



The North Central Chapter

Society of Wetland Scientists

NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER NEWSLETTER Spring 2019

PRESIDENTS NOTE

Once again, we are shifting to spring and all that comes with the change of seasons. There are a number of seeds that have been planted that we hope will prove fruitful for wetland science and for our Chapter. This past February, a new Student Chapter of SWS NCC at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor was officially approved. There is also one forming at University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. Please read the articles in this newsletter about this exciting development!

We have some wonderful candidates running for Chapter Board positions – their bios and statements are in this newsletter too. Voting will start on April 11th – we will all receive an email with a link for voting. Please vote! New officers will be installed in May.

Waters of the U.S. Proposed Rule

“Do unto those downstream as you would have those upstream do unto you.” – Wendell Berry

“The idea of wilderness needs no defense, it only needs defenders” – Edward Abbey

I am sure you are aware that changes have been proposed for our federal rules related to WOTUS. Please read SWS NCC Iowa State Representative Paul Weihe’s article on the WOTUS rule and take a few moments to write your comments in support of protecting our nation’s wetlands in the USEPA docket: <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=EPA-HQ-OW-2018-0149-0003>

May is American Wetlands Month

My challenge to you: Spend one hour reminiscing and appreciating your personal connection with wetlands over the course of your life. Next, spend an hour teaching, hiking, or celebrating with someone who doesn’t know much about wetlands to share your valuable experience, knowledge, and insights.

“When I touch that flower, I am not merely touching that flower. I am touching infinity”
– George Washington Carver

“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature – the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter” – Rachel Carson

This is my last note as President of our Chapter, as we will transition in May with Christina Hargiss stepping into the position of President and I will shift to Immediate Past President. We are thankful to Dave Mushet who is ending his term as Immediate Past President. In addition to countless contributions and insights for our Chapter, Dave was instrumental in securing the Chapter Development Grant which has enabled our Chapter to start a number of laudable projects. Thank you, Dave!

For Wetlands!



Julie Nieset
jenieset@illinois.edu

STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS IN THE NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER

BY JESSICA STERN

SWS Student Associations are student-led organizations that connect students, faculty, and community members in the spirit of wetland education, conservation, and management. These organizations are advised by an SWS faculty member at the affiliated University. Student Associations are an excellent way to facilitate active engagement in wetland science and offer an opportunity to strengthen and promote our Chapter.

The North Central Chapter has been active in encouraging the formation of student chapters. Read on to learn more about the students at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and their dedication to building a community of wetland enthusiasts below. A second chapter is in the works at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and has already arranged an event for March 31. Check out their Vernal Pool Hike in our events section.

If you are interested in creating a Student Association at your University, you can find the Student Association Guidelines [here](#). You can also follow the Society of Wetland Scientists (North Central Chapter) Student Chapter at University of Michigan on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#), and the Society of Wetland Scientists North Central Chapter Student Association at UIUC on [Facebook](#).

JOIN US OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP
[SWS.ORG](https://www.sws.org)

NCC-SWS OFFICERS

Julie Nieset, President
Christina Hargiss, President-Elect
David Mushet, Immediate Past President
Jessica Ackerman, Secretary
Eric Plankell, Treasurer
Liz Pelloso, At-Large Board Member
Joy Marburger, At-Large Board Member
Bree Richardson, Student Representative

NCC-SWS COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Christina Hargiss, Program Committee
David Mushet, Nominations Committee
Jessica Ackerman, Membership Committee
Karen Mangan, Grants and Awards Committee

Corrections or new items for the NCC newsletter. Editor: Jennifer Boyer (jen.boyer@dupageco.org)



UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN FORMS STUDENT CHAPTER

The Society of Wetland Scientists (North Central Chapter) Student Chapter at the University of Michigan is the first of its kind formed at the University. Created by a group of graduate students in the School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS) and under the guidance of USGS Wetland Ecologist Kurt Kowalski, the organization is the byproduct of an Independent Study focusing on the ecology of Great Lakes coastal wetlands. Affectionately known as SEAStheWetlands, our mission is to provide an independent forum for an interchange of ideas and data developed within wetland science between students and to encourage an understanding and appreciation for wetlands by all walks of life.



University of Michigan Student Chapter: Crosswinds Marsh Tour

Forming in early February 2019, SEAStheWetlands have already become quite active. The group celebrated its first official event during World Wetlands Day at one of Ann Arbor's local watering holes. We've also made field trips to two of Michigan's largest managed wetlands: Crosswinds Marsh, a 1,050-acre mitigated wetland created after the expansion of the Detroit Metro Airport and Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, an actively managed migratory bird refuge which includes over 1,000 acres of restored wetland that reconnect the historical floodplain to the Saginaw River. Several of our members will be studying the Refuge's hydrology and wildlife this summer as part of their master's project.



