

Melissa (Lissa) Pawlisch

EDUCATION

**Hubert H. Humphrey
Institute**, 2003

Masters of Science in
Science, Technology and
Environmental Policy

Macalester College, 1997
Bachelor of Arts in
Geology, Minor in Spanish

KEY SKILLS

- 20+ years of work in the clean energy space
- 20+ years of relationship building with communities and energy stakeholders
- 20+ years project and program management
- Skilled at team building and personnel management across staff, contractors, and volunteer network
- Strong track record of securing funding and managing budgets
- Skilled public speaker; able to communicate technical information in accessible ways to variety of audiences

PROFESSIONAL & RELATED EXPERIENCE

Minnesota Department of Commerce

Energy Development Office Director. March 2023 to Present.

Lead the Energy Development Section of the Minnesota Department of Commerce, guiding, supporting, and overseeing the Clean Technology Deployment, Emerging Energy Technologies, Energy Environmental Review and Analysis, Energy Market Transformation, and Resource Acquisition and Distribution units, to accelerate equitable, affordable, resilient, and reliable clean energy deployment.

Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships and Extension, University of Minnesota

Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) Director. June 2011 to March 2023.

CERTs Program Coordinator. 2003-2011.

Provide overall leadership to CERTs, a unique program partnership designed to connect individuals and communities to the resources they need to identify and implement community-based clean energy projects. As Director, guide overall partnership strategy; work to instill core value of community-driven focus toward clean energy in staff, steering committees, students and project partners; work directly with communities to understand their energy options, the values that drive their project engagement, methods to deploy technologies and practices, and approaches to harness their capacity to effect change. Specific efforts include:

- Guide program development, strategic planning, goal setting and evaluation to refine programmatic approaches and assess program effectiveness
- Connect CERTs program partners (four distinct organizations) and ensure effective collaboration
- Hire, train and mentor statewide staff and team of regional coordinators in each of seven regions; includes supervising internal staff and managing both partner contracts and independent contractors
- Work closely with Commerce staff on efforts ranging from energy education, energy efficiency with government units, and engaging low-income communities in solar

- Work with Regional Steering Committees (90+ volunteers) to assess regional priorities to spur energy efficiency and renewable energy adoption, including through seed grants; host monthly webinars to educate members on emergent opportunities
- Lead CERTs joint fundraising efforts and serve as Principal Investigator for majority of CERTs projects and grants (~\$1 million/year) including for both Federal and State funds.
- Convene topic-focused work groups and teams to advance collaborative work on topics such as solar and agricultural lands, wind and solar siting, utility peer-to-peer learning

Retec Consulting Corporation.

Geologist 1997–1999. Project Manager 1999–2002.

St. Paul, MN

Key Examples include:

Former Manufactured Gas Plant Site, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1999-2001. Developed cost estimates, assisted budget management, coordinated project planning. Managed investigation and remedial planning stages of project (in Puerto Rico). Presented technical data during meetings with regulatory agency and clients.

Active Thermal Power Plants, Panama City and Colon, Panama, 1999-2001. Led and performed field investigation activities at three power plants. Managed ambient air monitoring program. Wrote reports summarizing all investigation results and developed conclusions based on data analysis. Evaluated and recommended remediation alternatives for two sites. Presented investigation results and mitigation methods to client and plant managers (in English and Spanish).

SERVICE ACTIVITIES AND AFFILIATIONS

Happy Dancing Turtle Board Member (2021-present). Happy Dancing Turtle is a Pine River based 501c3 dedicated to growing good stewards of the planet.

Institute on the Environment Fellow. 2018-present. Served on Energy Transition Lab strategic planning committee and energy-connected hiring committees. Participate in crafting joint proposals and recruiting community partners.

Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) Board member (2015-2021), Secretary (2017-2021). MREA is Midwest renewable energy workforce training focused organization.

National Extension Energy Initiative workgroup. 2017-2018. Co-developed a paper entitled, “National Energy Education Needs and Priorities: A Roadmap for the Cooperative Extension System” to be shared with US Department of Energy.

Cooperative Energy Futures Board Member. (2008-2011). CEF is a 403(b) co-op, that envisions a future where people own, manage, and use clean energy systems for collective benefit.