



# Meet Jeffrey Peterson

**Jeffrey Peterson, PhD**

Director, University of Minnesota Water Resources Center

Professor, Department of Applied Economics

University of Minnesota

612-624-9282

[jmpeter@umn.edu](mailto:jmpeter@umn.edu)

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Jeffrey Peterson is the Director of the University of Minnesota's Water Resources Center, a partnership of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences and University of Minnesota Extension. As Director, he provides overall leadership for the center's research, Extension, and education activities involving faculty and students across the university. He also holds a faculty appointment as a professor in the Department of Applied Economics. He earned his Ph.D. from Cornell University in agricultural and resource economics. Prior to coming to Minnesota, he held a faculty position in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Kansas State University for 15 years, where he was Director of Graduate Studies from 2014 to 2015. He is the recipient of national awards for his research on environmental policy analysis, focusing on water use and water quality impacts from agriculture.

***"How do you plan on advancing UCOWR's mission of leading in education, research and public service in water resources?"***

I have been part of UCOWR as a longtime delegate and this year, as conference chair, I had the opportunity to interact more closely with its leaders and executive office. Everything I see tells me that UCOWR is a vibrant and well-run organization on a healthy trajectory. The best ways to advance UCOWR's mission, I believe, are to capture strategic opportunities that build on current strengths.

One such opportunity is to build on UCOWR's partnership with the National Institutes for Water Resources (NIWR). As a state water center director, I have been pleased to see the synergistic relationship between UCOWR and NIWR develop further in recent years. I would plan to work with my colleagues in NIWR to organize special sessions at the UCOWR/NIWR annual conference and plan other activities that would benefit the UCOWR community while also giving NIWR more exposure among water resources professionals. The NIWR network would be well-positioned to host sessions on: (a) federal science priorities and opportunities for government-university collaboration, (b) successful approaches for researchers to engage stakeholders, and (c) skill-building workshops on academic leadership, project management, communication with policymakers, and cross-disciplinary teambuilding.

Another opportunity is to expand the reach of UCOWR by attracting new participants from geographies and disciplines that are currently not as well represented. From my vantage point in the Midwest, for example, I perceive that there are many water researchers and educators in our region who are not yet familiar with UCOWR but could benefit from its programs. Similarly, in sessions I attend at UCOWR and elsewhere, the need for social science expertise to address water issues is often called for but social scientists are not well represented at these meetings. I would work through professional networks to be an ambassador for UCOWR, promote its programs and benefits, and find targeted ways to invite participation from new groups. Specific activities to involve new participants include conference special sessions, special issues or solicited articles in JCWRE, and UCOWR-hosted webinar series.