

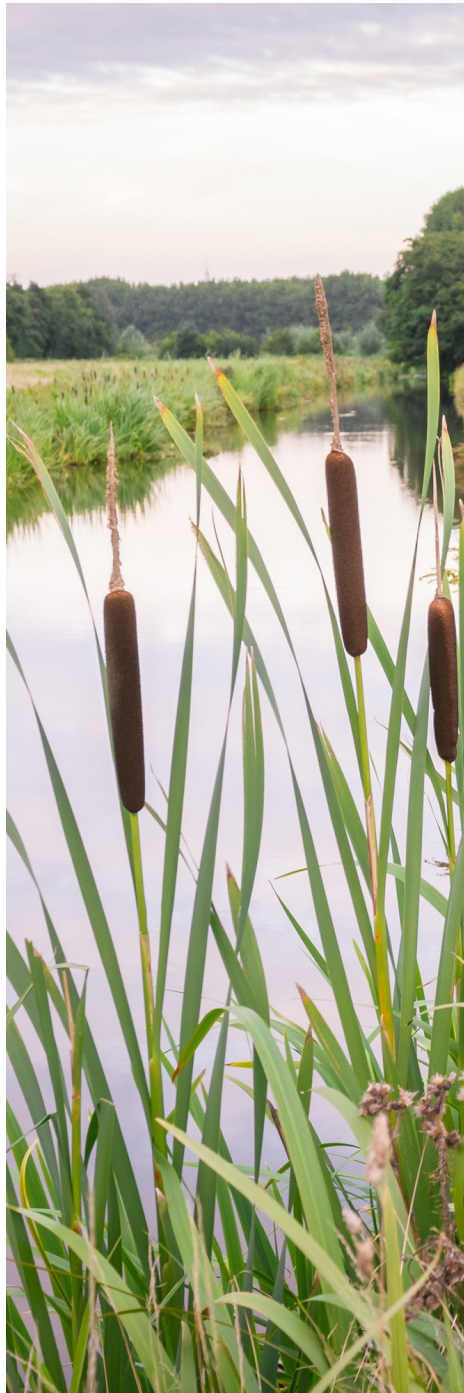
2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Association of State Wetland Managers, Inc.



Photo by John Sullivan, Friends of the La Crosse Marsh



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In 2021, ASWM projects were supported by the McKnight Foundation, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Bureau of Land Management, along with members and private donors. The Association would like to express its gratitude to those who have supported its efforts to protect the nation’s wetlands through the application of sound science, training and education.

Thank you.

FEDERAL GRANT PROJECTS

Despite the ongoing complications and challenges created by the global COVID-19 pandemic, ASWM was able to maintain its current level of activities and help other organizations and agencies with ASWM's expertise in hosting virtual meetings and conferences.



Photo by Sharon Weaver, ASWM

Federal Landscape Scale Wetland Functional Assessment Virtual Workshop May 25-26, 2021

In partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory, ASWM facilitated the Federal Landscape Scale Wetland Functional Assessment Workshop on May 25th-26th, 2021. Identified in collaboration with multiple federal agency partners, the goal of the workshop was to develop a federal community of practice around landscape scale wetland functional assessment to highlight current federal activities and to identify future needs and opportunities. Over the two-day workshop, more than 40 participants from 13 different federal agencies participated in a series of presentations and facilitated discussions.

Landscape scale wetland functional assessments were defined by the workshop steering committee as protocols that characterize chemical, physical, and biological processes that occur in multiple wetlands simultaneously using geospatial analysis, such as remote sensing. In comparison to functional assessments, conditional assessments address the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of wetlands assessed through indicators, and assessments of ecosystem services address the societal benefits provided by wetlands. In addition to the landscape scale, the steering committee also defined comprehensive and rapid assessments. Comprehensive assessments are relatively intensive and time-consuming primarily field-based approaches conducted at the specific wetland site scale, whereas rapid assessments are relatively simple (compared to comprehensive) and time-efficient protocols typically conducted at the specific wetland site scale and involving a field component. Although the workshop focused on landscape scale functional assessments, the workshop included presentations describing a range of wetland assessment types and scales, recognizing that this information is often synergistic.

Grounded in these shared definitions, presentations from eight federal agencies revealed a wide range of projects focused on or related to landscape scale wetland functional assessment. Driven by a diverse set of mandates, federal agencies are focused on assessing a wide range of functions, from surface and groundwater storage to carbon sequestration. These presentations documented past and current federal activities and discussions in facilitated breakout sessions identified the following future needs, opportunities, and next steps.



MAWWG/NEBAWWG Virtual Meeting Oct. 12-13, 2021

ASWM teamed up with staff from NEIWPC and EPA Regions 1, 2 and 3 to plan the next biennial MAWWG/NEBAWWG meeting in Baltimore, Maryland in the fall of 2020. Due to COVID-19 and feedback from states and tribes in Regions 1, 2 and 3, the planning committee decided to postpone the in-person meeting to the fall of 2021. The planning committee discussed contingency plans in case COVID-19 is still a barrier for meeting in-person. The group ultimately decided to go with two half-day virtual sessions in October of 2021 and a full in-person conference in the spring of 2022. ASWM completed all planning and preparation of presenters to run the two day virtual joint conference. This was an intensive process involving most of the ASWM staff to coordinate, manage web-based delivery, manage the website, address registration changes and answer questions, as well as moderate the meeting throughout. Following the meeting, ASWM worked with the planning team to conduct follow-up and begin planning for the in-person joint meeting scheduled for May 2022 in Maryland.

EPA Region 7 Virtual ESTP Conference Nov. 2-4, 2021

Funding was received on September 24, 2019, to plan, coordinate and help run the 2020 Region 7 ESTP meeting in Kansas City, Missouri in 2020. Due to COVID-19 and feedback from Region 7 states and tribes, the in-person meeting was postponed to November 2021. However, the decision was later made to cancel the contract with the Kansas City Marriott and hold the meeting virtually, as the COVID-19 pandemic and travel/safety restrictions were likely to still be an issue in November. ASWM completed all planning and preparation of presenters to run the three-day virtual Region 7 ESTP Meeting. ASWM staff coordinated, managed web-based delivery, managed the website, addressed registration changes and answered questions, as well as moderated the meeting throughout.

Our Mission...

The Association of State Wetland Managers (ASWM) is a nonprofit organization established in 1983 to promote and enhance protection and management of wetland resources, to promote application of sound science to wetland management efforts and to provide training and education for our members and the public. Membership is open to all.



Photo by Marla J. Stelk, ASWM

Silviculture and Coastal Wetland Loss

In 2013, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service published its remote sensing study "Status and trends of wetlands in the coastal watersheds of the Conterminous United States 2004 to 2009" which correlated coastal wetland loss with forested wetlands in areas of active silviculture. The silviculture industry strongly disagreed with the study's methods and findings, and an active debate ensued as to what the cause of wetland loss should be attributed to. Strong opinions were expressed on both sides. The Interagency Coastal Wetlands Work Group (ICWWG) recognized a need for collaborative discussions between both groups, the silviculture industry, and the federal agencies, in order to resolve several outstanding questions and disagreements.

