

New DNR Leadership

Secretary and Executive Team

Preston D. Cole, Secretary



Preston D. Cole

Secretary Cole had been a member of the Natural Resources Board since 2007, first appointed by Governor Jim Doyle and then re-appointed for another six-year term by Governor Scott Walker in 2013. Secretary Cole served as NRB chair from 2013-14, where he put an emphasis on making board meetings open for citizens to see online.

Previously, Secretary Cole worked in a government setting as a parks superintendent for the city of St. Louis and a resource forester for the Missouri Department of Conservation. He also served as operations chief for the Milwaukee Department of Public Works and earlier the city forester. Most recently, Secretary Cole was the commissioner of the Milwaukee Department of Neighborhood Services.

Secretary Cole was a proud member of Future Farmers of America in high school. He graduated from the University of Missouri-Columbia with a Bachelor of Science degree in forest management. Secretary Cole supports traditional conservation activities and environmental protection as well as connecting nontraditional audiences with opportunities to get outdoors.

Raised on 15 acres in southwestern Michigan, Secretary Cole hunts ducks, geese and pheasants, and enjoys hiking the state park system with his wife, Laura.

Elizabeth Kluesner, Deputy Secretary



Elizabeth Kluesner

Elizabeth most recently served as DNR's liaison to local and federal government, and has held several positions at DNR, including Business Project Coordinator, 11 years as the agency's Legislative Liaison, and one year as Executive Assistant to Secretary Scott Hassett. She served for 4 1/2 years as Kathleen Falk's Director of Policy and Program Development for Dane County, where her primary duties focused on land acquisition, recreation, land use and transportation planning.

Elizabeth and her family enjoy being active in Wisconsin's outdoors. She has served as President of the Junior League of Madison and as a board member of the Groundswell Conservancy Land Trust. Elizabeth is originally from Madison, Wisconsin, and holds a Bachelor of Science and master's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Todd Ambs, Assistant Deputy Secretary



Todd Ambs

From 2003-2010, Todd was the DNR's Water Division administrator, where he was lead negotiator for the State of Wisconsin during the development of the Great Lakes Compact. Todd has worked in the environmental policy field for more than 30 years, most recently as the campaign director for Healing our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition.

His extensive experience in both state government and nonprofit organizations includes serving as executive director of two statewide river organizations, policy director for the Ohio Attorney General and senior policy analyst for the Wisconsin Department of Justice. Todd graduated from Eastern Michigan University in 1980 with a Bachelor of Science in Political Science/Speech.

Management Team



Sarah Hoyer
Communications Director

Sarah Hoyer is an award-winning journalist with nearly 20 years of field reporting for broadcast, print and digital news. Having reported from nearly every corner of the United States, Sarah has spent her career as a national TV news correspondent and storyteller for media outlets, including Al Jazeera America, CNN, The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and more. Her awards include the Peabody, Knight Digital Media Fellowship at Ohio State University, Women's Media Center's Emerging Journalist Award and a host of others. Sarah, a Milwaukee native, is also a licensed Wisconsin REALTOR®. She received her master's degree from the University of Maryland and Bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.



Scott Loomans
Fish, Wildlife & Parks Division Administrator

Scott Loomans has been named division administrator for the Fish, Wildlife and Parks Division. Scott has been a policy initiatives advisor in the secretary's office, and prior to that worked on policies and rules in the Fish, Wildlife & Parks Division for 11 years. He initially started out in the DNR as an LTE for wildlife management before spending nine years as a staffer with the State Assembly's Natural Resources Committee. Scott majored in journalism at

UW-Stevens Point and lives in the Dane County village of Windsor with his wife Sandra and son Zachary.



Cheryl Heilman
Chief Legal Counsel

Cheryl Heilman has accepted the position of Chief Legal Counsel. Cheryl has been with the department since 2011, and has been serving as a Deputy Chief Counsel in the Bureau of Legal Services. An experienced attorney, Cheryl previously worked for the Minnesota Attorney General's Office, a federal court monitor, a criminal justice nonprofit, a private law firm and as a law clerk to US District Court and Court of Appeals judges. Cheryl is a graduate of the University of Minnesota and received her J.D. cum laude from the University of Minnesota Law School.



