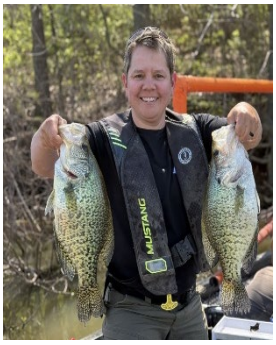
Candidates for Board of Directors

Brian Canaday - Brian has been a member of the Conservation Employees Credit Union for over 30 years, and he currently serves the citizens of Missouri as the Statewide Resource Management Branch Chief at the Missouri Department of Conservation. He and his wife Bridget founded *Word of Mouth Catering* in Ashland, Missouri in 2004 and are the current co-owner/operators. When not working, Brian enjoys wood working, fishing, and spending time outdoors on the lake with family.

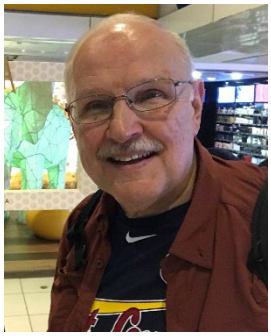
Brian Ham - Protection Branch Major/Programs Supervisor Brian Ham has been a joint member of CECU since 1994. He started working for MDC out of college as a part-time Hourly employee for Wildlife Division in 1993 and then was accepted to and graduated from the 1996 Agent Training Academy. Brian and his family utilize CECU for their financial needs. In his spare time, he enjoys fishing for large catfish, shooting sports and spending time with family and friends.



Denise C. Otto – Denise began her career with the Department in 2003 as a Special Projects Assistant, cataloging bee specimens for the STL Region Natural History Biologist. In 2005, She transferred to Fisheries Division, where She developed the GO FISH! Program—an initiative that has since grown into today's Discover Nature – Fishing Program. In 2011, Denise was promoted to Fisheries Biologist and currently manages more than 50 lakes and several streams across the STL Region. This year marks her 20th year as a proud member of CECU. The Credit Union has been an incredible partner over the years, always going above and beyond to help me and my family whenever we've needed assistance. As a dedicated and engaged member who resolutely believes in what this organization represents, she has a strong desire to give back; it would be an honor and a privilege to serve on the Board of Directors and represent my fellow CECU members.

Paul Lepper – Paul is the Information Technology Infrastructure Supervisor with the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), where he has been employed for nine years. In his role, he oversees critical IT infrastructure, ensuring reliable and secure technology operations that support the department's mission. He has been a proud member of the Conservation Employees Credit Union (CECU) for approximately five years. His experience with CECU has been outstanding, and the professionalism and dedication of the individuals he has encountered—both personally and professionally—have been of the highest standards. Beyond his professional life, he enjoys spending time at Pomme De Terre Lake camping during the summer, indulging in great BBQ, and creating lasting memories with his grandkids. Paul states serving as a member of the CECU Board would be an honor. He is committed to upholding the high standards that make CECU an exceptional institution and would work diligently to support the interests of both current and future members. Paul believes it would be a privilege to contribute to the continued success and integrity of CECU.

Samantha Mueller – Samantha currently serves as the Branch Office Manager for the Science Branch within the Missouri Department of Conservation in Jefferson City. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Columbia College and a Master of Business Administration from William Woods University. With more than 25 years of experience in the customer service industry, including over two decades in state government, she brings a strong background in leadership, communication, and organizational management. Since joining MDC in 2021, she has focused on fostering collaboration, improving efficiency, and supporting both team and community goals. Outside of work, she is actively involved in her community as a Girl Scout Leader for Troop 70178 in Wardsville, Missouri. Samantha enjoys camping, hiking, event planning, swimming, and spending quality time with her family. Samantha would be honored to serve on the Credit Union Board of Directors and contribute her experience, professionalism, and commitment to advancing the interests of our members—both current and future. Thank you for considering my candidacy.

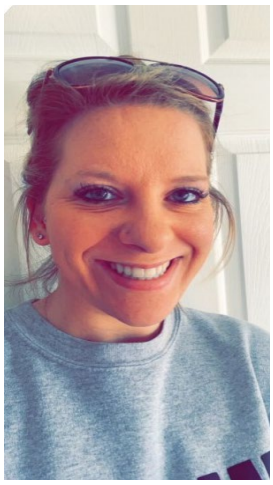


Larry Yamnitz - Protection retiree Larry Yamnitz has been a member of CECU since 1980, when he began employment with MDC. He retired from MDC in 2018. Larry served three terms on the Board of Directors beginning in 2000. He served as board chair during the construction of the current CECU building. Larry is currently completing his third term. Larry and his family continue utilizing CECU for their financial needs. Larry continues working part time as a contractor for the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Law Enforcement as a leadership coach and mentor for their Training and Development Unit. He also serves as an elder at his church in Jefferson City.