For information and updates, you can follow or contact us here:

Facebook: SEAStheWetlands

Twitter: @seasthewetlands

Email: SWSNCCUMich@gmail.com

University of Michigan Student Chapter: The Master's Project team at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge

HIGHLIGHTED STUDENT
BY BENJAMIN HENGEL

Our highlighted student is Mary Keilhauer, a second-year master's student studying hydrological sciences at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She was the recipient of the SWS Multicultural Mentoring Program (SWaMMP) award allowing her to travel to the Society of Wetland Scientists annual meeting in Denver, CO to present her research. In the following section Mary elaborates a little more about herself and receiving the SWaMMP award.



Why did you become interested in Wetland Science?

My undergraduate degree in Environmental Engineering focused on water treatment and I became really interested in water treatment in the natural environment. I developed a passion in the protection and study of migratory fisheries through some internships that lead me from Arecibo, PR to Turners Falls, MA. Getting into wetlands was a natural step because of the many benefits including wildlife habitat, improved water quality, and increased landscape resilience.

You were a recipient of the 2018 SWS Multicultural Mentoring Program (SWaMMP). How did this program benefit you?

I received the SWaMMP Graduate Mentor travel grant which allowed me to come to the 2018 meeting and present my current research on constructed wetlands. The opportunity to get to learn and meet so many professionals was amazing, but one of the best parts of the trip was the unique and strong community I gained from SWaMMP. Over the week, the students, grad mentors, and staff became very close and it was a very supportive environment. I have participated in similar programs in other societies, but this program was different. I still keep in touch with this group and have even collaborated on a paper. I feel that I am a stronger professional and scientist because of this program.

What was your favorite part of the SWS 2018 Annual Meeting in Denver, Colorado?

I attended the SWS 2018 Annual Meeting in Denver, CO. The best part was the field trip in the Rockies. Many of the professionals around me were people whose papers I was citing so to get the opportunity to get into some alpine wetlands and learn from them was a great experience.

What are your future plans and goals?

I hope to be finishing up my master's program in late May and pursue a career in water resources/stormwater management in the Colorado area. I am really interested in best management practice design and city planning to increase water quality in a safe and environmentally conscience way.

REGIONAL NEWS

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

We are happy to welcome the newest SWS student chapter that is based at the University of Michigan School of Environment and Sustainability in Ann Arbor, MI. This energetic group of students is off and running, so check out some of their activities on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/seasthewetlands/>) and look for ways to engage them in the coming years (scholarships, internships, site tours, career advice, etc).

Audubon network comes together to protect Michigan's wetlands <http://gl.audubon.org/news/audubon-network-comes-together-protect-michigan%E2%80%99s-wetlands>

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

Save the date for the Minnesota Wetlands Conference, October 15-16, 2019 <https://www.mnwetlands.umn.edu/conference>

Scientists say there's still time to save Minnesota from invasive wetland plant <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2019/02/27/scientists-say-theres-still-time-to-save-minnesota-from-invasive-wetland-plant>

National Wetland Inventory Update for Minnesota should be available May 2019: <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/water-nat-wetlands-inv-2009-2014>

INDIANA: (State Contact, Joy Marburger, jmarburg@frontier.com)

Northern Indiana wetland added as state nature preserve, January 2019: <https://wsbt.com/news/local/northern-indiana-wetland-becoming-states-newest-nature-preserve>

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

Wisconsin's Wetlands of International Importance

Wisconsin currently has five Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites). These include Kakagon and Bad River Sloughs, Door Peninsula Coastal Wetlands, Chiwaukee Illinois Beach Lake Plain, the Upper Mississippi River Floodplain Marshes, and Horicon Marsh. Wisconsin Wetlands Association (WWA) has been instrumental in nominating the first three sites.

Contest Winners

In celebration of World's Wetland Day, we asked you to post pictures of yourselves involving wetlands on Facebook and/or Instagram. The winner was determined by the greatest number of "likes". The contest winner for the photo contest was Eliza Lugten, with Jannice Newson a close runner-up. Thank you to all who participated in the contest! Ms. Lugten won a \$25 gift certificate.

All members who renewed their membership by January 31, 2019, were entered to win a \$50 gift card (lifetime members were automatically entered, and current board members were not eligible). The randomly chosen winner was Ann Key of Wisconsin. Congratulations!

In February WWA recently nominated a sixth Site: The Lower Wisconsin Riverway. The 92-mile Lower Wisconsin River segment is from the Prairie du Sac dam to the confluence with the Mississippi River in southwest Wisconsin. The proposed Ramsar Site comprises lands and waters featuring high quality regionally- and globally-significant wetland communities with outstanding species and natural community diversity and richness critical to maintaining a healthy river and supporting a variety of rare and sensitive species. If the Lower Wisconsin Riverway is designated, Wisconsin will have six Ramsar sites -- putting us #2 in the US (California has 7).

