Association of State Wetland Managers Annual Report 2011

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Association of State Wetland Managers, Inc.

Annual Report 2011
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.

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

- Edward Abbey

Photos contributed by Peg Bostwick, Hal Bryson, Jeanne Christie, Todd Harless, Josh Hemrick, Zack Mondry and Leah Stetson.
History tells us that the 1960s were turbulent times in America. While we often associate this turbulence with cultural conflicts, the condition of our waters was no less conflicted. Estimates from this time revealed that over 60% of our waters were unsafe. Untreated sewerage was often dumped into our rivers and coastal waters, and in 1969, the Cuyahoga River near Cleveland, Ohio, burned. Against this backdrop, Congress passed legislation in 1972 to reduce and prevent pollution from entering our waterways. The Clean Water Act was enacted to reduce pollution and protect health and habitat for all to enjoy – human and animal alike. 2012 is an auspicious year for those of us interested in water resources and wetland issues.

The Association of State Wetland Managers is celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Clean Water Act by promoting its Wetlandkeepers campaign. Bridging the gap between wetland science and policy, the Wetlandkeepers initiative cultivates a wetland ethic – much like Aldo Leopold’s concept of “land ethic” – designed to protect wetlands in a watershed context, to support wetland managers in their conservation and management goals, and to identify adaptive strategies to mitigate the effects of climate change. Our work did not begin, nor does it end, here.

During the past year, the Association has collaborated with the Environmental Council of States (ECOS) to publish a handbook for states and tribes on the requirements for Section 404 Assumption; continued to engage federal agencies in policy issues and projects; provided a forum for stakeholders to share information on Clean Water Act jurisdiction and guidance in light of several court cases; continued to work with policy makers, scientists, and citizens to develop fair and reasonable wetland policies that are underlain by good science; joined with other nonprofit and private organizations, government agencies and individuals to establish the Natural Floodplain Function Alliance (NFFA) and Wetland Mapping Consortium (WMC); increased our capacity with an updated website; monitored, analyzed, and reported on state and federal legislation development; continued support at various levels on the effects of sea level rise and wetlands; and all the while continued to bring you – our members, stakeholders, colleagues and friends—our monthly e-zine Wetland Breaking News.

None of these accomplishments would be possible without the vision and tireless efforts of our dedicated staff. Led by Executive Director Jeanne Christie, the operational and financial health of the Association is very strong. As belts have tightened across all business, government, nonprofit, and industry sectors, Jeanne and the Association staff continue to produce valuable workshops, complete important projects, collaborate and anticipate areas for needed work in the future. In 2011, the Association opened our Great Lakes Office in Michigan, and tapped the experience of former Michigan wetland manager and past Association chair, Peg Bostwick, to lead that office. As you peruse this report, remember that, since 1983, the Association of State Wetland Managers has strived to promote the application of sound science to wetland management efforts.

With kindest regards,

Dave Davis, Board Chair
Message from the Executive Director

Dear Reader,

Wetland professionals already know that, ‘If you want a comfortable job, don’t work in wetlands’ or stated otherwise, this way there be dragons. However, if you thrive on constant challenge, high learning curves, new discoveries and tortuous public policy, then a profession in the field of wetlands is where you belong. You are a Wetlandkeeper.

While some folks might wonder what the attraction is, those of us who work in wetlands know it’s because this area of public policy is so important and so difficult. Often there is no easy way to balance individual and public interests in water resources. At the same time there is nothing more vital. Healthy wetlands are of enormous importance to our overall social and economic well-being. They ensure clean drinking water, abundant wildlife, protection from floods and hurricanes and economic security for millions of Americans. But when times are hard there are always efforts to weaken programs that protect wetlands and other natural resources. That is certainly true now.

After years of steady progress reducing the loss of wetlands and developing scientifically sound ways to restore and manage these resources, wetlands are under attack. Economic uncertainty has led to the introduction of legislation at the federal and state level that will weaken existing wetland protection and reduce funding for voluntary programs. The choices in front of Congress and state legislatures will have consequences for both current and future generations. They merit our attention and balanced public debate.

This is why the Association’s mission has always been to advocate for using sound science to develop and inform public policy around wetlands. It can be an important tool in finding an appropriate balance. Also essential is making information about wetlands readily available to everyone and keeping people informed about what’s happening nearby and around the country.

To be honest, a lot of the work we do sounds dull: writing reports, developing webpages, hosting webinars and organizing coalitions to share information. But don’t be deceived. It’s all for the people who depend on our services. These are the tools they need to understand the issues and negotiate a balanced approach. We’re proud to do the work we do because we are inspired by the people we serve: the Wetlandkeepers.

