



The North Central Chapter

Society of Wetland Scientists

NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER NEWSLETTER Winter 2016-17

A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

I would like to start this note by wishing everyone a very Happy World Wetlands Day!!! As most of you know, February 2nd is World Wetlands Day marking the 1971 adoption of the Convention on Wetlands in Ramsar, Iran. The day was designated to “help raise public awareness about the importance and value of wetlands.” This is also a very central goal of both the Society of Wetland Scientists and our North Central Chapter. If as you celebrate this special day you find yourself wondering how you can become more active in promoting the importance and value of wetlands, I have an option that you may want to consider. As you will find elsewhere in this newsletter and also on the Chapter’s webpage, we are currently seeking nominations for all of the elected positions on the North Central Chapter’s leadership team. Positions open for election include President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, two At-Large Board Members, and our Student Representative position. These positions will form the Chapter’s Executive Board for 2017/18 and are key to a successful chapter. Thus, please think about stepping forward and nomination yourself (or someone else) for one of these positions. The elections will take place in March with installation of newly elected officers at the June International Meeting in Puerto Rico. If interested in any of these opportunities, please contact the Chapter’s Nominating Committee Chair ([Arnold van der Valk](#)). We would love to have you become part of the NCC’s Executive Board and help us to better promote and celebrate the “importance and value of wetlands.”

Also, if you are a Facebook user, you will find information in this newsletter about a photo contest that the Chapter is holding in celebration of World Wetland Day.

Planning is underway for the 2017 North Central Chapter Annual Meeting. Current plans are to hold the meeting in Fargo, North Dakota, in late September or Early October. As those who have attended past meetings will attest, our annual meetings are a great way to interact with other NCC members, to learn more about wetland resources in a particular portion of our region, and to present your research results. Students also will find unique opportunities at these meetings to gain experience presenting in a friendly setting of peers and to interact with professionals from throughout the North Central region. We would like to see our annual meetings grow to become an even larger event each year, so you can expect additional field trips, opportunities to present your research, and social events at this year’s meeting. Also, we will be planning some unique fund raising activities to help our Chapter continue to be able to support students and wetlands events and activities into 2018. If for some reason you are unable to make it to the SWS International Conference in Puerto Rico, please consider your SWS Chapter meeting as an alternative. And if you do make the Puerto Rico meeting, we would still love to see you in Fargo this fall.

Please enjoy your Winter Newsletter. I would like to thank once again our dedicated Newsletter Editor, Jen Boyer, for all the work she does putting these together for us.

The Very Best of Wishes to All Our Members!!! Stay Warm!!!

Dave Mushet, NCC President
dmushet@usgs.gov

2017 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

DEADLINE: MARCH 3

NOMINATIONS ARE NOW OPEN

The NCC is currently accepting nominations for a President-elect, Secretary, Treasurer, two At-Large Board Members, and a Student Representative. Nominations for each of these six positions will be accepted through Friday, March 3rd, 2017. Please send your nomination along with a few sentences stating why this person is interested via an email to Arnold van der Valk (Nominating Committee Chair) at valk@iastate.edu. Self-nominations will be accepted and are highly encouraged.

The President-elect position is a two-year position. After serving an initial two-year term, the President-elect automatically ascends to become Chapter's President. Following a two-year term as the NCC President, the elected individual serves a final two-year term as Past-President. Thus, this office requires a six-year commitment to the Chapter. The Secretary, Treasurer, and At-Large Board Member positions are each two-year commitments that begin in June 2017 when new officers are installed at the Annual SWS Meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Detailed duties for each are described in the Chapter Bylaws and Standing Rules that can be found on our website at:

http://www.sws.org/images/chapters/North_Central/Bylaws_06_01_2016.pdf

Please note that the current Bylaws list the Secretary and Treasurer positions as a single position. The NCC governing board has approved changes to the Standing Rules and drafted changes to the Bylaws needed to split this position into separate Secretary and Treasurer positions. The proposed Bylaw changes will be voted on by the membership at our Chapter Meeting in San Juan.

The Student Representative is a newer position on our governing board. The Student Representative serves for one-year as a voting member of the Executive Board. The Student Representative needs to be openly available for student members to contact and voice any needs and concerns. The Student Representative would then forward these on to the Executive Board. As a voting member of the Executive Board, the Student Representative attends (by phone, generally) Executive Board meetings and expresses the perspective of students on proposed actions. Further, the Student Representative currently seeks out nominations for the highlighted student section in the Chapter's quarterly newsletter, and writes that section for inclusion in the newsletter. Contact our current Student Representative, Casey Judge at cjudge@iastate.edu for more information.