WWA is already considering its next Site to nominate: Crex Meadows in NW Wisconsin. If you are interested in helping with that process contact Katie Beilfuss at wwaprogs2@wisconsinwetlands.org.

I encourage you to take time to explore one or all of Wisconsin's Wetlands of International Importance.

Thirsty the Duck is back on the job to help wetlands, waterfowl, and wildlife

<https://www.jsonline.com/story/sports/columnists/paul-smith/2019/03/08/bryan-muche-resurrects-thirsty-duck-mission-benefit-wetlands-waterfowl-and-wildlife/3097152002/>

NORTH DAKOTA: (State Contact, Marinus Otte, marinus.otte@ndsu.edu)

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

First wetland bank credits available in South Dakota from South Dakota Farm Bureau:

https://www.agupdate.com/tristateneighbor/news/state-and-regional/first-wetland-bank-credits-available-in-south-dakota/article_80d81664-14e6-11e9-aa69-571e1e11c11a.html

IOWA: (State Contact, Paul Weihe, PhD, WeiheP@central.edu)

Iowa Soybean Association recently released a video on benefits of wetlands constructed for nitrogen removal: <https://www.iasoybeans.com/news/videos/wetlands/>

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

<http://www.annanews.com/news/waterfowl-habitat-projects-funded>

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources has begun a large list of waterfowl habitat improvement projects that were reviewed and recommended by the State Duck Stamp Advisory Committee:

- Roth Crossing Wetland Construction, Horseshoe Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area, Alexander County
- Bottomland Hardwood Enhancement, Cache River State Natural Area
- Bottomland Hardwood Enhancement, Mermet Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area
- Moist-Soil Wetland Units Development, Mermet Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area
- Compact Excavator and Trailer, Region 5
- Other statewide wetland maintenance and management

The Foxconn development at the headwaters of the Des Plaines River Watershed in Wisconsin is likely to have impacts within Illinois as well. The Lake County Stormwater Management Commission recently received and disseminated the findings of a watershed report focusing on the impact from the development. The report is available on Lake County, IL's website and is open for public review and comment until April 8: <http://www.lakecountyil.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=1650>

Wetlands being filled in, silt spilling into Des Plaines River due to Foxconn development, Lake County study finds <https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/lake-county-news-sun/news/ct-lns-stormwater-foxconn-report-st-0309-story.html>

Advancing Wetland Conservation grants available through the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation <https://www.illinoiscleanenergy.org/natural-areas-program/advancing-wetland-conservation>

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

Memphis Lake wetland restoration (Saunders County, NE) began in January 2019: <http://magazine.outdoornebraska.gov/2019/01/memphis-lake-wetland-restoration-project-to-begin-jan-29/>

USDA providing funds to protect and restore agricultural working lands, grasslands, and wetlands across Nebraska. Applications due April 12, 2019: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/ne/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD1447874>

Saline Wetlands Conservation Partnership: <https://lincoln.ne.gov/city/parks/parksfacilities/wetlands/index.htm>

OHIO: (State Contact, Brad Petru, bpetru@hullinc.com)

The Ohio EPA has just closed open comment on draft rules for the Water Quality Certified Professional (WQSP) program rules. Under this program, anyone who is seeking an application for Section 401 Water Quality Certification or an Isolated Wetlands Permit through the Ohio EPA may become certified as a WQSP which would allow the streamlining of the review process. The permit application review would be reduced from 180 days to 90 days, provided a public hearing is not necessary. The Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) Chapter 3745-6 establishes the training, experience and field method requirements necessary to submit quality data in support of the Section 401 Water Quality Certification and Isolated Permits. The goal is to have the Client and the Consultant provide data on wetlands and streams in the permit application that would normally be garnered by the Ohio EPA during the review process and this data would be collected at a level of detail that would be similar to that collected by the Ohio EPA. Thus, there would be minimal involvement by the Ohio EPA to process the permit application. This transfer of power does come with the requirement for a lot of training, periodic renewal of education and experience, and annual fees. Additionally, the WQCP certification can be revoked if the submission of the documentation in the permit is inconsistent with the technical standards established in the rules.

Call for nominations for 2019 Ohio Wetland Leader Awards: <https://www.ohwetlands.org/ohio-wetland-leader-nominations.html>

Wetlands in Wood County to be restored: <http://www.wtol.com/2019/01/17/wetlands-wood-county-be-restored/>

Ohio Environmental Law Blog, Long Saga of Defining Federally Protected Water Continues with Trump Administration Redefinition of WOTUS by Joseph Koncelik
<https://www.ohioenvironmentallawblog.com/2019/01/wetlands-and-streams/long-saga-defining-federally-protected-waters-continues/>

Save the Date – Ohio Wetland Association Bioblitz in Pickerington, July 19-20, 2019:
<https://www.ohwetlands.org/bioblitz-2019.html>

EDITORIAL

Input on WOTUS rule (Initially published 2/20/19) Reprinted with permission from SWS NCC Iowa State Representative Paul Weihe’s blog about wetlands which can be found at <https://99wetlands.wordpress.com/>

Americans are encouraged to provide feedback and guidance on a proposed change in how the Nation defines, and therefore protects, our wetlands. The comment period ends on Tax Day (April 15). I hope you’ll have your say!

