



Dear SWS Executive Board,

As you know, a Strategic Planning Committee (Committee) was convened in 2019 to review the 2015 to 2020 Strategic Plan and to create the 2020 to 2025 Plan. We are excited to present you with the attached plan that will further advance SWS and ensure that we provide maximum value to our members.

As part of the Plan revisions, the Committee did the following:

- Completed an extensive review and revision of the SWS mission and vision
- Articulated SWS's values and identified stakeholders
- Thoroughly reviewed the 2015 to 2020 plan to identify tasks that were completed and those that still need to be addressed
- Identified four priorities: Communication, Education and Research, Global Reach, and Membership
- Crafted objectives and action items under each priority

The Committee defined the action items under each objective using SMART Goals: creating actions that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. This makes it much easier to track the progress of the objectives. The Plan also includes suggestions for the responsible parties for each action item (e.g. Committees, Chapters, Sections, Executive Board, Board of Directors, etc.). The Committee suggests that the responsible parties engage with the Executive Board and with other appropriate Committees, Chapters, and Sections as necessary to complete the action items.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best Regards,

Scott Jecker (Chair)  
Leandra Cleveland  
Frank Day  
Andy Herb  
Kurt Philipp  
Matt Simpson  
Jen Brydges (Staff)

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025



## MISSION

To promote best practices in wetland research, education, conservation, preservation, restoration, and management.

## VISION

To ensure that wetlands are understood, their importance recognized, and sound wetland science is used as a guide for wetland professionals and the general public to collaborate on research, conservation, preservation, restoration, and management of wetlands in our changing environment.

## VALUES



### Diversity

Of backgrounds in the promotion of educational opportunities and exposure across all wetland professions

In ethnicity, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, and geography



### Credibility



### Integrity



### Sound Science



### Education

For our members, our communities, and the public



### Communication and Connection

To our members, our communities, and stakeholders

## STAKEHOLDERS

### General Public

- Landowners and land managers
- Policy makers, regulators, and government officials
- Indigenous peoples

- Partners (Ramsar, ASWM, CLRA, SER, CASS, SWS PCP, etc.)
- Non-profit organizations
- Public interest groups
- Educators

### Within the Society

- Students
- Academics and researchers
- Managers and practitioners
- Government agencies



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES



### Goal 1: Communication

Promote wetland science and stewardship so that wetlands are understood and their importance recognized.

- Promote the application of scientific knowledge to conservation, preservation, restoration, and management of wetlands
- Facilitate incorporation of the latest wetland science and management into policy
- Provide publications that include relevant and important emerging wetland science



### Goal 2: Education & Research

Foster high-quality wetland research and education opportunities for all stakeholders, support public awareness of wetlands, and provide support for education and outreach efforts.

- Support student research and involvement
- Provide diverse forums for basic and applied research
- Collaborate with educators to enhance wetland curricula and recognize excellence
- Provide relevant professional development and continuing education opportunities for stakeholders
- Facilitate fully inclusive participation of diverse people and wetland science through education



### Goal 3: Global Reach

Support advancements in wetland science and practice worldwide.

- Continue to develop the structure to expand globally
- Promote wetland science and practice through partnerships with stakeholders around the world
- Encourage worldwide representation in our publications and conferences
- Provide resources to members where there is limited support for wetland science



### Goal 4: Membership

Build and maintain one of the leading wetland science organizations in the world. Ensure that the growth and development of SWS are sustainable and inclusive of diverse backgrounds, ethnicity, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, and geography.

- Increase human diversity of membership
- Bolster membership by increasing visibility and ensuring value
- Maintain effective governance and operations
- Deliver high-quality Annual, Chapter, and Section meetings
- Develop and promote sponsorship programs to fund initiatives

## Goals and Objectives

### COMMUNICATION

Promote wetland science and stewardship so that the function and value of wetlands are understood and their importance recognized

OBJECTIVE 1	Promote the application of scientific knowledge to conservation, preservation, restoration, and management of wetlands
OBJECTIVE 2	Provide wetland science and management information for policy considerations
OBJECTIVE 3	Provide publications that include relevant and important emerging wetland science

### EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Foster high-quality wetland research and education opportunities for all stakeholders, support public awareness of wetlands, and provide support for education and outreach efforts

OBJECTIVE 1	Support student research and involvement
OBJECTIVE 2	Provide diverse forums for basic and applied research
OBJECTIVE 3	Collaborate with educators to enhance wetland curricula and recognize excellence
OBJECTIVE 4	Provide relevant professional development and continuing education opportunities for stakeholders
OBJECTIVE 5	Facilitate fully inclusive participation of diverse people in wetland science through education

