



**Wisconsin  
Wetlands**  
ASSOCIATION

**2024 ANNUAL REPORT**

Dear wetland enthusiast,



As I reflect on this year's growth and accomplishments, I'm grateful for the support of members like you who help shape our organization.

We have a new five-year strategic plan, developed with your valued membership feedback, and are currently working on the implementation plan for our new goals. Looking ahead, our vision remains constant: "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." With a new strategic plan guiding us and with your support, I am confident that we will achieve remarkable outcomes for wetlands and communities in our state.

In the following report, you'll see how we're already aligning with these new strategic priorities.

Our work and accomplishments depend greatly on our membership. Thank you for your support which keeps us working towards our goals.

A handwritten signature of Alison Peña in blue ink, written in a cursive style.

Alison Peña

## Major Donors

July 2023-June 2024

### Individual & Family Gifts

#### \$2,500 or more

Anonymous  
Elaine Burke  
Doug & Sherry Caves  
Cal & Ruth DeWitt  
Steve Glass  
Dr. Helen J. Gurkow  
Tracy & Victoria Hames  
R. Tod Highsmith & Joan Braune  
Robert & Jane Pearson  
Kate Redmond  
Gary & Penny Shackelford  
John Shillinglaw  
Marc & Marilyn Thwails  
Martin & Karen Voss  
Thomas Wolfe & Patricia Powers  
Elizabeth Zimmerman  
& Jack Ferguson

#### Gifts of \$1,000-2,499

Anonymous  
Tim & Sue Anderson  
Steven Antholt  
Greg "Ole" Bauer  
Barbara & David Bryce  
Richard & Jane Dana  
Tom & Nancy Ellis  
Ann Engelman

Kristine & Jim Frater  
Scott Froehle & Traci Peloquin  
Bruce & Kris Gabert  
Gary & Pamela Gates  
Colvin Goree  
Karen Grimmer  
A. Woodson & Inga Hagge  
Duncan Highsmith & Ana Araujo  
Brende Hofer & Dennis Steadman  
Melissa Hornung  
& David Hubanks  
Andrew & Natalie Hoyos  
Terri Johnson  
& Roy Froemming  
Heidi Kiesler  
Chuck & Linda Lee  
Tom Leiden  
Roma Lenehan  
Karen Leigh Leonard  
Al Lustig & Janice Watson  
Michael McLain  
Michael A. Mlinar  
Ursula Muehlelehner  
Russell Olson  
Constance Pukaite  
Nancy Pullen  
Tim & Sharon Thousand  
Kristin Westad  
The Wisconsin Water  
Protection Fund of the  
Natural Resources  
Foundation of Wisconsin

### Gifts of \$500-999

Anonymous  
Sharon Ashworth  
Frank & Rebecca Bertalan  
Cheryl Brickman  
Quentin & Mary Carpenter  
Theodore & Barbara Cochrane  
Barb Copeland Buenger  
Mark Cullen  
Lila Daut & Allen Jacobson  
Diane & Robert Dempsey  
Susan & Gregory Derfus  
Linn A. Duesterbeck  
Sue Feyrer  
Bob Freckmann  
Amie Goldman & David Gundersen  
Nancy Hames  
Raymond Hansen  
Richard Hansen  
Randolph Hoffman  
Lon & Bonnie Knoedler  
Sandee Kosmo  
Glen & Lee Magyera  
Bruce Moore  
Rebecca Moscatel  
David Musolf & Roger Packard  
Anna Pidgeon & Volker Radeloff  
Kurt & Laurie Schmude  
Jerome Simmons  
Carl Sinderbrand & Maryann Sumi  
Mary Jo & Steve Spiekermann  
Michael Staggs

Robert & Marsha Steffen  
James & Barbara Syverud  
Michael Trieschmann  
Laura & Peter Turchi  
Tim Walsh & Agnes Chwae  
Sammis & Jean White  
Levi & Janet Wood  
Dennis Zeloski