To address this need, The Association of State Wetland Managers and the ICWWG developed a project designed to explore the relationships, if any, between silviculture practices and coastal wetland hydrology, specifically as they relate to forested coastal wetland loss. This project focused on the goal of facilitating productive dialogue, identifying common messages, and developing several primary work products, including an initial conference symposium, a communications strategy (containing a stakeholder analysis), a bibliography, two versions of a scientific literature review, and two draft project proposals designed to fill the research gaps jointly identified by the workgroup and the literature review. The final deliverables were completed in 2021 with ongoing work on developing a final project report to be completed in 2022.

Our Vision...

As a result of ASWM's work, the wetland community has access to and effectively uses sound science, policy, and private/public partnerships to preserve, protect, and restore the nation's precious and limited wetlands and related aquatic resources.

Strengthening Opportunities for State Assumption of the Section 404 Dredge and Fill Program

This two-year EPA Wetland Program Development Grant was awarded on April 26, 2019 and concluded in the spring of 2021. The project resulted in extensive information collection and compilation, the use of multiple tools and resources created by the project, information sharing in ways that played a positive role in state decision making, and the sharing of regular updates. The project built on and distributed existing resources and provided a space for brainstorming and troubleshooting. Perhaps most importantly, it developed a peer-to-peer support network for those pursuing assumption. In the long-term, this project will lead to increased completeness of assumption packages submitted and provide the groundwork for an ongoing network of states/tribes exploring/pursuing assumption. With the resources developed from this project, states and tribes are better equipped to undertake the assumption process and strengthen cooperative federalism.

The primary goals of this project were to: 1) encourage the development of complete assumption packages that meet program requirements; 2) allow states and tribes to capitalize on the work and success of other states; 3) help states plan sustainable funding strategies for assuming the §404 Program; and 4) expand the resources available to states and tribes interested in assumption. The project was designed to explore key assumption topics, including:

- Section 404 assumption basics and frameworks;
- Alternatives to assumption;
- Regulatory crosswalks;
- Assumable waters;
- Section 404 dredge or fill program and workload descriptions;
- Systems for assumption data management;
- Mitigation banking as a component of assumed programs;
- Potential funding strategies to support development and implementation of assumed 404 programs; and
- Elements of the case for assumption to state/tribal leadership, internal agency administration, partners, and the public.

To meet documented needs, ASWM's project activities included:

- Developed a national project workgroup to advise and inform the project;
- Hosted national dialogues on key assumption topics;
- Developed an ASWM Assumption web resource;
- Developed and delivered 8 live webinars on key assumption topics;
- Archived post-processed webinar recordings for anytime/anywhere access;
- Developed new best practice documents on key assumption topics;
- Crafted a checklist of considerations for states and tribes exploring assumption;
- Developed a matrix of assumption examples from states pursuing assumption; and
- Developed and delivered communications and outreach on project products.



Urban Wetlands: Supporting and Sustaining a Healthy and Safe Urban Environment

This two-year EPA Wetland Program Development Grant was awarded on April 26, 2019 and concluded in the spring of 2021. The primary goal of this project was to identify ways to enhance, protect and restore wetlands within and surrounding urban areas to maximize economic, ecological, and social benefits for urban communities.

The project was designed to increase urban wetland protection and restoration through greater state, tribal, and local program capacity building and greater public knowledge of the critical role urban wetlands play in making urban communities more sustainable and better places to live. ASWM's project worked to address these challenges by:



Photo by William Dooley, ASWM

- Establishing a national interdisciplinary workgroup;
- Exploring ways in which Wetland Program Plans and the Core Elements Framework can support urban wetland restoration, enhancement, and protection;
- Identifying opportunities for integrated mapping and functional assessment of wetland and floodplains to inform strategic, state and local decision-making and prioritization;
- Facilitating research and peer to peer exchange on innovative financing methods and improved cost-benefit techniques for nature-based projects;
- Cataloging findings and case studies in a white paper; and
- Sharing our findings through webinars, workshops, social media, and our website.

Numerous challenges were identified during the project with the way Wetland Program Plans address and manage urban wetlands. From these observations five recommendations were identified addressing the biggest barriers and gaps in the Core Elements Framework (CEF) related to urban wetland specific issues. Recommendations were crafted with the support of the workgroup and developed with supporting evidence to provide context as to why the workgroup determined them to be important.

With the support of the workgroup, ASWM identified, researched, and discussed the benefits and limitations of existing geospatial mapping and prioritization tools at various spatial scales including federal, state, county, and local. ASWM explored how these tools can be used to inform urban land use decisions and incorporated findings into the Urban Wetlands Guide. ASWM also worked with the Natural Floodplains Functions Alliance and the Wetlands Mapping Consortium to hold two workshops on integrated mapping. Reports from the workshops and other meeting materials including agenda, participant list, and PDFs of PowerPoint presentations are all accessible on ASWM's website.

Through research and workgroup discussions, ASWM facilitated peer-to-peer sharing on cost-benefit techniques, the potential to expand the use of crediting system in urban settings, and opportunities around under leveraged funding mechanisms. ASWM worked to identify pilot projects where urban communities have realized multiple, co-benefits by protecting, restoring, enhancing and/or creating wetlands. ASWM developed an Urban Wetlands Protection and Restoration Strategic Guide that summarizes its findings from this project and provides a road map for future efforts to improve policies, programs and actions that restore and protect wetlands in support of urban economic, ecological, and social health. The Guide is geared primarily towards supporting development of local wetland programs, however recommendations to both state and federal agencies provide insight on how those agencies can support local partners as well.

Enhancing State and Tribal Roles in Wetland Protection through Regulatory Program Capacity Building

This two-year EPA Wetland Program Development Grant was awarded on April 25, 2019 and concluded in the spring of 2021. The primary goal of this project was to collect, share and support the adoption of successful capacity building efforts designed to build state and tribal wetland regulatory programs, whether through strengthened §401 certification programs, the development of dredge and fill programs, or improving the capacity of specific elements of existing dredge and fill programs. Focusing on meeting states and tribes “where they are,” products for this project were designed to emphasize a range of options.

The project focused on key capacity building topics, including:

- Identification and analysis of regulatory gaps
- Use of EPA Wetland Program Plans as strategic program development tools
- Sustainable funding strategies
- Methods to build compliance and enforcement capacity
- Strategies for effective communication around regulatory capacity building efforts
- Documented tips on working with state legislatures to support regulatory programs
- Possible value-added from integrating with other state/tribal agency programs and partnering with state/local wetland associations

To meet documented needs, ASWM’s Regulatory Capacity Building Project:

- Developed a national project workgroup to advise and inform the project
- Hosted national dialogues focused on peer-to-peer sharing and brainstorming
- Developed capacity building resources, trainings, and documentations of “best practices”
- Increased state and tribal understanding of the role WPPs can play in capacity building
- Developed a WPP factsheet for those seeking to utilize WPPs as regulatory building blocks
- Identified and shared useful models and tools for regulatory capacity building
- Developed and delivered 8 live webinars on need-based regulatory capacity-building topics
- Archived post-processed webinar recordings for anytime/anywhere access
- Created a new web-based resource to support state/tribal regulatory capacity building
- Created a checklist (self-assessment guide) for state/tribal regulatory capacity building
- Developed and delivered communications and outreach on project products

The National Dialogue Tool was designed to allow states and tribes not in the workgroup to ask questions for consideration during the project. State wetland program staff members were invited to participate from all 50 states. Additional state and tribal staff were added upon request and verification that they formally represent a state or tribe’s wetland program.

