

Candidate Search for Vice President of The Wildlife Society (TWS)

The TWS Nominating Committee is searching for and evaluating potential candidates for Vice President of The Wildlife Society. To assist us with this search, please provide information for the seven categories below.

Complete and submit this form to Nominating Committee: nominations@wildlife.org by 11:59 pm Eastern Standard Time on Monday, February 2nd, 2026. Please include the name of the nominee in the filename (e.g. *TWS VP 2026_Nomination_Smith.docx*). Do not submit a CV or resume in place of this nomination form. Nominations submitted after the deadline and all with incomplete nominations forms will be rejected.

Prior to submission, *all italicized text below this point can be deleted.*

NOMINEE:

I. Contact Information

Karl J. Martin
University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension
3500 University Avenue
Madison WI 53705
Office: (608) 263-2775
Cell: (608) 213-4184
karl.martin@wisc.edu

II. Education

Bachelor of Science, Wildlife Ecology, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1990
Master of Science, Wildlife Science, Oregon State University, 1994
Doctor of Philosophy, Forest Science (Wildlife Science minor), Oregon State University, 1999
US Fish and Wildlife Service - National Conservation Leadership Institute Graduate, 2010
LEAD 21 – Extension Leadership Training Graduate, 2016

III. Current position

Dean and Director University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension

| 2020 – Present (*Previously served as Interim Dean and Director, 2016–2020*)

- **Natural Resource Education, Research, Management and Policy:** Established the University of Wisconsin Madison-Division of Extension Natural Resource Institute (NRI)

which currently includes over one hundred employees focused on wildlife, forestry, water, and land use. NRI collaborates closely with the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Tribal Partners, Wisconsin DNR, Sea Grant, USDA, and NOAA to implement its natural resource education and research mission.

- **Organizational Leadership:** Collaborated with faculty, staff, and leaders to successfully develop and implement strategic priorities related to professional development, internal advancement, inclusion, compensation, educational programming and research (including wildlife, forestry, and water), philanthropy, state and federal funding, organizational reputation, and technology.
- **Executive Oversight:** Responsible for over 700 employees and educational programming across Wisconsin's 72 counties and five Tribal Nations; oversee six Extension institutes, including the Natural Resource Institute.
- **Financial Diversification:** Secure and oversee a wide variety of county, state, foundation, nonprofit, and federal grants; lead philanthropic activities to support research and education in conjunction with the University of Wisconsin Foundation.
- **Organizational Transformation:** Led a large-scale reorganization to modernize the structural model and improve efficiency (2016-2018), led the transition of the Division of Extension to the University of Wisconsin-Madison (2018-2019), and led the adoption of covid policies for centrally located and geographically distributed educators (2020-2021).
- **Diversity & Inclusion:** Created the Office of Access, Inclusion, and Compliance and established new joint positions for Tribal relations and volunteer management. Created and supported seven Employee Resource Groups. Focused efforts on being an "employer of choice."
- **Partnership Management:** Cultivate critical relationships with state/federal agencies, Tribal governments, and private organizations. Conduct significant advocacy and engagement efforts with federal, state, and local governments.
- **Financial and Personnel Stewardship:** Provide oversight for an annual budget of approximately \$80M and over 700 faculty and staff.

Additional positions pertinent to TWS president position

Assistant Dean and Program Director for the Community, Natural Resource and Economic Development Program (CNRED) and associate professor at the University of Wisconsin | 2014-2016.

- **Vision:** Supported over 100 Extension colleagues focused on natural resources and community development in support of a diverse set of constituents.

- **Partnership:** Collaborated with the College of Natural Resources at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point to support investments in natural resources including wildlife, forestry, land use, and water.
- **Funding:** Allocated additional resources to advance Wisconsin's Master Naturalist Program resulting in significant growth of volunteers and participants.
- **Engagement:** Engaged with County, Town, and League of Municipality Associations to create a network of partners to advance community-based work across Wisconsin.