### Institutional Gifts

#### \$2,500 or more

Association of State Floodplain Managers  
The Brico Fund  
The Brookby Foundation  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Forest County Potawatomi Foundation  
Fund for Lake Michigan  
Heartland Ecological Group  
Ho-Chunk Gaming Madison  
Madison Community Foundation  
Mosaic - Water Solutions Fund  
Oneida Nation  
Pieper Electric, Inc./Ideal Mechanical  
Stantec  
Village of Plover  
We Energies Foundation  
Wisconsin Coastal Management Program  
Wisconsin Department of Agriculture,  
Trade and Consumer Protection  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Wisconsin Public Service Foundation







## A watershed moment for Wisconsin Wetlands Association

Thanks to your generosity, the Wisconsin Wetlands Association is growing. Growth is more than the number of members or a larger budget. Growth means we're getting the word out effectively to more and more people across the state on why wetlands are important. And successful growth requires good planning. To that end, we've developed a strategic plan for our next five years. Learn more at [wisconsinwetlands.org/Future](https://wisconsinwetlands.org/Future).

- We're refining and expanding our policy and outreach work.
- We're updating our internal operations.
- Most importantly, we're increasing connections within our community of wetland lovers!





*Wisconsin Wetlands Association staff celebrated with Governor Evers after he signed 2023 Act 265 into law.*

WISCONSIN WETLANDS ASSOCIATION

KYLE MASCIERA




## Furthering wetland conservation by building policy and program supports

To help build capacity and demand for wetland conservation, our efforts emphasize restoring wetlands to solve problems. Toward that end, our work to ensure flood-prone communities have the data, decision support tools, and funding to protect and restore wetlands to reduce flood risks and damages continues to gain momentum.

- In April 2024, a new state-sponsored pre-disaster flood resilience grant program was created with the final enactment of 2023 WI Act 265. Already, dozens of communities are applying for support.
- Wisconsin Wetlands Association and Association of State Floodplain Managers released data and decision-support tools to help Marengo River Watershed communities evaluate opportunities to restore wetlands, streams, and floodplains to project vulnerable downstream infrastructure.





“I’m so glad I found the Wetland Coffee Break. The topics are always so fascinating, and your speakers are super engaging! I love it!”

– *Wetland Coffee Break attendee*



*Thank you to everyone who joined our celebration of American Wetlands Month at the Delta Beer Lab in Madison!*





## Fostering a wetland community

People protect things they care about. That's why cultivating a wetland community in Wisconsin is at the core of our work. Wisconsin Wetlands Association offers people opportunities to experience, learn about, and enjoy wetlands. We also promote human connections within the wetland community, developing a feeling of fellowship and a shared commitment to wetlands.

- The Wetland Coffee Break webinar series featured 22 presentations and reached more than 800 people this year (60% of which were new attendees). Since 2020, the Wetland Coffee Break has reached nearly 2,800 people.
- Members and other stakeholders shared their input and ideas with Wisconsin Wetlands Association staff and board through surveys and in-person gatherings last spring.



MONIKA BLAZS

*More than 400 people attended the 2024 Wetland Science Conference in Green Bay, WI, attending concurrent sessions, poster presentations, workshops, working groups, and roundtable conversations like the one pictured here.*





## Cultivating a wetland workforce

Achieving our vision of reestablishing healthy wetland landscapes across the state requires collaboration among a diverse and highly-trained conservation workforce. Ensuring that the people who work in and around wetlands understand how wetlands work and why they're important helps further our vision.

- Wisconsin Wetlands Association is collaborating with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to identify core competencies that state and county land conservation staff must have to engage in hydrologic restoration work.
- Our 2024 Wetland Science Conference supported knowledge exchange and skill building for established and emerging wetland conservation professionals alike.







## Remembering WWA member Col. Dr. Helen Gurkow (1926–2023)

Col. Dr. Helen Gurkow lived a long and productive life dedicated to service. As you will notice in our financials report (back cover), that commitment to service continued even in death thanks to a generous bequest that will benefit wetlands for decades to come.