In the first year of the national dialogues, GoogleForms sent out in January 2020 made it possible for states and tribes not in the workgroup to ask questions for consideration during the project and by webinar presenters, as well as identify resources they would like included in the peer-to-peer sharing element of the project. The national dialogues hosted via GoogleForms were then moved to monthly GoToMeeting-based dialogues with topic-targeted 45-minute national discussions following workgroup calls, engaging all interested parties (broader than just workgroup members, though many joined the formal workgroup as the project progressed).

SPECIAL PROJECT



Photo by William Dooley, ASWM

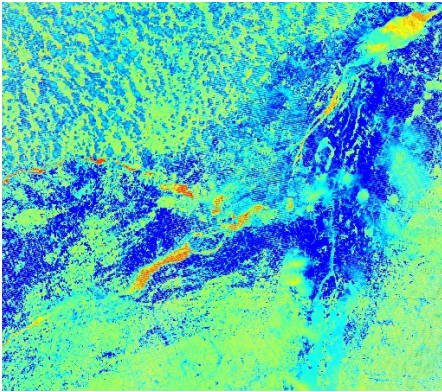
Developing an Action Plan for NNL of Floodplain Functions Workshop Nov. 30 – Dec. 2, 2021

In 2017, ASWM began facilitating a discussion between the Natural Floodplain Functions Alliance (NFFA) and the Wetland Mapping Consortium (WMC) about the possibility of creating a multi-year initiative to improve floodplain mapping programs. The intent was to integrate geospatial data and functional assessment methods being developed and used by the wetland mapping community to identify wetland and floodplain functions in support of nature-based solutions for reducing flood risk. A Steering Committee was established with individuals from each organization, and ASWM began hosting monthly conference calls. The Steering Committee identified an ultimate long-term goal of developing a baseline national classification standard for functional assessment of wetlands and floodplains. This standard would incorporate regional environmental variations and could be tailored for different project goals and state/local policies, to better inform land-use decisions and provide greater project outcomes with multiple co-benefits. The Steering Committee decided to hold three annual workshops to facilitate accomplishing this goal, bringing together subject matter experts from across the country and disciplines.

On April 10, 2018, ASWM convened the NFFA and the WMC for the first workshop, “Exploring Opportunities for Integrated Mapping and Functional Assessment of Riverine and Coastal Floodplains and Wetlands.” On September 30, 2019, the second workshop, “Data Needs, Gaps and Interoperability for Integrated Mapping and Functional Assessment of Riverine and Coastal Floodplains and Wetlands,” was held. The third workshop, “Federal Program and Policy Changes Needed to Advance Integrated, Functional Mapping of Floodplains and Wetlands for Nature-Based Solutions,” was originally planned for 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the in-person workshop was replaced with an interim half-day virtual workshop, held on February 10, 2021.

Given the abbreviated format of the third workshop, a fourth workshop was added, titled “Developing an Action Plan for No Net Loss of Floodplain Functions.” This final workshop was also moved to a virtual format due to the continuing global pandemic and was spread across three half-day sessions from November 30 – December 2, 2021. The goal for this workshop was to develop an action plan with clear recommendations and near-term actions leading to no net loss of floodplain functions and reduced flood risk in local communities. The workshop was designed around four breakout sessions, each focusing on a different topic that the previous workshops identified as being central to developing a path forward: policy, data, funding, and communication. A final report compiling all the lessons learned and recommendations from this series of workshops will be completed in 2022.

COLLABORATIONS



Wetland Mapping Consortium

ASWM is a founding member of the Wetland Mapping Consortium (WMC). The WMC is an interdisciplinary group of wetland scientists and managers interested in mapping and monitoring wetlands using remote sensing and/or using the resultant products to better manage wetland resources. The consortium fosters collaborations and disseminates data and findings for the purpose of enhanced wetland mapping and monitoring.



Natural Floodplain Functions Alliance

The Association of State Wetland Managers is a founding member of the Natural Floodplain Functions Alliance (NFFA). The Natural Floodplain Functions Alliance (NFFA) is an affiliation of nonprofit and private organizations, government agencies and individuals dedicated to the protection and preservation of the natural functions of floodplains, including coastal areas. ASWM maintains an NFFA webpage on its website devoted to NFFA activities. In 2018 NFFA held five webinars on topics such as “Reaching Across the Border to Improve Water Supplies for People and Nature: The United States, Mexico, and the Colorado River,” “Green Infrastructure Resources for Coastal Flood Risk Management,” “Wetlands by Design: A Watershed Approach for Wisconsin,” “Floodplain Policies for Flood Survivors - A Conversation,” and “Green Infrastructure Case Studies: How to Successfully Lower Risk in Your Community”. Through NFFA, ASWM hosted three webinars and the Association of State Floodplain Managers hosted the other two. All were recorded and are available to the general public.

*It is not enough to understand the natural world;
the point is to defend and preserve it.*

- Edward Abbey

PARTNERSHIPS

The Association of State Wetland Managers works with other organizations on education, training, clean water advocacy and other wetlands-related issues. ASWM has worked with its partners in recent years toward a common goal of protecting wetlands and water resources through sound science and sensible public policy. ASWM is a membership organization; membership is open to anyone.

State Wetland Managers

ASWM has members who are State Wetland Managers from 38 states.

State Associations & Organizations

Association of Clean Water Administrators (ACWA)
Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (AFWA)
Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM)
Coastal States Organization (CSO)
Environmental Council of the States (ECOS)
Groundwater Protection Council (GWPC)
New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPC)

Foundations

Horne Family Foundation
McKnight Foundation
Robert and Patricia Switzer Foundation

Non-profits & Academic Institutions

American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Planning Association
American Rivers
Center for Wetlands & Stream Restoration
Ducks Unlimited
Environmental Law Institute
Kenyon College
Louisiana State University
Michigan Wetlands Association
Midwest Biodiversity Institute
Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District
Muskie School of Public Service
(University of Southern Maine)
National Wildlife Federation
Pennsylvania State University & Riparia
Prairie River Network
Ramsar U.S.

Restore America's Estuaries
River Network
Saint Mary's University of Minnesota
Society of Wetland Scientists
Southern California Coastal Water Research Project
Southern Illinois University
Stetson University College of Law
SUNY Buffalo Law School
The Nature Conservancy
The Pew Charitable Trusts
The Water Institute of the Gulf
The Wetland Conservancy
Union of Concerned Scientists
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Virginia Tech
Wisconsin Wetlands Association

Federal Agencies

Federal Emergency Management Agency
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Department of Agriculture
- APHIS
- Forest Service
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- National Wetlands Inventory Coastal Program
U.S. Geological Survey



Photo by Elizabeth Byers, WVDEP

STUDIES/REPORTS/TOOLS PUBLISHED



Urban Wetlands Protection and Restoration Guide

A resource to support efforts to restore and protect urban wetlands for economic, ecological, and social benefits

Urban Wetlands Protection and Restoration Guide

This guide summarizes the findings of a two-year project carried out by the Association of State Wetland Managers (ASWM) with assistance from a national interdisciplinary workgroup of experts to identify ways to enhance, protect, and restore wetlands within and surrounding urban areas to maximize economic, ecological, and social benefits for urban communities.



Federal Landscape Scale Wetland Functional Assessment Workshop Summary Report

The Association of State Wetland Managers, Inc. May 2021

Federal Landscape Scale Wetland Functional Assessment Workshop: Summary Report

In partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), the Association of State Wetland Managers (ASWM) facilitated the Federal Landscape Scale Wetland Functional Assessment Workshop on May 25th-26th, 2021. Identified in collaboration with multiple federal agency partners, the goal of the workshop was to develop a federal community of practice around landscape scale wetland functional assessment to highlight current federal activities and to identify future needs and opportunities.

