Hope Donnellan Exit Summary

My name is Hope Donnellan, and I was the winter intern for 2026 – and will likely be the last winter intern for the Lake Wissota Stewardship Project. I learned about this internship through our agronomist, Elise Theiler, when I did WAV volunteering with her and Zachary Rohde (the intern before me). I had just moved to Wisconsin from North Carolina, and I was excited to apply and, eventually, start my first role in this state. My background was in psychology and environmental studies, with a focus on sustainable management and social justice, and I knew very little about agriculture when I started. This internship has been amazing at broadening my perspectives of farm innerworkings, crop rotations, and conservation best management practices.

Throughout the internship, I worked mostly on GIS projects, I helped update and redesign the LWP project map, created a historic master-map of the county's cost sharing practices, and started an online lake quality viewer for the end of dock monitoring project, among many others. Some other projects I had included: outreach for the Biochar dock socks project, using Canva to design flyers as well as helping to fill and safety-pin sentinel packets onto the docks socks; installing the Fixed Point Photo Station the old Rod and Gun boat landing (now the Lake Wissota Reserve boat landing); and drafting an Xcel Grant application for end of dock monitoring Secchi disks.

I was also able to get experience in tabling, presenting, and working on teams. This internship has been great for helping me improve in my public speaking and task management, as well as improve my technical skills in Cava, Esri GIS software, and Microsoft products.

Toward the end of my internship, once the snow melted and the days got warmer, I was able to shadow on outdoors projects such as site showings and cover crop checks, as well as help with flagging sites for the Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program research on Triple T Farms. It has been great getting to see what the others in the office do, learn the methods and language they use, and see how the site itself grows or benefits from it.

Thank you to everyone in the Lake Wissota Association and the LCFM department for teaching me, mentoring me, and helping me experience new things. It's been a wonderful internship. I look forward to learning what the next interns will achieve and seeing the impact on the landscape as I drive by during my next walk in life.