If you have been looking for a way to become more involved in the Chapter, one of these positions may be for you. The officer elections will be held in March 2017 (details on how to vote will be provided in our Spring Newsletter).

If you have any questions, please contact [Arnold van der Valk](#) (Past President and Head of the Nominating Committee) or [David Mushet](#) (Current NCC President).

And remember, the nominations deadline is March 3rd, 2017.

SWS NCC STUDENT RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM

DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 12

The North Central Chapter (NCC) of SWS (<http://sws.org/North-Central-Chapter>) is offering one \$1000 Student Research Grant to graduate or undergraduate students conducting research in wetland science and who are enrolled in an accredited college or university in the NCC region (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin).

Application information

Please see the SWS webpages (<http://www.sws.org/Awards-and-Grants/student-research-grants.html>) for application instructions

SWS NCC FACEBOOK PHOTO CONTEST

DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 9

In anticipation of World Wetlands Day 2017 we would like to ask our members to participate in another **Facebook photo contest!** In concordance with RAMSAR's theme of "**Wetlands for Disaster Risk**



Reduction" we would like to see all of our **wetland super heroes** donning their capes and super tools! The contest will start on February 2nd and you'll have until February 9th to post your pictures and vote on other's pictures. Please post pictures as a "public post" (there is a drop-down menu that usually says "friends", change this to "public") and hashtag the post with "**#worldwetlandsday**" and "**#sws**". There will be two winners this year – a "fan favorite" for the most "likes" on Facebook, and one voted on by the North Central chapter board. The board will especially be looking for how well you kept to the theme this year. Winner of the "fan favorite" award will be rewarded with a \$25 gift card to Papa John's, and the winner selected by the board will be rewarded with a \$25 gift card to Bass Pro Shop. Winners will be announced mid-February over Facebook.

Pictured: Wetland Superhero, Nick Assell, DuPage County Stormwater.

HIGHLIGHTED STUDENT

BY CASEY JUDGE

This quarter we would like to check in with Gwendolyn Murphy, a 2nd year Masters student at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale who was the recipient of the NCC's \$1000 research award last year. When I reached out to Gwen regarding this quarter's highlighted student section, she was actually in the field in Mississippi using the funds that the chapter had provided to create fiddler crab enclosures! When she isn't working on her research, Gwen's hobbies include hiking, backpacking, gardening, do-it-yourself projects like soap making and generally researching/dreaming about homesteading. She also loves reading classic literature as well as fantasy and science fiction.

What are your primary research interests?

I currently study interactions between fiddler crabs and plants in Gulf coast tidal marshes. Burrowing organisms like fiddler crabs aerate the soil through bioturbation, enhance nutrient cycling and increase habitat heterogeneity. Plants in turn provide habitat, detritus, and protection from predators as well as

the sun. I am captivated by these facilitative interactions and would love to continue working with coastal plants and invertebrates in the future.

Why did you become interested in Wetland Science?

Wetlands are often highly productive ecosystems that provide many invaluable services like flood relief, filtration of nutrients or harmful compounds and habitat for wildlife. I am amazed by the multitude of unique adaptations many wetland species have to cope with their environment as well as the array of facilitative interactions playing out between many wetland species. I find wetlands to be places of great beauty. Among my happiest memories are wading through swamps while listening to barred owls calling hauntingly from towering bald cypress trees and watching the horizon blaze with the setting sun over a sea of swaying marsh grass.

Last year, you received the \$1000 research award from the NCC. We would love to hear about the progress of your research since then! Do you have any updates to share?

My research has come a long way over the past year. I just completed the field portion of my fiddler crab habitat preference study in January 2017. This data will provide insight into habitat amenities like soil hardness and plant biomass predicted to influence fiddler crab population dynamics at my field site. I also erected twenty-four fiddler crab enclosures across four tidal marsh ecotones in January 2017. These enclosures will allow me to compare soil and plant characteristics in the presence/absence of fiddler crabs, and



ultimately determine if fiddler crab activity facilitates growth of tidal marsh vegetation. My research award from the NCC has been tremendously supportive. The award paid for materials to build my enclosures and it has provided me with confidence that my research is meaningful to others. Thank you.

