

Dane County Parks: Opening soon for Dane County youth: Applications for Conservation Career Pathways Program

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MADISON, WI - March 17, 2026 - Young people in Dane County who are passionate about the outdoors, sustainability, and have an interest in careers in conservation are encouraged to apply for the **Conservation Career Pathways Program**. Launched by Dane County Parks last August, the organization is excited to announce that the **Conservation Career Pathways Program will soon open applications for internships this summer.**

The Conservation Career Pathways Program was created based on feedback from participants of the [Youth Volunteers for Conservation Program \(YV4C\)](#). Over 100 youth have participated in this specific program, helping with park maintenance, habitat restoration, water and wetlands protection projects, and more. **The Conservation Career Pathways Program builds on the success of YV4C, providing teenagers and young adults with the skills, certifications, connections, and hands-on experience needed for careers in the natural resource management field.**

“The Conservation Career Pathways Program gives young people the opportunity to gain hands-on experience, develop valuable skills, and explore careers in conservation,” said **Dane County Executive Melissa Agard**. “By investing in our youth and connecting them to the outdoors, we are cultivating the next generation of environmental stewards and building a more sustainable future for the parks, lands, and waters that define our community.”

The program will consist of paid internships, volunteer workdays, leadership and technical training, and comprehensive support from experienced Dane County Parks staff. Participants will gain real world experience, build their resume, and receive references for future jobs — all while exploring a wide variety of potential career paths. The program will be led by Grace Coleman in the newly created position of Youth Conservation Coordinator.

“This program not only builds on the Youth Volunteers for Conservation Program, but builds on our community center partnership program, Get Outside!” said **Lael Pascual, Engagement & Visitor Services Manager**. “The Conservation Career Pathways Program will continue to foster young people’s relationships in the outdoors who may not have access to our parks, natural areas, or conservation careers in the past.”

Applications will open to Dane County youth on April 1, 2026, and will be accepted through April 15 on the [Conservation Career Pathways Program website](#). Interviews will take place in June, with youth internships beginning at the end of June.

The Conservation Career Pathways Program is made possible through financial support from the [Foundation for Dane County Parks](#) and [Ascendium Education Group](#).