Federal Program and Policy Changes Needed to Advance Integrated, Functional Mapping of Floodplains and Wetlands for Nature-Based Solutions



Feb. 10, 2021

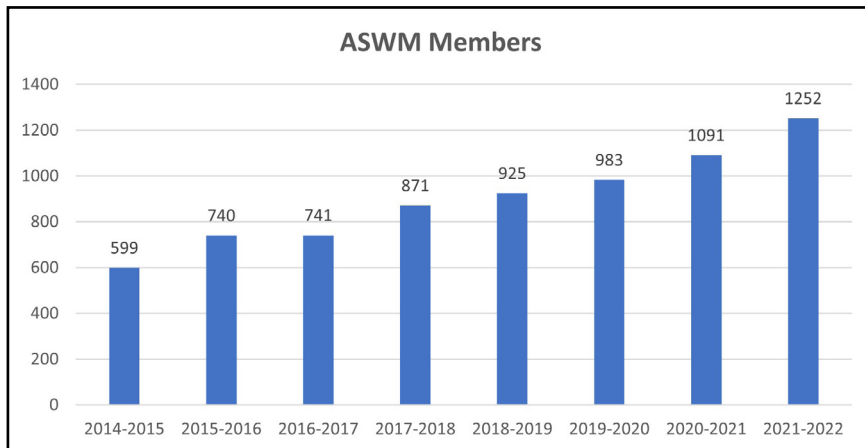
A Natural Floodplain Functions Alliance and Wetland Mapping Consortium Workshop

This paper presents the topics, key findings and next steps from a half-day virtual workshop held as part of a multi-year initiative exploring innovative ways to integrate geospatial data and functional assessment of riparian and coastal wetlands and floodplains into federal policies and to inform local decision-making.

Federal Program and Policy Changes Needed to Advance Integrated, Functional Mapping of Floodplains and Wetlands for Nature-Based Solutions A Natural Floodplain Functions Alliance and Wetland Mapping Consortium Workshop

This paper presents the topics, key findings and next steps from a half-day virtual workshop held as part of a multi-year initiative exploring innovative ways to integrate geospatial data and functional assessment of riparian and coastal wetlands and floodplains into federal policies and to inform local decision-making.

ENGAGEMENT



ASWM Membership Development in 2021:

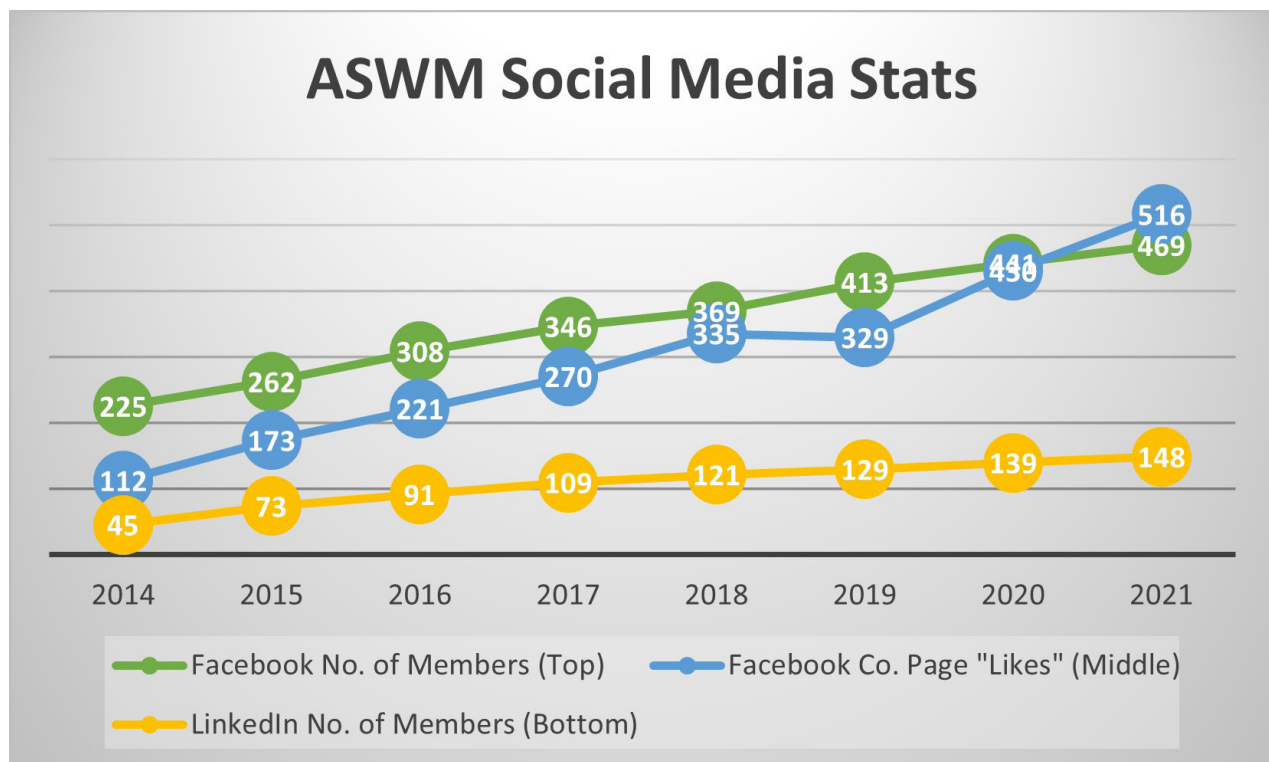
- In 2021 ASWM welcomed 326 new members
- Current number of members (December 2021): 1,252 members

ASWM Periodic Publications Ongoing in 2021

- Wetland News Digest (monthly)
- State/Tribal Note (monthly)
- Wetland News (Bi-monthly)
- Insiders' Edition (weekly)



Social Media Outreach:



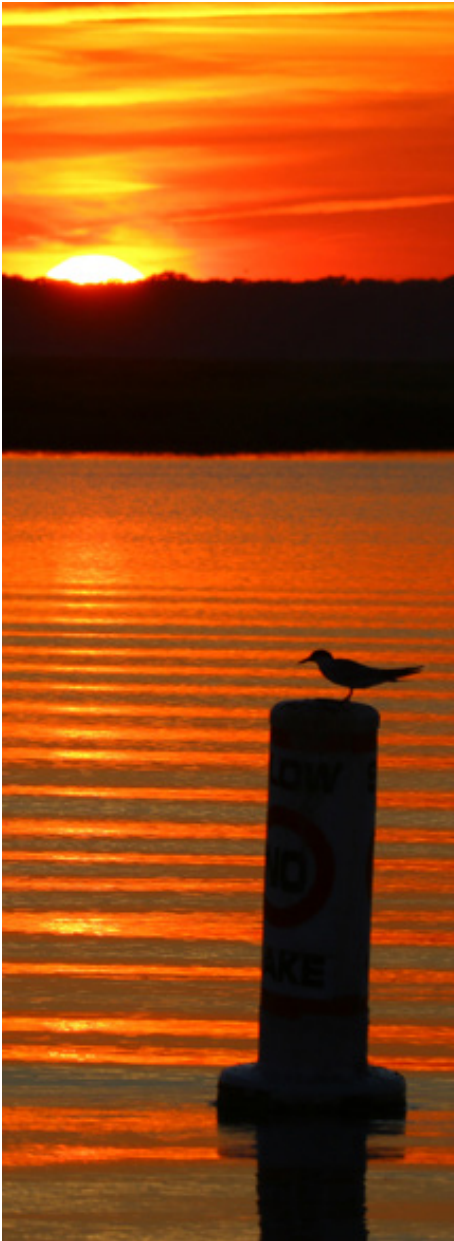


Photo by Devin Griffiths, The Wetlands Institute

ASWM Speaking Engagements/ Presentations in 2021

- Hoosier Environmental Council - IN
- National Mitigation and Ecosystem Banking Conference: Minneapolis, MN
- NAFSMA Conference - Nashville. TN
- Society of Wetland Scientists Annual Meeting: Virtual

