



The North Central Chapter

# Society of Wetland Scientists

## **NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER NEWSLETTER Autumn/Winter 2018**

### **A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT**

Recently reviewing 39 applications for free SWS student memberships, largely funded through a Chapter Development Grant that NCC received, has been an inspiration to me. It doesn't seem that long ago since I was in their place, and as I hear the freshness in their hopes and anticipation of wetland explorations, I am reminded to see with new eyes that which I think I know. I am grateful for professional support, access to information, networking, and other avenues of growth that being a member of SWS has provided since I was a student through to my current work. In addition to the SWS Annual Meeting this coming May in Baltimore, MD, there are other opportunities for connecting with other wetland scientists and enthusiasts in our region over the next several months through conferences organized by state wetland groups in Wisconsin and Ohio. This newsletter also outlines a number of opportunities to get more involved in our Chapter for your professional development, networking, and more.

Thanks to our NCC Student Representatives we are expanding our reach in social media - note the new links in this newsletter. This coming spring brings openings for a place on our NCC Board. Please consider enriching your Chapter in this way! We are grateful for other contributions as well – please contact a member of our Board with your ideas and volunteer interests that excite you and can serve to strengthen our organization.

The USEPA and USACOE released the pre-publication version of the proposed WOTUS rule on December 11<sup>th</sup> that greatly changes what is considered a “water of the U.S.”. SWS along with other aquatic science societies submitted a joint statement opposing the WOTUS Rule to replace the 2015 Clean Water Rule:

<https://sws.org/Blog/Sws-joins-other-aquatic-science-societies-in-opposing-the-wotus-rule-to-replace-the-2015-clean-water-rule.html>

You are encouraged to comment when the proposed WOTUS rule is released. We will post information on our social media sites when this is available.

World Wetlands Day is on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. “Wetlands and Climate Change” is the theme that Ramsar has declared for this year. Check out activities in celebration of the wetlands in our world and add your event:

<https://www.worldwetlandsday.org/events>

As we welcome the New Year, may this season and the year ahead bring potent and fulfilling opportunities for your work. Thank you for your continued support of SWS.

For Wetlands!

Julie Nieset

[jenieset@illinois.edu](mailto:jenieset@illinois.edu)

Some links in this newsletter may not work until the federal government resumes normal operations.

## RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP EARLY FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A \$50 GIFT CARD

Renew your membership by **January 31, 2019** and you will be entered to win a \$50 gift card from your choice of Amazon, Cabela's, REI, or Bass Pro Shop. Current board members are not eligible. Lifetime Members will be automatically entered. **Renew today!**

## NCC ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Don't forget to connect with us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn! The SWS North-Central Chapter has active accounts that we'd love for you to follow, like, and share. Click on the icons below to start now. If you have any information that you would like posted on those accounts, please feel free to message us directly on each platform.



## SWS NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS

In an effort to encourage the formation of Student Associations in our Chapter region, we have allocated seed money that can be applied for upon formal establishment of the respective Student Association. Student Associations should have at least 3 student members who are both enrolled at their respective universities and are student members of SWS, can be comprised of a group of students from several universities in a larger region, and have a faculty or organization advisor who is an SWS member. If you have an interest in forming a student association as a student or as an advisor, please read the official guidelines (see links below), and email NCC President Julie Nieset for further discussion at [jenieset@illinois.edu](mailto:jenieset@illinois.edu).

[Link to Student Association Guidelines](#)

[Link to more information about SWS student programs](#)

## 2018 NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER RESEARCH AWARD WINNER

Andrew Hopkins, a master's student in Biology at Western Michigan University, was the 2018 recipient of the \$1000 NCC Student Research award. Andrew's project is titled "Measuring Disturbance and Community Assembly of Amphibians and Reptiles in Interdunal Wetlands"

Andrew's research objective is to characterize and inventory the spatiotemporal pattern of amphibians and reptiles within interdunal wetlands along the eastern shoreline of Lake Michigan. This research is comprehensive and the first of its kind to characterize the herpotofauna assemblages in interdunal wetlands. The award was used to help defray travel expenses associated with Andrew's field work.



Currently in my research progress I am beginning the process of writing my papers for publication. I am still in the process of running statistical tests for my data and figuring out what my results are, but all of



the data is gathered and is being worked with. I am attempting to have at least one of my publications out in press before the time I graduate. This paper will be of similar structure to the one I used to propose my research for the grant funding and deals with examining disturbance ecology of amphibians in interdunal wetlands. As for how the grant money was used, first I would like to say thank you very much for the award. My research would have been much more difficult without it.