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

Installing my fiddler crab enclosures was physically and at times emotionally exhausting. We buried each 1.5 m² wooden frame approximately 15 cm within the marsh substrate to limit fiddler crabs ability to burrow out. Digging in each ecotone (salt marsh, brackish marsh, fresh marsh, salt pannes) required a new strategy due to the differences in substrate and vegetation. One of my lab mates brilliantly suggested using a 1.5 m length wooden board to hammer into the salt marsh substrate instead of digging a trench. The method worked! We would place our board, hammer or stomp it into the wet, messy substrate. After the board was deep enough, myself and two lab mates would kneel and wiggle

the board back and forth to create a wide enough trench to insert the enclosure. We were soaking wet and covered in marsh mud, but we all really liked when it was wiggle time. We even sang a wiggle song.

(Gwen, I hope that we can talk you into sharing your wiggle song with us in Puerto Rico!)

NOTES FROM AROUND THE NORTH CENTRAL REGION

MICHIGAN: (State Contact, Kurt Kowalski, kkowalski@usgs.gov)

Did you know that Michigan DEQ has a new wetland monitoring program? Check out a news story here (<http://bit.ly/2eSs6cg>) and get into the DEQ web pages starting at <http://bit.ly/2jrDQEP>

The Upper Midwest and Great Lakes Landscape Conservation Cooperative has been active along the Lake Huron to Lake Erie shoreline of Michigan (<http://bit.ly/2iC3TJt>), including the development of coastal wetland decision support tools (<http://bit.ly/2j2gx7S>).

If *Phragmites* is something that concerns you, keep an eye on the new materials regularly being added to the Great Lakes *Phragmites* Collaborative web site (<http://greatlakesphragmites.net/>). Spread the word to your colleagues and partners!

ILLINOIS: (State Contact, Jessie Ackerman, jracker@illinois.edu)

<http://www.annanews.com/news/us-forest-service-grant-funding-benefit-wetland-habitat-project>
Shawnee National Forest, in partnership with Ducks Unlimited, has received a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant. The project hopes to expand the Big Muddy Wetlands Complex, restore an oxbow to the Big Muddy River, and restore 320 acres in the Oakwood Bottoms Greentree Reservoir.

http://www.shelbyvilledailyunion.com/news/usda-announces-conservation-reserve-program-investments-in-illinois/article_aadec85f-665c-541a-97cb-c8c8a564e892.html

The USDA will allow enrollment of up to 15,000 acres of farmland to be converted to grasslands and wetlands as part of their Conservation Reserve Program/Illinois Grassland-Wetland Habitat Restoration SAFE Project. In addition to soil erosion prevention and water quality improvements, the project is protecting populations of endangered and threatened grassland bird species.

NORTH DAKOTA: (State Contact, Marinus Otte, marinus.otte@ndsu.edu) We are looking forward to hosting the Chapter's annual meeting in North Dakota this coming fall! Stay tuned for details.

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

Wisconsin Wetland Association 2017 Annual Wetland Science Conference, February 28 to March 2. To be held in Stevens Point, WI Details: conference.wisconsinwetlands.org/

INDIANA: (State Contact, Liz Pelloso, pelloso.elizabeth@epa.gov)

IOWA: (State Contact, Melinda Coogan, coogan@bvu.edu)

OHIO: (State Contact, Hugh Crowell, hcrowell@hullinc.com)

MINNESOTA: (State Contact, Elizabeth Markhart, bmarkhart@comcast.net)

NEBRASKA: (State Contact, Ted LaGrange, ted.lagrange@nebraska.gov)

SOUTH DAKOTA: (State Contact, Carol Johnston, Carol.Johnston@sdstate.edu)

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)

NCC-SWS OFFICERS

David Mushet, President

Julie Nieset, President-Elect

Arnold van der Valk, Immediate Past President

Jessica Ackerman, Secretary/Treasurer

Liz Pelloso, At-Large Board Member

Joy Marburger, At-Large Board Member

NCC-SWS COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Julie Nieset, Program Committee

Arnold van der Valk, Nominations Committee

Jessica Ackerman, Membership Committee

Karen Mangan, Grants and Awards Committee

WEBSITE <http://www.sws.org/North-Central-Chapter>