Candidates for Supervisory Committee

Melanie Crane – Melanie is a recent retiree from the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), where she most recently served as the Chief Budget Officer immediately preceding her retirement, as well as the Budget Manager for many years prior. She had worked for MDC for over 25 years before her retirement. Melanie has an incredible breadth of budget and financial skills, in addition to her professional distinction as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA-retired), with over 31 years of experience in accounting. She earned her Master's in Business Administration and a B.A. in Accounting from William Woods University. With an exceptional career in budget and accounting, Melanie would apply her wealth of experience in financial strategy, budgeting, and accounting to ensure the Conservation Employees Credit Union continues a commitment to financial success for its members. Melanie lives with her husband, Kirby, in Jefferson City, MO, where she was born and raised.

Nelson Dunn – Nelson is a Reporting and Analytics Specialist for the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), where his primary focus is on managing the Department's Reporting environment. He has worked for MDC for 10 years, starting on May 1st, 2015, he first started as a helpdesk technician for a year, then as an Application Developer for 6 years and has been in his current role for 3 years. Before coming to MDC, Nelson earned his associate's degree at State Tech in Computer Science. Nelson lives with his wife, Amber, here in Jefferson City, MO with their son August. Nelson brings a diverse skillset that he has developed over his career at MDC. A few being, understanding and breaking down complex systems, attention to detail, and creativity with solutions to reporting needs within the department's various branches.



Valerie Matherne - Valerie grew up in the St. Louis area and Jefferson City. She finally settled her roots during her early years of high school with her dad. She met her husband (Joey) in science class when they got paired for a project together. They both graduated from Jefferson City High School in 2007 and were married in June 2008. This year they celebrated our 17th wedding anniversary. She is a proud wife of a law enforcement officer and mother of three beautiful girls, Rylie (18), Lilyana (16) and Paisley (7), all who keep me on my toes! I started my career at the Motor Vehicles License office in Jefferson City while she worked towards obtaining her Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) License. Once becoming a certified EMT, she spent several years working on an ambulance and at a local emergency room. For fifteen years she worked at Cole County Emergency Medical Service as an EMT/Administrative Assistant before leaving the crazy schedule of the medical field behind to spend more time with family as they welcomed their surprise baby. Valerie joined Missouri Department of Conservation in 2019 as an Administrative Assistant in Conservation Business Services, Fleet Services. Her extensive knowledge of motor vehicle license/registration regulations and laws helped her transition to the role in which she currently serves. Valerie is genuinely blessed to have the opportunity to do work she loves with a wonderful group of people who support her both personally and professionally.

Alex Prentice – Alex has been a CECU Member since 2011 when he started working for the Department as a Fisheries Technician and later as the Fisheries Information Systems Manager. He now serves as IT Project Supervisor, in the IT Branch. A great part of my job is the engagement with staff; learning about the programs we offer and supporting their work through IT projects. Alex lives in Columbia with his wife, Ellie, and their kids Aldo (10) and Norah (7). They enjoy hiking, camping, hunting and fishing in their spare time. Alex looks forward to serving CECU Members on the Supervisory Committee!

Matt Vitello - Matt has been a Policy Coordinator with the Missouri Department of Conservation for nine years. Matt has a Masters in Geological Engineering and is a Professional Engineer. As a Policy Coordinator, Matt works on a variety of topics with a focus on large river policy, representing MDC on multiple Mississippi River committees. Matt began his career at the Missouri Department of Natural Resources in the Water Resources Center, modeling dam failures and working on Missouri River policy. When not at work Matt enjoys the outdoors - canoeing, hiking and camping - with his wife, nine-year-old son, and newly arrived daughter.

Shaun Zimmerman - Ever since becoming a member of the Conservation Employees Credit Union in 1998, Shaun says he has never had a bad experience with them; they have always offered high-quality customer care and offered the best possible services to us as members. He would love to serve on the CECU Supervisory Committee to help ensure that these practices continue and to be a proxy representative for each member receiving their services. Shaun recently had the privilege of serving on the CECU Board of Director's but feels his talents would be better served on the Supervisory Committee. He has also been employed on MDC's Information Technology support team for the past 28 years in Jefferson City. It would truly be my pleasure to serve on the Supervisory Committee to help guide staffing and customer service decisions and to represent your interests. Thank you for your consideration.