

Minnesota Chapter of The Wildlife Society Strategic Plan
Approved March 6, 2021

Vision

The Minnesota Chapter of The Wildlife Society is a strong and effective voice in representing wildlife conservation and management, ensuring sustainable wildlife populations in healthy ecosystems, and supporting the wildlife conservation profession in Minnesota.

Mission

To inspire, empower and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitats through science-based management and conservation in Minnesota.

Overarching Strategic Direction

Continue to provide and refine our professional development opportunities for members, student programs and advocacy work on wildlife issues to ensure sustainable wildlife populations in healthy environments within the state of Minnesota. Additionally, we will support the wellness of wildlife students and professionals by providing an inclusive, caring, and engaged community.

Goals

Goal 1: Professional Development for Members

Continue providing opportunities for members to learn, network, and increase their effectiveness in their professional fields.

Objective 1: Annual meeting –provide an annual meeting that informs members, stimulates discussions and provides opportunities for learning, fun, networking and fellowship.

Objective 2: Workshops and virtual learning experiences – Provide learning opportunities outside of the Annual Meeting, both on our own and with partners. Encourage individual members to create and lead workshops and virtual learning experiences on behalf of the Chapter. Promote other leadership training and continuing education opportunities.

Objective 3: Networking and building relationships with each other – Offer regional science mixers and virtual networking platforms such as google groups to share ideas.

Goal 2: Student Member Support and Programs

Provide opportunities for students to launch their wildlife careers through mentoring, professional development and networking.

Objective 1: University and College Chapter Advisor Support – Strengthen ties with faculty and support University and College Chapter advisors so they can be effective conduits to students.

Objective 2: Student activities at Annual Meeting – Maintain current activities such as Quiz Bowl, student papers and posters, student leadership breakfast and student-professional mixers. Ensure student safety during all events.

Objective 3: Student financial support – Provide Student Travel Grant and Student-Professional Development Grant programs to provide financial support for students to attend the Chapter’s Annual Meeting, and other developmental activities.

- Student Travel Grant Program – provides funds to active student chapters or wildlife clubs for travel to Chapter’s annual meeting.
- Student Professional Development Grant Program – provides funds to individual students or group of students to attend experiences that will improve their professional skills, knowledge, or network.

Objective 4: Additional student programs – Add student programs as Chapter is able from the following list of ideas:

- Job shadowing/Assisting board members
- Mentoring program
- Student Member at Large on the Board and on committees
- Sponsored participation in TWS Leadership Institute or other natural resource-focused leadership opportunities (e.g. Leopold Center’s ethics course)
- Student research grants
- Student transition strategy

Objective 5: Affordability – Continue to make annual dues, Annual Meetings and other Chapter sponsored events affordable for student members to maximize attendance and participation.

Objective 6: Student member integration – Improve integration of Student Chapters into Chapter goals and objectives.

Goal 3: Advocacy

Be proactive and speak up for wildlife, their habitats, and the wildlife profession by supporting and bringing science to decision-makers, publicly being an effective voice in representing science-based wildlife conservation and management, and supporting the scientific integrity and financial security of the wildlife profession.

Objective 1: The Wildlife Society Conservation Affairs Network – Strengthen connections to TWS’s Conservation Affairs Network (CAN). Maintain a CAN representative for the Chapter.

Objective 2: Advocacy priorities – Focus proactively on the following issue areas of importance to our members:

- Promoting the use of nontoxic alternatives to lead ammunition and fishing tackle.
- Preventing wetland and grassland degradation and loss in the prairie/farmland region.
- Promoting increases in funding for wildlife conservation and management in Minnesota and Nationally.
- Promoting science-driven management of public lands in Minnesota, particularly Wildlife Management Areas.
- Promoting equity, inclusivity, and diversity in the wildlife profession.

Objective 3: Membership advocacy input – Poll members annually by 1 February on evolving issues of importance and update Objective 2 as needed.

Objective 4: Committees and workgroups – Evaluate committees and their structure to better support the priority issue areas by 1 February, annually. Ensure each committee or workgroup has clear expectations, roles and annual work plans.

Objective 5: Collaborating – Partner with other organizations to share the load, maximize efficiency and effectiveness, and create a more unified and strong voice within Minnesota, North Central Section, nationally, and internationally, when appropriate.

Objective 6: Legislative relationships – Establish and cultivate advisory and consultative relationships with Minnesota legislators on an annual basis.

Goal 4: Financial Health

Create annual budgets based on revenue projections and increase diversity of funding and revenue sources to support the Chapter and develop new fundraising capacities to help raise funds for the administrative backbone and projects.

Objective 1: Annual Work Plan and Budget – Create work plans and relative budgets on an annual basis. To best ability, provide balanced budget where credits meet or exceed debits.

Objective 3: Emergency fund – Maintain a \$10,000 emergency reserve for the Chapter.

Objective 4: Funding diversity – Increase funding diversity by pursuing new opportunities such as grants to support the ongoing work of the Chapter.

Goal 5: Membership Recruitment, Retention and Involvement

Identify, recruit and retain excellent board members and other volunteers to support the vision, mission and values of the Chapter and effectively carry out projects and govern the organization.

Objective 1: Position evaluation and descriptions – Annually evaluate, update, or create “job descriptions” for Chapter volunteer leadership roles.

Objective 2: Membership recruitment and retention – Review current recruitment and retention process and update as needed. Use the results of the membership survey to ensure the Chapter is addressing the motivations of members.

Objective 3: Leadership recruitment – Build a leadership recruitment and election committee to assist Past-President in finding quality candidates for Chapter leadership positions.

Goal 6: Organizational Structure and Efficiency

Provide an effective support structure for members and volunteers to achieve and maintain Chapter common goals.

Objective 1: Bylaw review - Review and revise bylaws to adjust committees and board structure as needed to support this strategic plan. Bylaws need to meet requirements of TWS and be revised at least every five years.

Objective 2: Chapter archives – Create and maintain a formal archive of organizational history and future documents online via Google Drive.

Objective 3: Record and communications maintenance – By 1 February 2022, investigate the Chapter’s financial and logistical ability to hire a paid position to carry out Chapter communications, records management, and other duties. If able, draft a position statement and submit to Governing Board for consideration.

Goal 7: Internal and External Communications

Provide communications to our members to engage in Chapter business, policy matters, promote our programs, and attract participants and new members.

Objective 1: Digital communication – Continue to improve communication with Chapter members through email, the website, Facebook page, and other social media platforms as appropriate.

Objective 2: Newsletter – Provide a google group as a communication tool and ensure information is shared, read, and utilized by members. Discontinue quarterly newsletter format.

Objective 3: Communication updates – Add new communication tools, as capacity allows, filling any identified gaps.

Objective 4: Outreach – Improve the relationships of the Chapter with local and state media outlets to enhance opportunities to promote our voice and share our stories.

Goal 8: Sustainable Practices

Improve environmental stewardship and sustainable use of resources in Chapter and Board activities.

Objective 1: Environmental footprint – Reduce environmental footprint of conferences and workshops whenever possible

Goal 9: Improve the Chapter and TWS member wellness and diversity

Promote diversity, inclusivity, and equity within the Chapter and wildlife profession

Objective 1: Membership wellness – Provide opportunities for members to learn and discuss mental and physical wellness, learn techniques for improving their personal wellness, and support an informed culture that sustains the wellbeing of wildlife conservation students and professionals.

Objective 2: Membership Diversity – Provide an inclusive and equitable culture within the Chapter to welcome and support a diverse membership