Primarily the money was put towards the travel costs for the research. Our research spanned 500 miles of coastline and 4 degrees of coastline, and there was a trip to every site at

least once a month. Additionally, the money was used to help with camping fees for stay at some of our sites as well as food and supplies during travel. Finally, the last I used the funds for was supplies (gear to use in the wetlands and reagent kits for chemical testing).



## HIGHLIGHTED STUDENT

BY BENJAMIN HENGEL AND JESS STERN

**Némesis Ortiz-Declet** is a second-year master's student in Water Resources Management at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a 2018 recipient of the Society of Wetland Scientists Multicultural Mentoring Program. Ms. Ortiz-Declet presented a poster at the SWS Annual Meeting in Denver, CO, where she was also a graduate student mentor. Her primary research interests include wetland ecology and ecosystem services, as well as social aspects of water resources management.

**Why did you become interested in Wetland Science?** Water resources courses at the University of Puerto Rico Rio Piedras, attending the Joint Aquatic Sciences Meeting in Portland, OR, through a Society of Wetland Scientists Undergraduate Mentorship Award in 2014, and different summer research experiences at the University of Vermont and the Agricultural Research Service in Beltsville, MD sparked my interest in wetland science and water resources research and management. My main trigger was considering that water connects to everything and is necessary for everything and working to conserve it is one of my main goals as a scientist and natural resources manager.

**What are your goals after graduation?** My master's degree is about water resources management. I am interested in applying the skills



developed through past experiences and through my degree in a related job in Arizona. I am considering non-government organizations with a strong community engagement component as well as government (state or federal) organizations that work with water scarcity management.

**Do you have any memorable field stories?** Some of my most memorable field stories are from my Student Conservation Association internship at the Chugach National Forest (USDA Forest Service). I was an outreach coordinator as well as a biological field and lab technician. I enjoyed engaging the community, increasing awareness about Pacific salmon, and helping out with data collection throughout the different salmon spawning streams of the forest. It was also definitely memorable seeing glaciers for the first time! I got to go on a small airplane over the Prince William Sound and see all the different water connections and dynamics.

**Highlighted Awards and Presentations:**

- National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON)-ESA Early Career Scholar (2018 ESA Annual Meeting 2018, New Orleans, LA)
- Society of Wetland Scientists Graduate Student Travel Award (2018 SWS Annual Meeting, Denver, CO)
- USDA Certificate of Appreciation – El Yunque National Forest – U.S. Forest Service (2016, Rio Grande, PR)
- Society of Wetland Scientists Undergraduate Mentorship Award (JASM 2014, Portland, OR)
- Monitoring Cyanobacteria Dynamics and Water Quality Parameters in Two Productive Systems – Shelburne Pond and Missisquoi Bay, Lake Champlain (2014). [View the poster.](#)

Find Némesis Ortiz-Declat on [LinkedIn](#).

**NOMINATIONS ARE NOW OPEN FOR THE ELECTION OF NEW OFFICERS**

**NOMINATION DEADLINE: MARCH 1**

The NCC is currently accepting nominations for President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, two At-Large Board Members, and a Student Representative. Nominations for each of these six positions will be accepted until midnight Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. Please send your nominations along with a few sentences stating why this person is interested in the position via an email to David Mushet, the Nominating Committee Chair ([dmushet@usgs.gov](mailto:dmushet@usgs.gov)). Self-nominations are highly encouraged. So, if you are interested in serving the Chapter in a leadership role, please nominate yourself for a position.

The President-Elect position is a six-year commitment. The duties of the President-elect are to assist the President and to perform the duties of the President when that officer is absent or unable to act. The President-elect also serves as chairperson of the Program Committee. After serving an initial two-year term, the President-Elect automatically ascends to become the Chapter's President for an additional two-year term. The President is responsible for the business of the Chapter, making appointments authorized in the Standing Rules, establishing special committees, and exercising other responsibilities determined from time to time by action of the Chapter and its Executive Board. The President chairs all meetings of the Chapter and the Executive Board and serves as a member of all Standing and Special Committees. The President also serves as Chapter Representative to the Society and as a member of the Society Board of Directors. Following the term as the NCC President, the elected individual serves a final two-year term as Past-President. The Past President serves as chairperson of the Nominating Committee.