### GLOBAL REACH

Support advancements in wetland science and practice worldwide

OBJECTIVE 1	Continue to develop the structure and value to expand globally
OBJECTIVE 2	Promote wetland science and practice through partnerships with stakeholders around the world
OBJECTIVE 3	Encourage worldwide representation in our publications and conferences
OBJECTIVE 4	Provide resources to members where there is limited support for wetland science

### MEMBERSHIP

Ensure that the growth and development of SWS are sustainable and inclusive of diverse backgrounds, ethnicity, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, and geography

OBJECTIVE 1	Increase human diversity of membership
OBJECTIVE 2	Bolster membership by increasing visibility and ensuring value
OBJECTIVE 3	Maintain effective governance and operations
OBJECTIVE 4	Deliver high-quality Annual, Chapter, and Section Meetings
OBJECTIVE 5	Develop and promote sponsorship programs to fund initiatives

## ACTION PLAN

### COMMUNICATION

Promote wetland science and stewardship so that wetlands are understood, and their importance recognized

Objectives	Action Items	Responsible Parties
<b>OBJECTIVE 1:</b>	<b>Promote the application of scientific knowledge to conservation, preservation, restoration, and management of wetlands</b>	
	1. Develop and publish at least one report on important wetland issues per year starting in 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Sections and Committees, as appropriate</li> <li>• Executive Board</li> </ul>
	2. Collaborate with the Education and Outreach Committee to add one program that reviews important wetland issues per year (see Education and Research Objective 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ramsar Section</li> <li>• Public Policy Section</li> </ul>
	3. Create a mechanism for members to identify their areas of expertise so that they may be invited to participate in different functions of the Society such as advisory or ad hoc committees, webinars, white papers, mentoring programs, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Board</li> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>
	4. Create Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document on how to talk to policy makers about wetland issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Policy Section</li> </ul>
	5. Explore the creation of a Marketing and Communications Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Board</li> </ul>
	6. Host an annual student competition for submissions of Wetlands of Distinction applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wetlands of Distinction</li> </ul>
	7. Promote Wetlands of Distinction to wetland ecology classes to encourage student submissions to the website and potential Wetland Science and Practice (WSP) articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wetlands of Distinction</li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 2:</b>	<b>Provide wetland science and management information for policy considerations</b>	
	1. Provide sound scientific advice/expertise for preparation of reports, comment letters on rulemaking, and legal proceedings related to policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Policy Section</li> <li>• Ramsar Section</li> </ul>
	2. Explore ways to integrate science into policy development, management, and decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Policy Section</li> <li>• Ramsar Section</li> </ul>
	3. Utilize WSP and the website to identify and discuss relevant wetland policy issues, new legislation, key court cases, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Policy Section</li> <li>• Publications Committee</li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 3:</b>	<b>Provide publications that include relevant and important emerging wetland science.</b>	
	1. Continue to promote WETLANDS and WSP, and find new ways to expand their reach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publications Committee</li> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>
	2. Grow readership for WETLANDS and WSP by 10 percent over the next five years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publications Committee</li> </ul>
	3. Increase and maintain the number of submissions to WETLANDS to over 400 per year, with 70% of those submissions being from outside of North America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publications Committee</li> </ul>
	4. Promote Wetlands of Distinction to secondary school educators for use in wetland science education and field trips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wetlands of Distinction</li> </ul>

## EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Foster high-quality wetland research and education opportunities for all stakeholders, support public awareness of wetlands, and provide support for education and outreach efforts

Objectives	Action Items	Responsible Parties
<b>OBJECTIVE 1:</b>	<b>Support student research and involvement</b>	
	1. Increase funds by at least 10 percent through grants and sponsorships to further develop the Student Grant Program by 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awards Committee</li> <li>• Ways &amp; Means Committee</li> </ul>
	2. Develop and provide at least one online workshop/training opportunity and one field workshop/training opportunity (other than those associated with the Annual Meeting) per year starting in 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education &amp; Outreach Committee</li> <li>• Student Section</li> </ul>
	3. Increase number of student presenters at the Annual Meeting by at least 10 percent each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapters</li> <li>• Local Organizing Committee</li> <li>• Sections</li> </ul>
	4. Increase the number of research grants from 12 to 15 within five years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awards Committee</li> <li>• Chapters</li> <li>• Sections</li> </ul>
	5. Increase the number and dollar amount of travel grants, and awards for posters and presentations for students by at least 5 percent each year through new sources of funding and Chapter/Section contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapters</li> <li>• Sections</li> <li>• Ways and Means Committee</li> </ul>
	6. Increase the number of Student Associations by at least one per year through campus promotions, faculty promotion, and other measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter leadership</li> <li>• Secretary General</li> </ul>
	7. Increase the number of Student Association members who are both enrolled at their respective universities and members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter leadership</li> <li>• Secretary General</li> <li>• Student Section</li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 2:</b>	<b>Provide diverse forums for basic and applied research</b>	
	1. Develop plans for virtual forums by 2021 (such as online meetings, webinars, Twitter conferences, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education &amp; Outreach Committee</li> </ul>
	2. Require Chairs of symposia to write a brief outline of the event and include talk title, abstract, and presenter information to be presented in WSP, website, social media, and/or newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Organizing Committee</li> <li>• Publications Committee</li> <li>• Sections</li> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 3:</b>	<b>Collaborate with educators to enhance wetland curricula and recognize excellence</b>	
	1. Investigate collecting and producing educational curricula online for general education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education &amp; Outreach Committee</li> <li>• Education Section</li> </ul>
	2. Create a Wetland Educator of the Year Award by 2021 to recognize excellence in wetland education activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Section</li> </ul>
	3. Encourage members to promote wetland science by attending educational science related events (ex. science fairs and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) events)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter and Section leadership</li> <li>• Education &amp; Outreach Committee</li> <li>• Education Section</li> <li>• Executive Board</li> </ul>

