



The North Central Chapter

# Society of Wetland Scientists

## NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER NEWSLETTER Spring 2018

### A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

“On motionless wing they emerge from the lifting mists, sweep a final arc of sky, and settle in clangorous descending spirals to their feeding grounds. A new day has begun on the crane marsh” – Aldo Leopold

Earlier this spring our family made the trek to the Platte River in Nebraska to see the sandhill crane migration. Many years ago during an internship in North Dakota prairie-pothole land - my first in-depth exposure to exploring wetlands - I watched a video about sandhill crane migration. Their beauty and grace enthralled me. During that same time I was introduced to the writings of Aldo Leopold. His words continually inspire and ground me. The lesson of spring to me is a reminder of the potential in life, of honoring the mystery within and around us, all the while bearing witness to tangible circumstances of snow and soil thaws, births and caretaking of young, animal migrations, plants bursting forth, longer days, the silence of winter marshes transformed into cacophony. I felt that mystery while watching the cranes feeding, jostling, calling.

A request: our NCC Student Representative is working hard on updating the SWS education website to help students guide their education and professional careers. Please take this very short and anonymous survey. The results will be used to create a webpage that lists careers and advice to students pursuing graduate school. It would be wonderful to fully support her project! Our students have so much potential and it means a lot to them to feel our support. The survey can be accessed:

<https://goo.gl/forms/ifXeRePztwpBEHiF2>

May will bring American Wetlands Month. How can you celebrate this in your region? The SWS 2018 Annual Meeting in Denver, Colorado is during the end of May through the first of June (website: <https://www.swsannualmeeting.org/>). Chapter meetings will be held during the early evening on Wednesday May 30<sup>th</sup>. I hope that you can make it! We value your ideas about what you would like our Chapter to be involved in and welcome your participation! Welcome Spring.

For Wetlands!

Julie Nieset [jenieset@illinois.edu](mailto:jenieset@illinois.edu)

### **NCC ANNUAL MEETING-SAVE THE DATE!**

Our NCC Annual Meeting is going digital this year! We have reserved an online forum for Wednesday October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Look for more information and a call for presentations in upcoming newsletters and emails.

### **HAVE YOU MADE A DONATION TO SWS NCC IN THE PAST YEAR?**

Thank you for all those who have made donations to our Chapter – these donations are invaluable in supporting our programs for students and outreach efforts. We are doing a routine audit of our books in an effort to standardize donation accountability. If you made a donation to our North Central Chapter through our website anytime last year, we would like to hear from you. If you made a donation for the Native American Arts Initiative (NAAI) for the NCC Annual Meeting in Fargo last fall, we have inspected these donations and do not need further information from you. For all others, please contact our NCC Treasurer Eric Plankell [eplankel@illinois.edu](mailto:eplankel@illinois.edu)

### **OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS!**

The following are NCC Committee Chair positions that are open. We welcome your participation and passion for wetlands and for helping to create a stronger organization. Contact Julie Nieset [jenieset@illinois.edu](mailto:jenieset@illinois.edu) for more information about these Chair positions and to volunteer. Acknowledgement of your involvement will be listed on the Leadership page of our NCC website.

#### **External Affairs Committee Chair**

- Identify potential sponsors and collaborators for Chapter events

Goal: To connect with other like-minded organizations to collaborate on projects and share ideas. To have sponsorship of Chapter events to offset some expenses (Modeled from page 9 of SWS Standing Rules June 2017 <https://www.sws.org/category/governance.html>)

#### **2018 Chapter Meeting Committee Chair(s)**

- Plan and implement 2018 Chapter symposium and meeting along with associated tasks. This year we will be utilizing webinar and videoconferencing technology for an online Chapter symposium and meeting. Tech-savvy individuals are encouraged to get involved!

