During my time working with the Lake Wissota Stewardship Project, I did a lot of learning and growing. I gained experience using Arc GIS Pro, Canva, Esri StoryMaps, and presenting to the public. I have learned about many new aspects of conservation and I am very grateful for the knowledge I have gained over the last six months.

In the beginning of my internship, I was able to learn what my responsibilities would be from the previous intern, Lyndsey Tyznik. She helped me adjust to the office and kindly answered all of my many questions. In June I attended a picnic for LWIPA where I met many of the association members and learned more about the area and community surrounding Lake Wissota. Throughout my internship I had the pleasure of working with a few members of the association on different projects. I enjoyed learning from them and listening to their stories and lessons from being in LWIPA.

One of my first large responsibilities was to create new content for the LWSP display board. With guidance from Lynda Schweikert and Ketty Clow, I updated all of the images and information to better represent our practices and inform people about what kind of conservation funding might be available for them. I had a lot of fun collecting soil samples and assembling soil jars for an educational display on soil erosion and blue-green algae. I then presented that information to the public. LCFM employees and I presented the board at Farm Tech Days, a local vet clinic event, and at a festival in the town of Lafayette. This gave me to opportunity to speak with the public and hear what they know about conservation and how it looks on their end.

Throughout my internship I spent a large portion of my time working on our Fixed-Point Photo Stations project. I spent some time taking example photos at each of the locations I had chosen, then used those to create the Fixed-Point Photo Station StoryMap. I improved my skills using and editing StoryMaps this way, with help from Kristin Teston at WI Land & Water. The two projects that I had the most fun with were creating the Lake Wissota water quality charts, and making the mailing lists for LWIPA outreach. These projects helped me gain more experience using ArcGIS and Excel, which will be very valuable skills throughout my career.

The people and projects I have worked with while in this internship have given me knowledge and experience that I will use for the rest of my career in conservation. I am very grateful to have had this opportunity to work with Chippewa County LCFM and the Lake Wissota Stewardship Project. Thank you to everyone who I had the pleasure of working with in the last six months, I hope to hear from you going forward!

-Daylin Sairs