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## Association of State Wetland Managers Strategic Plan 2018-2022

Association of State Wetland Managers

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## ASSOCIATION OF STATE WETLAND MANAGERS (ASWM) STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2022

ASWM Board Approved on 1-10-18

### **Mission:**

The ASWM mission is to promote the protection and restoration of wetlands and related aquatic resources, to apply sound science to wetland management and policy, and to provide training, education and capacity building for our members and the public.

### **2022 Vision**

While ASWM does not propose specific actions beyond the 2022 horizon, near-term actions will be undertaken with awareness of long-term vision for wetland protection and management. In 2022, the nation will celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the federal Clean Water Act. ASWM recognizes the continued advancement of wetland science, improvement of wetland tools and techniques, increased cooperation among water agencies, organizations and disciplines, and ongoing education of the public regarding the economic and ecological values of wetlands. ASWM envisions a future where there is:

- Greater appreciation for the benefits wetlands bring to our lives
- A net increase in the quantity and quality of the nation's wetlands, reversing over 100 years of wetland loss
- Increased ability to evaluate, value and protect the ecological services provided by wetlands
- Greater clarity, consistency, and interagency coordination of regulatory programs

Progress in adapting the management of wetlands to increase resiliency to climate change including increased temperature, changing hydrology, severe weather events and sea level rise.

**Goals:** The strategic plan includes these goals:

- A. To be a recognized leader in supporting and promoting science-based wetlands conservation, protection and management, and to ensure that state and tribal programs are fully integrated into national wetland policy.
- B. To build the capacity of wetland managers and public officials at all levels of government to participate in wetland policy development and to build strong, science-based wetland programs.
- C. To educate wetland managers, public officials, and others with regard to current wetland science, policy, comprehensive management, and the use of new technologies and techniques for wetland planning, assessment, restoration, mitigation and program implementation.
- D. To more fully integrate wetlands into broader water programs including water quality protection, flood protection, safe drinking water, natural water infrastructure, fish and wildlife management, watershed management, management for severe weather events, climate change adaptation, and ecosystem-based planning.

E. To sustain an active and growing membership.

F. To be fiscally competent and administratively responsible.

**Goal A: To be a recognized leader in advocating for science-based wetlands conservation, protection and management, and to ensure that state and tribal programs are fully integrated into national wetland policy.**

Activities to achieve Goal A:

- Identify priority needs for wetland research and applied science.
- Conduct science and management studies and publish results online. Such studies will continue to address a broad range of timely subjects such as wetlands and natural hazards (e.g., flooding), wetland restoration, stream restoration, sustainable wetland capacity for water quality improvement, and wetlands and climate change.
- Publish reports on new wetland management methods and technology and provide review drafts and final documents online.
- Increase the reach of *Wetland Breaking News*.
- Make wetland science information available on our website and organize it by management or policy issue.
- Encourage the exchange of information among wetland scientists, managers, and policy makers through the formation of ad hoc committees or workgroups to investigate priority issues and to report on current research and development.
- Conduct open forums, workshops, webinars, conference calls, discussion boards and symposia to provide opportunities for wetland scientists and wetland managers as well as other resource professionals to share information and integrate sound science into management and regulatory programs.
- Coordinate policy discussions with other state and professional associations/organizations, including Association of Clean Water Administrators (ACWA), Environmental Council of the States (ECOS), Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM), Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), and others (e.g. Society of Wetland Scientists, Restore America's Estuaries, American Institute of Biological Sciences, etc.).

**Goal B: To build the capacity of wetland managers and public officials at all levels of government to participate in wetland policy and regulatory development and to build strong, efficient, predictable, scientifically- and legally-defensible wetland programs.**

Activities to achieve Goal B:

- Provide direct technical assistance to states, tribes and others requesting our assistance.
- Analyze the implications of proposed policy changes on wetland resources from a variety of perspectives, including primarily ecological, but also economic and organizational, and provide a summary of findings in a plain English format to help assist and inform decision-makers. Likewise, analyze the implications of proposed policy changes from a legal and management perspective and provide a plain English analysis to help assist and inform scientists and resource managers.

- Respond appropriately, effectively and promptly to immediate and significant issues (such as proposed federal wetland program changes or legal decisions) as they arise. The Executive Director will communicate with the Board as appropriate on these issues to reach a rapid consensus on a recommended response.
- Distribute information to wetland managers and others.
- Support the practical implementation of state and tribal programs, recognizing the multiple issues facing many program managers. Provide assistance both for programs that are focused on a primary issue (such as restoration or regulation), and those that have a mandate to manage wetland resources in a comprehensive manner – and that must therefore consider the relationships between multiple program areas and competing stakeholder needs.
- Host forums for sharing information.
- Identify wetland program and policy development issues that have strategic importance for the Association. Issues may be identified by the Executive Director, the Board, or individual members; the Board and the Executive Director will define priorities for the Association and agree on appropriate actions. Members representing a range of geographic and programmatic interests will be involved in follow-up actions.
- Actively pursue partnerships with federal agencies, tribes, states, nonprofit organizations, the regulated community and other organizations and interest groups.
- Support the integration of floodplain and wetland management.
- Support wetland mapping efforts nationwide and make tools readily available to states and tribes.
- Prepare analyses of important legal, science and policy issues in partnership with other organizations, e.g., state nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, scientific organizations, law schools, etc.
- Support state/tribal review of reissuance of COE Nationwide permits, and similar recurring issues.
- Hold online discussions, conference calls, webinars, training seminars, workshops and symposia pertaining to a broad range of topics.
- As approved by the Board, provide formal comments to the public record on proposed rules, guidance, and other policies and programs and participate in the preparation of amicus briefs.

