

UW-Madison: UW student receives Udall Scholarship to further environmental work

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Carly Winner envisions a day when teaching children about environmental stewardship is so commonplace and apolitical that it's part of every school's curriculum, like reading and writing.

The UW-Madison junior is working toward that goal in her undergraduate research, which just got a major boost. Winner has been named a recipient of a 2019 Udall Scholarship, a national honor that recognizes leadership, public service and commitment to issues related to the environment or American Indian communities.

Fifty-five students from 50 colleges and universities were chosen from 443 candidates. The scholarship provides up to \$7,000 for a recipient's junior or senior year.

Another 55 candidates received honorable mentions, including Anna Schmidt, a UW-Madison junior from Rochester, Minnesota. Schmidt is majoring in biology and environmental sciences, with a certificate in environmental studies.

Winner, a Madison native who graduated from Verona Area High School, is majoring in environmental studies and elementary education, with a certificate in leadership. Her goal, she says, is to create egalitarian learning opportunities and learning spaces so that all children have access to environmental education and the outdoors.

“What I and others have found is that, a lot of times, people who are really into the environment developed that interest very early in life,” she says. “But if that’s not part of your childhood, either for financial or familial reasons, then it’s not as likely to be something that follows you into adulthood. I want to put programs in place where you don’t need a high income or family involvement to develop that interest.”

Winner has been pursuing her environmental interests in a variety of ways, from involvement in student organizations (Conservation Biology Club, Sierra Club) to internships (Sustain Dane, the state chapter of the Sierra Club). She is an ambassador for the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies and has worked as a research assistant in the Botany Department.

Since the fall of 2018, she has been involved with the Nelson Institute Community Environmental Scholars Program, which is designed for students who want to link their passion for the environment with a commitment to the community.

“It’s been one of my biggest supports in connecting the environment to society and finding that place here at Madison,” Winner says. “They do a wonderful job facilitating conversations of how the environment and society intertwine and where we stand on working towards issues.”

Building off a Study Abroad experience, Winner continues to conduct independent research on how the removal of an entrance fee at a marine protected area in Panama is affecting everything from park governance to visitation numbers.

Additionally, Winner volunteers weekly at the River Food Pantry through the Badger Volunteers program.

The 2019 Udall Scholars will assemble August 6-11 in Tucson, Arizona, to meet one another and program alumni; learn more about the Udall legacy of public service; and interact with community leaders in environmental fields, Tribal health care, and governance.