Lake Wissota Stewardship Project Update

By Touger Vue

Hello, my name is Touger Vue and I have been the Lake Wissota Stewardship Project (LWSP) Intern for the Chippewa County Land Conservation & Forest Management (LCFM) Department this summer. I want to take this opportunity to tell you a little about myself and what I have been working on this summer in the Lake Wissota Watershed.

After I graduated from University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point with a major in Forestry Ecosystem Restoration and a minor in Soil Science this spring, I wanted a job near my hometown Eau Claire, WI. I wanted a job that connected conservationists and farmers to work alongside together. My dream job would be to work on prairies that landowners and farmers set aside as conservation. I had done this work in my previous internship with the Healthy Grown Program in Central Wisconsin and enjoyed it. I was happy to find a job with the Chippewa County Department as the LWSP Limited Term Employee (LTE).

In my position I reach out to landowners and the public about our practices, help farmers on conservation practices, and monitor and evaluate water quality data. I've enjoyed connecting with other organizations and landowners by attending to events such as "Bees, Trees, and Cheese Event" (hosted by Beaver Creek) and I hope to continue to attend them after my time at Chippewa County.

I've also had a great opportunity to learn more about conservation practices being implemented on farms, specifically manure storage. Learning about manure storage and the proper way to abandon an aging facility has led me to understand Chippewa County's agricultural history and how to professionally reach out to farmers. I got to experience talking to farmers and understanding the difficulties they are currently facing, such as current milk prices.

At the monthly meetings with the Lake Wissota Improvement & Protection Association (LWIPA), I was able to connect with Andrew Schneyer, WI DNR Watershed Restoration Coordinator, who is involved with water sampling on Lake Wissota. With my research background I have been enjoying learning how to collect and send water samples, in combination with the Drywood Creek USGS Gaging station.

With my time and experience as the LWSP LTE I hope to use my knowledge and experiences from this position to support my goal of bringing conservationists and farmers together.

I want to thank Lake Wissota Improvement and Protection Association for funding my position and giving me an amazing opportunity to learn about the water resources in Chippewa County. I also want to thank Chippewa County LCFM for guiding and teaching me professionalism and implementing conservation practices.