



SWSPCP

◆◆◆ Fall Newsletter ◆◆◆

FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Héctor Aponte, President,
Professional Wetland Scientist*

A Wetland Scientist's Christmas in July: Reflections from Ramsar COP15 in Victoria Falls

This July, I had the incredible privilege of attending my first-ever Conference of the Parties (COP). Thanks to the generosity of the Society of Wetland Scientists Professional Certification Program (SWSPCP), I joined their delegation as the current President to participate in the 15th COP of the Ramsar Convention the world's foremost international treaty dedicated to wetland conservation and sustainable use.

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Yet, beyond the awe-inspiring setting, what truly made the experience unforgettable was the palpable global spirit of collaboration and urgency. Delegates from over 170 countries convened, including ministers, scientists, and NGOs, engaging in vibrant discussions about the future of wetlands. As a wetland scientist, it truly felt like Christmas had come early.



The event was rich with inspiring moments: parallel sessions where researchers and managers exchanged data and best practices; passionate appeals urging a shift from planning to tangible action; and moving testimonies highlighting the vital ecological services wetlands provide—especially in carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, and water regulation.

The SWSPCP played a prominent role at the conference, hosting a dedicated booth to inform attendees about professional certification. Interest in the PCP program continues to grow worldwide, and we remain committed to maintaining a flexible, inclusive approach that acknowledges the diverse realities of countries across the globe. A significant milestone was reached on July 25, 2025, when the Ramsar COP plenary officially approved the PCP program's observer status at future convention meetings. This recognition crowns a long journey led by Ramsar-related committees and the PCP Globalization Committee, to whom we extend our deepest gratitude.

The contributions of Rob McInnes and Matthew Simpson—who actively participated in plenaries and side events—showcased the scientific rigor and excellence of certified wetland professionals, underscoring the importance of expert knowledge in achieving effective conservation.

As the conference focused on shaping a 10-year strategy and assessing waterbird populations, one message stood out: while global interest in wetlands is strong, achieving real impact demands deeper commitment and innovative solutions.

We all must play our part, from our respective fields, to halt wetland loss and ensure these ecosystems flourish for generations ahead. Despite numerous legal protections, wetlands have already lost about 30% of their global extent. As echoed throughout Ramsar COP15, the challenge lies not in policy creation but in implementation.

Wetlands are not merely victims of environmental change—they are powerful allies in combating it. From carbon storage to supporting biodiversity, they offer vital nature-based solutions urgently needed worldwide. Their protection intersects with international treaties, migratory species, and even research on groundwater systems. The call is clear: we must act faster, innovate more boldly, and unite across generations and sectors to ensure wetlands are not just preserved but actively restored. Now, more than ever, the world needs skilled professional wetland scientists.



Connecting, Learning, and Leading: SWSPCP's Highlights from SWS 2025 - Providence

On July 15 – 18, 2025, SWSPCP attended the Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS) 2025 Annual meeting in Providence, Rhode Island. The Annual Meeting serves as a gathering for professionals, researchers, and enthusiasts dedicated to wetland science, management, and conservation.

On July 15, 2025, Nancy Lin, now past-president of SWSPCP, led a workshop titled, *"How to become a SWS Certified Professional Wetland Scientist"* which was well attended and informative. Approximately 20 attendees joined the conference early to attend and gain additional insight on what is needed to apply to become a WPIT or PWS, how to apply, how to improve their application, and what exactly is needed to upgrade or submit an application. The session was co-led by the now current SWSPCP President, Hector Aponte, Ellen Kracauer Hartig, Mary Grover, Sara Kreisel, and by Harold Jones, who provided a fascinating explanation of the history of the PWS program that even some of our Board Members heard for the first time.

Additionally, many of our BoD members including Hector Aponte, Ellen Kracauer Hartig, and Siobhan Fennessy also presented in symposiums and workshops throughout the Annual Meeting.