Chief, Wildlife and Forestry Research Section Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources | 2008 – 2014

- **Research Leadership:** Responsible for 20 research scientists and 15 technicians in the design and implementation of landscape-scale conservation projects including grassland birds, small mammals, fire, landscape ecology, old-growth forests, forest songbirds, waterfowl, deer, bear, grouse, prairies, invasive species, etc.
- **Budget Allocation:** Managed \$3.7 million annually for salaries, competitive grants, and high-priority wildlife and forestry projects.
- **Collaborative Initiatives:** Collaborated with UW-Madison colleagues to develop, implement, and secure long-term funding for SNAPSHOT Wisconsin a geographically distributed network of trail cameras managed by citizen scientists including a crowd sourcing approach to document trail camera photographs.
- **Climate Adaptation:** Co-chaired the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI) Forestry Working Group, co-authored climate related publications, and co-led the initiation of the TWS climate change working group.
- **Strategic Investment:** In collaboration with the UW Madison Department of Wildlife Ecology created a long-term funding mechanism to hire and support a tenured faculty position focused on interaction of climate change and wildlife (resulted in the hiring of Dr. Ben Zuckerberg). Implemented an undergraduate internship program in conjunction with UW Madison and UW Stevens Point.

Research Scientist | 2000 – 2008

- **Forest Research:** Developed a multi-million-dollar research initiative in partnership with UW-Madison, University of Minnesota, and the US Forest Service to create and enhance managed old-growth forests called the Managed Old-Growth Silviculture Study (MOSS).
- **Wildlife Research:** Collaborated with colleagues to implement research projects focused on forest-bird habitat relationships, spruce grouse distribution, wild turkey habitat selection, the impact of overabundant white-tailed deer populations on forests, and flying squirrel habitat-use in northern Wisconsin.

- **Mentorship:** Hired and mentored over 40 employees and students for various wildlife and forestry research projects.
- **Funding:** Secured external grants in support of forest-wildlife research, applied management and student support (graduate and undergraduate).
- **Collaboration:** As an adjunct faculty member in the UW-Madison Forest and Wildlife Ecology Department I collaborated with faculty and staff in support of graduate and undergraduate students, funding proposals, publications, and wildlife management.

IV. Memberships and involvement with TWS at the TWS, Section, and Chapter levels

The Wildlife Society (TWS) Leadership & Service

- **Fellow**, The Wildlife Society (Awarded 2015)
- **Aldo Leopold Memorial Award Committee Member** (2019–2020)
- **Nominations Committee Member** for TWS President (2015–2018)
- **Nominations Committee Member** for Northcentral Section (2016–2019)
- **North Central Section Representative**, TWS Council (2010–2013)
- **Co-Chair**, TWS Climate Change Working Group (2010–2013)
- **Co-Chair**, 20th TWS Annual Conference (Milwaukee 2013)
- **President**, Wisconsin Chapter of TWS (2007–2008)
- **Program Chair**, Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference (2007)
- **Paper Committee Chair**, 12th Annual TWS Conference (Madison 2005)
- **Associate Editor**, *Journal of Wildlife Management* (2002–2004)
- **Program Committee member/moderator**, 9th annual TWS Conference (2002)
- **Certified Wildlife Biologist**, The Wildlife Society (1998)
- **Poster Committee Chair**, 4th Annual TWS Conference (1997)
- **Poster Committee Chair**, 3rd Annual TWS Conference (1996)
- **Active Member**, restarting UW-Madison Student Chapter of TWS (1988–1990)
- **TWS Member**, in good standing since 1988
- **Journal Reviewer:** *Journal of Wildlife Management*, *Wildlife Society Bulletin*, *Forest Science*, *Canadian Journal of Zoology*, *Wilson Journal of Ornithology*, and *Society for Conservation Biology*

Membership with other professional organizations

- **Extension Committee on Policy (ECOP)** (elected in 2024–Present)
 - Chair of the Professional Development Committee
- **National and State Member of Epsilon Sigma Phi (ESP)** (Extension Professional Society (2014–Present))

- **National Association of Community Development Professionals (NACDP)** (2014-2016)
- **American Society of Mammalogy (ASM)** (1992-1995)
- **Ecological Society of America (ESA)** (2001, 2008)
 - Moderator for Paper sessions at The Ecological Society of America (2008)
 - Organizing Committee Member for the Ecological Forestry Conference (2007)

V. Nominee, please provide your answer to the following question (500-word limit):

It is with great enthusiasm, a deep commitment to our profession and strong sense of humility that I submit my name for the position of Vice President of The Wildlife Society (TWS). Having been an active member of TWS for over three decades I have seen firsthand how TWS serves an essential role for professionals and students with a focus on wildlife science, research, management, communications, professional development, and advocacy. TWS has always been my go-to professional association benefiting me as both a student and professional. Being vice president is an opportunity for me to serve this amazing organization by supporting students, professionals, and the natural resources that we have committed to research, manage, and conserve.