Thank you,

Jeanne Christie, Executive Director
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Those who dwell among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life.
~Rachel Carson
In 2011 ASWM projects were supported by the McKnight Foundation, the Orchard Foundation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality 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.
Wetlands are crucial to healthy watersheds and clean water. They provide nurseries, food, pollution prevention and flood control. It is essential to protect and manage these resources to enhance the well-being of both human and natural communities. Sadly we have lost half of the wetlands in the lower 48 states over the past 200 years and more are threatened. The purpose of the Association of State Wetland Managers is to provide tools and resources to the people on the ground who protect, conserve and manage wetlands. We call these people Wetlandkeepers. They wear a variety of hats – from wetland scientists to environmental regulators. They work in state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations including academic and conservation entities, as well as private, nongovernmental and green business partners. ASWM is dedicated to finding ways to help all of them. During 2011 the Association of State Wetland Managers accomplished a number of tasks to arm Wetlandkeepers with the information they need to do their job.

Take, for example, climate change. For many years ASWM has been thinking outside the box by looking closely at adaptation for water resources and carbon sequestration in wetlands, rather than solely at mitigating greenhouse gases. In 2011, the Association developed new online resources with a focus on climate change adaptation.

Another important project has been to develop model language to help states and tribes develop water quality standards specifically for wetlands. Wetlands are not like other waters and not easily adapted to conventional numerical standards for chemicals, dissolved oxygen and pH. It is this kind of specialized work – finding ways to use science and sound public policy to deliver products that are nationally relevant to Wetlandkeepers – that is unique to ASWM.

Throughout 2011, the Association kept its finger on the pulse of wetland science and policy – but also responded to unforeseen events, including the Mississippi River floods with a new webpage under its Watersheds program. As always, ASWM communicated its message through multi-media, including Wetland Breaking News, regional workshops, webinars, its blog and webpages. Working with federal, state, tribal and nongovernmental partners, ASWM strengthened its collaborative relationships to further its mission to promote the inclusion of sound science into public policy.

Three of ASWM’s special projects and some of its collaborations from 2011 are featured on the forthcoming pages of this report. At ASWM, our goal is to find solutions to the challenges that occur at the intersection of science and public policy.
As part of a multi-faceted project, and with critical support from grants from the McKnight Foundation and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, ASWM developed information and analysis about climate change impacts to wetlands and water resources, and provided training and information to states, tribes and local government as well as the broader public on monitoring, restoring and protecting wetlands to adapt to climate change. ASWM achieved a number of goals in 2011 under its climate change program. For instance, the Association created new webpages with sea level rise tools and adaptation planning tools, and co-authored a report with the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies on “Reducing Climate Change Impacts and Promoting Fish & Wildlife” in 2011.

ASWM also endorsed and supported the concept of sequestering carbon in wetlands to mitigate for climate change. ASWM participated in numerous conference calls, webinars, workshop and other forums to share information about climate change.

ASWM’s webpage on climate change has grown to include pages devoted to wetlands and 1) sea level rise 2) carbon sequestration and 3) adaptation.

One of the facets to ASWM’s climate change program involved a status report and dynamic webpage with state summaries of climate change adaptation planning efforts related to wetlands and water resources in the U.S.

ASWM gathered information about wetlands and climate change activities in the 50 states and created a new webpage with state by state summaries of climate change activities related to wetlands. This was a pioneer effort on behalf of the states to assess the current state of climate change adaptation efforts for wetlands and water resources throughout the U.S.

Although the project was published in 2011, it will be continually updated as states develop climate change adaptation planning for wetlands and water resources.

p. 3, ASWM Annual Report 2011
Advancing Environmental Advocacy for Wetlands/Aquatic Resources through State Legislators

The Association of State Wetland Managers was awarded a grant by the Orchard Foundation to encourage state legislators to support legislation to protect wetlands by providing them with the resources to 1) understand wetlands and wetland programs, 2) engage successfully in initiatives to block legislation that would weaken state wetland protections and 3) introduce and pass legislation that would strengthen wetlands protection. ASWM collaborated with the National Conference of State Legislatures to develop reports and web materials for both organizations. ASWM also coordinated with the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators (NCEL) to assist and support its members in 2011.

In early 2011 ASWM encouraged communication between state legislators and wetland professionals by inviting Rep. Rick Hansen of the Minnesota House of Representatives to talk about how state wetland program managers could work effectively with state legislators at its annual State/Federal Coordination workshop. On ASWM’s new website, there is a new section: “I am a Legislator.” The information on this webpage has been compiled specifically to assist State legislators and their staff in understanding some of the most common public questions and policy issues related to wetlands.