At issue is how to define “Waters of the United States” (WOTUS) which are the lakes, rivers, wetlands, and similar water bodies to be regulated by the Clean Water Act (CWA). President Trump ordered Federal agencies to look at the issue, and propose a new rule to define and regulate WOTUS. The [proposed rule and related information](#), including [how to comment on the proposed change](#), and the [written public comments already received](#), may be found on-line at those links. Readers of this blog might very well wish to input on specifics of the proposal, or simply express support for a particular point of view regarding the issue. (All public input is solicited).

A consortium of nine different aquatic-related societies [issued a statement](#) in December about this proposed change. None other than Iowa State University Professor and past President of the Society of Wetland Scientists, Arnold van der Valk, is quoted in the statement:

“It will result in the loss of many of the nation’s wetlands. This decision is shortsighted and counterproductive. It will significantly reduce the multitude of ecosystem services that these wetlands currently provide us at no cost. As a result the taxpayers will have to pay to build elaborate and expensive infrastructure to replace these free ecosystem services, such as flood reduction and cleaning up polluted water.”

...and he is 100% correct. This rule will result in the Nation losing many wetlands, and all the services they render.

I also recommend a *New York Times* article on the issue:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/06/climate/trump-water-pollution-wotus-replacement.html?ref=oembed>

Regular readers of this blog have heard my thoughts on why wetlands should be protected, i.e. the various important work they do. New visitors (welcome!!) or those wishing a review might consider clicking on the “tags” in the sidebar for categories of “ecosystem services,” listed under Hydrology, Pollution, and so forth.

“But Paul,” you say. “How would a rewording of the definition of ‘Waters of the United States’ affect **wetlands**?” Because most of the wetlands in the USA will be protected (or not) through the Section 404 provision of the Clean Water Act. If wetlands are WOTUS, then the US Army Corps of Engineers must regulate their physical structure (“dredge and fill”) and the EPA must regulate their water quality. But if wetlands are **not** WOTUS, then...individual States may choose to protect them, or not.

Supposedly this new rule will “...increase predictability and consistency...” of wetland regulations, and that certainly sounds appealing. But actually, since 1986 the Federal government has had a Rule about WOTUS that was, more or less, consistent and effective. In 1987, the Corps of Engineers published a Manual for determining what is/is not (i.e., *delineating*) a wetland based on that Rule. Although an Obama-era rule tweaked it slightly, the 1987 Manual, and the Rule it’s based on, has worked just fine. That’s over 30 years of practice—and this new Rule proposes to stick to it, with an important difference: **adjacency**.

The new Rule would require a wetland (as defined by the 1987 Manual) to be **physically adjacent** (“abut”), and connected to, a surface water body relating to other WOTUS (“jurisdictional waters”). In other words, a wetland must have a surface flow (in or out) connecting to a stream, river, lake, or other waterway already considered a WOTUS. That surface water flow or connection must exist in a “typical year,” not just a year with high water (i.e., flooding conditions).

I admire the honesty of frank statements in the Federal Register regarding what this rule is designed to do: *eliminate protection for all wetlands **not** linked by a surface water flow* to other WOTUS. Here are specific quotations:

(the proposed rule) would exclude isolated wetlands with only physically remote hydrologic connections to jurisdictional waters. Under the proposed definition, ecological connections alone would not provide a basis for including physically isolated wetlands within the phrase “The Waters of the United States.”

(the proposed definition) of “adjacent wetlands” and the categorical treatment of jurisdiction over wetlands adjacent to tributaries as proposed and informed by, though not dictated by, science.

Wetlands separated from other “waters of the United States” by upland or by dikes, barriers, or similar structures would not be adjacent and would not be jurisdictional wetlands under the proposed rule...

That last one is interesting. Several statements in the proposed Rule seem to suggest that even a wetland physically adjacent to a stream or lake will **not** be regulated, as long as you put up a barrier (like an earthen dam or berm) between the wetland and the adjacent WOTUS. You could even put in a pipe or culvert (because the wetland is so very wet...) and yet it’s no longer, legally, a wetland.

I encourage you to read the proposed Rule yourself, and/or those analyses linked above. And then, please consider weighing in with a comment on the proposed Rule. As you might expect, I plan to do so. This is a time we need to speak up. Our Government needs to know that we value wetlands (whether *they* do, or not). We must remind our public servants that whether a wetland is physically adjacent to a stream or not, it nevertheless *DOES* affect the hydrology of that stream. The wetland absorbs water that otherwise (even if by groundwater, rather than a surface connection) would contribute to downstream flooding. The wetland improves the water quality of the downstream WOTUS. So-called “isolated wetlands” simply **aren’t** isolated, and they do important work...but only if we allow them to exist!!

