

# DIVERSITY IN CONSERVATION INTERNSHIP



PHOTO CREDIT: EMMA SCHATZ



## 2024 Highlights

The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin's Diversity in Conservation Internship Program provides **meaningful, paid experiences for undergraduates interested in careers in natural resource conservation.**

The goals of this cohort-based program are to introduce students to the field of conservation and its career pathways, and to help strengthen their knowledge and skills **to meet the need for diverse professionals in Wisconsin's conservation field.**

In addition to weekly seminars and professional development programming, this year's cohort took field trips to the Kemp Natural Resources Field Station, the Ho-Chunk Sacred Earth Reservation, Devil's Lake State Park, the International Crane Foundation, Havenwoods State Forest, and Lulu Lake State Natural Area.

This year NRF hosted 10 interns, who were each paired with a Wisconsin conservation organization for a unique internship experience. Interns also participated in weekly programming and field trips that connected them to Wisconsin's natural resources, conservation professionals, and future career opportunities in conservation. **Read on to learn more about this year's interns!**



**3**

universities



**8**

host  
organizations



**10**

interns



**20**

professional  
connections



**4,000**

hours of  
conservation  
experience





"I truly feel like I'm on the right path of what I want to do for the rest of my life because I had no inkling of what career path I should be on prior to this internship."

-Alicia Espino, 2024 Cohort

PHOTO CREDIT: FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: LINDSEY TAYLOR, JADE CARASO, ROBI PALOSKI, CAIT WELLMANSON, LINDSEY TAYLOR, AND EMMA SCHATZ



# MEET THE INTERNS

## Helena Bello

Southern Wisconsin Bird Alliance

“My favorite parts of the internship included going on field trips, especially kestrel banding trips and education outings with local community centers. This program allowed me to gain experience in conservation which will be invaluable in the future. I also got to make a lot of connections in the conservation field and learned how to network which is very important for me.”



## Reece Charles

Zoological Society of Milwaukee

“This program has been fundamental to my professional development as I have learned a lot about the field of conservation, particularly within and around urban areas. Before this, I was under the assumption that conservation had no place in urban environments, but this program opened a lot of doors I didn't know existed. I look forward to exploring this more as I finish school and find my place in the field.”



## Fiona Cranley

Wisconsin DNR - Office of Applied Science

“When I first applied, I wasn't sure if conservation was something I liked as a hobby or wanted to do more with in the future. But now I have a better idea. I am still figuring out exactly what field to go into but my love for conservation and the field certainly grew.”



## Lauren DeGere

International Crane Foundation

"I've gained experience in ecological restoration through the pulling of invasive species and seed collection and processing. I got a bit of practice handling large-bodied wild birds, which is super cool... I've utilized telemetry equipment to locate cranes, as well as taken field notes on cranes' behaviors and band combinations. Since this is my first job in conservation, this internship has given me a foot in the door to the field and helped me make connections."



## Alicia Espino

Gathering Waters

"I had no inkling of what career path I should be on prior to this internship. The connections I made this summer will never be forgotten, and I am glad I got to meet so many people who care deeply about what they do. This experience helped me realize that the path I am currently on is the right one for me and I look forward to what the future holds for me and the rest of my cohort."



## Alana Fisher

The Nature Conservancy - Milwaukee Program

"My learning goals from the summer were really general but that's because I wasn't sure what I wanted to learn but I was very open to exploring different things. I feel as though I met all my goals especially in professional development, real world practicality and also the intersectionality of public health and the environment... There's so much that I can share that it's hard to describe at this moment. But this was the right program for this time in my life."



## Jamie Kollman

Wisconsin DNR - Wildlife Management

"I gained so much from this internship experience... I've been exposed to and now have experience in bird banding... algae research on the UWM Neeskey research vessel, assisting with environmental education programs and writing my own, fieldwork photography, wildlife handling and rescue, wetland water control, plant identification... so much! I'm grateful that I've gotten to dip my toes in all these different pools of conservation efforts."





## Isabel Liao

University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum

“It gave me a new purpose and a new direction in terms of my career path. Before this, I was unsure of any back up careers I could see myself doing in case being a vet didn't work out. I'll still move forward with the mindset that I will try my best to succeed, but DICI has definitely given me more assurance. DICI gave me something I never expected: a genuine passion for a cause, and a clear direction for my career.”



## Cort Taylor

Wisconsin DNR - Natural Heritage Conservation

“This internship helped me feel more comfortable asking questions and understanding the value of the work that I was committed to doing for the course of the summer. I was also able to acquire specific skills that could help me if I choose to find a career within conservation. This internship also helped me realize that I can complete any task no matter how challenging.”



## Nyagam Wal

Lake Michigan Bird Observatory

“This program has allowed me to grow personally and has made my professional goals more clear. After experiencing this internship, interacting with many different types of people and hearing a lot of unique perspectives, I am more confident in what I want to see in my future career path and that wouldn't have been possible this soon without this internship.”



PHOTO CREDIT, FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: ISABEL LIAO, CORT TAYLOR, AND NYAGAM WAL



PHOTO CREDIT LINDSEY TAYLOR



# 2024 Partner Organizations

Thank you to our partners at Lawrence University, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and the following conservation organizations who hosted interns through the Diversity in Conservation Internship Program this year:

Gathering Waters

International Crane Foundation

Lake Michigan Bird Observatory

Southern Wisconsin Bird Alliance

The Nature Conservancy

UW-Madison Arboretum

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Zoological Society of Milwaukee

# THANK YOU

We are deeply grateful to these donors and NRF's members for their support of this impactful program.

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