State legislators are interested in understanding changing federal policy that affects wetland programs. In 2011 ASWM hosted a conference call with interested members of NCEL to learn about the draft joint Clean Water Act jurisdiction guidance. Executive Director Jeanne Christie spoke at NCEL’s conference for Mississippi River states in the fall. Throughout the spring of 2011, ASWM responded to queries from state wetland managers for assistance in explaining how other states run wetland programs in order to answer questions posed by their state legislators in consideration of changing or altering wetland programs. ASWM anticipates that state legislators and their staff will find the information made available to them highly useful in the years ahead.

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Clean Water Act §404 Assumption — A Handbook for States & Tribes

Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act defines a permitting program for dredge and fill activities in wetlands and other waters of the United States. Section 404 also establishes the requirements a state or tribe must meet to administer its own permit program to regulate these activities in place of the federal program for most nontidal waters, given approval from the EPA. In 2010, the Association of State Wetland Managers and the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) convened a national workgroup to facilitate state and tribal “assumption” of the Section 404 Program. The work group was comprised of representatives from states that have conducted in-depth investigations on 404 assumption in the past, or have assumed the 404 program (Michigan and New Jersey), as well as experts from EPA.

The work group made recommendations to EPA on how to further clarify and improve the assumption application process for states and tribes with comprehensive wetlands protection programs.

Throughout the first half of 2011, ASWM worked on developing a handbook on State Assumption, a product of the 2010-2011 workgroup. The handbook is intended to provide concise information to states and tribes interested in 404 program assumption. It describes how a state or tribal 404 program operates, the basic legal requirements for program assumption, and the process of applying, including submitting a complete application to EPA for program approval.
New Features

ASWM launched a newly re-organized website and developed many new webpages in 2011. Since the Association launched its improved website, aswm.org received more visitors who have stayed on the website longer and explored more webpages. Excluding the homepage, the most popular parts of the new website are the News section, including the Wetland Jobs board, and the blog “The Compleat Wetlander,” with roughly 60% of visitors then continuing to the special topic webpages with information about wetland science and policy issues. Before ASWM launched the new website, a user might have spent (on average) a matter of seconds; since the new improved website was launched in April, the average time spent on the aswm.org site is now three minutes. During a given month in 2011, nearly 4,000 different users visited ASWM’s website— that’s about 5,000 actual visits to aswm.org on a monthly basis. Part of what makes ASWM’s website valuable to users is that by optimizing the new website so that it appears in more Internet searches, more people looking for wetlands information are finding the ASWM website and utilizing its web resources. It is updated on a weekly basis with new and relevant content. Some of the new features and webpages that were added in 2011 are described below.

I am a Legislator, I am an Educator, I am a Concerned Citizen, I am a Landowner:
Information on these webpages targets a selected audience concerned with wetland issues.

Water Quality Standards for Wetlands: A series of papers and web resources on developing state and tribal water quality standards for wetlands.

Floods & Natural Hazards: Information and recent reports about floods, floodplains and the importance of natural resources in integrating natural hazard damage to human health and property. In addition, there is a new webpage on the Mississippi River Flood events of 2011 and related wetland issues.

Clean Water Act Guidance: The latest information on the draft joint federal guidance that was released in spring 2011. ASWM facilitated a coalition of organizations that submitted a comment letter on the draft guidance. Other new webpages highlight CWA-jurisdiction issues related to wetlands.

Climate Change: The latest tools, reports and resources on Sea Level Rise, Adaptation and Carbon Sequestration. A weekly Climate Change Feature is also highlighted on the Climate Change portions of the website and included in the weekly Insider’s Edition.

Major News topics from “Wetland Breaking News” are organized by topic under ASWM’s “News” and “WBN” homepages. It includes news on the Gulf oil spill, Farm Bill, agricultural-related wetlands issues and mitigation plus job postings, webcasts, etc. In particular, the Wetland Jobs board, has been highly valued by members, readers and users of the ASWM website.

p. 5, ASWM Annual Report 2011
**Wetland Bookshelf:** Features wetland-related books in several genres. The latest “Recommended Reading” is featured on the ASWM blog bi-monthly.

**Twitter:** ASWM joined Twitter in 2011. The Association’s “Wetland Breaking News” Editor posts news, blog posts and updates as @StrangeWetlands on Twitter.