The Secretary, Treasurer, and At-Large Board Member positions are each a two-year commitment. The Secretary maintains a roster of Chapter members in good standing and serves as chairperson of the Membership Committee. The Secretary coordinates Chapter membership with the Society Secretary and replies to or directs all correspondence pertinent to Chapter business affairs and membership. The Secretary also maintains files and records of Chapter business and maintains and updates copies of the Chapter Bylaws and Standing Rules. The Treasurer attends to all appropriate financial matters of the Chapter, including payment of bills, collection of Chapter dues through the Society, and any Internal Revenue Service reporting requirements. Elected Board Members serve as voting members of the Executive Board. Special duties of these board members are at the discretion of the President.

The Student Representative is a newer position on our governing board. The Student Representative serves for a one-year term as a voting member of the Executive Board. The Student Representative needs to be openly available for student members to contact and voice any needs and concerns. The Student Representative then forwards these on to the Executive Board. As a voting member of the Executive Board, the Student Representative attends (by phone, generally) Executive Board meetings and provides a “student” perspective on proposed actions. Further, the Student Representative seeks out individuals to highlight in the “highlighted student” section of the Chapter’s quarterly newsletter and writes that section for inclusion in the newsletter.

If you have been looking for a way to become more involved in the Chapter, one of these positions may be for you. The elections will be held in April (details on how to vote will be provided in our Spring Newsletter) and our new officers will be installed at the Annual SWS Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland (May 28–31, 2019). If you have any questions, please contact David Mushet (Past President and Head of the Nominating Committee) or Julie Nieset (Current NCC President). And remember, the nominations deadline is Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **2019 WISCONSIN WETLANDS ASSOCIATION WETLAND SCIENCE CONFERENCE** **FEBRUARY 19-21; MADISON, WI**

Join other scientists and professionals of the wetland and water community of Wisconsin and the upper Midwest to:

- Share your wetland research, restoration, management, or outreach program;
- Learn new identification and assessment approaches and techniques;
- Hear about approaches to incorporating wetlands into watershed & community planning;
- Discuss the latest in wetland science, planning, and protection issues;
- Look ahead to the future of wetland science and practices in Wisconsin and the Midwest.

The 2-day conference, which annually draws upwards of 300 attendees, includes a keynote address, organized symposia, topical oral sessions, a poster session, working groups, a banquet, and field trips to area wetlands.

The 2019 Wetland Science Conference, *Wetlands: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*, will be held February 19-21 in Madison, WI. Wisconsin Wetlands Association celebrates its 50th year as an organization in 2019, so this conference offers a unique opportunity to look back broadly as a wetland community. Where have we come from, where are we today, and where do we need to go in the next fifty years? How have our work and our issues changed, what have we learned, and what have we accomplished? Where do we need to take our work in the future to achieve what we need for wildlife, for water, and for communities? The conference will address these questions and more. For more information: <https://conference.wisconsinwetlands.org/about/>

Student scholarships and travel grants are available: <https://conference.wisconsinwetlands.org/for-students/>

### WHO IS WISCONSIN WETLANDS ASSOCIATION?

This conference is hosted by Wisconsin Wetlands Association, a statewide non-profit dedicated to the protection, restoration, and enjoyment of wetlands and associated ecosystems through science-based programs, education, and advocacy. **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.**

### CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

#### VERNAL POOLOOZA SCIENCE CONFERENCE

April 4, 5 & 6, 2019

Ashland University Convocation Center

Ashland, Ohio

#### Conference Overview:

Vernal Poolooza is a 3-day conference on vernal pools. The Ohio Vernal Pool Network, a committee of Ohio Wetlands Association, has participated in one-day vernal pool workshops for 15 years. Feedback from participants has encouraged us to provide more detail, depth and diversity of activities and topics. The 2019 Vernal Poolooza is our first full conference to address these needs. The conference format will include plenary sessions, evening keynote address and breakout sessions on Thursday and Friday. Each session will be 45 minutes. Presentations should be no longer than 40 minutes with 5 minutes available for Questions and Answers. Meals are provided these first two days. The half-day Saturday will offer an array of labs and field trips. Meals will be on your own.

