

# Dept. of Natural Resources: Secretary-designee Payne makes leadership team appointments

Posted on Thursday, Jan 5, 2023

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**MADISON, Wis.** – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Secretary-Designee Adam N. Payne today announced appointments to his leadership team.

Sarah Barry will continue to serve as Deputy Secretary. Barry has more than 20 years of experience meeting the complex challenges inherent in public sector organizations. She also spent 15 years as the Chief of Staff to several state senators, including most recently Sen. Brad Pfaff, and providing guidance and leadership on numerous environmental policy and regulatory issues. Barry holds a master's degree from the Robert M. La Follette School of Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh.

Steven Little will continue to serve as Assistant Deputy Secretary. Little brings more than 25 years of public policy, executive budget management, financial regulatory and government relations experience in both the public and private sector to Secretary Payne's leadership team. Prior to accepting an appointment as the Director of Management and Budget for the DNR, Little was a Senior Vice President of Government Relations for Citigroup Inc., with a focus on state government relations in the Upper Midwest. He holds a master's degree from the Robert M. La Follette School of Public Affairs at UW-Madison and received his undergraduate degree in Government from Beloit College.

Cheryl Heilman will continue to serve as Chief Legal Counsel. Heilman has been with the DNR since 2011 and previously served as a deputy chief counsel in the Bureau

of Legal Services. An experienced attorney, she previously worked for the Minnesota Attorney General's Office, a federal court monitor, a criminal justice non-profit, a private law firm and as a law clerk to U.S. District Court and Court of Appeals judges. Heilman is a graduate of the University of Minnesota and received her J.D. cum laude from the University of Minnesota Law School.

Sean Kennedy will continue to serve as Legislative Liaison, a position he was originally appointed to in November 2019. Kennedy has a background in government affairs and environmental policy. He previously advised legislators and oversaw State Capitol office operations as staff to several state representatives. Kennedy holds a master's degree from the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at UW-Madison and received his undergraduate degree in Political Science, also from UW-Madison.

Katie Grant has been appointed to serve as Communications Director. Grant began working in the DNR's award-winning Office of Communications in August 2018, serving as Digital Communications Section Manager since 2020. She got her start in communications through her own business of teaching coaches how to build their social media presence and has worked in various industries including non-profit events, restaurants and grocery stores. She is currently serving as vice president and Midwest representative for Government Social Media Leadership Council and has a Bachelor of Arts from UW-Madison in Spanish Language and Hispanic Studies.

Jim Zellmer has been named Administrator of the Division of Environmental Management. Zellmer has served as the Deputy Division Administrator since 2016, overseeing the Water Programs within the division. Zellmer brings more than 35 years of experience working in a variety of positions during his career, all of it spent at the DNR, except for a short period serving in the U.S. Army. Zellmer's education includes a bachelor's degree in Water Resources from University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and a master's in Civil and Environmental Engineering from UW-Madison.

Ann Kipper has been named Administrator of the Division of External Services. Based in Rhinelander, Kipper has 30 years of experience in the environmental and natural resources fields, joining the External Services Division as the Deputy Administrator in April 2018. In addition to her time at the DNR, she has spent time in the private sector and at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation working in a variety of environmental positions. Kipper has a bachelor's degree in Geography/Geology from UW-Stevens Point.

Diane Brusoe has been named Administrator of the Division of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. She has served as the Deputy Administrator for the division since May 2020. Brusoe's DNR career started as an LTE in 1998 after receiving a Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning from UW-Madison and a bachelor's degree from UW-Stevens Point.

Heather Berklund will continue to serve as Administrator of the Division of Forestry and Wisconsin's Chief Forester. Based in Rhinelander, Berklund was appointed as the first female Chief State Forester in October 2020. During her 22 years at the DNR, she has held various roles in all aspects of forest and fire management. She is involved in numerous statewide, regional and national forestry-related policy committees and initiatives. She earned a bachelor's in forestry from UW-Stevens Point.

Tim Cooke will continue to serve as Administrator of the Division of Internal Services. Beginning in 2016, Cooke served as Internal Services Deputy Division Administrator until he was appointed to the role of Internal Services Division Administrator in 2019. Cooke began his career in the DNR's Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation in 2001 and has also spent time working in the Remediation & Redevelopment Program. From 2014-2016, he served as the department's Continuous Improvement Director, leading Lean process improvement efforts and serving as chair of the Operations Management Team. Cooke holds a B.S. in Economics with a certificate in Environmental Studies from UW-Madison.

In addition to the above, the DNR's Secretary's Directors will continue to serve within their respective regions, acting as the department's eyes, ears and voice throughout the state, ensuring prompt attention to local issues and improved responsiveness to opportunities. They include:

*Northeastern Wisconsin* - Jean Romback-Bartels

*Southern Wisconsin* - Mark Aquino

*Southeastern Wisconsin* - Mike Thompson

*Western Wisconsin* - Dan Baumann

*Northern Wisconsin* - James Yach