**The Compleat Wetlander:** ASWM’s top-ranking blog included unique weekly content. There were over 60 original blog posts for “The Compleat Wetlander” and “Strange Wetlands” combined in 2011. The Compleat Wetlander blog offered analysis about wetland science and policy topics, such as “Rulemaking to Clarify Clean Water Act Jurisdiction,” “Status & Trends: No Net Loss of Wetlands,” “Rethinking Floods,” “Wetland Mapping Training,” “Climate Change Adaptation,” and “Wetlands of the Great Lakes.”

A weekly feature on the blog, Strange Wetlands presented a quirky, human interest perspective on stories about wetlands, such as “Wetlands as Classrooms,” “Beneficial Uses of Dredged Material,” “Sea Turtle Conservation History,” “Prairie Pothole Protection,” and the “Gastropods that Restore Us.” In addition, the blog featured wetland poetry, other good wetland and water resources-related blogs and recommended reading.
Collaborations

Wetland Mapping Consortium

The Association of State Wetland Managers is a founding member of the Wetland Mapping Consortium (WMC), an interdisciplinary group of wetland scientists, mappers and wetland managers interested in mapping and monitoring wetlands with remotely sensed images and/or using the resultant products to better manage wetland resources. ASWM partnered with Virginia Tech to form the Consortium. The main goal of the WMC—Enhancing Wetland Conservation through Improved Mapping and Monitoring—is attained through the Consortium’s collaborative approach.

The ability to map and monitor wetland extent and the fundamental drivers of wetland function is evolving rapidly. Enhanced communication amongst and between scientists, mappers and managers is necessary to improve the awareness of new remote sensing tools and techniques capable of solving many of our most intractable wetland management challenges. A collective approach to communication will prevent duplication of funded research efforts and allow the leveraging of resources and expertise to protect and manage more wetlands. Cooperative, synergistic, interdisciplinary research funding proposals and projects may be initiated that overcome limitations at a single institution or agency.

Members of the Wetland Mapping Consortium include a number of work groups:

- Wetlands Mapping Standard Workgroup (WMSWG)
- Wetlands Classification Standard Maintenance Working Group (WCSMWG)
- Coastal and Marine Ecological Classification Standard Working Group (CMECS)
- Southeast Wetland Workgroup (SEWWG)

The long-term goal of the WMC is to improve the management of wetland resources through enhanced wetland mapping and monitoring, ultimately resulting in increased conservation of wetlands, the enhanced delivery of wetland ecosystem services through the evaluation of wetland sites and the dissemination of this information to natural resource managers.

p. 7, ASWM Annual Report 2011
ASWM is a founding member of the Natural Floodplain Function Alliance (NFFA), 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. As a member of the NFFA Steering Committee, the Association of State Wetland Managers provides a webpage, which hosts the collective work and contributions of NFFA member organizations. NFFA was established to “promote, protect, and enhance the protection, restoration, and management of natural floodplain resources.” Members share information and may elect to coordinate actions on issues of interest, but the Natural Floodplain Function Alliance does not take formal positions on matters of national policy, guidance or legislation.

To support the work of the Natural Floodplain Function Alliance ASWM wrote and published “Assessing the Natural and Beneficial Functions of Floodplains” by Dr. Jon Kusler. This publication provides alliance members as well as federal, state and local floodplain management staff, water planners, wetland managers and others with information to assess, protect and restore floodplain “natural and beneficial functions.” More specifically it:

1. Identified and explored user needs for assessment of the natural and beneficial functions.
2. Described selected wetland and floodplain methods and techniques which have been developed to assess such functions and values.
3. Described some “lessons learned” with regard to the application of these techniques.
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

State Wetland Managers in 50 states. In addition, ASWM has members in 48 states and 11 tribes.

State Associations & Organizations

Environmental Council to the States
Association of State Floodplain Managers
Association of Clean Water Administrators (ACWA)
National Association of State Foresters
Coastal States Organization
Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies
Groundwater Protection Council

Water Resources Science, Law, Academic & Environmental Organizations

River Network
Michigan Wetlands Association
American Rivers
McKnight Foundation
National Caucus of Environmental Legislators
Society of Wetland Scientists
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
National Wildlife Federation
Environmental Law Institute
Orchard Foundation
The Wetland Conservancy
St. Mary’s University of Minnesota
Ducks Unlimited
Virginia Tech
Oregon State University
University of North Carolina
    Environmental Finance Center
Society of Wetland Scientists Professional Certification Program
Muskie School of Public Service
    (University of Southern Maine)
Ramsar U.S.
Federal agencies
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
New Publications in 2011

Section 401 Certification Best Practices in Dredge and Fill Permit Programs. A report on the characteristics and best practices used by states in implementing Section 401 certification programs based on case studies of 11 state programs.