And beyond reacting to this specific government action, I hope we can think about the long-term future of our wetlands. Personally, I would like our Nation and its government to provide effective and uniform legal protection for all of our aquatic resources, including wetlands. I certainly believe in making that task as straightforward as possible for everyone involved: landowners, regulators, and environmental professionals. How do we serve our citizens best? Protecting wetlands is surely part of that...so how do we get it done??

OFFICER ELECTIONS

The election of chapter board members and officers will take place April 11-26. A link to the online voting site will be sent out to all NCC members when the voting starts on the 11th.

MEET THE CANDIDATES

President-Elect Candidate: Casey J. Judge, WPIT

Background:

I have been an active member of SWS and the North Central Chapter since 2014. I am currently in the process of completing my Ph.D. at Iowa State University with an expected graduation date in July this year. My research focus has been on evaluating the potential unintended consequences of restoring wetlands for the purpose of intercepting agricultural tile drainage and reducing excess nutrients. Specifically, I have been monitoring methylmercury and greenhouse gases in the surface waters of these types of wetlands. I am interested in wetland research in the NCC region because I see how wetlands are going to become increasingly more important for mitigating the effects of agriculture and climate change. I have lived in the Midwest my entire life, and enjoy seeing the positive impacts of wetland research in the area I call home.



SWS Volunteer Experience: I have attended SWS annual meetings since 2015, and became involved with SWS leadership almost immediately. In 2015 I was elected as incoming Chair of the Women in Wetlands section of SWS, and also began working with (now) Past-President Dave Mushet to initiate a Student Representative position on the board of the North Central Chapter. Establishing the Student Representative position was completed in the spring of 2016, and I served as the first student representative through June of 2017. As a leader of the Women in Wetlands section, I worked to increase the section's visibility and activity level between annual meetings. I also successfully increased attendance at section events during the annual meeting in Puerto Rico.

Why do you wish to serve?

My experience with being a member of SWS and the NCC has been enormously enriched by my volunteer leadership. I would like to remain actively involved in SWS leadership to help our society and our chapter remain strong and grow into the future. My personal professional goal is to actively lead the incorporation of sound science into actionable policy, and I believe that continued involvement with this society and this chapter will help me accomplish this.

What do you envision for the Chapter's future?

I would like to see our chapter's visibility increase both between annual meetings, and at the annual SWS meetings. As a chapter, we have been striving to increase member participation and we have actively increased support for greater student involvement. I would like to develop clear strategies to continue meeting chapter objectives. I would also like to see our chapter become more involved with some of the goals highlighted in the SWS main strategic plan. I believe that using the SWS strategic plan as a tool to guide our actions will help us to achieve similar goals within our chapter. These include: fostering high quality applied research within our chapter's region, supporting public awareness locally, promoting the incorporation of sound wetland science into policy, and ensuring the growth and sustainability of our chapter.

Secretary Candidate: Jennifer Boyer, CFM, PWS

Background:

B.S. in Environmental Biology from Eastern Illinois University

22 years of experience in various roles related to wetland science, water quality BMPs, wetland banking, restoration, and public policy

Currently serving DuPage County Stormwater Management as Environmental Projects coordinator

Speaking engagements at local meetings, seminars, and conferences on topics related to wetland regulations, water quality best management practices, and native vegetation

Currently serving as the SWS NCC newsletter editor and enjoyed serving in the past as website editor for the chapter

Why do you wish to serve?

The wetlands that we work to understand and protect are important individually and crucial in aggregate. Protecting wetland resources and drawing attention to their importance has been the most rewarding part of my career and I would be honored to continue that work by assisting the chapter as Secretary.

What do you envision for the Chapter's future?

Our members are improving on our knowledge of wetland science and policy every day. The NCC supports our regional membership by sharing insights, providing opportunities to build relationships, and highlighting research and policy. I would like to see us expand our work to connect scientists and policy makers to research occurring in our region and around the world.



Treasurer Candidate: Eric Plankell, M.S., PG

Background:

Education:

- M.S., Geology (2000) and B.S., Geology (1997), The Ohio State University

Experience:

- Associate Scientist, Wetlands Geologist - Illinois State Geological Survey (Prairie Research Institute, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)
- Licensed Professional Geologist for State of Illinois (since 2007)
- Member, Society of Wetland Scientists (since 2004)
- Treasurer, North-Central Chapter SWS (since 2017)
- Illinois State Contact for NCC-SWS (2008-2012)
- Student Oral Presentation & Poster Judge for SWS Annual Meetings in Denver, CO; San Juan, PR; and Salt Lake City, UT



Why do you wish to serve?

