

Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources: Building a diverse workforce for the future of conservation

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Summer 2022 interns, like Rahul Sabnis, wrapped up an active field season with the

Wisconsin DNR. / Credit: Wisconsin DNR

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) wrapped up a successful 2022 summer field season thanks to more than 35 interns within the Division of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

The 2022 intern class introduced college-aged students to a potential career in conservation through fieldwork, surveying and sampling, habitat restoration and critical administrative functions. Interns assisted the DNR with a variety of essential summer tasks including:

- Sonar surveying lakes and cold water stream electrofishing
- Developing and leading educational programs
- Conducting bridge inspections for bat use
- Removing invasive woody species
- Installing State Natural Area property and boundary signage
- Registering campers
- Water control checks to manage wetlands

In addition to hands-on experience in the field, some interns also earned college credits.

The summer internship program was made possible through partnerships with Operation Fresh Start, the State of Wisconsin Student Diversity Internship Program, the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin's Diversity in Conservation Internship Program, and established internship efforts with several University of Wisconsin campuses.

“We are committed to continuing to expand our relationships and get the next generation of conservationists the basic skills and knowledge they need for a career in wildlife, fisheries, endangered resources or parks and recreation,” said Drew Feldkirchner, Bureau Director of the DNR's Natural Heritage Conservation program.

This year, the DNR cast a wider net for internship candidates by working with non-profit and university partners. Looking ahead to the 2023 field season, the DNR is also working with the College of Menominee Nation on agreements for hiring future interns. DNR staff is conducting follow-up surveys to evaluate and enhance these internship opportunities, with an emphasis on breaking down barriers to careers in natural resources.



Visit the [DNR's Internship Program webpage](#) to learn more about future internship opportunities.