2010 Wetland Mapping Summary. A report on the status of state wetland mapping efforts throughout the U.S. This report included webpages with state profiles showing the extent and age of current wetland maps and the status of new mapping efforts in the states that participated in the study.

State Wetland Climate Change Adaptation Summaries. ASWM published a report on activities underway in state wetland programs to anticipate and adapt to climate change. This included state profiles for each state that participated in the study.

CWA Section 404 Program Assumption: A Handbook for States and Tribes. In 2010, ASWM and the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) convened a national workgroup to facilitate state and tribal “assumption” of the Section 404 Program. This handbook is a product of that workgroup. It is intended to provide concise information to states and tribes interested in Section 404 program assumption about the basic legal requirements for program assumption, and the process of applying, including submitting a complete application to EPA for program approval.

Section 401 Certification: Case Studies of State Programs. ASWM published case studies of Section 401 Certification programs in 11 states highlighting successful approaches to using the states’ 401 certification authority under the Clean Water Act.

Water Quality Standards for Wetlands Series:

Part I: State Water Quality Standards for Wetlands. This paper addresses the adoption of state water quality standards for wetlands under the Clean Water Act.

Part II: Total Maximal Daily Loads (TMDLs) and Wetlands. This paper addresses the question of what state and federal requirements have been set for applying Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) to wetlands.

Part III: Implications and Management Options for Wetlands that Fail to Meet “Designated Use” Criteria. This paper addresses the implications and state management options for wetlands that are listed on a state Clean Water Act 303(d) list of impaired waters.

Part IV: How Wetlands Differ from Traditional Waters: What this Means to Wetland Water Quality Standards. This paper makes recommendations based on “lessons learned” from 14 states that adopted wetland water quality standards.

Assessing the Natural and Beneficial Functions of Floodplains
By Jon Kusler, Esq. Ph.D. This substantial report was prepared to help federal, state, and local floodplain management staff, water planners, wetland managers and others assess, protect and restore floodplain “natural and beneficial” functions.

ASWM Annual Report 2011, p. 10
State/Federal Coordination Workshop

ASWM State/Federal Coordination Workshop was held on March 22-24, 2011 in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The state/federal coordination symposium organized by the Association of State Wetland Managers covered important revisions in federal and state wetland policy. Topics included Clean Water Act jurisdiction, reissuance of the Nationwide permits, wetland mapping, water quality standards for wetlands, adapting to climate change, mitigation, floodplain management and developing state/tribal wetland program plans. There were approximately 83 speakers and participants. An additional 41 people participated in some of the sessions remotely via webinar.

Preserving & Restoring Floodplain Natural Functions: Informing Assessment and Policy Efforts

The Association of State Wetland Managers is a founding member of the Natural Floodplain Function Alliance (NFFA). The Alliance is an affiliation of federal agencies, professional and nonprofit organizations, and individuals who are dedicated to the protection and preservation of the natural functions of floodplains, which includes coastal areas. As a member of the NFFA Steering Committee, ASWM played a lead role in organizing a workshop held in October 2011 in Washington D.C. titled, “Preserving and Restoring Floodplain Natural Functions: Informing Assessment and Policy Efforts.” ASWM’s Jon Kusler, Ph.D., and Executive Director Jeanne Christie delivered the presentations, “Lessons Learned in Assessing the Values of Naturally Functioning Floodplains —Overview of Floodplain Assessment Methods; Future Directions” and “Lessons Learned in Assessing the Functions Lost in a Degraded Floodplain System —A Comparison of Floodplains and Wetlands” during the workshop at the Pew Charitable Trust Building. ASWM maintains an NFFA webpage on its website devoted to NFFA activities, including forthcoming workshops and webinars. Participation in the alliance is open to organizations that support natural floodplain functions.
Michigan Wetlands Conference Focus: Climate Change Adaptation

ASWM partnered with the Michigan Wetlands Association (MWA) and the Michigan DEQ in organization of the MWA annual conference - August 31-September 2, 2011 in Traverse City, MI. This conference featured a special symposium on climate change adaptation and wetlands bringing together state, regional and national experts to investigate how wetland restoration and management can meet multiple goals, including climate change adaptation. Following the symposium, ASWM prepared recommendations to encourage incorporation of wetland management into state climate change strategies. The keynote speaker was Heather Stirratt, Great Lakes Coordinator for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Services Center.