SWSPCP exhibited a table, offering PWS pins to certified WPITs and PWSs, selling SWSPCP merchandise, and providing information and answering questions for those looking to become a certified PWS.

During the meeting, Presidential rotations occurred, where Nancy Lin became the Immediate past-president, Hector Aponte became Presidnet, and Shiobhan Fennessy became President-Elect. Additionally, Mary Grover transitioned from Treasurer-elect to the new SWSPCP Treasurer. We want to thank Yvonne Vallette for her many, many years of dedication as Treasurer for the program!

We are looking forward to attending the next SWS Annual Meeting June 15-19, 2026 in New Orleans, Louisiana! (<https://www.sws.org/annual-meetings/>) and look forward to seeing you all there.

- Mary Grover (Treasurer) and Sara Kreisel (Outreach)

Captured Moments: SWS 2025 Annual Conference

— Certification Workshop —



Photos by Sara Kreisel

Captured Moments: SWS 2025 Annual Conference

Opening Reception



Photos by Sara Kreisel

Captured Moments: SWS 2025 Annual Conference

Board of Directors



Photos by Sara Kreisel

Captured Moments: SWS 2025 Annual Conference

Business Meeting & Awards Luncheon Run-of-Show

At the closing luncheon Nancy Lin, via a recording, expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to serve as president and handed over the presidency to Hector A. Aponte Ubillus. Sara Kreisel and Ellen Kracauer Hartig presented this year's SWSPCP awards. Yvonne Vallette (bottom right), who served as the Professional Certification Program Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair, received an award for her 17 years of service. William (Bill) Kirchner worked for over 30 years on the Certification Panel and was the 2024 recipient of the R. Harold Jones Lifetime Achievement Award. Robert J. Jontos served for 20 years reviewing certification renewal applications and became the 2025 recipient of the R. Harold Jones Lifetime Achievement Award. Kurt Philipp retired from active service and was recognized for his many years serving tirelessly on different PCP committees and on the Board of Directors. He also served a term as President and was the lead in achieving PCP's accreditation with CESB.

- Ellen Kracauer Hartig

Captured Moments: SWS 2025 Annual Conference

Business Meeting & Awards Luncheon Run-of-Show



Photos by Mary Grover and Sara Kreisel

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE ON THE SWS PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM'S (PCP) BOARD OF DIRECTORS

“My term as the Student Rep with SWSPCP was enlightening and fulfilling. I met an amazing group of mentors and colleagues who valued my input from the student perspective and contributed their time and energy to help me push forward student goals. I found that I learned from them at every interaction, from technical knowledge to organizational skills. Serving as the Student Representative provided me opportunities for networking, conference attendance, and for my voice to be heard in creating a more inclusive program. I highly recommend working with this fantastic group!”

Kyle Runion

Outgoing Student Representative in the PCP Board of Directors

PCP is keenly interested in building the program to hear the needs and perspective of students and those soon launching into the professional world of wetlands. This individual will take the reins from our outgoing student representative.

Apply here:

https://www.wetlandcert.org/student_board_rep_application.html

Why does the PCP have a Student Representative?

To gain insights from students on the application and certification process, and on the initiatives of the Program, the PCP Board of Directors established a position on the Board for a Student Representative (Rep), as a non-voting member.

Who can apply?

The applicant for Student Rep should be a graduate student and an SWS member (1 year minimum) and should have attended an SWS Annual Meeting at least once in the past 3 years (this criterion may be flexible to include virtual conferences).

How long is the appointment?

The Student Rep will be appointed for a 1-3-year term, depending on active, graduate student status.

What are the responsibilities?

Attend quarterly Board meetings; provide reports on activities and initiatives that affect students who have been or those who desire to become certified as a WPIT or PWS; represent student members of SWS from around the globe; participate in discussions relating to the role of students in the Program; and promote interactions and common activities between PCP and student groups in SWS.

What are the perks?