I have enjoyed serving as Treasurer for the NCC over the last two years. The work has been challenging at times. However, working through those difficulties has allowed me to interact with and get to know people at SWS that I would otherwise have been unlikely to meet. After two years of serving as Treasurer I'm beginning to feel like I'm settling into the position, and, should I be elected for a second term, I feel that it is a low cost/maximum return way for me to remain engaged with the chapter over the next two years.

What do you envision for the Chapter's future?

My hope is for the NCC to remain on strong financial footing so that we may expand our support of student memberships and participation in the Society, both from traditional and tribal colleges and universities. The chapter has made good progress in supporting students over the last several years, and I would like to see that continue.

SWS Student Representative Candidate: Sara Johnson

University of Illinois: Urbana-Champaign

Background:

Education

- B.A. in Biology from Niagara University, New York (2010)
- M.S. in Rare Plant Conservation at Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences/Illinois Natural History Survey - University of Illinois Urbana Champaign (anticipated graduation December 2020)

Experience

- Undergraduate research assistant at Niagara University in plant genomics and a long-term regeneration study of alpine plants in Rocky Mountain National Park. (2009-2010)
- MAPS Bird Banding - Volunteer at Beaver Meadow Audubon Center (2013-2015)
- Marsh Monitoring Environment Canada -Volunteer (2012)
- Environmental education and public program assistant at the Anita Purves Nature Center (2015-Present)
- Seasonal avian ecologist with Coweeta LTER program at University of Georgia (2016)
- Champaign County Forest Preserve – Frog call monitoring program volunteer (2017)
- Assistant botanist and bat technician with the Illinois Natural History Survey (2017 to Present)
- Wildlife research crew leader for Shoener Environmental, Inc. and avian field technician for West, Inc. (2016 – 2017)
- Past President and current Vice President of the Champaign County Audubon Society (2017 – Present)



Why do you wish to serve?

Living in the agricultural desert of the Midwest, I think many of us are hungry for a deeper connection to the natural world, especially with wetlands in an area where abundant water is lacking. Students and residents of the area will benefit greatly from increased exposure to the bounty of nature available to them, although it can take a little extra work to find. There is a wealth of knowledge in this area and I hope to bring individuals of varying backgrounds together and utilize their experience to create collaborations to educate, inform, and inspire the public to take action and be an advocate for their small pocket of the world.

What do you envision for the chapter's future?

I hope that in my time with the SWS NCC, I can help to build a strong connection between the organization and the students at the UIUC. Additionally, building the infrastructure of the chapter to be sustainable into the future can be a challenge given the transient nature of students. However, I hope to help build this foundation so that the chapter can be successful into the future.

SWS Student Representative Candidate: Eliza Lugten

University of Michigan

Background:

I consider myself lucky to have grown up in a Great Lakes state. Living in Michigan has made me who I am and shaped my career. My love for the outdoors started early with summer days at the beach and has continued through my undergraduate and graduate career as I am currently working on my Master's in Conservation Ecology at the University of Michigan. My undergraduate career



provided me with an interdisciplinary approach to environmental issues and also a strong background in research. Through an undergraduate research program, I worked as a research assistant at the US Geological Survey analyzing diets of fish from coastal wetlands. This past summer, I worked as a research assistant on a Harmful Algal Bloom monitoring project in Lake Erie. I am excited to be focusing on Great Lakes Coastal wetlands for my master's project. Starting in May, I will be beginning a project on monitoring part of a 10,000-acre coastal wetland connected to Lake Huron's Saginaw Bay.

Why do you wish to serve?

A group of my peers and I have recently started a student chapter of SWS at the University of Michigan. It has been wonderful to work with my peers who are passionate about wetlands and their conservation. I would love to serve as the student representative for the Society of Wetland Scientists and act as a voice for the future of wetland science because I believe in the importance of spreading this passion to others.

What do you envision for the Chapter's future?

I believe the most important mission of the Society of Wetland Scientists is connecting interested scientists so they can advocate and educate on the behalf of wetlands. I think the chapter should focus on the connection of students with each other and with other members of the chapter. In my experience while starting our new chapter, I have seen the positive effects that connecting students can have on interest in wetlands. I hope that I can help the chapter connect students with established scientists in our field through networking events and talks and connect more students through the formation of new student chapters.

At-Large Board Member Candidate: Jessica Ackerman

Background: I work for the Illinois State Geological Survey as a wetlands geologist on several water-quality projects in Northern Illinois and the Chicago-region. I have served as the secretary for our chapter for the past 4 years, and would still like to serve on the board in some capacity just because I love representing and advocating for SWS NCC and wetland science!

Why do you wish to serve?

I enjoy serving on the board, and wish to continue serving! I enjoy meeting our chapter members and hearing how we can better serve our region.

What do you envision for the Chapter's future?

