

# Wisconsin Wetland Study Council

## ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – July 2023

### Background

The Wetland Study Council (WSC) was created in 2017 Act 183. The WSC is composed of nine appointed council members, who represent diverse interests. The WSC is a resource for the legislature, agencies, and the Governor as it researches and makes recommendations on wetland-related issues. Section 15.347 (22), Wis. Stats., details WSC membership, terms, and charge. For full information on Council recommendations and meeting materials, visit [Wisconsin Wetland Study Council](#).

### Current Membership

**Tim Andryk**, Ducks Unlimited, Policy Staff (representing waterfowl interests)

**Tracy Hames**, Vice-Chair, Wisconsin Wetlands Association, Executive Director (representing a conservation group with a specific interest in wetlands)

**Matt Howard**, The Water Council, Vice President (representing the business community)

**Stacy Jepson**, Cedar Corporation, Environmental Projects Manager (statewide assured delineator)

**Paul Kent**, Stafford Rosenbaum LLP, Attorney (representing municipal interests)

**Thomas Larson**, Wisconsin Realtors Association, Senior Vice President of Legal and Public Affairs (representing real estate and development interests)

**Carol McCoy**, Stantec, Senior Environmental Project Manager (statewide environmental consultant)

**Ben Callan**, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources representative

**\*Karen Gefvert**, Government Policy Director, Wisconsin Farm Bureau (representing rural and agricultural interests) \*Vacant position as of January 2023

### Council Activities

From July 2021 to July 2023, the WSC engaged in the following major activities:

1. Supported creation and launch of the Wetland Data Dashboard on the Department of Natural Resources website.

A new webpage was created at the recommendation of the WSC with a goal to improve data access and transparency and to provide the public with a rolling snapshot of the extent of permitted wetland regulatory activity. This webpage summarizes key wetland data such as acres of permanent fill and temporary impacts across the last three years,

including wetland net gain and loss by county. The webpage also details the results of efforts to avoid and minimize wetland impacts through the “practicable alternatives analysis” and restoration and mitigation results by county. The data is updated by the DNR annually. To access the Wetland Data Dashboard, visit <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/> and search “Wetland Data Dashboard.”

2. Developed and circulated [Legislative Outreach Handout](#).

At the beginning of the 2023 Legislative Session, the WSC distributed a Legislative Handout summarizing information about the council and how the council is a resource for policymakers.

The WSC also provided input on two legislative proposals, which were introduced following previous council recommendations:

- Senate Bill 254 / Assembly Bill 254 - codifying the Wetland Assured Delineator Program into Wisconsin Statutes.
- Senate Bill 255 / Assembly Bill 253 - amending public access requirements on wetlands benefitting from the in-lieu fee subprogram.

3. Review of DNR Wetland Permitting Process.

A sub-committee of the WSC called the *Integrated Watershed Management Working Group* examined DNR permitting staff perceptions and ideas through an interview process. The goals for this exercise were to examine existing policies related to wetlands, waterways, and stormwater management, and how staff interpret and implement these policies. The interview process also sought to understand policies posing a barrier to taking a more watershed-based approach to wetlands, stormwater, and flood control projects. Find more information on this by visiting [Wisconsin Wetland Study Council](#) and see “Integrated Watershed Recommendation.”

4. Additional meeting materials, including agendas and minutes are available by visiting [Wisconsin Wetland Study Council](#).