Fred Souba
Forestry Division Administrator

I have asked Fred Souba to continue to serve as Administrator of the Division of Forestry and Wisconsin's Chief Forester. Fred was originally appointed to this position in 2016. Prior to that he had an extensive career in the forest industry, including owner and Senior Consultant of ProVision Forestry LLC, Vice President of Wood Supply and Sustainability for NewPage Corporation and served as chair of the Wisconsin Council on Forestry for seven years. Fred graduated from the University of Minnesota with a B.S. in Forest Management and Administration.



Doug Haag
Internal Services Division Administrator

Doug Haag has also agreed to continue serving as Administrator for the Division of Internal Services. Doug began working for DNR in 1986, served as Chief of the Real Estate Section and then Real Estate Director prior to his appointment as Division Administrator in 2016. He also worked for Dane County Parks Department from 1990 to 2000. Doug has a B.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in Geography.



Darsi Foss
Environmental Management Division Administrator

Darsi Foss has been named division administrator for the Environmental Management Division. Darsi has been the director of the Remediation and Redevelopment Program since 2014, and served as the RR Program's Brownfields Section chief from 1998-2014. Prior to coming to the DNR in 1989, she worked at EPA headquarters in Washington, D.C., as a policy analyst and presidential management intern. Darsi has a Bachelor of Science degree in political science and a Master's degree in public administration from Iowa State University. She lives in Madison with her husband Matt and enjoys watching her three adult daughters Kelsey, MacKenzie and Madison explore the world.



Dave Siebert
External Services Division Administrator

Dave Siebert has been named division administrator for the External Services Division. Dave has been the director of the Environmental Analysis and Sustainability Program since 2004, where he focused on a number of environmental issues, including environmental impact analyses, complex project reviews, energy and utility projects and social science research. Dave has been with DNR for over 27 years. Prior to that he worked for U.S. EPA in their Region 5 office in Chicago, working on environmental analysis of federally-funded wastewater projects.

He has a Bachelor of Science degree in environmental science from Bowling Green State University and a Master of Science degree in water resources management from UW-Madison. Dave lives in Madison with his wife Sarah, daughter Olivia, two cats and a big goofy dog.



Eric Ebersberger
Interim Budget Director

I have asked Eric Ebersberger to serve as the interim director for the DNR Office of Management & Budget. Eric's public service experience goes back more than 25 years, including working as deputy administrator in the Environmental Management Division, as chief of the Water Use Section within the Bureau of Drinking Water and Groundwater, as an analyst and manager in the Bureau of Management and Budget and as an attorney in the Bureau of Legal Services. Most recently, Eric has worked as the Foxconn project manager for the Secretary's Office. Eric will help guide us through the always challenging state biennial budget process in 2019.



Ben Van Pelt
Legislative Liaison

Ben Van Pelt has accepted the position of DNR Legislative Liaison. Ben most recently worked for the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association, where he served as the director of community advocacy and the director of government relations. He also served as an aide in the Wisconsin State Legislature, starting in 2012, and worked for State Senator Julie Lassa from 2013-2016.



Todd Schaller, director, Bureau of Law Enforcement

Todd Schaller continues as chief warden. The Bureau of Law Enforcement is home to the Conservation Warden Service. The Warden Service performs the law enforcement function within DNR and is dedicated to protecting the people and natural resources of Wisconsin. The warden service also works cooperatively with other law enforcement agencies at the local, state and federal level on a variety of law enforcement and emergency response initiatives. We protect, enhance and promote public safety and our natural resources through enforcement, education and community involvement, and encourage everyone to be stewards of our natural resources on behalf of future generations

Secretary's (Regional) Directors

Southern Wisconsin



Mark Aquino

Phone: 608-275-3262

Work Station: Fitchburg Service Center

Counties served: Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green, Grant, Iowa, Jefferson, Lafayette, Richland, Rock and Sauk.

