

North American Waterfowl Management Professional Education Plan

Steering Committee

Terms of Reference

Revised May 2, 2022

Waterfowl and wetland management as guided by the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) across this continent arguably is one of the greatest conservation achievements during the 20th and 21st centuries. The NAWMP's history of continued success stems in part from regular updates and revisions, so its implementation remains contemporary and relevant. From the 2018 NAWMP Update, "Effective waterfowl and wetland habitat conservation is driven by the close relationship between management and applied research. The academic programs and institutions producing waterfowl and wetland management professionals have been key to this relationship (Williams and Castelli 2012)."

In the early 2000s, published research revealed that university-based waterfowl and wetlands programs were declining in North America. By 2013, > 40% of these programs were lost after faculty retired or passed, and their positions were not filled with experts in waterfowl and wetlands because of funding limitations or transition toward conservation of biodiversity rather than foci on game species (Kaminski 2013; *The Wildlife Professional*). In 2020, about 30 programs remained across the United States and Canada but none yet in Mexico. Accordingly, the waterfowl community questioned who would educate and produce skilled waterfowl and wetlands scientists and stewards for future generations. To assuage the decline of these university programs, generous conservation philanthropists have endowed eight waterfowl-centric programs in perpetuity across the United States and Canada.

The 2018 NAWMP Update identified a critical need to maintain and expand educational capacity to ensure existence of an appropriately skilled workforce to meet NAWMP conservation goals. . The Update's Recommendation 7 reads, "Bolster training programs for future waterfowl management professionals." Thus, the waterfowl management community promoted efforts on this front, and, in February 2020, the NAWMP Committee endorsed a new initiative termed the North American Waterfowl Professional Education Plan (NAWPEP).

Here we describe the composition and function of the NAWPEP Steering Committee to support the mission of the 2018 NAWMP Update and NAWPEP. This document describes the committee's administrative structure, roles, membership, and responsibilities.

2018 NAWMP Vision

Connecting people, waterfowl, and wetlands.

2018 NAWMP Update Recommendation 7

Bolster training programs for future waterfowl science and management professionals.

NAWPEP Goal

Engage and assist universities, colleges and NAWMP partners with establishing, sustaining, and enhancing academic and experiential programs in waterfowl science and management, in order that sufficient numbers of professionals representing human diversity from across North America are supported, available, and employed to sustain professional capacity and excellence of future waterfowl science and management.

NAWPEP Steering Committee Responsibilities

1. Serve as the primary body to achieve the NAWPEP goal.
2. Actively identify, develop, and coordinate activities in support of objectives identified in the strategic plan.
3. Continuously seek opportunities to leverage resources and partnerships toward achieving NAWPEP goals and objectives.
4. Facilitate appropriate monitoring and assessment of NAWPEP efforts.
5. Actively coordinate activities, identified in the strategic plan, with university, state, federal, nongovernmental partners, and other public-private initiatives involved with compatible activities.
6. Participate in steering committee meetings.
7. Regularly inform, update, and seek to engage colleagues and other stakeholders in conservation education and NAWMP implementation (e.g., university waterfowl faculty and National Association of University Wildlife and Fisheries Programs [NAUWFP], TWS committees and conferences, flyways, joint ventures, NAWMP committees and working groups, North American waterfowl symposia).

NAWPEP Steering Committee Membership

Members are invited by the existing steering committee and will serve no more than 2 consecutive 3-year terms. After 2 consecutive terms followed by 1 or more years of absence, an individual may be invited to rejoin. The committee shall be limited to no more than 15 members.

Characteristics to consider for membership inclusion:

- Members from academia who provide waterfowl and wetlands programs or are knowledgeable about implementing specific objectives and priorities of the strategic plan
- Representation of the waterfowl endowed chairs
- Representatives from each of the 3 NAWMP signatory nations (Canada, Mexico, and the U.S.)
- Representation of racial, ethnic, and gender groups
- One or more persons involved in leading NAWMP implementation
- Persons with experience in hiring agencies and organizations that hire new professionals
- State, provincial, federal, and NGOs engaged directly with waterfowl science and conservation with cross-flyway representation

NAWPEP Steering Committee Leadership

- The steering committee will be led by a volunteer or elected chair or a chair/coordinator who will serve a 2-year term. The chair or chair/coordinator will be nominated and selected by majority vote. There are no term limits.
- The term begins on January 1st.
- Nomination and election occur at the 4th quarter meeting, unless needed sooner to fill an unanticipated vacancy.
- Coordination, administration, and facilitation duties may be handled by the chair, another member, or a nonmember enlisted solely for these duties.
- The chair represents NAWPEP as a member of the NAWMP Integration Steering Committee.

Decision Making

The NAWPEP Steering Committee does not operate by majority rule, or formal voting, but will strive to reach consensus (i.e., no dissenting opinions, all members can live with decision) on all issues while working cooperatively. On issues where the committee does not reach consensus, the chair calls for a recommendation and the decision is made by majority vote of the committee.

Reporting

The steering committee provides an annual NAWPEP update (presentation and document) to the NAWMP Committee and as appropriate to other NAWMP partners. An annual report for the calendar year is finalized by the steering committee by December 31st each year and presented to the NAWMP Committee at its January/February meeting.

Meetings

The Steering Committee meets in person, if possible, once each year, unless decided otherwise by the Steering Committee. Additional meetings are held at least quarterly and be conducted remotely. Other than the annual in-person meeting, the Steering Committee uses teleconferencing, webinars, and other technology to conduct its business whenever possible to reduce annual operational costs.

Funding

All costs of participation in the NAWPEP Steering Committee are covered by the members' respective organizations, unless other funds are available. The Steering Committee is not directly responsible for funding NAWPEP activities; funding sources and the cost-sharing for individual projects are developed by cooperating entities and partners.