Federal Policy Engagements

The Association of State Wetland Managers (ASWM) actively monitors many issues of concern to our members and provides comments on proposed policies and other actions when appropriate. ASWM will also occasionally sign onto group comment letters with other organizations and associations such as ACWA, ECOS, WSWC, ASFPM, and SWS. Comment letters submitted in 2021 include:

- May 28, 2021 – ASWM Comments on Regulations Governing Take of Migratory Birds
- July 30, 2021 – ASWM Submits Pre-Proposal Comments on Clean Water Act Section 401
- October 1, 2021 – ASWM Submits Comments on EPA Office of Water 2023-2024 NWPG
- October 4, 2021 – ASWM Submits Pre-Proposal Comments on WOTUS

ASWM's Policy Documents can be found [here](#).

*“Wetlands are the sanctuaries of nature,
providing refuge for countless species in need.”*

- Unknown

WORKSHOPS/CONFERENCES



ASWM State/Tribal/Federal Coordination Meeting

ASWM's annual State/Tribal/Federal Coordination Meeting was held April 12-15, 2021, in a virtual format again this year. As disappointing as it was to not meet in person, the virtual format allowed more people to attend this year's event and we had a record attendance level of 208 participants and speakers, including 83 state agency staff (including 2 from Washington, D.C.), 15 tribal agency staff, 50 federal agency staff, 28 from the corporate/consulting sector, 15 from academic institutions, 9 from other non-governmental and non-profit organizations, and 8 individuals who identified as either from local/county government or who identified as retired or a public stakeholder.

This year's theme for the meeting was "Adaptation & Resiliency for the Advancement of Wetland Science, Policy and Practice." The meeting was extended out to four half-day sessions and had a very robust agenda. Monday's presentations focused on new challenges and directions for federal water policy and tribal sovereignty, as well as wetland science and climate change. Tuesday was focused on federal policy updates and significant court cases. Wednesday featured presentations covering various aspects of wetland program capacity building, and Thursday was focused on wetland mapping and functional assessment.

We were very excited to support three students' participation through ASWM's new Jon A. Kusler Student Scholarship Award.



Jessica Idle is a graduate student at the University of Hawaii at M'noa studying Natural Resources and Environmental Management.



Xuanshu Lin is a Chinese international student at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign pursuing a dual degree in Sustainable Design and Urban Studies & Planning with a minor in Natural Resource Conservation.



Sarah Pawliczak is a graduate student with Oregon State University enrolled in the online Master of Natural Resources program.

WEBINARS

The Association of State Wetland Managers hosted a number of webinars in 2021 as part of ongoing projects to improve state wetland programs and to further the efforts of two collaborations: the Natural Floodplain Functions Alliance and the Wetland Mapping Consortium. ASWM utilizes webinars as a tool for communication and for reaching an audience that would not otherwise be able to travel to conferences or seminars. ASWM also hosts a monthly webinar series for members only. Topics alternate between science, policy and legal issues each month. ASWM also records and post-processes all webinars and they are available to view on the ASWM website. The 2021 webinar series are listed below.



Photo by Dan Cary

Members' Webinars

ASWM held nine Members' Webinars in 2021 with a total of 974 participants. Some of the topics covered were: Drones, State Climate Action Plans, Technology, State Buffer and River Corridor Programs, Mitigation Banking Tools, Karst Fens, and Restoration.

Hot Topic Webinars

ASWM held five Hot Topic Webinars with a total of 1,308 participants. Webinar topics were:

- Looking Back, Looking Forward: A Review of Trump Administration Rulemakings and Charting a Path Forward
- Investing in Resiliency: Intersectional Perspectives of Wetlands, Infrastructure, and Healthy Communities
- Mentoring the Next Generation of Wetland Professionals
- Risk Reduction for Mitigation Projects: Perspectives on Financial Assurances' Best Practices Parts 1 and 2

Wetland Mapping Consortium (WMC) Webinars

This year ASWM held two WMC Webinars with a total of 639 participants. The topics were: "Mapping Hydrologic Connectivity and Wetlands with LiDAR" and "The Expanding Role of Automated Feature Extraction in Wetlands Mapping".

Natural Floodplain Functions Alliance (NFFA) Webinars

This year ASWM held one NFFA Webinar with a total of 183 participants. The topic was: Protecting and Restoring Urban Wetlands for Community Benefits.

Assumption Project Webinars

ASWM held three Assumption Webinars in 2021 with a total of 600 participants. The topics were: State Programmatic General Permits, Findings from ASWM's CWA §404 Assumption Project, and Regulatory Crosswalks.