The Student Rep will be offered a stipend to cover their WPIT (Wetland Professional in Training) or PWS (Professional Wetland Scientist) application and/or annual maintenance fees during their term of service.

The SWSPCP Student Rep must:

1. Be an enrolled graduate student;
2. Be a SWS member for a least one year;
3. Have attended one SWS Meeting in the past 3 years (this could include a SWS Virtual Meeting); and
4. Submit information on this short form at:
https://www.wetlandcert.org/student_board_rep_application.html.

Sound intriguing? Please contact Adrianna Borczyk, Program Administrator, for more information and share this with other students that you think would be interested.



Welcome



Congratulations to all of our newly Certified PWSs and our WPITs who are taking a major step towards PWS certification! Welcome to our PCP Community!

Please find below the list of newly certified WPIT and PWS professionals over the last three months:

Approved WPIT Certifications:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Jackson P. Hunt - 5/19/25 | • Keegan Berndsen - 6/14/25 |
| • Julia A. Coan - 5/19/25 | • Shannon L. Gaffney - 6/14/25 |
| • Risa Askerooth - 5/19/25 | • Dylan T. Irby - 6/22/25 |
| • Samantha M. Stewart - 5/19/25 | • Charles D. Ross - 6/28/25 |
| • Seymone O'Brien - 5/19/25 | • Ashleigh Read - 7/3/25 |
| • Katherine B. Waguespack - 5/19/25 | • Melissa I. Savoy - 7/15/25 |
| • Sara Rogers - 5/19/25 | • Lori M. Carlos - 7/29/25 |
| • Maria C. Ochoa - 5/19/25 | • Katherine deBeauclair - 7/29/25 |
| • Alice R. Burney - 5/19/25 | • Burke M. Haywood - 7/31/25 |
| • Katie S. Miller - 5/19/25 | • Hallie M. Feltus - 7/31/25 |
| • Blessing O. Oged - 5/19/25 | • Alexis Takara - 7/31/25 |
| • Holly E. Robison - 6/10/25 | • Luke W. Goodin - 7/31/25 |
| • Elyse C. Johnston - 6/10/25 | • Melissa Ocampo - 8/9/25 |
| • Dante B. Dartiguenave - 6/10/25 | • Elyse L. Schlick - 8/9/25 |
| • Megan M. Meyer - 6/14/25 | • Kurtis Fisher - 8/9/25 |
| • Tia S. Tumaliuan - 6/14/25 | • Taylor N. Donovan - 8/14/25 |
| • Abigail Rios - 6/14/25 | • Rue Dee H. Hoover - 8/14/25 |
| • Jordan L. Haselwood - 6/14/25 | • Karmyn J. Pasquariello - 8/14/25 |
| • Celina M. Amaya - 6/14/25 | • Samantha Bitar - 8/14/25 |
| • Matthew V. Horrigan - 6/14/25 | • Cameron J. Covill - 8/16/25 |
| • Malyssa N. Peabody - 6/14/25 | • Theo V. Huval - 8/16/25 |



Welcome



Approved PWS Certifications:

