

TWS Council Candidate Biographic Sketch

North Central Representative – 2022

Jason Riddle

Education

- 2003-2007 Ph.D. in Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences - North Carolina State University
Dissertation: *Maximizing the Impact of Field Borders for Quail and Early-succession Songbirds: What's the Best Design for Implementation?*
Major advisor: Christopher Moorman, Ph.D.
- Ph.D. Minor in Statistics
Minor advisor: Kenneth Pollock, Ph.D.
- 1999-2003 M.S. in Biology, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC.
Masters Thesis: *Short-term Effects of Wildfire on Breeding Birds in Southern Appalachian Old-growth/Pre-settlement Forests.*
Major advisor: Matthew Rowe, Ph.D.
- 1995-1999 B.S. in Biology, The College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA.
Minor in Anthropology.

Present Position

Gerald and Helen Stephens Professor of Wildlife, University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point.

Former Positions

- 2017-present Gerald and Helen Stephens Professor of Wildlife, University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point
- 2009-2017 Assistant and Associate Professor, University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point
- 2007-2009 Postdoctoral Research Associate, North Carolina State University
- 2003-2006 Hoffman Forest Graduate Fellow, North Carolina State University
- 2000-2004 Independent Contractor and Consultant

The Wildlife Society Activities:

- International Member since 2006
- Biometrics Working Group member
- Previously a member of The North Carolina Chapter,
- North Central Section (currently President until 2/22),
- Wisconsin Chapter (President-Elect, President, and Past President; as well as interim Past President due to unexpected vacancy; various committees),
- Faculty advisor to the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Student Chapter.

Other Professional Affiliations

- Xi Sigma Pi Forestry Honor Society

Leadership Experience (professional and organizations, up to 5):

Serving as Faculty Advisor to the UWSP Student Chapter – This is my “happy place.” Our weekly student chapter Executive Board meetings are one of my favorite times of the week. I love to watch students problem solve, innovate, and take initiative. I’ve learned that there is no substitution for genuine care for students. I’ve also learned that historical or longitudinal perspectives can provide important context for the decisions that others make. I do my best to serve as a sounding board for their ideas and interests, but I try to refrain from input or comments that would keep the student chapter from being their student chapter.

Serving as President of the North Central Section of The Wildlife Society – I did not expect to end my term as President with more energy than when I started. However, it has been really invigorating to experience the productivity of this team. We’ve accomplished a lot for the professionals and students in our Section. This experience has shown me the importance of having effective committees within an Executive Board and how crucial volunteerism can be outside the defined roles of elected positions. I’m very grateful to our Board and to our Section members for their dedication, their insight, and their contagious commitment.

Served as President of the Wisconsin Chapter of The Wildlife Society – This was a great honor. We made significant headway in getting students more involved with the state chapter Executive Board. We have 3 student chapters in our state (one of which I advise). This experience was helpful for me to think about the collective needs of the students in our state and try to find places where we could encourage collaboration among student chapters as an Executive Board. We were also tasked with investing some of our Chapter’s assets. This was a daunting task, but it taught me to rely on our team as several Executive Board members had more experience in this area than I did. I also learned that in a leadership role it is important to choose a manageable number of “platform” items on which to focus. Most Executive Board terms only last a couple of years in our chapter, so it is important not to have overly aggressive platforms that may burn out other team members.

Served as Coordinator of the Wildlife Ecology and Management Discipline – Our College of Natural Resources is primarily composed of “disciplines” rather than departments. Every 3 years, each discipline has the opportunity to elect a new Discipline Coordinator (DC). The DC serves as the liaison for the Wildlife Ecology and Management Discipline to college and university administration as well as to other academic units. As such, I met weekly with the Dean and other DCs during the academic year and led weekly meetings of the Wildlife Ecology and Management Discipline. This position helped me to hone my organizational skills a little more, learn to choose my battles, and attempt to balance transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness.

Serving as Academic Coordinator for The College of Natural Resources Summer Field Experience – This position helps to keep things running smoothly for faculty, teaching assistants, staff, and students during our College of Natural Resources Summer Field Experience (SFE). SFE typically lasts 6 weeks and the Academic Coordinator (AC) serves as AC for 3 weeks while also teaching their own, discipline-specific course. The AC often helps with difficult situations that may involve students and instructors (e.g., academic misconduct), students and students, and students and staff. It has been a valuable experience for many reasons. In particular, it requires one to step back and try to see “the big picture” when multiple parties from different fields of study are involved. Even though everyone may have the same goal, there are various levels of authority and “power structure” when faculty, staff, and students are all involved. Trying to simultaneously advocate for all parties involved is a skill that I’m developing from these experiences.

Principal Professional Interests

Teaching and mentoring students, helping students discover, bird conservation, upland game birds, and statistics.

Views: Limit of 250 words.

We moved to the North Central Section about 13 years ago. I continue to be amazed at the work ethic, passion, and professionalism of Wildlifers in our Section. I've witnessed these qualities in our students as the Faculty Advisor to the Student Chapter at the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point, in our members at the state-level as President of The Wisconsin Chapter, and across our entire Region as President of the North Central Section.

I'll be transitioning out of the North Central Section Presidency in February of 2022. It is bittersweet. It has been a pure joy to get to know state chapter Presidents from across the region and to work with the other officers and committee chairs. I believe we've been incredibly productive together as a team. We've continued to provide online services (such as webinars) to our members, allocated nearly 40 travel grants to professional meetings, and are even piloting a free student membership program to students in our section regardless of their membership status in other TWS units. The accomplishments of our team have given me even more energy and passion about our section and our members than I had when I began serving at the section-level. I would love to harness that energy and apply it to representing the interests and needs of our section to Council. Similarly, I am excited to see how the North Central Section can continue to strengthen the entire Wildlife Society as we grow and become more established at a global-level.