

OCTOBER  
2023



WISCONSIN TRIBAL CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

# FALL NEWSLETTER

Notice something new?  
WTCAC has a new look!



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WINNER, CODY  
COTTRELL**

**WTCAC INTERNS SHARE  
THEIR THOUGHTS ON  
THEIR SUMMER  
EXPERIENCES**

**WTCAC IS HIRING!**

**2024 SUMMER  
INTERNSHIP  
ANNOUNCEMENT**



WISCONSIN TRIBAL CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

A special thank you  
from the WTCAC  
Board and staff to  
**Cody Cottrell**, the  
winner of  
WTCAC's student  
logo contest!







## Deven 2023 wtcac intern

Hi, my name is Deven Metoxen-Hamilton, and I am a member of the Oneida Nation. I am heading into my 4th year at UW-Stevens Point. I am currently working towards a Wildlife ecology major and two minors in biology and soil science. This summer I had the chance to do an internship with the Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (WTCAC). I was stationed at the Little Bear Development Center on the Wisconsin Oneida reservation to perform an invasive pest survey of Oak Ambrosia Beetle (OAB), Siberian Silk Moth (SSM), and Pine-Tree Lappet.

I had also provided outreach materials to the Oneida community to provide information on invasive pests. In addition, I have helped collect samples from 11 streams and 3 lakes on the Oneida reservation to determine their health. I have also helped with backpack shocking in several streams looking specifically for brook trout. This internship was a great and valuable experience, and I am glad that I was given this opportunity.







## Ryan 2023 wtcac intern

My Name is Ryan Metoxen-Hamilton. I am entering my 3rd year as a student at UW-Stevens Point. This summer I was accepted into the WTCAC summer internship program. I was stationed at the Oneida Orchard. My main job was to conduct a pest survey of the orchard looking for specific invasive species: the ambrosia beetle, the european cherry fruit fly, the summer fruit tortrix moth, the plum fruit moth, and the false codling moth. To do the survey I placed 2 traps for each species around the orchard and collected samples from them. I used four different types of traps and once every week I checked them to make sure they were not damaged, missing, or if I needed to collect samples.

When I was not checking my traps I did other work around the orchard like helping the orchard workers like taking care of the orchards garden and removing giant piles branches from the orchard. I cut down scrub trees that were growing in between the apple trees and I removed grapevines that were climbing up the apple trees and smothering them. I also helped pick wild berries like black caps, raspberries, and black berries and near the end of my internship I helped pick and grade the late summer apples like the jersey mac's and the pristine apples. The work at the orchard was hard especially on hot days but I enjoyed the work I did and thank WTCAC for giving me this opportunity.







I also got the opportunity to help out the fisheries biologist in lake and stream surveys. We conducted these surveys with electrofishing equipment. For lakes we have a boat with electrical probes that extend into the water, emitting enough electricity to only stun the fish. Then we scoop the fish in nets, measure, weight, identify them, then they are released. For the streams we used an electrofishing backpack or barge for larger streams. These surveys are to monitor stream and lake health along with seeing what fish are in them.

Overall, I learned so much this summer and I am so grateful for this opportunity to do what I love. I made so many memories that I will look back on.

## Jaylynn 2023 wtcac intern

Posoh I am Jaylynn Brisk from the Menominee Nation and I would like to share my WTCAC summer intern experience. A little bit about me, I am 19 and will be going to the College of Menominee Nation and starting my degree in natural resources. A few hobbies I have are fishing, hiking, painting, and spending time with my dog.

This summer I got an internship to work with Menominee Environmental Services as an invasive pest intern through WTCAC. I spent the majority of my time out in the field treating areas all across the reservation for Spotted Knapweed and Wild Parsnip. These two plants are invasive here in Wisconsin. To treat the areas we used spraying backpacks filled with an herbicide called Renovate. Once sprayed on the leaves the plant absorbs it and dies within a few weeks.

I also worked on trapping invasive insects, such as the Emerald Ash Borer and the Oak Ambrosia Beetle. For the Emerald Ash Borer we used a trap called the purple prism trap with a lure that smells like fresh cut grass. For the Oak Ambrosia Beetles we use what is called a multi funnel trap with a lure as well. We collect samples from each of these traps and store them in the freezer until they can be sent off to be identified.







