

# Alaska Wilderness League chooses scientist as new director

By Heather Richards

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An oceanographer with a career exploring the Arctic has been chosen to lead the Alaska Wilderness League following the untimely death last year of its previous director.

Peter Winsor joins the league from the World Wildlife Fund, where he served as Global Arctic Programme director for three years. Born in Sweden, Winsor began his career in the U.S. as a scientist specializing in the Arctic at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and later worked as a professor at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

“I am deeply connected to these landscapes and experience daily the rapid changes that Alaska is now undergoing and am excited and honored to join Alaska Wilderness League to safeguard these globally important ecosystems for generations to come,” Winsor said in a statement released today by the Alaska Wilderness League.

Winsor takes the place of the league’s longtime director Adam Kolton, who died of cancer last year at age 52 ([Greenwire](#), Apri. 27, 2021).

Kolton, and by extension the Alaska Wilderness League, had been a leading voice in environmental debates about the American Arctic for many years, helping guide campaigns like the opposition to drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Winsor moved to the U.S. in 2002, after earning a doctorate in Arctic sea ice and oceanography at the University of Gothenburg. He took a post as a scientist at Woods Hole and taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology under the institutions' joint program in oceanography, applied ocean science and engineering.

In 2008, Winsor joined the faculty at University of Alaska, Fairbanks, where he founded the Coastal Community Ocean Observers program, according to a release from the Alaska Wilderness League.

He’s been the chief scientist for large expeditions in the Arctic and Antarctica, and he has served on advisory boards for NOAA and NASA, according to the press release.

During his years at WWF, Winsor was the group’s representative to the Arctic Council, a consortium of countries whose borders extend into the Arctic, including the U.S., Sweden and Russia.

Pat Pourchot, the Alaska Wilderness League’s board president, said Winsor brings to the director position a long history of learning from Alaska Native people, in addition to his other expertise.

“Peter has forged deep relationships with Alaska Native communities across the state and understands not only the critical role Indigenous peoples have played for thousands of years in stewarding the land and wildlife, but also the unique challenges they’re facing today,” he said.