Climate change is both a pressing and an overwhelming issue. Predictions for the Great Lakes region include alterations in temperature and precipitation patterns that will have an impact on the region’s vast wetland resources including Great Lakes coastal areas. Proactive wetland managers can implement climate change adaptation measures by strategically pursuing common management goals such as wetland restoration and management for flood storage and water quality improvement, bridging gaps in wildlife corridors to facilitate species migration, and encouraging biodiversity to increase ecological resilience. This symposium and follow-up by ASWM have been supported by the Michigan DEQ Coastal Management Program and NOAA.
Webinars

The Association of State Wetland Managers hosted a number of webinars in 2011 as part of ongoing projects to improve state wetland programs and to further the efforts of two collaborations: the Natural Floodplain Function 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 will continue to develop its webinar series on these and other topics going forward—for its members, state and tribal wetland managers and those working on wetland issues in the U.S. Some of the 2011 webinar series are listed below.

**Wetland Mapping Consortium Series**

Webinar topics included “Organizing the Mapping Consortium,” “Developing Unique Identifiers for Mapping Wetlands” and “Review Wetland Mapping Actions to Date.”

**Natural Floodplain Function Alliance (NFFA)**

ASWM hosted two out of a series of webinars for the NFFA.

- “Assessing Natural and Beneficial Functions of the Floodplain” June 23, 2011
  *Presenter:* Jon Kusler, Association of State Wetland Managers

- “Economic Evaluation of Floodplain Natural and Beneficial Functions” July 12, 2011
  *Presenters:* David Batker, Executive Director, Earth Economics and Norm Starler, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Institute for Water Resources

**Water Quality Standards for Wetlands**

As part of this project, ASWM hosted a series of webinars in 2011. A few of the webinar topics are provided below.

- “Water Quality Standards for Wetlands: Aligning Sources of Pollution, Designated Uses and Wetland Functions”

- “Water Quality Standards for Wetlands: Anti-degradation”

- “Water Quality Standards for Wetlands: Narrative and Numeric Criteria”

- “Model Regulation: Water Quality Standards for Wetlands”
2011 Active Projects

Projects Completed in 2011

Protecting Wetlands by Enhancing State and Local Regulatory Programs
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Developing Wetlands Monitoring and Restoration Strategies for Climate Change
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

ASWM Outreach and Training for Federal Geographic Data Committee Wetland Mapping Standard

2011 State/Federal Wetland Coordination Workshop: Conservation, Regulation and Management of Headwater Wetlands
U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service

Advancing Environmental Advocacy for Wetlands/Aquatic Resources through State Legislation
Orchard Foundation

Creating Change by Making Ecological Services Real
The McKnight Foundation

Projects Ongoing

Water Quality Standards in State Wetland Programs
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Evaluating Approaches to Wetlands and Climate Change Adaptation
Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

Best Practices for Joint Corps/State Implementation of the Section 404 Program
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Building State and Tribal Capacity to Develop Wetland Programs
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Delivery of Wetland and Floodplain Mapping Conservation and Management Collaboration Project, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Looking Ahead to New Projects

Developing Comprehensive Approaches to Wetland Program Development with States and Tribes
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Improving Wetland Restoration Permitting Success
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

State Definitions and Requirements for Ephemeral, Intermittent and Perennial Streams
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

To Support the Development of State and Federal Policies that Protect and Restore Wetlands and Floodplains
The McKnight Foundation
FINANCIAL REPORTS 2011

INCOME

- Contributions (Public Support) 333,333
- Program Income 9,679
- Membership Dues 19,653
- Interest Income 638
- Reimbursed Expenses 368

TOTAL INCOME 363,671

ASSETS

- Current Assets
  - Checking/Savings 215,700
  - Accounts Receivable 12,000
  - Other Current Assets 100

  Total Current Assets 227,800

  TOTAL ASSETS 227,800

EXPENSE

- Labor (personnel) 257,366

  Nonlabor
  - Commercial Insurance 1,836
  - Non-employee compensation 21,677
  - Office Computers (IT) 5,443
  - General Office 23,748
  - Program Expense 35,836
  - Travel Expense 12,115
  - Miscellaneous 3,162

  Total Nonlabor 103,817

  Cost Share 26,302

  TOTAL EXPENSE 387,485

  NET INCOME (23,814)

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

- Liabilities
  - Total Accounts Payable 480
  - Other Current Liabilities 4,832

  Total Liabilities 5,312

- Equity
  - Retained Earnings 246,302
  - Net Income (23,814)

  Total Equity 222,488

  TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY 227,800

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

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Board of Directors

Officers:

David Davis, Chairman
Dave is the Director of the Office of Wetlands & Water Protection at the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. In this position, he is responsible for Virginia’s independent nontidal wetland regulatory program and non-regulatory wetland programs. He is also a member of the Society of Wetland Scientists. In his spare time, Dave plays bass trombone. A native of Chincoteague Island, Virginia, Dave has resided in Richmond since 1990, is married, and has a precocious daughter who is in the “but why, Daddy” stage.