Goal: To continue the tradition of annual Chapter meetings for members to connect and present regional wetland research

#### **History/Archives Committee Chair**

- Review Chapter documents to understand Chapter history. Ideally draw up a timeline or other document to highlight Chapter events, personnel, and changes over the years

Goal: For our Chapter to have a better understanding of our history, of how we have come to this point in our Chapter and more context of where we can go from here. For instance, there is a SWS chapter that has a “Past Presidents Council” where they can draw on support and insight from past chapter presidents. Gathering this type information would give us the potential to draw on support if we choose. (See also page 9 of SWS Standing Rules June 2017 <https://www.sws.org/category/governance.html>)

## STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE ELECTIONS MAY 10-24

To better meet the needs of our student members, the NCC has a Student Representative as a voting member of its Board of Directors. Each Student Representative serves a one-year term on the Board. Bree Richardson is our current Student Representative and her term is set to expire at the end of May. Luckily, we have two well qualified students, Benjamin Hengel and Jess Stern, who have each been nominated to follow in this position after Bree's term ends. Some brief background information and candidates' answers to a few questions that we asked each follow. You will soon be getting a message from SWS on how to vote. So please take some time to look over the information provided by the candidates, and to vote when you receive the email form SWS. We wish the best of luck to both. Our Chapter is very lucky to have such well-qualified students interested in serving in a leadership role for the Chapter. Our new student representative will be installed during the NCC meeting being held on May 30<sup>th</sup> at the SWS annual meeting in Denver. If you are attending the Annual Meeting in Denver, please also try to attend our Chapter Meeting on Wednesday, May 30<sup>th</sup>. And a very special THANK YOU to Bree Richardson for all the work she has done serving in the Student Representative position this past year. Her presence on the Board will be missed.

**Candidate:** Benjamin Hengel

**Background:** Masters of Science, December 2018; North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND; Major: Natural Resources Management

Bachelor of Science, December 2016; North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND; Major: Natural Resources Management

Graduate Research Assistant, North Dakota State University, May 2017-Present

Fisheries Technician Intern, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR), Finland, MN, June 2016-August 2016

Soils Department Research Technician, North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND, May 2015- August 2015



**Why do you wish to serve as the NCC Student Representative?** I have always strived to get the most out of every opportunity given to me. One of those opportunities is serving the North Central Chapter and representing our future wetland scientists. The student representative position will allow me to learn from some of the top research scientists in the field of wetland management/science while providing a unique student perspective of current and future wetland research. I am excited about providing my ideas to the organization and getting the student body more involved in the future of SWS.

**What do you envision for the Chapter's future?** Today wetland scientists face some key issues that threaten wetlands. In the North Central Chapter, some of these issues include protection of prairie pothole wetland complexes and the unknown changes to the diversity and ecology of these wetlands from future climate variations. Focusing on educating the public and future scientists about these issues will become greater than ever. Advancements in research within sub-disciplines such as ecology, policy,

education, management, and geographic information systems are important the future of wetland conservation. I envision connecting to the student body to spark innovation and bridge the gap between students and professionals to improve future decisions and drive future research.

**Candidate:** Jess Stern

**Background:**

I am a M.S. student in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign studying restoration ecology and Floristic Quality Assessment with Dr. Jeff Matthews. Before joining Dr. Matthews' lab, I worked for the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the State of Connecticut primarily in plant ecology and habitat restoration. My current research focuses on assessing and improving standardized protocols for herbaceous vegetation monitoring, with study sites in wetlands across four ecoregions of the U.S. Serving as the student representative for the North



Central Chapter of the SWS would allow me to advocate for student input in Chapter decisions and be a point person for student engagement. This appointment would provide me with an excellent opportunity to engage with other researchers in my field, as well as improve my knowledge and development as a wetland scientist.

**Why do you wish to serve as the NCC Student Representative?** I am interested in serving as the Student Representative because of my desire to become more greatly involved in research and outreach in the field of wetland science, and to make connections with professionals in the field that will facilitate collaboration and continued growth within the Chapter. I believe that involvement with the NCC of the SWS will allow me to expand my professional and academic opportunities, and will assist me in generating ideas for my own research, as well as for potential future projects. Serving as the Student Representative will give me a unique platform to advocate and involve other students and community members in the field of wetland science.