We should continue to support our student members by providing leadership and finances for research and travel grants. I'm excited for the new student chapters that are starting up, and our future support of wetlands groups at tribal colleges in our region.



At-Large Board Member Candidate: Kate Lucier

Background:

- B.Sc. in Biological Sciences with a minor in Agriculture from University of Alberta, Canada.
- Undergraduate research experience in aquatic invertebrate ecology, Williams, B. W., K.L. Williams, S.R Gelder, H. C. Proctor. 2011. Distribution of Entocytheridae (Crustacea: Ostracoda) in Northern prairies of North America and reports of opportunistic clitellate annelids on crayfish hosts. *Western North American Naturalist* 71(2): 276-282.
- M.Sc. in Biology from the University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada. Thesis: "Relative distribution and biomass of invertebrates in fens and marshes in the boreal region of Northeastern Alberta" 2013.
- Graduate Research assistant in Athabasca oil sands region of Alberta, Canada.
 - Technical Report: Ciborowski, J.J.H. A.L. Foote, M.C. Roy, S. Nakhaie and K. Williams. 2012. Early community development in reclaimed landscapes of the Wapisiw Lookout Riparian Zone and associated wetlands – May-August 2011. Prepared for Suncor Energy Inc., Fort McMurray, AB, 12 p + Appendices.
- 13 years' experience in Wetland Ecology, 5 years of experience in infrastructure consulting including National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation, wetland and waterway permitting



Why do you wish to serve?

As a Professional Wetland Scientist, I am a strong advocate for the profession of wetland scientist as well as membership to professional organizations that further the understanding and conservation of wetlands. I would like to play an active role in this group as I believe the mission statements and goals of the SWS is vital in today's changing political and environmental climate. Because I would like to play a more active role, I would like the opportunity to learn more about the board and I believe that an at-large position would provide me the opportunity to do so. I am an organized, professional person and I look forward to furthering the mission of the North Central Chapter.

What do you envision for the Chapter's future?

In order to facilitate growth of the chapter, further initiatives to encourage participation and membership are necessary. Current initiatives that include travel vouchers and research grants are excellent and could be further supported through increased membership. If I were chosen to serve on the NCCs committee, I would also like to propose mentorship initiatives that could pair experienced wetland professionals to interested students and researchers. I believe that the field of wetland science is vitally important and vastly diverse in terms of career options and research pursuits. Creating a space and dialogue for young professionals could both garner greater membership to the chapter, but also – and perhaps more importantly – further membership to the profession.

At-Large Board Member Candidate: Jessica Stern

Background:

Education:

- M.S., Natural Resources Management, University of Illinois Urbana Champaign (Anticipated graduation December 2019)
- B.A., Environmental Studies, Marlboro College (2011)

SWS Volunteer Experience:

- Current NCC Student Representative
- Co-organized the 2019 World Wetlands Day NCC Facebook and Instagram photo contest
- Co-run the NCC Instagram account

Experience:

- Biological Science Technician, Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area, National Park Service, Boston, MA (2016)
- Forest Pest Outreach Coordinator, UCONN Extension, Haddam, CT (2015)
- Resource Assistant, Wildlife Division, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Hartford, CT (2014)
- Botany Intern, Conservation and Land Management Program, Chicago Botanic Garden and Bureau of Land Management, Lakeview, OR (2013)
- Plant Ecology Research Hourly Worker, Joseph Jones Ecological Research Center, Newton, GA (2012)
- Kettle Pond Water Quality Monitor, Student Conservation Association and National Park Service, Truro, MA (2011)



Presentations:

- Assessing vegetation metric robustness across four regions of the U.S., poster presentation, Wisconsin Wetlands Association conference, Madison, WI (2019)

Why do you wish to serve?

I have greatly enjoyed serving as one of the Student Representatives this past year, and I wish to expand upon my work with NCC over the past year and serve as an At-Large member for the next two.

What do you envision for the Chapter's future?

I envision further engagement from NCC members via a greater social media presence! I hope that we can use a variety of tools to grow our membership base, whether that's by organizing more localized meetings and workshops or helping to facilitate Student Associations throughout the different states in our Chapter. I think growing our student membership is key, and I hope to work on a variety of ways to bring more students into the Chapter.

At-Large Board Member Candidate: Paul Weihe

Background: Education:

- BS, Biology, University of Michigan-Dearborn
- MS, Biology, Eastern Michigan University
- PhD, Environmental Science, The Ohio State University

Experience:

Paul Weihe has served the Biology Department at Central College in Pella since 1998 as Associate Professor of Biology & Environmental Science. He has been a member of SWS for about 30 years. Research interests are evenly divided between wetland science, with an emphasis on plant ecology and hydrologic function, and educational methods and Best Practices. In addition to teaching at Central College, he participates in study-abroad (currently in Yucatan state, southeast Mexico) and with Iowa's field station (Iowa Lakeside Laboratory). Paul is also committed to public outreach and engagement, frequently posting on his blog about a project visiting wetlands in every Iowa county (<https://99wetlands.wordpress.com/>).