Alan Quackenbush, Vice Chairman
Alan runs the Wetland Program for the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. Originally from central New York, Alan had an early affinity for wetlands that were prevalent on the farm where he grew up. Alan served as a member-at-large on the board of the Association of State Wetland Managers; is a member of the Society of Wetland Scientists; is on EPA’s National Wetland Condition Assessment Workgroup and New England Wetland Workgroup for monitoring and assessment. He lives in the Green Mountains, just a few miles from work, with his wife Audrey and his dog, Sadie.

Cherie Hagen, Secretary/Treasurer
Cherie is the Wetland Team Leader and Policy Coordinator for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), where she collaborates with more than 17 partner organizations on the development and implementation of Reversing the Loss - A Strategy to Protect, Restore and Explore Wisconsin Wetlands. She has worked for WDNR since 1995. She holds degrees in Biological Sciences, Aquatic Ecology and Secondary Education.

Members At Large:

Collis Adams (New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services)
Collis has served as the administrator of the Wetlands Bureau at the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services for the past eight years. As the administrator, he oversees all activities relative to the New Hampshire Dredge and Fill Law and the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act. His greatest accomplishment as administrator of the wetlands bureau was the implementation of an in-lieu fee program for wetland mitigation and then expanding that program to include streams, rivers, and their riparian habitats. Collis holds a BSCE degree from the University of Massachusetts with an emphasis on environmental engineering. He has two children, one of each, and is proud that he has instilled in them his same sense of volunteerism and a love for the outdoors. He is seldom seen without his dog and best friend Zoë at his side.

Richard Gitar (Fond du Lac Reservation - Office of Water Protection)
Rick is a Water Regulatory Specialist for the Fond du Lac Reservation - Office of Water Protection (located in Northeastern Minnesota). Rick was a recipient of a 2009 National Wetlands Award from the Environmental Law Institute. In his spare time, Rick enjoys camping, fishing, bicycle touring, canoeing, trail building (for the Superior Hiking Trail system), or just spending time at home with his wife, two children, two dogs, two cats and three birds in Duluth, Minnesota.
Amy Lounds (Michigan Department of Environmental Quality)
Amy is a Wetlands Specialist for the Water Resources Division of the Michigan Department Environmental Quality (MDEQ). She serves as the statewide specialist for the wetland protection program on guideline and policy development, serves as the single program administrator for several statewide programs including wetland mitigation banking, and serves as the wetland education and training specialist. She is also a member of the Michigan Wetlands Association's Board of Directors. Amy has a Master's degree from the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment and a Bachelor of Science in Zoology from Michigan State University.

Maryann McGraw (New Mexico Environment Department)
Maryann is the Wetlands Program Coordinator and the Wetlands and Department of Transportation Team Leader with the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Surface Water Quality Bureau. Maryann brings to the ASWM board the perspective and challenges of a newly formed and growing wetlands program. Maryann paints en plein air in pastel, concentrating on New Mexico’s scenic vistas and how time and seasonal changes affect those places.

Erik Stockdale (Washington Department of Ecology)
Erik Stockdale supervises the Wetlands/401 Federal Permitting Unit with the Washington State Department of Ecology’s Northwest Regional Office. He is certified as a Professional Wetlands Scientist and is an active member of the PacificNorthwest Chapter of SWS. He is a graduate of the University of California, Santa Barbara (B.A. Aquatic Biology and Environmental Studies) and the University of Washington (M.M.A. Marine Affairs).

ASWM Staff

Jeanne Christie, Executive Director
Jeanne has been with ASWM since 1999 and Executive Director since 2001. From 1995 to 1999 she was a Resource Conservationist with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Wetlands and Watersheds Division where she was national program leader for the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program. She worked for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Wetlands Division (1988-1995) moving from the staff level to Section Chief and Acting Branch Chief. Jeanne is a 2007 winner of the National Wetlands Award for Education and Outreach. During her spare time she competes in ultra runs, teaches digital photography, and does volunteer work with the Maine Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club, and Riding to the Top Therapeutic Riding Center. She lives in an 1860 farmhouse in Windham, ME with her husband Larry and their ‘rescued’ animal companions Tux, Gabby and Massey.