Photo by Audra Martin, ASWM

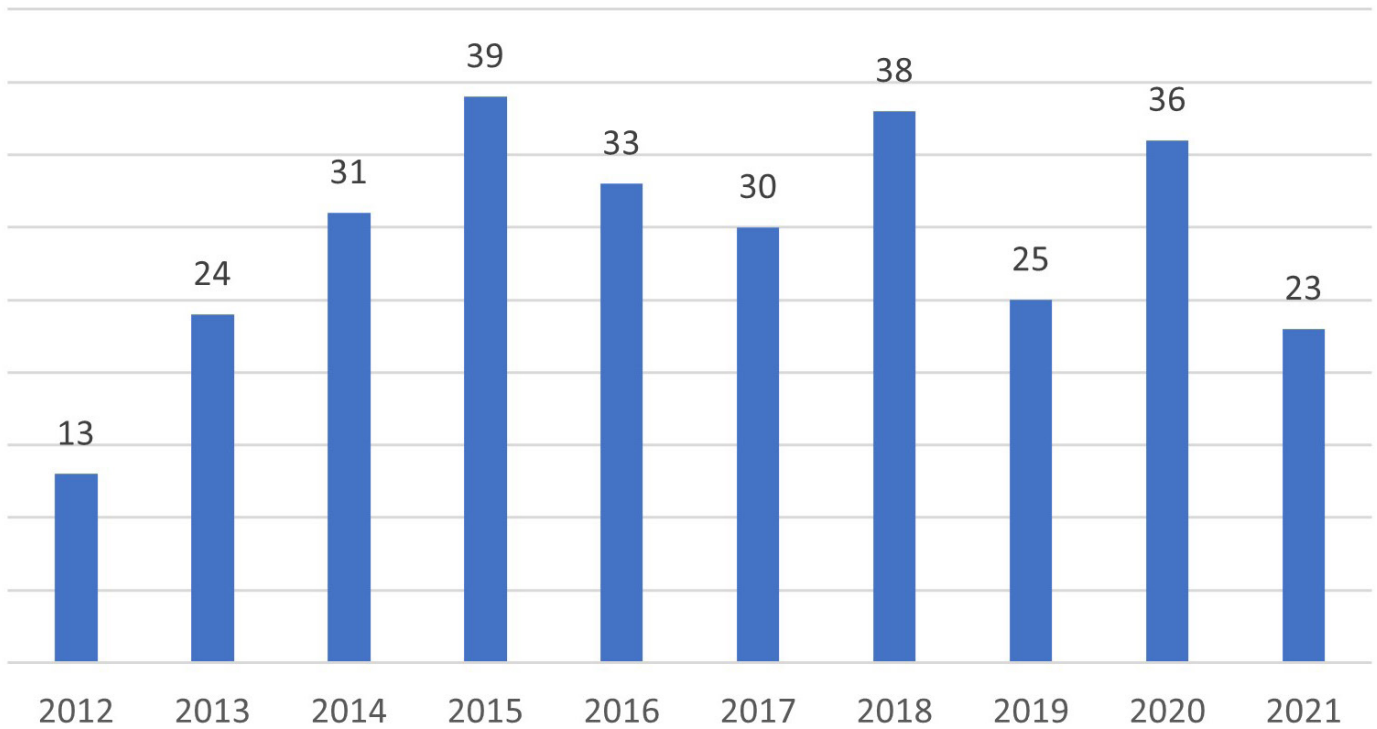
Beaver-related Restoration Webinars

Two webinars were held for the Beaver-related Restoration project in 2021 with 987 participating. The topics were “Coalition Building for Beaver Based Stream and Wetland Restoration Success” and “Beaver Restoration for Climate Resiliency”.

Wetland Regulatory Capacity Building Webinars

ASWM held the final webinar for the Wetland Regulatory Capacity Building project in 2021 with 117 participating.

Total Webinars & Online Trainings



FINANCIAL REPORT

ASSETS

Current Assets	
Cash	137,947
Other Assets	2,231
Accounts Receivable, Net	19,174
Prepaid Expenses	17,925
Investments	
- Publicly Traded Securities	<u>197,770</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	\$375,047

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities	
Accrued Expenses	<u>39,142</u>
Total Liabilities	\$39,142
Net Assets	
Without Donor Restrictions	330,050
With Donor Restrictions	<u>5,855</u>
Total Net Assets	\$335,905
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$375,047

2021 AUDIT

An audit was performed by Purdy Powers & Company and the financial statements presented fairly.

REVENUES and OTHER SUPPORT

Grant Income	350,948
Contributions	4,410
Program Fees	38,784
Membership Dues	65,622
Sponsorships	6,600
Interest Income	3,489
Miscellaneous Income	9,540
In-kind	<u>0</u>
TOTAL REVENUE AND OTHER SUPPORT	\$479,393

EXPENSE

Compensation and Benefits	556,147
Program Expense	36,686
Occupancy	23,600
Travel Expense	2,691
Office Computers (IT)	28,339
Office Expenses	10,658
Bank Fees	1,933
Insurance	1,735
Professional Fees	10,600
Telephone	8,507
Miscellaneous	4,234
In-kind	<u>0</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$685,130

Increase in Net Assets	-205,737
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	544,642
Net Assets at End of Year	\$335,905

The Association of State Wetland Managers, Inc.
is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, nongovernmental organization.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT

ASWM's Board of Directors and staff gathered in Portland, Maine for their 2nd bi-annual Strategic Planning Retreat on September 21-22, 2021. The retreat was designed to accomplish the following objectives:

- To review our accomplishments over the past two years and acknowledge where this positions us today,
- To determine what opportunities within our impact areas we want to prioritize in the next three years and develop a roadmap to enact these priorities in support of state and tribal wetland programs,
- To discuss top priority topics and look to agreements and next steps for furthering these discussions, and
- To review our planning infrastructure and committee structure.



Collectively we reviewed our progress on the planning done at our 2019 Strategic Planning Retreat and spoke to where this positions us today. As a group we discussed and celebrated what we have accomplished and highlighted items we wanted to carry into our planning and discussions. Specific ASWM strategic program areas discussed included:

- Strengthening our membership program by reviewing our membership benefits and rate structure and investing in more robust membership management software.
- Creating internal support and operational capacity for a student mentorship program in collaboration with the Society of Wetland Scientists.
- Identifying strategies for educating decision makers about the value of state and tribal wetland programs and effective federal policies for wetland protection and restoration.
- Developing closer relationships with Tribal Nations, identifying ways to learn more about tribal wetland program needs and increase ASWM's capacity to provide technical assistance to tribes, and increase tribal participation in the organization as a whole.
- Rebranding of ASWM to be more inclusive and to more accurately reflect our current vision, mission and impact areas.

A roadmap for the next three years and beyond was developed to help ASWM meet its goals for building its internal infrastructure, and to effectively deliver on the identified impact areas. Milestones were developed for the next three years to enact our goals and integrate our planning into the day-to-day functions of our organization.

ASWM's Board of Directors and staff are already tackling several items on our roadmap and are excited to continue making progress on increasing our organizational capacity to continue delivering on our mission and improving our services to our members and the greater wetland community.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers:



Mark Biddle, Chairman

Mark is a lead wetland scientist with more than 23 years of experience working for the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control. Currently, Mark is housed within the Watershed Assessment Section, Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Program. Mark holds degrees in Natural Resource Management and Soil and Water Management and attended both Delaware State University and the University of Delaware. Residing in Dover, Delaware, Mark lives with his wife and two daughters. Mark enjoys his time with the family lab Gabby, and hopes that the future holds ample time for two of his other loves, hunting and fishing.



Jill Aspinwall, Vice Chairman

Jill Aspinwall has worked at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection since 2001. She has a background in watershed management, education and outreach, wetlands mitigation, ecosystem restoration, and policy. For the last five years, Jill has been working in the Office of Policy Implementation assisting in the development and implementation of New Jersey's land use regulations, including the Freshwater Wetland Protection Act Rules, Flood Hazard Area Control Act Rules, and the Coastal Zone Management Rules. Jill manages the State's In-Lieu Fee Program and has also recently become the lead in the development and management of the New Jersey's Mitigation Banking Program. Jill currently serves as an ex-officio member of the Board of ASWM. She has a B.S. in Biology and Environmental Studies from Washington College, and an M.S. in Environmental Science from Rutgers/NJIT.



Lauren Driscoll, Treasurer

Lauren Driscoll is the manager of the wetlands program at the Washington State Department of Ecology, a position that she has held since 2005. She is responsible for ensuring statewide consistency in the implementation of 401 WQ certifications, technical assistance, and guidance for local wetland regulations. She is responsible for assisting and mentoring wetland technical staff statewide. She oversees the wetland compliance program and writes grants for wetland program activities. Since 2007 she has also served as the agency's wetland policy lead doing bill analyses and legislative briefings, tracking national issues, and providing guidance on local wetland ordinances and their implementation. Lauren specializes in wetland policy and mitigation options such as wetland banks, ILF and advance mitigation.

Lauren began work at Ecology in 1998 when she was hired to develop a wetland banking rule and establish the state's bank certification program. Before joining Ecology, Lauren worked for the Washington State Department of Transportation where she performed wetland studies on transportation projects statewide, designed mitigation sites, and participated in the development of the Washington Wetland Function Assessment model. Prior to that she worked for the two federal agencies: the US Forest Service doing trail work where she ran a pack string of mules; and the USFWS where she did Swampbuster work under the Farm Bill.