<b>OBJECTIVE 4:</b>	<b>Provide relevant professional development and continuing education opportunities for stakeholders</b>	
	1. Coordinate with another stakeholder or organization to develop one joint professional development opportunity per year starting in 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapters</li> <li>• Education Section and/or Committee</li> </ul>
	2. Develop and provide at least one online workshop/training opportunity per year starting in 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Section</li> <li>• Education &amp; Outreach Committee</li> </ul>
	3. Provide one webinar per month that qualifies for Professional Wetland Scientist (PWS) certification credit starting in 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education &amp; Outreach Committee</li> <li>• SWS Professional Certification Program (PCP) Representative</li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 5:</b>	<b>Facilitate fully inclusive participation of diverse people in wetland science through education</b>	
	1. Evaluate the possible establishment of Fellowships for undergraduate and graduate students, with special focus on underrepresented groups to provide exposure to wetland careers and foster interest in wetland science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education &amp; Outreach Committee</li> <li>• Human Diversity Committee</li> </ul>
	2. Market the job section of the website to underrepresented groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Diversity Committee</li> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>
	3. Create a formal mentoring program for past SWS Multicultural Mentoring Program (SWaMMP) participants by 2021 that provides post-meeting advice and maintains contact with the students following their meeting participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Diversity Committee</li> <li>• Student Section</li> </ul>
	4. Explore mechanisms, financial or otherwise, for involving non-US citizens and groups not considered underrepresented by National Science Foundation (NSF) in diversity programs such as SWaMMP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Diversity Committee</li> <li>• Student Section</li> </ul>

## GLOBAL REACH

Support advancements in wetland science and practice worldwide

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>
<b>OBJECTIVE 1:</b>	<b>Continue to develop the structure to expand globally</b>	
	1. Grow membership outside the US by at least 5 percent year over year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global Outreach Ad Hoc Committee</li> <li>• Membership Committee</li> <li>• Non-US Chapters</li> </ul>
	2. Ensure that all communications, publications, policies, and activities use “international language” and reference globally instead of US only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>
	3. Promote and develop at least one mutually beneficial strategic partnership per year with international organizations involved in wetland science, conservation, protection, restoration, management, or sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Board</li> </ul>
	4. Recognize a minimum of 25 Wetlands of Distinction outside of the US	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wetlands of Distinction</li> </ul>

<b>OBJECTIVE 2:</b>	<b>Promote wetland science and practice through partnerships with stakeholders around the world</b>	
	1. Continue to support and develop the Gratis Membership to provide free memberships to wetland scientists engaged in wetland research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global Outreach Ad Hoc Committee</li> <li>• Membership Committee</li> <li>• Non-US Chapters</li> </ul>
	2. Continue to develop Affiliated Societies and engage in Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) to promote the exchange of scientific information with members of other wetland societies in developing countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Board</li> </ul>
	3. Work with universities and government agencies in developing countries to ensure that WETLANDS is affordable for the local wetland community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-US Chapters</li> <li>• Publications Committee</li> </ul>
	4. Provide expert support upon request from educational institutions in developing countries on wetland science curricula, as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education &amp; Outreach Committee</li> <li>• Education Section</li> <li>• Ramsar Section</li> <li>• Other Sections as per expertise</li> </ul>
	5. Provide expert support upon request from intergovernmental agencies, conventions, etc. with particular focus on supporting the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ramsar Section</li> </ul>
	6. Provide expert support upon request to regulatory agencies in developing countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ramsar Section</li> <li>• Non-US Chapters</li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 3:</b>	<b>Encourage worldwide representation in our publications and conferences</b>	
	1. Host the annual meeting outside the US every three years, starting with Taiwan in 2024 and consider co-hosting with other international organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Board</li> <li>• Future Meetings Committee</li> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>
	2. Develop and maintain a list of volunteers who will assist members not proficient in English in publishing papers in journals written in English, particularly WETLANDS and SWS Research Briefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publications Committee</li> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>
	3. Each year, identify up to three meetings (more if appropriate and financially viable) outside of the US for Executive Board members to attend, present, and promote SWS. Earmark budget for attendance at these meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Board</li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 4:</b>	<b>Provide resources to members where there is limited support for wetland science</b>	
	1. Create online access for members in developing countries to download applications, instructions for Sponsored Membership, and other beneficial documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>



