



**Wisconsin
Wetlands**
ASSOCIATION

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

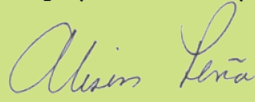


Dear wetland lovers,

Thank you for continuing to support the great work Wisconsin Wetlands Association (WWA) continues to pursue. You are the backbone of our organization, and we appreciate your commitment to our work and to our mission.

WWA is excited to be working on executing our strategic plan's goals and objectives. We are currently working to build a more skilled and capable wetland workforce. Our role is to make sure the wetland community is strong and they have the tools and support to get the work done. This will include training and offering the backing to assist communities in accomplishing their wetland goals. A consulting firm is assisting us with strengthening our internal operations and statewide approach to achieving our goals and objectives. This will strengthen our growth as an organization.

I am very proud to Chair this fine organization. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for being an active member of Wisconsin Wetlands Association. We hope you continue your support as we venture forward in our work.


Alison Peña



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July 2024-June 2025

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Advisory Council



A stream and floodplain restoration permitting working group at the conference brought together a diversity of perspectives to inform WWA policy work (see p. 10-11).



Cultivating a wetland conservation workforce

Wisconsin Wetlands Association (WWA) is working to grow a robust wetland conservation workforce with the knowledge, tools, and skills to implement the large-scale, strategic, watershed-based wetland restoration that Wisconsin needs to heal our lands and waters. We do this work in close collaboration with many partners, building on existing networks and structures.

- The Wetland Science Conference—a key WWA professional development program—celebrated its 30th anniversary in La Crosse, WI, with a sold-out crowd of more than 400 people.
- In partnership with Trout Unlimited, we brought together wetland and stream restoration professionals for a symposium and other sessions on integrated approaches to stream and wetland restoration.





Building the capacity of state agency and county staff

Given that Wisconsin Wetlands Association doesn't manage land or plan and implement restoration projects directly, we prioritize collaborations that build the capacity of key audiences who engage—or could engage—in wetland conservation work. This includes helping public agencies support the restoration of wetlands to address issues of statewide concern.

- We collaborated with agencies whose programs address wetland-related issues like flood risks and damages, soil conservation, water quality, and more: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, & Consumer Protection (DATCP), Wisconsin Emergency Management, and the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program.
- An example of this wide-reaching work is our hydrology fundamentals webinars, which were co-designed by DATCP and reached conservation professionals at DATCP, WDNR, and County Land Conservation Departments.

We collaborated with DATCP to deliver three field-based trainings on hydrology fundamentals attended by 56 individuals, including conservation technicians from 16 counties and engineering staff from all 5 DATCP regions.



Flooding this past summer in the Milwaukee area (including Wauwatosa, pictured here) was yet another reminder of the importance of our work to help communities reduce flood risks by restoring wetlands and floodplains.

Improving resilience in flood-prone communities

Flood resilience and wetland conservation go hand in hand. Our policy initiatives and regional collaborations are helping communities across Wisconsin become more resilient to flooding and other extreme weather events by improving their capacity to reconnect wetlands, streams, and floodplains in strategic locations.

- The Pre-Disaster Flood Resilience Grant program that Wisconsin Wetlands Association helped establish now supports projects in 11 flood-prone communities, and the legislature and Governor approved \$2 million in renewed funding.
- In a significant expansion of our previous work, we co-led the launch of a 4-year, NOAA-funded project to help four additional Lake Superior basin communities identify opportunities to restore wetlands and floodplains to reduce flood risks.



Creating a path for wetland, stream, and floodplain restoration

Even the most beneficial wetland, stream, and floodplain restoration projects are subject to regulatory review and approval. That's why our policy priorities include working to ensure that Wisconsin's regulations and regulators help enable, rather than hinder, the approval of voluntary hydrologic restoration.

- We used policy analysis and working groups to advance a statewide discussion on ways to simplify regulatory review requirements for restoration projects in FEMA-mapped floodplains.
- We collaborated with WDNR to cross-train regulatory staff on key hydrology fundamentals relevant to the review of applications under the new General Permit for Hydrologic Restoration.



“I always look forward to these talks and have learned a lot over the last four years. Getting exposed to other ideas I hadn’t even considered has been the best part! Thank you for putting these on.”

– *Wetland Coffee Break attendee*



In the spring of 2025, we released a video highlighting how the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa protects and cares for wetlands and watersheds.

Fostering a wetland community

To protect wetlands, we need a vibrant and active community of people who care deeply about them. We know that the power of engagement, connection, and shared purpose is key to advancing our work. Wisconsin Wetlands Association offers people opportunities to experience, learn about, and enjoy wetlands. We also provide opportunities for people in our wetland community to meet and build relationships with one another.

- The Wetland Coffee Break webinar series featured 24 presentations and reached more than 900 people this year (55% of whom were new attendees). Since 2020, the Wetland Coffee Break has reached nearly 3,200 people.
- Our short documentary-style videos highlighting people and communities caring for wetlands have been viewed by thousands. Watch them at wisconsinwetlands.org/videos.

Wetland Legacy Club

Anonymous	Maggie Jones
Betsy Barnard	Elizabeth Middleton**
Katie & Richard Beilfuss	Bruce Moore
Jane Dobberpuhl**	Anthony & Darlene Nowak
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Ronald Horn**	Margaret Welke**
Sharland Brookens Huffaker	Elizabeth Zimmerman & Jack Ferguson

*** **Denotes that the named member is deceased.*

If you have included WWA in your estate plans but are not listed here, please contact Tracy Hames at 608-250-9971 so we can properly thank you for your generosity.

Sustaining and growing a healthy organization

These days, government funding is more uncertain than ever. Wisconsin Wetlands Association remains strong through times of uncertainty like these because of the support of our members—including members who have chosen to become Wetland Gems® and members of the Wetland Legacy Club.

- Wetland Gems® are members who donate to Wisconsin Wetlands Association via automatic recurring monthly gifts. In 2025, 111 households provided Wisconsin Wetlands Association with this sustainable, reliable funding.
- Wetland Legacy Club members have notified Wisconsin Wetlands Association that they have included us in their estate plans through a charitable bequest and/or beneficiary designation. We invite these generous members to join special events and tours. Join this list by calling Tracy Hames at 608-250-9971.



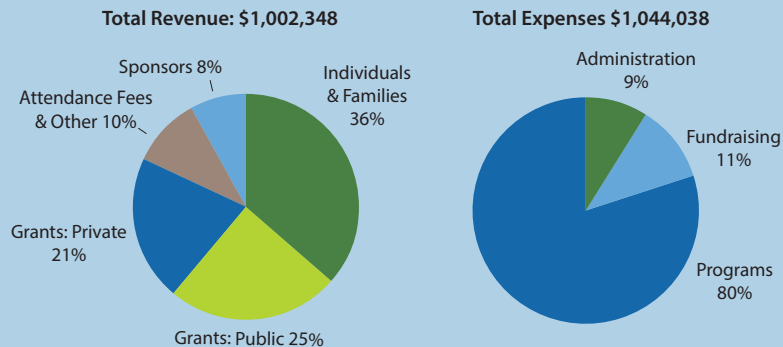
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Fiscal Year 2025 (July 2024–June 2025)



Unaudited figures. Our audited figures will be completed by January 2025.

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

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www.wisconsinwetlands.org

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