Lauren received her bachelor's in environmental studies from the Evergreen State College where she studied ecology, botany, organic agriculture and computer sciences. Lauren and her husband live in Yelm, Washington and they have two fledging adult children along with a dog and two indoor cats (who are enjoying their new patio.) She enjoys gardening, doodling, card making, hiking and any excuse to get outside.



Amy Lounds, Secretary

Amy manages the Field Operations Support Section in the Water Resources Division of the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), which includes Michigan's Great Lakes, floodplains, dam safety, critical dune, high risk erosion area, coastal zone, enforcement, and wetlands, lakes, and streams (Section 404) programs. Previous to that, she served as the Wetlands, Lakes and Streams Unit Chief for close to a decade. Amy has worked for EGLE for over 20 years, during which time she also served as the statewide wetland policy specialist and the administrator of the wetland mitigation banking program. Prior to working for the MDEQ, Amy worked for the Michigan Department of Transportation doing environmental reviews and permit applications for wetlands, inland lakes and streams, and floodplains. Amy has a Bachelor of Science in Zoology from Michigan State University and a Masters in Landscape Architecture and Conservation Biology and Ecosystem Management from the University of Michigan. Amy currently lives in Holt Michigan with her husband and two daughters, and enjoys spending time with her family and being outdoors.

Members At Large:



Stacia Bax - Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Stacia Bax is the Environmental Supervisor of the Stormwater and Certification Unit within the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. Her unit includes 4 technical staff and implements the Section 401 Water Quality Certification Program, drafts renewals for approximately 40 Section 402 NPDES program master general permits (industrial stormwater, industrial process water, construction/land disturbance stormwater, and municipal stormwater), and implements aspects of the NPDES eReporting Rule. Stacia has nearly 20 years of experience with the department and has also worked with Section 319 Nonpoint Source grants, Water Quality Standards rulemaking, TMDL development, Montauk State Park as a seasonal naturalist, and fieldwork in the beautiful Ozarks of Southwest Missouri.

In her personal time, she enjoys spending time with her husband, daughter and son (and two dogs) hiking, camping, and kayaking as well as coaching NASP archery, leading Scouts BSA and Girl Scouts, and watching her daughter play volleyball. In her spare time, Stacia loves to read, cook and bake (pies are her favorite), explore new places, and craft fiber arts (knitting and crocheting namely, though she has a loom she would love to learn to weave on). She lives in Central Missouri.



Denise Clearwater - Maryland Department of the Environment

Denise Clearwater has worked in Maryland's wetland programs since 1986. She has a background in developing and implementing a regulatory wetland program; a mitigation program; policy development; and special projects for program improvement and grant management. She has represented the Wetlands and Waterways Program in the Maryland Department of the Environment on numerous interagency work groups for regulatory, wetland monitoring, restoration, and preservation and is the co-chair of the Chesapeake Bay Program Wetland Work Group. She is also serving as an ex-officio Board member of ASWM and is a member of the Society of Wetland Scientists. Denise has a B.S. in zoology from the University of Maryland and an M.S. in wildlife management from Frostburg State College (now University).



Andrew Robertson - GeoSpatial Services at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota

Andy Robertson is the Executive Director of GeoSpatial Services at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota. In this role, he is responsible for oversight and management of all GeoSpatial Services projects, activities and staff. GeoSpatial Services is engaged in a wide variety of projects across the Lower 48 and Alaska including wetland inventory; National Hydrography Dataset updates; spatial data development; and, natural resource condition assessments. Andy has a diverse background in spatial information systems, watershed planning, wetland inventory, forest management, environmental impact assessment, desktop and server system support and database administration. He is a Registered Professional Forest Technologist (Alberta, Canada) and has experience leading natural resource projects for both private sector companies and public agencies across Canada and the United States including the Department of Interior, United States Army Corp of Engineers, NOAA, and the Department of Agriculture. Andy has a Forest Technology Diploma from Sault College of Applied Technology in Ontario, Canada, a B.Sc. in Environmental Science from the University of Waterloo and has completed postgraduate work in forest management at the University of Toronto. He is also a steering committee member for the Wetland Mapping Consortium and is co-chair of the Alaska GeoSpatial Council Wetland Technical Group.



Bill Ryan - Oregon Department of State Lands

Bill Ryan is the Deputy Director at the Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL) leading the Aquatic Resources Management Program which is responsible for implementation of Oregon's Removal-Fill and Wetlands Conservation Laws. Prior to joining the DSL in June of 2010, Bill enjoyed 14 years at the Oregon Department of Transportation performing environmental compliance work including wetlands delineation and mitigation, mitigation banking, regulatory streamlining and process improvement. Bill started his professional career in Southern California in 1989 providing environmental planning and habitat restoration expertise for various planning and engineering firms.

Bill has been a member of ASWM for nine years. He also serves on the Board of the Oregon Public Management Association which provides networking and low cost training opportunities for managers and aspiring managers in public service. Bill has an undergraduate degree in Geography/Ecosystems Management from UCLA and a master's in Biology from California State University, Fullerton. His master's thesis topic was a study of succession in the alluvial scrub plant community following flood events in the Santa Ana River, California. In his spare time Bill enjoys hiking, camping, travel, skiing, singing acapella madrigals with the Sherwood Renaissance Singers and reading a good book.



Mary Ann Tilton - New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services

Mary Ann Tilton is the Assistant Wetlands Bureau Administrator with the State of New Hampshire, Department of Environmental Services (NHDES), Wetlands Bureau. She has been with NHDES for over 30 years in various management and supervisory positions. She helped develop the Wetlands Enforcement program and supervised wetlands compliance for 17 years. She has served as the Assistant Administrator since 2005 and oversees state wetlands rules development, program development, and wetlands permitting. She is the recipient of an EPA Merit Award (2019) for development of a Wetlands BMP, multi-year rules initiative, and development of stream crossing rules. She holds a BA degree in Botany and Zoology from Connecticut College, MS in Zoology from University of Rhode Island, and a JD from UNH Law School (formerly Franklin Pierce Law Center), and is a Professional Wetland Scientist (PWS)

and member of the Society of Wetland Scientists. She lives with her family in Concord, NH and enjoys hiking in the White Mountains, skiing, and exploring arboretums.

ASWM STAFF

Marla J. Stelk, Executive Director

Marla is the Executive Director at the Association of State Wetland Managers (ASWM) where she has worked on wetland policy and management issues since 2013. Marla has over 25 years of experience working on wetland, water, and wildlife issues, climate change, environmental policy and research, land use planning, communications and organizational leadership. Marla has led research at ASWM on topics such as ecosystem service valuation for wetland restoration, the role of wetlands in floodplain and natural hazard management, wetlands and watershed health, wetland mapping and communications. Prior to coming to ASWM, Marla worked for a variety of environmental and social nonprofit organizations helping to build organizational capacity, manage projects and improve internal processes. Marla earned her MA in Community Planning and Development with a focus on Land Use and the Environment at the University of Southern Maine's Muskie School of Public Service and her BA in Environmental Issues from Colorado College.