**Goal C: To educate wetland managers, public officials, and others with regard to current wetland science, policy, comprehensive management, and the use of new technologies and techniques for wetland planning, assessment, restoration, mitigation and program implementation.**

Activities to achieve Goal C:

- Increase the availability of wetland information to members and others, including providing online learning opportunities, including webinars, online training, forums and other opportunities for interested parties to share information and discuss solutions to current issues.
- Consider potentially more effective methods of compiling or digesting citations of interest from peer-reviewed and/or grey literature for members.

- Identify key partners, describe the purpose(s) of partnering with them and formalize relationships with them.
- Respond in a tangible and appropriate manner – e.g., through development of fact sheets or issue papers, formation of workgroups, webinars, or development of ASWM recommendations – to new or ongoing wetland management issues. These include but are not limited to
  - Section 404 Assumption
  - State Programmatic General Permits
  - Section 401 Certification
  - Significant legal decisions related to the scope of Clean Water Act jurisdiction or to other issues affecting state and tribal wetland regulation
  - Wetland and stream restoration and mitigation
  - Renewal of Corps Nationwide Permits
  - Wetland ecological services including economic evaluation
  - Wetland mapping
  - Wetland and water quality standards
  - Wetlands and climate change, including sea level rise, severe weather events, and other climate change adaptation measures
  - Invasive species
  - New issues as they arise

To meet these needs, ASWM will **continue to**:

- Publish *Wetland Breaking News* on a monthly basis Develop a series of web-based information pages, fact sheets and FAQs on identified strategic and significant issues
- Organize monthly webinars on technical wetland issues to provide training and continuing education for members and others
- Conduct an annual tribal-state-federal meeting
- Conduct an annual membership meeting

**Goal D: To integrate wetlands into broader water programs including water quality protection, flood protection, safe drinking water, wildlife management, watershed management, climate change adaptation and ecosystem-based planning.**

Activities to Achieve Goal D:

- Identify opportunities to integrate wetlands with other water quality, water quantity, floodplain management, and biodiversity-focused programs.
- Identify specific program and science areas where there are opportunities to integrate wetlands into related and/or larger programs, and disseminate that information.

- Consider wetland and water management issues through the lens of climate change, severe weather events, and adaptation needs.
- Identify links between stream and wetland management – in particular in state dredge and fill programs – and support improved and coordinated wetland and stream protection and restoration/mitigation in this context.
- Develop materials and host forums to share information about joint opportunities and common interests.
- Participate in forums, workshops, conferences and webinars hosted by other water programs and organizations.
- Maintain existing partnerships and establish new partnerships with organizations working on related but not wetland-specific activities.
- Identify opportunities to change and revise public policy and programs to better integrate wetlands with other water programs.
- Hold meetings, webinars, conference calls, etc. to explore, share and better understand issues and challenges. Provide wetlands program information at cross-discipline meetings and conferences.
- Develop and distribute information online and through other avenues to provide ideas and direction on how to include wetlands in related and broader programs.
- Develop joint policy statements or science white papers with related organizations and programs on wetland/water program issues and opportunities.

**Goal E: To sustain an active and growing membership.**

Activities to achieve Goal E:

- Have a systematic plan to recruit and retain members. Identify opportunities and implement efforts to build ASWM membership.
- Provide meaningful opportunities and services to our members such that they value their membership, including training through a professional webinar series.
- Provide special services for members, including provision of *Insider's Edition* via e-mail, and member only access to some web material. (Update with larger list, including free certificates)
- Publish a bimonthly newsletter for members (6 issues per year).
- Develop an online bulletin board that will allow members to address questions to the wetland community at large, and that will support discussions among wetland managers.
- Have a process for encouraging, recruiting, preparing, mentoring and honoring members actively participating in the Association.
- Have an annual membership drive and analyze the results. Retain 90% of current members.
- Have state agency membership in 50 states.
- Provide our members with an annual report.

**Goal F: To be a fiscally competent and administratively responsible organization and have the financial resources to assure ASWM's ongoing and future operations.**

**Tasks for achieving Goal F:**

ASWM will continue to have in place:

- A written fiscal policy and financial guidelines and procedures for staff and officers to ensure income and expenses are tracked accurately.
- An active fundraising program,, including a written fundraising plan, to guide ongoing fundraising efforts. The plan seeks to draw income from diversified sources - foundations, government, individual contributions, memberships, businesses, workshops and other earned income.
- A current annual and upcoming work plan that is reviewed and approved at each March Board meeting. The Secretary/Treasurer is actively involved in oversight of finances and provides the Board with quarterly reports on aggregated income and expenses. The Board approves the annual budget.
- Develop an attractive, professional funding request package to be used in soliciting support for the association.
- Actively utilize our website to request support for Association activities. (Note: For example this could include securing corporate sponsors for "Wetland Breaking News.")

**Approved by ASWM Board on January 10, 2018.**