

Wisconsin Wetlands Association

2019 - 2023 Strategic Plan

Adopted by Board of Directors: 01/28/2019

Mission

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

Vision

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.

Core Values and Guiding Principles

We are a non-partisan, science-based organization advocating for wetlands. These values guide our work:

- **Achieving** solutions through thoughtful collaborations with partners and strong support of staff.
- **Inspiring** others to enjoy, appreciate, and respect wetlands throughout the state.
- **Engaging** communities to participate in activities that protect and preserve wetlands.
- **Committing** to doing high quality work and ensuring accountability through measurable goals and work products.

Niche

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.

Strategies

Advance wetland knowledge

Sound wetland work is predicated on the use of science-based knowledge. Our work will advance the body of wetland knowledge and practice to help incorporate wetlands as solutions to the water-related issues facing Wisconsin.

We will:

- Identify and help address gaps in wetland knowledge (ecological, social, and economic) causing barriers to the protection, restoration, and management of wetlands in Wisconsin.
- Convene agencies, academics, practitioners, and others and support collaborations to advance wetland science and practice.

Disseminate wetland knowledge

Wetland knowledge is most useful when it is available to those in a position to protect, restore, and manage wetlands. Our programs and outreach activities will advance wetland action by providing the wetland knowledge needed by those working for wetlands and those that have the potential to influence wetlands.

We will:

- Incorporate the latest science in all of our programs and communications.
- Develop programs and materials for use by those advancing the protection, restoration, and management of wetlands.
- Design information content and message delivery in a manner useful to the needs of each specific audience.

Advance wetland conservation policies and practices

Sound wetland conservation policies and practices are essential to wetland protection, restoration, and management. We will work with agencies, elected officials, and other decision-makers to develop and implement policies, rules, and funding sources to support and advance healthy wetlands in Wisconsin.

We will:

- Increase understanding among decision makers about the importance of wetlands.
- Identify and address policy barriers limiting the advancement of wetland protection, restoration, and management.
- Engage in pro-active policy development with stakeholders and partners to develop policies that advance wetlands as solutions.

Engage in Place-Based projects

Currently, very few communities are using wetlands to address the water-related issues they face. By carefully identifying and engaging in place-based projects, we aim to demonstrate innovative approaches to incorporating wetlands as solutions at watershed and regional scales.

We will:

- Emphasize watershed scale projects that are replicable in and exportable to other areas within Wisconsin and beyond.
- Convene stakeholders to bring together the elements required to successfully apply wetlands as solutions to locally identified issues.
- Develop, test, evaluate, promote, and export watershed-based approaches to solving water-related problems.
- Utilize science-based approaches to prioritize implementation of wetland practices on the landscape where they are most needed in the watershed to address identified issues.

Build Wetland Partnerships

The future of wetlands in Wisconsin lies in the hands of many, including those in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. We will build and support partnerships that explore wetlands as solutions and implement pro-active wetlands protection, restoration, and management.

We will:

- Identify and engage critical partners and stakeholders to advance wetlands work.
- Provide tools and materials to help partners communicate the benefits of wetlands to their audiences.
- Help others integrate wetlands into existing programs and work.
- Collaborate to improve the use and effectiveness of on-the-ground wetland practices and implementation of wetland policies.

Organizational Excellence

Increase and engage a dynamic board of directors

Shared leadership with a dynamic board ensures a high impact organization.

We will:

- Recruit new board members to better cover the geographic area of the state and a range of expertise.

- Engage board members to open doors to resources, agencies, academic institutions, and others as needed.
- Utilize fully functioning committees to maximize the contributions of the board.
- Develop an annual board of directors workplan to effectively utilize the strengths and talents of the individual and collective board membership in advancing the organization's strategies.

Expand and retain talented staff

Our personnel are among the most important resources to advancing our efforts.

We will:

- Ensure an attractive, safe, and healthy work environment by offering competitive salaries and benefits, providing suitable tools and office space, and promoting a healthy work-life balance.
- Foster a learning environment and provide ongoing professional development and training.
- Increase WWA capacity by adding priority positions such as those dedicated to program development, fundraising, science, and administrative support.
- Develop a three-year rolling budget and implementation including annual goals guided by this strategic plan.

Maintain a healthy financial portfolio

A healthy financial portfolio provides the stability and flexibility required for WWA to efficiently and effectively perform work in support of this strategic plan.

We will:

- Continue to diversify funding streams to be less dependent on restricted sources of revenue.
- Develop a three-year rolling budget and implementation plan to help predict and address current and future expense and revenue needs.
- Increasingly engage the board of directors and committees in membership and fundraising development.

Use of this Plan

Upon adoption of this plan, the staff will develop a three-year rolling implementation plan that will include goal-setting and evaluation components. The implementation plan will be reviewed annually by staff and board prior to developing and approving a budget for the coming year. Staff will report to the board on the progress of each strategy on a regular basis.