Donna Downing, Senior Legal Policy Advisor

Donna Downing is the Senior Legal Policy Advisor at the Association of State Wetland Managers. Donna was the Jurisdiction Team Leader in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds from 2007-2020. Donna worked on a variety of issues at EPA, with a focus in recent years on the geographic scope of the Clean Water Act (CWA) in light of the U.S. Supreme Court decisions. She also served as EPA's staff lead for CWA section 401 water quality certification, and on wetland-related legal issues. Prior to joining EPA in 1998, Donna worked for the U.S. Congress Office of Technology Assessment and in private law practice. She has a BA magna cum laude from Harvard University, an MPP from the University of California at Berkeley, a JD cum laude from Georgetown University Law School, and an LLM in Environmental Law summa cum laude from George Washington University Law School. Donna has been an adjunct professor at George Washington University Law School since 1996, teaching environmental law. In what's left of her time, she moonlights as a professional potter and an unprofessional horse trainer. Donna also enjoys traveling and has traveled by reindeer sled in the Swedish Arctic, gone winter camping with dog sleds in Minnesota's Boundary Waters Wilderness Area, and bicycled the Burma Road in China.

Brenda Zollitsch, PhD, Senior Policy Analyst

Brenda is a Policy Analyst at the Association of State Wetland Managers. Brenda's areas of expertise include water resource policy, stormwater management, collaborative environmental policy implementation, and most recently, climate adaptation. At ASWM, Brenda conducts research and policy analysis on wetland and stream issues, manages projects; designs, coordinates and evaluates training for wetland professionals; coordinates webinars; publishes reports, articles and blogs; helps develop communications guidance; and is involved in conference planning and making presentations on ASWM's work to a variety of audiences. Brenda recently completed a national status and trends/state summaries project analyzing 50 state wetland programs across the United States and a national stream identification, delineation and mitigation study. She currently leads projects focused on increasing access to high quality wetland training and improving energy permitting to protect wetlands. Brenda received her PhD in Public Policy from the University of Southern Maine's Muskie School of Public Service in 2012, focusing on environmental policy and collaborative environmental management. She has her double Master's degree from Boston University and her bachelor's degree from the University of Maine. Brenda has 25 years of organizational leadership experience and a strong background in academic and action research, facilitation, training and communications. Brenda is a Switzer Environmental Fellow and has been instrumental in developing regional approaches to stormwater management in the State of Maine.

William Dooley, Policy Analyst

William is the new Policy Analyst at the Association of State Wetland Managers. William assists in the design and implementation of policy and program research and analysis plans; assists in identifying, writing, and carrying out federal grants; facilitates various workgroups and ad hoc committees; coordinates and hosts webinars; and identifies content for the ASWM webpages and publications. William has a

bachelor's degree in Environmental Science from Assumption College and a Master of Public Policy with a concentration in Environmental Policy from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. William has 8 years of environmental work experience including field sampling, data review, and project management. William enjoys hiking and camping throughout New England with his wife Samantha and their dog August and playing cards with friends and family whenever possible.

Stacey Detwiler, Policy Analyst

Stacey is the Policy Analyst at the Association of State Wetland Managers. Most recently, Stacey worked as the Conservation Director for Rogue Riverkeeper in southern Oregon where she led multiple campaigns to protect and restore clean water in the Rogue watershed. Stacey earned her M.S. in Water Resources Policy and Management from Oregon State University where she researched the management of forest roads on private industrial forest lands to reduce chronic sediment pollution to streams. She also served on the Board of the Marys River Watershed Council. Before moving west, Stacey spent five years working for American Rivers in Washington, DC on federal clean water policies that promote green infrastructure and reduce polluted runoff. In DC, she also served on the Executive Board of DC EcoWomen, a non-profit organization that works to empower women in the environmental field. Stacey earned her B.A. in Environmental Studies from Connecticut College. Outside of the office, you can find Stacey hiking, paddling a local river, taking a dance class, fly fishing, or playing her guitar.

Audra Martin, Policy Analyst

Audra Martin is a Policy Analyst at the Association of State Wetland Managers, where she conducts research, analyzes policies, and evaluates state and tribal aquatic resource programs and program needs. Previously, Audra worked on water quality issues with NEIWPC, a northeast regional commission. Her experience includes conducting webinars and meetings in support of state wetland programs, developing policy position papers, and managing federal grant projects. In the past 10 years she has provided a range of support to government and nonprofit agencies addressing natural resource management on a local to global scale. She holds a Master of Environmental Management degree.

Dawn Smith, Communications Specialist

Dawn works on multimedia projects, focusing on webinars and short videos. After working in the corporate world for several years, she is redirecting creative energies towards social media, documentaries and short film communication formats. A lifetime resident of Maine, she has an appreciation for the preservation of local heritage and natural treasures, primarily from behind the lens. Working with ASWM, she has gained a greater appreciation for the local and national efforts to preserve and rebuild the wetland ecosystems that are all around us.

Marti Northover, Bookkeeper

Marti was hired in October as the new bookkeeper. Marti has over 30 years of professional experience in accounting, logistics and advertising. Marti has an undergraduate degree in Geography from Framingham State University in Framingham, MA and masters degree in Environmental Science from Clark University in Worcester, MA. Professionally Marti has taught environment related courses at colleges in MA, was owner of an historic inn, worked as the Director of Accounting and HR at a logistic company in MA and a homeless shelter in ME. Six years ago Marti moved to Alfred, ME, where she lives with her husband Vernon, enjoying the lake life and her chickens, ducks and nice garden. Currently Marti is the Treasurer of the Parson's Memorial Library Board of Trustees and is an Associate Member of Alfred Conservation Commission.

Laura Burchill, Office Manager

Laura is the office manager in the Windham office and has been with the Association since 2004. She is responsible for maintaining the membership information; assisting with the many tasks involved in preparing for webinars and workshops, Association publications as well as general office duties. She has 30+ years experience in graphic design and also works part-time for *Parent & Family*, a local publication. She lives in Windham, Maine with her husband Dave and their canine companion Jay.

Sharon Weaver, Webmaster

Sharon is the Publications Specialist and Webmaster for the Association in the Berne, New York office, where she has worked for the past 20+ years. Along with general office tasks, she works on the layout and design of Association publications, reports, and brochures. She helps coordinate ASWM workshops and symposia. She manages the ASWM website, which includes daily updates and prepares and designs new webpages. When she is not entertaining company, she enjoys some alone time with her husband, Ken, and grown children Karla and Pieter. She adores her cat and three dogs, who complete the family nest.

Tessa Paulsen, Intern

Tessa Paulsen is ASWM's newest intern. Ms. Paulsen graduated from University of New Haven in CT with a Bachelor of Arts in Marine Affairs with a minor in Sociology. She will be attending the Portland State University in Portland, OR to complete a master's degree in environmental science and natural resource management. Tessa's main career goal is to work on science communication and outreach with communities that have a history of distrust of government policy. This includes commercial fishers and indigenous peoples. During her time at ASWM, Tessa will be performing a literature review of hydrological dynamics in relation to silviculture management practices and coastal wetlands, as well as testing and assisting with the development of training modules on beavers and wetland restoration best practices, in addition to other activities in support of ASWM's mission.

Olin Jenner, Intern

Olin Jenner joined the Association of State Wetland Managers as an intern and will be working with the organization until the end of the year. Olin graduated from Colby-Sawyer College in 2015 with a degree in environmental science and a minor in history. From there he worked in local and state politics and joined the executive committee of Sierra Club Maine as a volunteer before starting graduate school at the University of Southern Maine's Muskie School of Public Service. Olin enjoys hiking, skiing, and canoeing on Maine's beautiful lakes and mountains.



Photo by Paul Anderson, University of Washington



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