

Preston D. Cole
4808 West Woodlawn Court
Milwaukee, WI 53208
(414) 551-9272
prestondoylecole@gmail.com

EDUCATION

University of Missouri, School of Forestry, Fisheries, and Wildlife
Bachelor of Science, Forest Management; Minor, Agronomy

African American Fund Development Institute/Helen Bader Foundation
Certification, Fundraising

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

As a senior cabinet member for the Governor of the State of Wisconsin, I lead collaborative efforts with corporations, Tribal governments, cities, towns, and villages through creative problem solving, technological advancements, and providing regulatory surety, so that our customers are inspired to lessen their environmental footprint, and be predictive of environmental protections, operational costs and revenue streams.

WORK EXPERIENCE

State of Wisconsin

Secretary, Department of Natural Resources (2018 – 2022)

- Direct a team of 2,200 full time employees and 900 limited term employees.
- Oversee \$1.1 billion in direct budget authority for the following programs: Regulatory management of air and water, forestry, fisheries and wildlife management, State Park system, and law enforcement.
- Lead the department in developing creative recruitment strategies aimed towards inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.
- Direct sustainability strategies for Wisconsin in partnership with sister agencies, agricultural entities, energy providers, universities, transportation and environmental NGO's.
- Coordinate climate change recommendations per the Governor's Climate Change Task Force.
- Direct and evaluate legislative and congressional bills impacting Wisconsin's air, water, natural resource and conservation programs.
- Provide the palate of opportunities in fishing, hiking, camping, and hunting activities that are the framework for Wisconsin's \$10 billion nature-based outdoor economy.

City of Milwaukee, Department of Neighborhood Services

Commissioner (2016 – 2019)

- As senior cabinet member to the Mayor of Milwaukee, served as chief building code official and implemented innovative solutions to build and maintain safe, healthy neighborhoods.
- Provided hands-on management and permit issuance for high-profile economic development projects including Northwestern Mutual Life, Fiserv Forum, and The Couture.
- Directed 250 employees and a \$20 million operational budget.

City of Milwaukee, Department of Public Works

Director of Operations (2009 – 2016)

- Served as Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Public Works (DPW) for the Mayor, Common Council and Commissioner of Public Works.
- Directed senior level management team responsible for Milwaukee Water Works, Infrastructure Services, DPW Administration, Operations Division, and Parking Fund.
- Directed 2,200 employees, and oversaw an \$80 million O+M budget, and \$250 million capital improvements budget.

Environmental Services Superintendent (2003 – 2009)

- Responsible for the administration, planning and fiscal oversight of the Forestry and Sanitation sections within the DPW.
- Managed snow and ice control operations, garbage collection, recycling, urban forest management, streetscaping, and boulevard programs.

City Forester (1998 – 2003)

- Directed and led the administrative, planning, and fiscal oversight for the nation's most progressive municipal urban forestry organization.
- Created *Greening Milwaukee*, a non-profit tree planting organization. Created *Greening Milwaukee Schools* tree planting program, removing asphalt surfaces from Milwaukee Public School playgrounds.

Deputy City Forester/Forestry Operations (1991 – 1998)

- Directed field operations for the Nation's most progressive municipal urban forestry organization.
- Co-authored *National Research Council – Forested Landscapes in Perspective*.

City of St. Louis – Department of Parks, Recreation, & Forestry Parks Superintendent (1989 – 1991)

- Implemented area-wide youth recreational programs.
- Directed and coordinated the grounds and tree maintenance activities in city parks, boulevards, and medians.

Missouri Department of Conservation, St. Louis, Missouri Forestry Division Resource Forester (1987 – 1989)

- Developed and presented technical assistance programs to municipalities, businesses, homeowners, and loggers regarding urban tree, landscape maintenance.
- Managed "Tree City USA" a city, town and village urban forestry outreach program fostered by the National Arbor Day Foundation.

SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS

State of Wisconsin Governor's Task Force on Climate Change (2019 – Present)

Serve as member who advises and assists the governor in developing a strategy to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, in order to ensure the health, safety, and economic well-being of people and communities throughout WI, specifically communities of color and low-income communities.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Board Member (2008 – 2018) Board Chair (2013 – 2016)

Served as one of seven board members who set guidance on statewide policies impacting water, forestry, fisheries, wildlife and stewardship programs, ensuring departmental policies are implemented among residents, associations, businesses, and Tribal Governments.

The Water Council, Board Member (2015 – 2018)

Served as board member of the internationally acclaimed water sector business organization working to establish Milwaukee as the global center for freshwater research, innovation, education, and business development.

Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD), Commissioner (2000 – 2009) Commission Chair (2007 – 2009)

Served as one of eleven Commissioners responsible for the review and oversight of WI's largest wastewater and storm water management agency, with a combined operation, maintenance, and capital budget of approximately \$265 million.

Wisconsin Center District, Board of Directors (1997 – 2000)

Served as one of fifteen board members and contributed expertise in strategic capital development and construction of the Wisconsin Center District (Miller High Life Theatre, Wisconsin Center, UW-M Panther Arena).

HONORS / AWARDS / MEMBERSHIPS

Madison 365 “51 Most Influential Black Leaders” (2020)
Business Journal 40 Under 40 Hall of Fame Award (2020)
Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful Lifetime Achievement Award (2017)
City of Milwaukee Housing Authority Partnership Award (2017)
Wisconsin Conservation Leader of the Year, UW Stevens Point (2016)
Mayor Tom Barrett’s Green Team (2009-2019)
Business Journal 40 under 40 Award (1998)
Inaugural National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council (1993-1996)
National Urban Forester Medal of Honor (1992)