

## ASWM Statement on Diversity, Inclusion and Equity

For more than 37 years, the Association of State Wetland Managers (ASWM) has stayed true to its mission to “promote and enhance protection and management of wetland resources, to promote application of sound science to wetland management efforts and to provide training and education for our members and the public.” From ASWM’s inception, one of the goals of the Association as identified by its first Board of Directors, was to “encourage minority participation in wetland protection, restoration and management.” This goal remains important to ASWM, and we will continue to work on this while also recognizing there is much ground to cover.

The reality of racism in this country is not new – the battle for equality has been fought for decades. As scientists, as humans, we cannot look the other way. Science does not discriminate, nor should we. As our colleagues at the Society of Wetlands Scientists so aptly stated:

“Protection and restoration of biodiversity in the natural world must go hand in hand with celebration of human diversity. *Inclusion* is the key to success in our broader community, our science, and conservation of the beautiful - yet vulnerable world - in which we live.”

The Association of State Wetland Managers stands in solidarity with all those fighting systemic racial injustice, those grieving lives lost, and those working to build more diverse and inclusive communities. We are ready to be an active partner in the necessary, long overdue change, and we are committed to doing the work it takes to build more diverse, inclusive and equitable communities.

There is a lot of hard work ahead as we face the pain, anxiety, and uncertainty prevalent throughout our nation. Yet, there is also opportunity to do better. This is the time to ask ourselves, how can we, in the wetland science community, promote and provide better opportunities for all people to join our community of practice? The staff and Board of Directors at ASWM hope you will join us in our efforts to build a bridge of inclusiveness, respect, dignity and hope.