## MEMBERSHIP

Ensure that the growth and development of SWS are sustainable and inclusive of diverse backgrounds, ethnicity, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, and geography

Objectives	Action Items	Responsible Parties
<b>OBJECTIVE 1:</b>	<b>Increase human diversity of membership</b>	
	1. Solicit involvement of members of underrepresented groups in local, regional, and international SWS meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Directors</li> <li>• Human Diversity Committee</li> </ul>
	2. Market student funding programs, including SWaMMP and SWS Student Grants via web-based media, WETLANDS, WSP, and personal contact with university and college professors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education &amp; Outreach Committee</li> <li>• Education Section</li> <li>• Human Diversity Committee</li> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Student Section</li> </ul>
	3. Establish at least two working relationships per year with faculty members at institutions that serve underrepresented groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Board</li> <li>• Human Diversity Committee</li> </ul>
	4. Establish promotional and recruiting activities for at least one non-SWS conference venue per year that targets multicultural diversity in wetland science, ecology, agriculture, or the environment (e.g., Ecological Society of America, Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Diversity Committee</li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 2:</b>	<b>Bolster membership by increasing visibility and ensuring value</b>	
	1. Provide electronic promotional materials for use by Chapters, Sections, Committees, and other members of the Board of Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>
	2. Utilize web-based media to provide additional value for members and the general public that are unable to attend the Annual Meeting and explore creating a committee to ensure media usage is consistent and relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future Meetings Committee</li> <li>• Local Organizing Committee</li> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>
	3. Survey the membership every three years for feedback on the value of membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership Committee</li> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>
	4. Provide marketing materials to participants at the Annual Meeting to promote member benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>
	5. Develop a platform to create and offer merchandise that members can purchase and distribute (review annually)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Board</li> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 3:</b>	<b>Maintain effective governance and operations</b>	
	1. By the 2021 Annual Meeting, determine what funding mechanisms would support hiring an Executive Director so that the Board of Directors may make a decision during the 2021 Annual Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Board</li> <li>• Ways and Means Committee</li> </ul>
	2. Analyze the governance structure, size of the Board, and operational efficiency every five years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Directors</li> <li>• Ways and Means Committee</li> </ul>
	3. Evaluate business management services, publication contract, and other vendor contracts at least one year prior to renewal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Directors</li> <li>• Executive Board</li> <li>• Publications Committee</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ways and Means</li> </ul>
	4. Review investment portfolios and assess current and future fiscal needs on an annual basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Board</li> <li>• Ways and Means Committee</li> </ul>
	5. Create a strong onboarding process that provides all governance documents, including the Strategic Plan, for new Board of Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• President</li> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>
	6. Review the Strategic Plan (including all action items) annually in a special session of the Board of Directors. Regular monitoring summary to be produced and included within each Board of Directors Meeting Packet. All Chapters, Sections, and Committees must submit reports ahead of all Board meetings, noting progress against the Strategic Plan so that the summary can be produced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Directors</li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 4:</b>	<b>Deliver high-quality Annual, Chapter, and Section Meetings</b>	
	1. Ensure a virtual component to every meeting (at least one symposium and one keynote speaker)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future Meetings Committee</li> <li>• Local Organizing Committee</li> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>
	2. Within a month of the Annual, Chapter, or Section meetings, the local planning committee and/or business office will update the “Lessons Learned” and “Meeting Planning Process” documents and share with the new local planning committee/Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future Meetings Committee</li> <li>• Local Organizing Committee</li> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>
	3. Review conference agreements and complete a financial risk assessment before and after a meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Board</li> <li>• Ways and Means Committee</li> </ul>
	4. When meetings are held with another organization, ensure that MOUs are written clearly outlining the partnership and who assumes what gain and what risk. Prior to signing, all documents should be examined by our attorney.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Board</li> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 5:</b>	<b>Develop and promote sponsorship programs to fund initiatives</b>	
	1. As part of the annual budgeting process, review programs and projects to be funded through sponsorship and prioritize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Directors</li> <li>• Executive Board</li> <li>• Ways and Means Committee</li> </ul>
	2. Develop funding proposals, marketing information for agreed sponsorship lists, and approach funders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Board</li> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>
	3. Consider creating a Fundraising/Sponsorship Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Board</li> </ul>