#### Preferred Vernal Pool Topics:

- Biodiversity of Vernal Pools
- Nature Photography with cell phones
- Vulnerability of Vernal Pools
- Frogwatch USA
- Life Beneath the Surface – Underwater Videography
- Managing Vernal Pools for Biodiversity
- Vernal Pool Amphibians
- Status and Trends of Ohio's Vernal Pools
- Mitigation of Impacts to Ohio's Vernal Pools
- Local Protection and Ordinances for Vernal Pool Preservation and Setbacks
- Weird Biology – Unisexual Ambystomids
- Listening Skills – Knowing Ohio's Calling Amphibians
- Monitoring Amphibians Using OHPARC Protocol
- Ohio Dragonfly Survey in Vernal Pools and Wet Woods
- Finding Vernal Pools Using Map Data
- Microbiology of Vernal Pools
- Differences in Vernal Pools Over Time and Space

For more information on how to submit an application to give a presentation, as well as find out more about the conference: <https://www.ohwetlands.org/vernalpoolooza-2019.html>

## NOTES FROM AROUND THE NORTH CENTRAL REGION

**MICHIGAN:** (State Contact, Kurt Kowalski, [kkowalski@usgs.gov](mailto:kkowalski@usgs.gov))

The following is re-printed in part from a member bulletin, with permission from the Michigan Wetlands Association.

During the last couple of weeks, the Michigan Legislature passed, and Governor Snyder signed 3 bills into law regarding the regulation of wetlands, lakes, and streams. The Governor signed HB 5854/5855 which addresses wetland restoration activities and a significantly revised SB 1211 (H-5). We are still reviewing the wetland restoration changes, but our initial review indicates that the changes are intended to improve wetland restoration in Michigan and will not change permit reviews for other types of activities. In regard to SB 1211 (H-5), we expect this new law will have significant impact on landowners, consultants, and regulators. Although most of the changes to regulated areas were removed in the signed version, here is a summary of the changes in the law:

- Several requirements on MDEQ for handling and noticing violations were added to the statute. MWA's experience is that most of these items were already being done by MDEQ, so we don't expect much change in MDEQ procedures, just more paperwork requirements for MDEQ.
- The federal definition of Waters of the United States (WOTUS) was added to the definition of Lakes and Streams. Except for adding WOTUS, the original definitions of Lakes and Streams remains the same. Landowners, consultants, and regulators will now need to understand and implement WOTUS when a lake or stream does not meet the original definition, to determine if it is now regulated.
- Several forested wetlands and a few other ecological types were removed from the list of Rare or Imperiled Wetlands. Although this does not make sense to anyone who understands Michigan Wetlands, the impact is most likely minor since this definition is not widely used in the statute. We expect that most of these areas are and will remain regulated, and that they will be protected through the permitting process. The MDNR will review the list of Rare and Imperiled Wetland and make recommendations to the Legislature in 2019 and every 5 years thereafter.
- WOTUS was added to the definition of Wetlands. As with lakes and streams, we expect this will cause significantly more documentation and understanding of WOTUS by landowners, consultants, and regulators as any previously unregulated wetlands will now have to be evaluated under WOTUS.
- The criteria for MDEQ to regulate wetlands that are "essential to the preservation of the state..." has been removed from statute and replaced with two criteria that will regulate small, isolated wetlands. Any wetlands that contain State or Federally Threatened or Endangered Species or are Rare or Imperiled Wetlands are automatically regulated. No notification to the landowner is required.
- Criteria was inserted to define when borrow material for farm and forest can be taken from the wetland. To take borrow material from the wetland, the landowner must use upland sources if feasible.
- Several criteria were added to make enforcement of violations more difficult for MDEQ.
- Pond does not include Farm or Stock Ponds in regards to regulating wetlands adjacent to those features.

**MINNESOTA:** (State Contact, Elizabeth Markhart, [bmarkhart@comcast.net](mailto:bmarkhart@comcast.net))

The main news for Minnesota has to do with mining and environmental impacts as aptly described in this article by Judy Helgen.

<https://www.minnpost.com/community-voices/2018/11/requiem-for-our-wetlands-whats-at-risk-in-ne-minnesota/>

Minnesota's annual wetlands conference has now combined with the water resources conference. Here was the October 2018 agenda. <https://www.mnwetlands.umn.edu/conference>

**INDIANA:** (State Contact, Joy Marburger, [jmarburg@frontier.com](mailto:jmarburg@frontier.com))

In 1985, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife entered into a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to share the costs of mapping Indiana's wetlands.