Mark Aquino, a manager at DNR since 2001, was named south central region director in October 2011. Aquino started his career with the state in 1988 as a management analyst at the Legislative Audit Bureau. In 1997, he was promoted to chief of the Department of Transportation's strategic issues section and he came to DNR in 2001 as land services team leader. He was promoted to south central region land leader in 2005 and deputy land division administrator in 2009. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in political science and economics from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville.

Southeastern Wisconsin



Joe Liebau Jr.

Phone: 414-263-8570

Work Station: Milwaukee Service Center

Counties served: Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Sheboygan, Walworth, Washington, Waukesha.

Joe Liebau Jr. was named southeast secretary's director in September 2016. Before coming to the DNR, Joe worked for WasteCap Resource Solutions for 8 years. During that time he worked as business manager, project manager and executive director. Previous to that Joe worked for Brown County in their Hazardous Waste Department.

Joe grew up working and enjoying life on a small dairy farm in Chilton, Wisconsin. He graduated from St. Norbert's with a Bachelor of Arts degree and earned a Master's in Public Administration from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Outside of work, Joe enjoys volunteering for nonprofits and served as Vice-Chair on the Wisconsin Council on Recycling that helped to inform and support the legislature on recycling initiatives. When he can he will try to get away to his woods in northern Wisconsin to hunt or travel abroad to see more of the world.

Western Wisconsin



Dan Baumann

Phone: 715-839-3722

Work Station: Eau Claire Service Center

Counties served: Adams, Buffalo, Chippewa, Clark, Crawford, Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Marathon, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, Portage, St. Croix, Trempealeau, Vernon and Wood.

Dan Baumann started his DNR career in 1992 with the dam safety and floodplain programs. Dan was reassigned in 1996 as a water management engineer out of La Crosse and in 2000, he was selected to be the basin leader for the Bad Axe-La Crosse Basin. Dan was promoted to the regional water leader position in November 2003 and began working out of Eau Claire. Since 2012, he has been secretary's director for the 19 counties of west central Wisconsin.

Dan earned a degree in civil and environmental engineering from UW Madison and holds his professional engineer certification. Dan retired from active duty and National Guard service in 2002, specializing in reconnaissance and combat engineering. Dan is a native of Muscoda, where he grew up working on a dairy farm and spent lots of time on the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway. In his spare time, Dan enjoys hunting, fishing and trapping as well as spending time doing anything outdoors. Dan, his wife and three daughters live in Eau Claire.

Northern Wisconsin



James Yach

Phone: 608-218-0711

Work Station: Rhinelander Service Center

Counties served: Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Polk, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor, Washburn, Florence, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Oneida, Vilas.

James Yach comes to the DNR from the Department of Workforce Development where he was a district director before being named the DNR's northern region secretary's director in July of 2017. Prior to joining the State of Wisconsin, James retired from the United States Navy after serving on active duty for over 20 years as a Naval Aviator at multiple duty stations across the country and abroad.

A Wisconsin native, James was born and raised in Stevens Point and has a degree in Business Administration from the University of San Diego. He currently resides in Tomahawk with his wife Shelain and two of their three children, with their eldest attending UW-Stout. James is an avid outdoorsman who enjoys all outdoor activities and spending time at their lakefront property in Presque Isle, though his great passion is musky fishing.

Northeastern Wisconsin



Jean Romback-Bartels

Phone: 920-662-5114

Work Station: Green Bay Service Center

Counties served: Brown, Calumet, Door, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marinette, Marquette, Menominee, Oconto, Outagamie, Shawano, Waupaca, Waushara and Winnebago.

Jean Romback-Bartels was appointed northeast director on Oct. 16, 2011. She started her career with DNR in 1993 as a limited-term employee wildlife technician at Horicon Marsh Wildlife Area and full-time park ranger later that year at Blue Mound State Park. She was promoted through a number of jobs including manager at Potawatomi State Park (1997), land and forestry basin Leader in Shawano (2001) and regional land leader in northeast Wisconsin (2002.)

Jean holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in wildlife and biology, and a minor in natural resources management (1989.) In her spare time she enjoys life with her husband Dave and her array of animals, including chows, cats and laying hens. Jean is an avid angler and deer hunter and enjoys canning fruits and vegetables.