

BALLOT

Candidates for the Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Prescribed Fire Council February 2023

The membership must submit their votes for eight WPFC Board candidates during the 2023 annual WPFC Winter Council Meeting to be held on **Wednesday, February 15, from 3:00-5:30 PM Central Via Zoom.**

If you would like to vote and will *not* be attending the meeting, you can return your ballot prior to **Tuesday, February 14th 8:00 PM Central** via email to Jim Elleson jim@hickoria.com or Jeb Barzen jeb@privatelandconservation.org.

The Board voted in October to amend our Bylaws to increase the maximum number of Directors from 10 to 14. Four current Directors' terms are expiring and are recommended to be returned to the Board. Four additional candidates are also standing for election. Only WPFC members are eligible to vote for and nominate Board of Directors.

The Nominating Committee recommends the following slate of candidates for the Board:

___ Jim Elleson, *Incumbent Director, current Secretary and Standards Committee Chair* – Senior Consultant, Quercus Land Stewardship Services

Since founding Quercus Land Stewardship Services in 2003, Jim Elleson has led nearly 500 burns covering over 12,000 acres. He has been active with the Wisconsin Prescribed Fire Council since its inception.

___ John Schwingel, *Incumbent Director* – Wisconsin Fire Manager, The Nature Conservancy

John Schwingel has been involved in wildland fire for almost 40 years dating back to his college days at UWSP Fire Crew. He has worked seasonally for the Bureau of Land Management as a wildland engine crew member, 20+ years as a volunteer structural firefighter and more recently 30 year career with the WDNR Division of Forestry having held multiple positions from Forestry Technician to Area Leader working in fire management and serving as crew to burn boss on several burns and Incident Commander on multiple events from wildland fires, search and rescues and advisory to local emergency services in tornado responses in central and northwest Wisconsin. Still today with TNC as a burn crew member to burn boss enjoying the challenges as he hones his skills in good fire.

___ Stephanie Judge, *Incumbent Director* – Conservation Director, Driftless Area Land Conservancy

Stephanie Judge joined DALC in 2022 after nearly 15 years with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) where she worked with landowners to acquire conservation interests in land that expanded protection for populations of native species and natural communities across Wisconsin. Steph remains a long-time member of TNC's burn crew and she's honed her land management experience over the years by leading large landscape-scale restoration projects of fire-dependent systems including prairies, wetlands and savannas.

___ Lee Jensen, *Incumbent Director* – Fire Management Officer for the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest.

Lee Jensen has spent time burning with private outfits in WI, non-government organizations like TNC, multiple states like Idaho, Wisconsin, North Dakota, Nebraska, Oregon, Washington and Montana, and all federal entities. His education started with a bachelor's from Stevens Point followed by a master's from Idaho. Lee considers himself uniquely poised to offer new perspective on politics, funding, certification, and evolving land ethics

___ Sara Kehrli, *New Director* – Wildlife Biologist, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Sara Kehrli is a field wildlife biologist working for the Wisconsin DNR. She has been the Columbia Co. wildlife biologist since 2007 and began doing prescribed burns the same year. Through the years, Sara has burned thousands of acres and has worked her way up to the level of "burn boss". Sara specializes in burning oak systems and grasslands. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her friends and family, spending time outdoors, reading and playing Sheepshead.

___ Vern Northrup, *New Director* – Retired wildland firefighter, Fond Du Lac Band of Ojibwe

Vern Northrup is a visual storyteller, educator, interpreter, and a retired wildland firefighter with the Fond Du Lac Band of Ojibwe in Minnesota. He shares his knowledge and cultural perspective of fire, from the spirit of fire to the practice of controlled burns.

___ Michael Tiller, *New Director* – Assistant Professor of Forest Ecology, UW Stevens Point

Mike Tiller has held fire management positions with Cal Fire and the Texas A&M Forest Service where he had the opportunity to conduct prescribed burns in both forest and rangeland ecosystems. His academic career began at Texas A&M University with a B.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Science followed by a M.S. and Ph. D in Forestry at Stephen F. Austin State University. Mike is currently an Assistant Professor at UW-Stevens Point

where he manages the wildland fire certificate program and co-advises the UWSP Fire Crew.

___ **Ronald Waukau, *New Director* – Forest Manager, Menominee Tribal Enterprises**

Ron Waukau has had a long career at Menominee Tribal Enterprises. Ron has served multiple appointments across Menominee forest management and Fire management activities for Menominee Tribal Enterprises prior to becoming Forest Manager.

You may also vote for someone not on the nominating committee's slate.

Write in Candidate: _____

Incumbent Matt Smith resigned from the Board in August 2022. Thanks, Matt, for your years of service!

Continuing Board Members:

- Jeb Barzen, Chair – Private Lands Conservation, LLC.
- Nathan Holoubek, Vice Chair – Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Clay Frazer, Treasurer – Native Range Ecological/Pheasants Forever
- Alison Duff, Director – USDA-ARS
- Cory Gritzmacher, Director – Mequon Nature Preserve
- UWSP Fire Crew Executive Team, Director(s) – UW-Stevens Point