**What do you envision for the Chapter's future?** For the Chapter's future, I envision greater involvement from a wide community. Outreach and educational opportunities for people outside of the scientific community would strengthen the mission and outreach potential for the Chapter. I also imagine that I could be a point person for student recruitment and potential campus functions at UIUC or other universities in the region. A strong student base would re-enforce the pool of young professionals and interested members and continue to grow the organization.

## HIGHLIGHTED STUDENT

BY BREE RICHARDSON

### Rosalind Russell

This quarter we would like to highlight Rosalind Russell, a 4<sup>th</sup> year Bachelor student at Buena Vista University. She is majoring in Sustainable Development and will be graduating this May. She received the best student oral presentation award at the SWS-NCC chapter conference in Fargo, ND. Congratulations Rosalind! We wish you the best of luck after graduation and look forward to seeing you at future conferences!



### What are your goals after graduation?

I plan to work for an environmental consulting company with a focus on planning, wetland management, and project development. From there, I hope to combine my work experience with a graduate degree later down the line, and eventually develop a professional presence in the areas of sustainable energy, sustainable natural resource management, and sustainable community development. While doing this, I will certainly focus much of my time in the political arena, helping to move our country in the direction of clean water, clean energy, and clean air.

### Why did you become interested in Wetland Science?

My interest in wetland science came about during my junior year when I took freshwater ecology with Dr. Melinda Coogan. In this class I learned about the many unique ecosystem services of wetlands and took field assessments of local wetlands to understand their impact in Storm Lake. When I discovered the City of Storm Lake was heavily involved in water quality initiatives, Dr. Coogan promptly helped to set me up with an internship (Thank goodness for her!). I worked as a Stormwater Management intern for the City and had the opportunity to work on stormwater projects funded by the HUD Community Development Block Grant, the Iowa Water Quality Initiative, and other funding sources. One project in particular was a one-acre treatment wetland that filters 140 acres of urban and agricultural runoff. I became fascinated with this project and decided to do some research on the benefits of urban wetlands, which is what I presented at the Society of Wetland Sciences: NCC Chapter conference. I also decided to visit the London Wetland Centre when visiting family in England. There, I saw in action the amazing impact urban wetlands have on all aspects community development, including education, health, economics, and general well-being. Since this time, I have maintained my interest in wetland sciences and I hope to continue working with wetlands as I develop in the professional world.

## **Do you have a fun or memorable field story that you would like to share?**

I was sitting outside the Field of Dreams (a soccer field in Storm Lake) collecting water samples at the inlet and outlet of a bioreactor on a very hot and humid day. In fact, I was sweating so much, I had to make sure it wasn't dripping into the water samples. As I was sitting in the grass, a rusty white truck drove into the gravel parking lot. There was a woman driving and a man in the passenger's seat with the windows rolled down. At first I thought nothing of it, but the woman continued to circle from the parking lot, back onto the road, back onto the parking lot...more than 50 times. I had a bright orange vest on and it was the middle of the day, so I wasn't so concerned, but after about 45 minutes of them circling I was just confused. I called my boyfriend, and he immediately called the county sheriff to inform them. By that time the police arrived, the truck had already left. She said, "I wonder if she was just testing out the car or taking driving lessons," and I laughed. All that fuss for nothing. I did successfully get my samples, however! We later found out there was a problem with that bioreactor from our results, so the sampling certainly paid off. The City of Storm Lake is now working to get the bioreactor fixed.

## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL CONTEST WINNER**

Thank you to all who renewed membership! Those who renewed before January 31, 2018 were entered to win a \$50 gift card. Lifetime members were automatically entered. The winner was randomly chosen from this list. Congratulations to Dylan Hensch from Minnesota who received a \$50 gift card from Cabela's.