Jon Kusler, Associate Director
Jon is a lawyer, writer, and educator with more than 35 years of experience with wetlands, floodplains and riparian areas. In addition to a law degree, he holds a M.S. in Water Resources Management and an interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Land and Water Management from the University of Wisconsin. He helped found the Association of State Wetland Managers in 1983 and served as its Executive Director from 1990 to 2001. He received EPA's National Wetland Lifetime Achievement Award in 1990, the Gilbert White award in floodplain management in 1979, and the Society of Wetland Scientist's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2009. He has authored many books and reports concerning wetlands, such as Our National Wetland Heritage: A Protection Guide, Regulating Sensitive Lands, and Wetland Creation and Restoration. He lives in an old farmhouse in Berne, New York with his wife Pat, two children (when they are home), many cats, and two lizards.
**Peg Bostwick, Senior Staff Policy Analyst**

Peg was Chief of the Wetland Lakes and Streams Unit in the Water Resources Division for the State of Michigan – Department of Natural Resources and Environment. Peg joined the (then) DNR in 1979 after completing a B.S. in fisheries and wildlife and additional graduate work in limnology at Michigan State University. With over 30 years of experience, Peg is also a member of the Society of Wetland Scientists, the Michigan Chapter of the North American Lake Management Society, and the Jacob Sheep Breeders Association. Peg lives with her family on a 40 acre farm near St. Johns, Michigan, where they raise Jacob sheep – an old heritage wool breed.

**Leah Stetson, Writer-Editor**

Leah is the Association’s resident human ecologist. She edits *Wetland Breaking News*, writes articles for *Wetland News* and develops content for ASWM’s website. Leah served on a number of work groups in 2011 including Water Quality Standards for Wetlands and the State Assumption project. She manages the social media, blog and campaign development. A published poet and conservationist, Leah holds a master’s degree in human ecology from College of the Atlantic. Before joining ASWM, she wore several hats—including a Smokey the Bear “Stetson” at Acadia National Park. Leah has over 15 years of nonprofit experience, with the last twelve years devoted to protecting natural resources. She likes to swim and explore local wetland preserves with her rescue dog, Sophie-Bea.

**Steve Palmer, Bookkeeper**

Steve has a B.S. in Business Administration from the University of Maine. Steve “re-tooled” after years in sales and has become a specialist for bookkeeping and tax preparations. He has worked for ASWM for six years. A flexible schedule has allowed Steve to donate some of his time to charity nonprofits. Steve and his wife, Dottie, live on a five-acre woodlot near Sebago Lake. They enjoy living in Maine with their Springer Spaniel, Jennie.

**Laura Burchill, Program Assistant**

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; assists with the many tasks involved in preparing for conferences and workshops; handles publication orders; as well as general office duties. She has 25+ years experience in graphic design and also works part-time for *Parent & Family*, a local publication. When not working, she enjoys spending time with her husband David and grown children, Chris and Stef.

**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 19+ 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.

**William Walker III, Environment/Technology Specialist**

Will joined the Association as an intern in the summer of 2010 through the Environmental Finance Commission at the Muskie School of Public Service. He performed research, GIS and IT support for ASWM. He graduated from the Edmund Muskie School of Public Service, part of the University of Southern Maine in August 2010 and started his Ph.D. program at Northeastern University in fall 2011. He earned his Master’s in Community Planning and Development with a focus on Regional Development.
Message from the Founder

Dear Friends:

Almost thirty years have passed since Scott Hausmann and I founded the Association of State Wetland Managers (ASWM). Scott and I founded ASWM with two goals—to support state wetland programs and to support national wetland policy reflecting sound wetland science. We and ASWM have tried to stay true to these goals during the ups and downs of funding and politics.

There is a story about the Sufi teacher, Mulla Nazrudin. One day a student finds him in the market on his knees searching. “What are you looking for Mulla?” “My keys.” The student joins Mulla but with no success. “Where did you leave your keys, Mulla?” “In my room.” “Then why are we searching in the market?” “Because there is more light.”

We began our fledgling Association with no staff or budget. Our first national meeting in 1983 was hosted by Richard Haman and the University of Florida College of Law. To our delight over one hundred twenty wetland managers and scientists attended. The quality and enthusiasm of the attendees was striking. Most did not know each other prior to the meeting but many emerged friends.

This was the first of many, many workshops ASWM conducted with a broad range of federal agencies such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Other partners have included the Association of State Floodplain Managers, Society of Wetland Scientists, Coastal States Organization, National Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and the Environmental Law Institute.

Hundreds of symposia, workshops, publications, webpages, and webinars later, we are still looking for our keys (particularly in recent years). You must start where you are and not give up. Jeanne and her capable ASWM staff including Peg, Laura, Steve, Leah and Sharon continue to support state programs and efforts at all levels of government to apply sound science. Many who attended that first meeting in Florida also continue as wetland advocates and mentors.

We thank all of you for working and cooperating with us over the years.

Sincerely,

Jon Kusler, Esq. Ph.D.

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