- Michael G. Wood - 5/19/25
- Jamie McCarthy - 5/19/25
- John H. Thompson - 5/19/25
- Raina F. Cumby - 5/19/25
- Christopher Stiegler - 5/19/25
- Rachelle N. Tones - 5/19/25
- Lisa M. Long - 5/19/25
- Allison C. Lutes - 5/19/25
- Sarah J. Falcone - 5/19/25
- Jessica L. Richardson - 5/19/25
- Nicholas P. Revetta - 5/19/25
- Alicia L. Pettibone - 5/19/25
- Andrea L. Sanchez - 5/19/25
- Katherine J. Lynch - 5/19/25
- EmmaLeigh K. Given - 6/8/25
- Tara D. Allden - 6/10/25
- Tommy J. Goodwin Jr. - 6/10/25
- Daniel R. Spradlin - 6/14/25
- Tamara Camper - 6/14/25
- Stanton X. Diggs Jr. - 6/14/25
- Michael C. Grzywacz - 6/14/25
- Aaron R. Marcus - 6/14/25
- Shane W. Manion - 6/14/25
- Megan L. Rebechini - 6/14/25
- Kayla E. Simpson - 6/22/25
- Laura H. Westervelt - 6/22/25
- Brian L. Smith - 6/22/25
- Michael R. Schening - 6/22/25
- Sarah L. Treby - 6/22/25
- Joshua E. LeClerc - 6/28/25
- Brian M. Cox - 6/28/25
- Hali J. Steinmann - 6/28/25
- Michael R. Gellman - 6/28/25
- Nicole A. Guigou - 7/3/25
- Timothy M. Twohig - 7/15/25
- Justin T. Sherman - 7/15/25
- Michael W. Blake - 7/15/25
- Karissa Protz - 7/29/25
- Joshua C. Brainerd - 7/29/25
- Jim Ashby - 7/29/25
- Amy Seim - 7/29/25
- Simon A. Hildt - 7/31/25
- Stephanie Beck - 7/31/25
- Chelsea Trottier - 7/31/25
- Grete L. Day - 8/5/25
- Robert W. Thornton - 8/5/25
- Connor Sullivan - 8/5/25
- Chad R. Madison - 8/5/25
- Amy A. Jensen - 8/9/25
- Jenna M. Slabe - 8/9/25
- Tonya L. Smith - 8/12/25
- Thomas E. Liddy - 8/14/25
- Regen Jamieson - 8/14/25
- Aaron M. Nemeyer - 8/14/25
- Cory R. Kwolek - 8/16/25
- James A. Easton - 8/16/25
- Amanda M. French - 8/16/25
- Alexandra T. Vlk - 8/16/25
- Nicholas J. Hebel - 8/16/25
- Patricia Schuyler - 8/27/25
- Jesse K. Sorrells - 8/27/25

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR NEWLY CERTIFIED PROFESSIONALS

We're excited to celebrate the commitment and hard work of our newest certified PWSs and WPITs! These individuals have taken an important step in their careers and are eager to share why they decided to pursue a certification.



Faith C. Doty, PWS

Certified on 4/16/2025

I decided to apply for the PWS certification to increase my visibility and accreditation within the local environmental science and consulting community (I work and live out of Bozeman, Montana). On a personal level, I applied to engage with a community of scientists and continue to learn about wetland science and policy. As a scientist, I'm fascinated by the way soil, water, and plant systems interact. As a consultant, I'm drawn to the challenge of applying policy and regulation to these complex, dynamic systems.

[View Faith's LinkedIn](#)

Hallie M. Peralez, WPIT

Certified on 7/31/2025

As a developing environmental scientist, I feel a strong pull towards wetland ecology given the unique, complex, and delicate ecosystem services they provide. Applying for my WPIT certification through SWSPCP was a first step towards a long career dedicated to studying, protecting, and preserving wetlands.



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Cameron J. Covill, WPIT

Certified on 8/16/2025

I applied for WPIT certification as I work towards building credibility as an environmental consultant early in my career with SWCA Environmental Consultants, Inc. In addition to wetland and stream delineations and associated permitting, I also do a lot of inspections for active construction which involve wetland and other resource area protections as well as wetland restorations and replications. I plan to continue taking the needed classes to earn my PWS certification in the near future, and am excited to be a part of the SWS and SWSPCP community!

Risa Askerooth, WPIT

Certified on 5/19/2025

As an Environmental Management Specialist at the Port of Seattle, I lead the monitoring, maintenance, and reporting for approximately 200 acres of wetland mitigation. With a background spanning coastal management and field biology, I was motivated to pursue the WPIT certification to deepen my technical expertise and applied skills in wetland science. Beginning in Fall 2025, I will be attending the University of Washington's Wetland Science and Management program, with the goal of applying for my PWS certification in 2026.



[View Risa's LinkedIn](#)