

SOCIETY of WETLAND SCIENTISTS

SWS Strategic Plan

2026-2030

Society of Wetland Scientists

Mission

To promote best practices and an inclusive and interactive community for wetland research, education, conservation, preservation, restoration, and management.

Vision

To ensure that wetlands are understood, their importance is recognized, and sound wetland science is used as a guide for wetland professionals and the public to collaborate on research, conservation, preservation, restoration, and management, and to inform current and future wetland policies.

Values

- Sound and credible science
- Effective communication
- Education and outreach
- Coordination and collaboration
- Integrity
- Diversity and inclusiveness
- Sustainability
- Partnership

Overview

The Society's strategic plan is a blueprint to guide and focus the Society's actions over the next five years. It establishes long-term goals and measurable objectives to ensure that the Society is effective, impactful, and relevant to its members and to the global wetland community. The strategic plan reflects the challenges and opportunities anticipated over the forthcoming five-year period. Consequently, this plan emphasizes the importance of (1) sound science, (2) policy engagement, (3) societal relevance, (4) inclusiveness, (5) collaboration, and (6) sustainability.

Chapters, sections, and committees are encouraged to develop implementation plans that serve as mechanisms to measure, report, and achieve the society's strategic goals. Implementation plans help to prioritize actions and provide accountability for the long-term success of the Society and will be used to track progress toward achieving the Society's stated goals.



Strategic Goals

The Society will conduct/support activities and empower its members to achieve the following strategic goals:

1 Promote Protection and Restoration of Wetlands

Promote activities that contribute to the long-term protection and restoration of global wetland resources, including the production and dissemination of sound science, development of strategic partnerships, engagement in wetland policy and management, and education and empowerment of the public. Specific implementation actions may include:

- Proactively engage partners to inform wetland policy and management decisions and inform broad constituencies on the importance of wetlands;
- Encourage conservation and wise use of wetlands by incorporation of sound science; and
- Partner with wetland regulators, practitioners, managers, and advocacy groups to provide them with science-based resources to support their efforts and help translate science into action.

2 Improve Awareness about the Importance of Wetlands

Develop science-driven, fact-based education and outreach materials on the importance of wetland protection, restoration, and management targeted at broad sectors, including students, the public, practitioners, researchers, and decision-makers. Specific implementation actions may include:

- Implement a diverse range of communication strategies that are accessible to people of all backgrounds and generations;
- Develop partnerships with academic programs and other organizations to support their educational mission and promote participation with the Society; and
- Develop and grow networks to allow exchange of scientific, practical, and policy information related to wetlands among researchers, practitioners, decision makers, and community groups.

3 Ensure Relevance and Representation Among the Membership

Implement programs that allow the Society to serve as an authoritative and meaningful forum for wetland professionals globally, including physical and social scientists, practitioners, decision makers, policy and legal experts, to collaborate on the exchange of ideas and research outcomes related to wetland assessment, conservation, restoration, and management. Specific implementation actions may include:

- Focus activities in ways that ensure representation and improve relevance for member interests and perspectives, globally;
- Improve accessibility to multiple sectors and career levels, and communicate the value of the Society in terms of professional advancement and opportunity;
- Create mechanisms by which the Society provides benefits throughout different career points (e.g., student, early career, experienced) and types of career paths (e.g., academic, practitioner, policy, etc.); and
- Foster an open, inclusive, and civil culture welcoming to people of all backgrounds, wetland interests, and views across Society activities and engagements.

4 Provide for the Sustainability of the Society

Ensure longevity and long-term sustainability of the Society through improved administrative efficiency and adaptive planning, increasing participation by students and early career professionals, and a diversified funding portfolio, and sound governance structure. Specific implementation actions may include:

- Develop mechanisms to ensure that the Society is agile and can focus on and respond to changing needs as the Society evolves and grows;
- Focus on advancing engagement by students and early career professionals to build the next generation of wetland professionals who are active in the Society; and
- Ensure fiscal and administrative strength and sustainability through a diversified funding portfolio, robust administration and management, and strategic partnerships.

Implementation

Chapters, Sections, and Committees are encouraged to develop implementation plans that support the strategic plan. The implementation plans should provide tangible actions to achieve the goals and include realistic measures, quantifiable objectives, and reporting measures to promote accountability. SWS leadership and management will provide support by reviewing and commenting on implementation plans and by reporting results to adaptively manage SWS in pursuit of the strategic plan objectives.

Progress toward meeting each of the strategic goals should be routinely reported to the membership and disseminated through the SWS website, SWS newsletter, Wetland Science and Practice, SWS social media accounts, and other appropriate outreach mechanisms.

The following measures of success should be used to evaluate how effective the Society has been at achieving our strategic goals and to connect to the specific actions that will be described in the implementation plan(s) developed by chapters, sections, and committees.

1 Promote Protection and Restoration of Wetlands

- Number of SWS products or actions that are cited for their role in guiding major wetland policies at the local, regional, or national levels within the United States
- Number of SWS products or actions that are cited for their role in guiding major wetland policies at the international level
- Number of restoration or conservation projects that refer to SWS derived science in guiding implementation and management

2 Improve Awareness about the Importance of Wetlands

- Number of SWS sponsored webinars, talks, and outreach activities
- Number of joint actions (e.g., webinars, talks, field trips) between SWS and associated professional societies, non-profit organizations, corporations, and groups (e.g., students, emerging economies) aimed at increasing wetland awareness
- Number of views and reposts on SWS social media accounts that help improve connection and engagement amongst members and the public

3 Ensure Relevance and Representation Among the Membership

- Percent of SWS members know what the major goals of the Society are and how it guides the Society's actions
- Increased number of members, including international members
- Balanced proportion of members from the research, education, policy, and practitioner sectors
- Number of SWS sponsored events that support career development and continuity among wetland professionals

4 Provide for the Sustainability of the Society

- Balanced budget that allows continued growth in investment accounts
- Diversity of funding sources
- Number of active funding initiatives
- Modest changes in membership rates
- Maintain an effective Executive Director, a strong Board of Directors, and active and fully staffed committees, sections, and chapters

