

HELLO FROM ILLINIOS!

A message from the incoming president

By Vickie Broomhead, Illinois

Hello from Illinois! I am Vickie Broomhead, your NASLR President for the 2023-2024 term. I have been in the regulatory field in one capacity or another for the past 28 years – the last 17 years I have been the Senior Hydrogeologist for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Office of Mines and Minerals, Land Reclamation Division (the Title V program). I have been a member of NASLR for years, but only got actively involved after I attended the 2019 Conference.

We have just wrapped up a successful annual conference in Altoona, Pennsylvania – thanks to Past-President Scot May, the staff of Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection and the Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation. I hope that those in-person attendees enjoyed the conference, field trip, banquet, networking and social opportunities, as much as I did. To those virtual attendees, thank you for your participation and we hope to see you in-person at our next conference.

Your new NASLR Executive Committee – Past-President Scot May, Vice-President Tyler Straight, Secretary/Treasurer Simone Rodriguez and Members Shawna Riddle and Kristi Dodson along with the Public Relations and Education Outreach Committee (PRE) – Jeff Meitrott (Chairperson) (PA), Shawna Riddle (NC), Kevin Brown (IL), Tom Rigley (NY), Psalm Wycoff (NY), Ashlon Wasko (AR) and Jamie Brown (OSMRE), all work behind the scenes to help NASLR function and move forward all year long, not just for the conference. Please reach out to me or any committee member with questions or concerns. This is YOUR organization and we're always open to new participants, new members and new ideas!

My goals for my short term as President are to formalize those behind the scenes actions the organization undertakes – outreach for Scholarships, Awards and Membership, putting together the newsletter, and reviewing and updating the Constitution, By-Laws and Policies to reflect where we are today as an organization. I have big shoes to fill from the actions of the past officers. I hope I can do justice to the office of President.

NASLR began in Illinois in 1972, 52 years later Illinois will be hosting the 2024 Annual Conference where we hope you will join us, under our theme of *Reclamation to Recreation* where we hope to highlight some of the former coal-mined lands that have been converted to popular public recreation spaces in the Land of Lincoln. It's a true testament to the professionalism and commitment of the numerous volunteers over the last 52 years that NASLR is still a viable, functioning organization. We also need to recognize that some of the Committee members have served in their respective roles for a long time and eventually, someone new will need to step into those roles – and we need a plan in place for that to occur. Being near the end of my "first" career, I'm cognizant of the fact that change happens whether we want it to or not, so I want to ensure that all aspects of this great organization of State Land Reclamationists can continue for another 50+ years with as little interruption to the service you've all become accustomed to.

Finally, I look forward to engaging conversations with you regarding all aspects of mining and reclamation. We should all use this platform to share our successes and failures to help promote the great work that has and is occurring across our member states, to show others that we are not your "typical state worker" and we are out there everyday putting in the work to not only keep our respective states economy running, but we are doing our due diligence to ensure that the environment is being duly protected and mining operations are conducted in the most viable, responsible way possible.