Helen served humanity as a physician for most of her adult life and served her country in both the Wisconsin and Ohio National Guard, including being activated for service in Desert Storm. She was an environmental advocate, professional nature photographer, and long-time member of Wisconsin Wetlands Association's Wetland Legacy Club.

Thank you for your lifetime of service, Helen.

## Wetland Legacy Club

Anonymous (2)

Betsy Barnard

Katie & Rich Beilfuss

Agnes Chwae & Tim Walsh

Jane Dobberpuhl \*\*

Dale Druckrey \*\*

Scott & Ann Eshelman

Helen J. Gurkow \*\*

Tod Highsmith

Ronald Horn \*\*

Sharland Huffaker

Elizabeth Middleton \*\*

Bruce Moore

Darrel Ruechel & JoAnn Krueger

Eldon Smithback \*\*

Peter & Jean Solac

Nicole & Paul Staskowski

Karen & Martin Voss

Margaret Welke \*\*

Elizabeth Zimmerman & Jack Ferguson

*\*\* Denotes that the named member is deceased.*

*If you have included WWA in your estate plans but are not listed here, please contact Tracy Hames at 608-250-9971 so we can properly thank you for your generosity.*



## Sustaining and growing a healthy organization

Wisconsin Wetlands Association must grow to effectively achieve our vision. Our members are vital to ensuring our growth. Thank you! As a token of our appreciation, we invite Wetland Gems® and Wetland Legacy Club members to special events and tours.

- Wetland Gems® are members who donate to Wisconsin Wetlands Association via automatic recurring monthly gifts. In 2024, 88 households provided Wisconsin Wetlands Association with this sustainable, reliable funding.
- Wetland Legacy Club members have notified Wisconsin Wetlands Association that they have included us in their estate plans through a charitable bequest and/or beneficiary designation. We invite you to join this list of generous Legacy Club members by calling Tracy Hames at 608-250-9971.



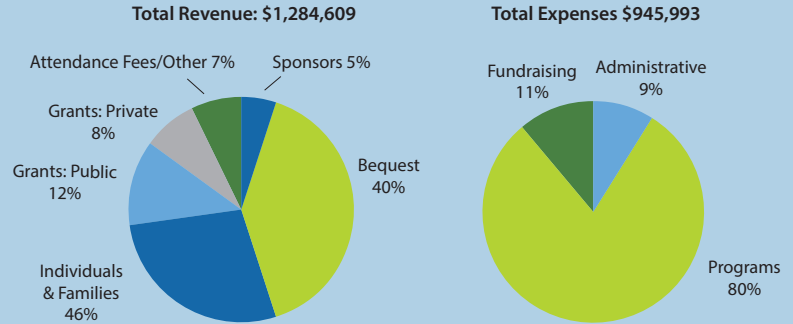
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Alison Peña – *Chair*  
Jim Ruwaldt – *Vice Chair*  
Tod Highsmith – *Treasurer*  
Gretchen Pfeiffer – *Secretary*  
Susan Schumacher  
Nicole Staskowski

**STAFF**

Tracy Hames  
*Executive Director*  
Katie Beilfuss  
*Outreach Programs Director*  
Emily Buck  
*Communications & Events Manager*  
Ginny Carlton  
*Conference & Workshop Coordinator*  
Debra Cook  
*Office Manager*  
Samantha Foster  
*Member Services Assistant*  
Kyle Magyera  
*Local Government Outreach Specialist*  
Erin O'Brien  
*Policy Programs Director*  
Stephanie Rockwood  
*Geospatial Analyst*  
Jennifer Western Hauser  
*Policy Liaison*

Fiscal Year 2024 (July 2023–June 2024)



Unaudited figures. Our audited figures will be completed by January 2025.

Wisconsin Wetlands Association is dedicated to the protection, restoration, and enjoyment of wetlands and associated ecosystems through science-based programs, education, and advocacy.

facebook.com/WisconsinWetlands  
www.wisconsinwetlands.org

214 N. Hamilton St, Suite 201  
Madison, WI 53703  
608-250-9971