I have a long-standing record of service at the chapter, section, and parent society. Notably, I served as the **North Central Section Representative to the TWS Council** (2010–2013), **President of the Wisconsin Chapter of TWS** (2007–2008) and **Associate Editor for the *Journal of Wildlife Management*** (2003-2005). My contributions have been recognized through my selection as a **TWS Fellow** in 2015 and Wisconsin receiving the **TWS Chapter of the Year Award** during my tenure on the executive board.

The vision for TWS should address both long-standing and emerging challenges facing the sound management and stewardship of our wildlife resources in a rapidly changing world. These challenges are evident in the unprecedented pressures many of our wildlife colleagues face regarding their employment, professional qualifications, and the work to which they have dedicated their careers.

At the same time, rapid advances in artificial intelligence present both significant opportunities and new challenges. AI has the potential to transform how we learn, conduct research, educate, and manage wildlife resources and how TWS functions as an organization. Of course, vision must be grounded in fiscal reality and TWS is not immune to those challenges.

As a grassroots, member-driven organization, it is essential for TWS Council to continue providing strong support for our student and professional members while simultaneously advancing strategic initiatives in four key areas:

- **Governmental advocacy and support for our members, policies, and priorities.**
- **Membership diversification and growth, and expansion of member services.**
- **Diversification of funding sources, with a particular emphasis on philanthropy and grants.**
- **Thoughtful development of policies and practices related to the Internal and external use of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies.**

In a time of rapid change, TWS must be both strategic and innovative to effectively serve the profession. Our grassroots foundation makes collaborative leadership essential, and our leaders must actively seek opportunities to engage members in addressing the critical issues facing wildlife professionals today.

Thank you for your time and consideration of me for the position of TWS Vice President. I'm honored to be considered for this important position, and I look forward to the possibility of continuing my service to TWS.

VI. Nominee, please share information about yourself that members should know for selecting the Vice President of TWS (500-word limit).

My love of outdoors started when I was a 5-year-old obsessed with using my BB gun to control European house sparrows on our dairy farm, fishing a nearby river for bass and trout, and cooking maple syrup. This love of the outdoors and specifically wildlife drew me to the wildlife profession and my desire to be part of something bigger than myself to make the future better.

My experiences as a wildlife undergraduate and graduate student, working for a state agency (Wisconsin DNR) as a research scientist and administrator, and working in an academic setting as a faculty member and administrator has provided a broad view of our profession and the many challenges and opportunities we face. As an undergraduate and graduate student, the power and attraction of TWS became obvious with support of my mentors at UW-Madison (Scott Craven and Stan Temple) and Oregon State University (Brenda McComb, Bob Anthony, and Chuck Meslow). TWS student and state chapters created venues to develop lifelong friendships with students, faculty and professionals. This opened my eyes to the diverse and

amazing array of TWS professionals who at their core have dedicated their professional and personal lives to the research, management, and conservation of wildlife.

My graduate work at Oregon State University was focused on small mammals and amphibians which quickly expanded to both game and nongame species when I moved into a research scientist role at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). As a research leader at WDNR my engagement expanded even more into prairie restoration, waterfowl, endangered species, furbearers, habitat restoration, and wildlife contaminant work. Now as an academic administrator, I engage around policies and initiatives that impact natural resources including habitat loss, master naturalist, water quality and quantity, forest management, wildlife damage, and urban wildlife to name a few. My current work also has a focus in the areas of philanthropy, lobbying, leadership, and operations management.

I am eager to leverage these diverse experiences to serve the Professional Society that has been an important part of my life for almost 40 years. To be successful at achieving the TWS mission **“to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitats through science-based management and conservation”** it will be important for TWS to be nimble, responsive, diverse, strategic, collaborative, and innovative. None of us can do this alone, but collectively we can meet our mission through shared leadership, dedication, and passion. My love of wildlife started at an early age and has grown into a servant leadership approach with the goal of making a difference. Lastly, I want to acknowledge and thank you, my TWS colleagues, for your dedication to advancing the work of the wildlife profession - this is not always popular or fun, but your work is so very important.

VII. Please “paste” a recent photograph of the nominee below (in .jpg, .jpeg or .tif format).

