse audiences.

#### **Evaluation**

- Evaluate and continually refine program activities to align with what's needed to accomplish wetland conservation at a landscape scale, increase statewide capacity, and/or strengthen the wetland community—and to define WWA's role in this work.

## Strategic Priority: Plan for Strategic Growth

Wisconsin Wetlands Association must grow to effectively achieve our vision. We will proactively identify and plan for future needs and will emphasize diversification of revenue sources to make sure those needs are met in a fiscally stable way.

### Strategic Activities

#### **Revenue & Staffing**

- Develop a staffing plan to meet operational and programmatic needs while proactively managing workload and addressing succession planning.
- Develop and implement a plan to diversify and increase revenue, including increased revenue from membership contributions.
- Identify opportunities for revenue-generating programs in line with strategies.

#### **Community Building**

- Build WWA community identity by increasing opportunities for supporters to interact with staff, board, wetlands, and each other.
- Increase the number of WWA members.
- Diversify WWA community by increasing representation (racial, economic, demographic, political, etc.) in staff, board, and membership. This is fundamental to the health of the organization and ensures relationship building and advancement of the mission.

#### **Evaluation**

- Evaluate and continually refine member engagement activities to strengthen the WWA community and increase membership revenues.

## Strategic Priority: Improve Internal Operations

Wisconsin Wetlands Association will enhance internal operations to prepare for anticipated growth. Adopting better ways of working will help deliver on our mission.

### Strategic Activities

#### **Evaluation**

- Identify and prioritize internal processes for improvement.
- Develop processes to continually evaluate and refine operations.

#### **Administration**

- Implement internal process improvements as identified in evaluation.
- Explore outsourcing processes, as appropriate.

#### **Organizational Structure and Personnel**

- Review organizational structure and adapt for growth.
- Review individual job descriptions and clarify as needed.
- Allow for organizational fluidity while anticipating growth.
- Enhance systems for annual work planning and performance evaluations with a focus on assessing and improving employee satisfaction and well-being and ensuring accountability. Incorporate professional development opportunities as a component of these systems.
- Begin to identify and correct implicit bias in our systems (including hiring processes, board development, etc.).

## Strategic Priority: Develop Organizational Leadership

Wisconsin Wetlands Association will examine and strengthen its organizational structure and processes to ensure we cultivate and sustain effective organizational leadership at the board, staff, and volunteer levels.

### Strategic Activities

#### **Board of Directors**

- Engage outside expertise to review and improve and oversee implementation of processes for board member recruitment, including establishing a pipeline, to enlarge the board and improve demographic and skill set diversity.
- Clarify roles and expectations of board members and develop systems for accountability.
- Update organizational bylaws to reflect updated board development and management policies and processes.

#### **Succession Planning**

- Develop and implement succession planning for board and staff leadership, including systems for capturing and transferring institutional knowledge.
- Ensure organization is structured to cultivate and sustain organizational leadership at all levels.

#### **Community Building**

- Identify opportunities for members to serve and support WWA programs & operations.

#### **Evaluation**

- Evaluate organization-wide implementation of and engagement with strategic plan.