If you haven't renewed yet, we encourage you to do so. Your membership is essential to continued efforts in our mission dedicated to promoting and supporting wetland science and professionals within the region.

## **NOTES FROM AROUND THE NORTH CENTRAL REGION**

**WISCONSIN:** (State Contact, Laura A.B. Giese, [lgiese@trcsolutions.com](mailto:lgiese@trcsolutions.com))

Something from Wisconsin Wetland Association's site may be of interest:

Prescribed fire as a wetland management tool: <https://wisconsinwetlands.org/updates/can-i-use-fire-as-a-management-tool/>

A cool link to Wisconsin's frog calls and other information

<http://wiatri.net/inventory/frogtoadsurvey/Wlfrogs/>

**OHIO:** (State Contact, Brad Petru, [bpetru@hullinc.com](mailto:bpetru@hullinc.com) )

The Ohio EPA has been overhauling their water quality trading program. They have recently put out updates for public comment which concluded in March. The water quality trading program has yet to take a strong hold in Ohio, although the concerns on water quality in the western Lake Erie basin and

the western Sandusky Bay basin may help push the nutrient removal concerns along. It is suggested that the agricultural community is over-fertilizing their land and that best management practices such as filter strips and riparian buffers become circumvented by tile drainage to agricultural ditches. Ohio EPA is currently in the process of redefining what constitutes impairment with regards to nutrients in large river bodies. They are suggesting that 130 ug/l total phosphorus should be used as a target for defining over-enriched waters.

In other news, the Ohio EPA has revised the credible data rules in February 2018, but is currently trying to find agreement between the Credible Data Program and the Water Quality Certified Professional Program. The two programs are distinct but have overlap for some activities and credentials. Participation in the Credible Data Program is voluntary. Included in this is the potential to merge the Qualitative Habitat Evaluation Index (QHEI) and the primary Headwater Habitat Evaluation Index (HHEI) into a single stream habitat assessment. Secondly there may be an additional specialty for Level 3 qualified data collectors (QDC) for salamander communities in small streams. They are also updating terminology to be consistent with other program areas.

<http://www.epa.state.oh.us/dsw/credibledata/index.aspx>

<http://epa.ohio.gov/dsw/401/wqcp.aspx>

**MICHIGAN:** (State Contact, Kurt Kowalski, [kkowalski@usgs.gov](mailto:kkowalski@usgs.gov))

How can beavers help with wetland restoration? You can find some answers in a recent guidebook (<https://bit.ly/2vw3Qdd>) created by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a series of partners in western States. Also, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) continues to fund exciting coastal wetland work by the Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Monitoring Program (<https://bit.ly/2HhapSI>). This basin-wide effort is producing a huge dataset on coastal wetland health that you can explore through an online mapper (<https://bit.ly/2jWPQ2u>).

Have you ever wondered what the best approach is to treat non-native *Phragmites australis*? The *Phragmites* Adaptive Management Framework (PAMF) is using a data-driven adaptive management approach to provide an answer. PAMF staff are gearing up to be fully operational this summer, so visit the PAMF website (<http://www.greatlakesphragmites.net/pamf/>) or a recent blog post (<http://bit.ly/2DFTbAf>) to get the latest information.

Looking for wetland restoration sites? Need a good map of hydric soils in your area? The Michigan's Wetlands Map Viewer (<http://bit.ly/2rG30c1>) might be just what you need.

**ILLINOIS:** (State Contact, Jessie Ackerman, [jracker@illinois.edu](mailto:jracker@illinois.edu))

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If you have an item for a future issue of the NCC newsletter or correction, please send an email with *newsletter* in the subject line to the Editor: Jennifer Boyer ([jen.boyer@dupageco.org](mailto:jen.boyer@dupageco.org))

**NCC-SWS OFFICERS**

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**Joy Marburger, At-Large Board Member**  
**Bree Richardson, Student Representative**

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**David Mushet, Nominations Committee**  
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**WEBSITE** <http://www.sws.org/North-Central-Chapter>