Why do you wish to serve?

I wish to serve as a Board Member to contribute directly to our local SWS members and the society as a whole. I am a longtime member but have served in a leadership role; this will allow me to “give back.” In particular, I want to help in educational efforts, both with future wetland scientists and with the public at large.

What do you envision for the Chapter's future?

This Chapter is in a region that is facing, and will continue to face, significant climate change and direct threats to wetlands. I would like to encourage members to network with each other and with the next generation of environmental professionals. I hope we can likewise engage productively with the public to encourage the recognition of wetlands and the benefits they provide.

WETLAND EVENTS AND TRAINING

MARCH

- 28 **Michigan Wetlands Association**, Vernal Pool Identification, March 28, 2019: <https://miwetlands.org/events/2019-vernal-pool-identification/>
- 3/30-4/5 **North Dakota State University**, Wonders of Wetlands course: <https://www.ndsu.edu/dce//courses/info/17959>
- 3/31 **Student Chapter at UIUC**, Vernal Pool Hike from 10-11AM; Free and open to the public; meet at Anita Purves Nature Center Parking lot: 1505 N. Broadway Avenue, Urbana, IL
- 2/23-4/7 **Nebraska Water/Ways Exhibition** in Gering: <https://visitnebraska.com/gering/events/waterways-exhibition-gering>

APRIL

- 3 **Minnesota Wetland Professionals Association**, April Forum: <https://www.mnwetlandprofessionals.org/events/2019/4/3/april-forum>
- 4-6 **Ohio Wetlands Association**, Vernal Poolooza Wetlands Science Conference: <https://www.ohwetlands.org/>
- 7 **University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC)** wetland scientists and graduate students, including some SWS members, have an outreach event for the public at the Urbana Free Library from 1:30 – 3:30pm that includes demonstrations, hands-on activities, and stories about wetland animals, soils, water and plants.

Add an event to our calendar

Do you know of a wetland event or training opportunity that would interest members in your state or the region? Send the title, date, time, and link to the [Editor](#).

- 8 **Waubesa Wetlands Talk (WI)** by SWS Member Joy Zedler at the E. D. Locke Public Library, 6:30 – 8:00pm. Come hear Dr. Zedler speak about one of the highest-quality and most diverse wetlands in southern Wisconsin – the Waubesa Wetlands State Natural Area. <https://birdcitywisconsin.org/events/60>
- 11 The forming Student Association of SWS at **University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign (UIUC)** will participate in educating the public about wetlands and water issues at the Illinois Water Day, 1 – 3pm at the Bardeen Quad at UIUC.
- 16-17 **Michigan Wetlands Association**, T & E Species Training: <https://miwetlands.org/training/>
- 26 **Indiana State Museum and History Sites**, Loblolly Marsh Nature Preserve, Creatures of the Night: <https://www.indianamuseum.org/Default.aspx?p=142288&evtid=1260193:4/26/2019>
- 2/23-4/7 **Nebraska Water/Ways Exhibition** in Gering: <https://visitnebraska.com/gering/events/waterways-exhibition-gering>

MAY

- 11 **Dickinson County (IA) Conservation Board**, Wings and Wetlands Weekend: <http://dickinsoncountyconservationboard.com/environmental-education/>
- 20-24 **Michigan Wetlands Association**, Wetland Delineation Training: <https://miwetlands.org/events/2019-wetland-delineation-part-1/>
- 26 **University of Wisconsin Arboretum**, Wetlands –Arboretum Family Nature Program in Madison: <http://madison.eventful.com/events/wetlands-arboretum-family-nature-program-/E0-001-123446341-9>
- 30 **SWS NCC Chapter Meeting at the SWS Annual Meeting in Baltimore, MD**, 8:45 – 9:30am (EDT): <https://www.swsannualmeeting.org/preliminary-schedule>

JUNE

- 18 **Illinois Department of Natural Resources**, Wetland Wonders: Exploring the Organisms of Illinois Wetlands: <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/calendar/Pages/Wetland-Wonders-Exploring-the-Organisms-of-Illinois'-Wetland-.aspx>
- 18-19 **Michigan Wetlands Association**, Sedges of Michigan Wetlands: <https://miwetlands.org/events/2019-sedges/>

27-28

Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois Aquatic Ecosystems:

<https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/calendar/Pages/Illinois-Aquatic-Ecosystems.aspx>

29

Morton Arboretum (IL), Plants of Wetlands Workshop, June 29, 2019:

<https://www.mortonarb.org/courses/plants-wetlands>

University of Wisconsin (La Crosse) has a number of wetland delineation, hydric soil, and wetland plant courses in **June and July**:

<https://www.uwlax.edu/conted/wetland/workshops/basic-wetland/>