Indiana's National Wetlands Inventory maps were produced primarily from interpretation of high-altitude color infrared aerial photographs (scale of 1:58,000) taken of Indiana during spring and fall 1980-87. Map production also included field investigations, reviews of existing information, quality assurance, draft map production, interagency review of draft maps, and final map production. The minimum size of a given wetland on National Wetland Inventory maps is typically one to three acres. Very narrow wetlands in river corridors and wetlands under cultivation at the time of mapping are generally not depicted, and forested wetlands are poorly discriminated.

Based on a 1991 survey Indiana had approximately 813,000 acres of wetland habitat in the mid-1980s when the data were collected. Wetland loss or gain since then is unknown.

- Estimated wetlands circa 1780s: 5,600,000 acres
- Percent of surface area in wetlands circa 1780s: 24.1%
- Existing wetlands: 813,000 acres
- Percent of surface area in wetlands today: 3.5 %
- Percent of wetlands lost: 85%

IDEM recently received a grant to investigate trends in wetlands losses and gains. Part of this study will focus on regulatory activities, another part on conservation efforts, and a final part devoted to updating the work carried out by IDNR in the 1980's utilizing more recent information and newer habitat studies.

Indiana Department of Environmental Management <https://www.in.gov/idem/wetlands/2333.htm>

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

A final report titled "An evaluation of agricultural tile drainage exposure and effects to wetland species and habitat within Madison Wetland Management District, South Dakota" can be downloaded at: <https://ecos.fws.gov/ServCat/Reference/Profile/105778>. The abstract says: "Concentrations of nutrients, pesticides and selenium in tile effluent exceeded water quality benchmarks for the protection of aquatic life. There were also differences in pollutant concentrations between wetland site categories, with Tile Wetlands having higher concentrations of select pesticides, chlorophyll-a, and selenium than Reference Wetlands. Tile Wetlands also exhibited selenium bioaccumulation in wetland biota (plants, aquatic invertebrates, and duck eggs) and had significantly lower wetland habitat scores and aquatic invertebrate diversity than Reference Wetlands."

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

Wetland Confirmation Service and Non-Growing Season Determinations

WDNR will begin piloting the issuance of wetland confirmations during the non-growing season over the winter of 2018 -2019. This service will be provided on a case by case basis, as site conditions allow. Sites that are good candidates for non-growing season wetland confirmations include, but are not limited to, review areas that lack all three wetland parameters (upland determinations) and review areas that have distinct wetland boundaries. WDNR will consider wetland delineations based on the level of detail that can be gathered for each of the three wetland parameters. Also whether environmental conditions

allow DNR to complete an adequate field review. Ideally this new approach will reduce unnecessary project delays for areas that clearly do not have wetland resources, or areas with distinct wetland boundaries.

**OHIO:** (State Contact, Brad Petru, [bpetru@hullinc.com](mailto:bpetru@hullinc.com) )

Ohio is relatively calm and subdued on the wetland front thanks to an active and productive state environmental protection agency (Ohio EPA). The August implementation of the 2015 Clean Water Rule has resulted in the probability that fewer isolated wetland determinations will be requested or approved in Ohio as the state has adopted the 2015 Rule. Many of the fragmented, distant and previously considered isolated wetlands that do not have a direct surface water connection are still located within 4,000 linear feet of a stream channel that contains ordinary high water mark definition and these wetland resources likely share some degree of significant nexus to those stream channels. The result is that we are seeing the USACE take regulatory ownership over more of these features in recent months. Obviously, surface water policy is interpreted differently in our neighboring states whom have joined the legal opposition to the 2015 Clean Water Rule, and this Rule may be subject to modification if the current administration is allowed to implement their interpretations and changes to the Clean Water Rule and waters of the U.S. definitions.

**SOUTH DAKOTA:** (State Contact, Carol Johnston, [Carol.Johnston@sdstate.edu](mailto:Carol.Johnston@sdstate.edu))

**IOWA:** (State Contact, Paul Weihe, PhD, [WeiheP@central.edu](mailto:WeiheP@central.edu))

**ILLINOIS:** (State Contact, Jessie Ackerman, [jracker@illinois.edu](mailto:jracker@illinois.edu))

**NEBRASKA:** (State Contact, Ted LaGrange, [ted.lagrange@nebraska.gov](mailto:ted.lagrange@nebraska.gov))

If you have an item for a future issue of the NCC newsletter or correction, please send an email with *newsletter* in the subject line to the Editor: Jennifer Boyer ([jen.boyer@dupageco.org](mailto:jen.boyer@dupageco.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**

**WEBSITE** <http://www.sws.org/North-Central-Chapter>