## HOW I GREW THROUGH THE WTCAC INTERNSHIP



### Celina 2023 wtcac intern

#### Natural Resources Conservation Services

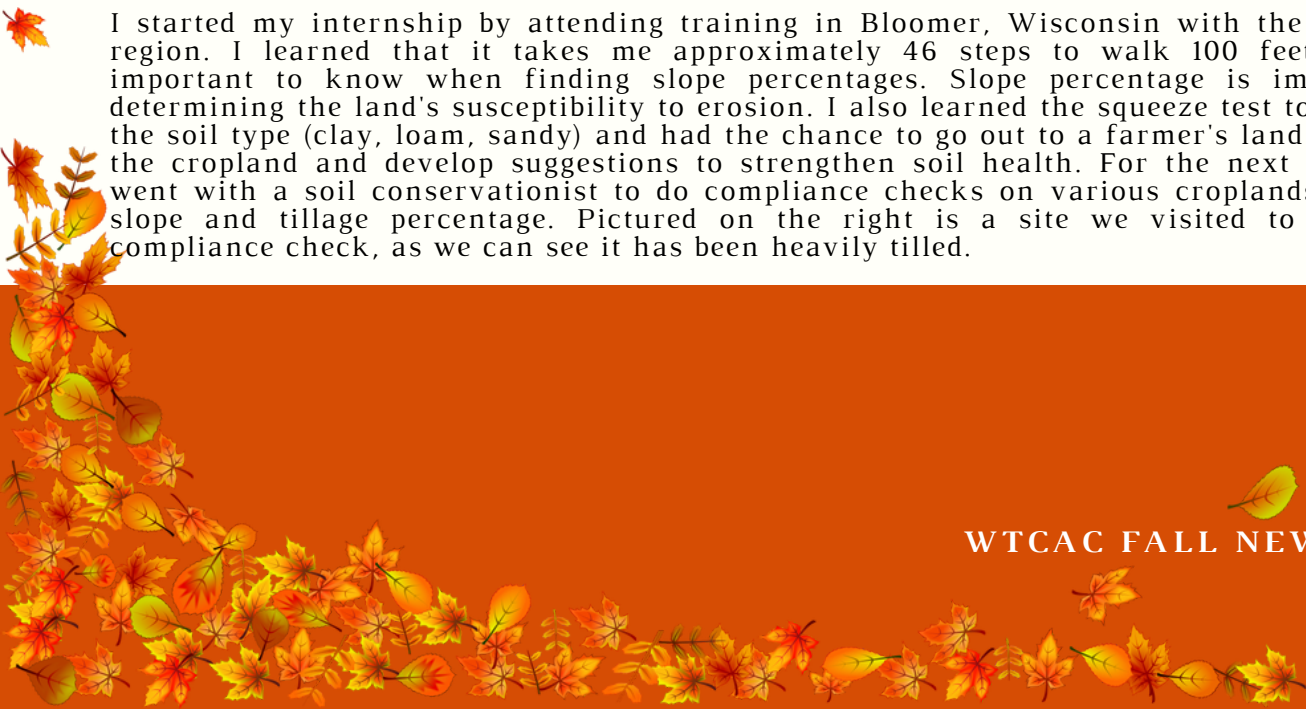
As stated before, I have limited knowledge of the fundamentals of agriculture. Going into this internship, I was both excited and nervous. I was excited to learn so much from an agency focused on conservation practices but was nervous because I knew this was going to be something out of my comfort zone. Little did I know, NRCS would change my perspective on the land around me.

I started my internship by attending training in Bloomer, Wisconsin with the Northwest region. I learned that it takes me approximately 46 steps to walk 100 feet which is important to know when finding slope percentages. Slope percentage is important in determining the land's susceptibility to erosion. I also learned the squeeze test to determine the soil type (clay, loam, sandy) and had the chance to go out to a farmer's land to analyze the cropland and develop suggestions to strengthen soil health. For the next few days I went with a soil conservationist to do compliance checks on various croplands to record slope and tillage percentage. Pictured on the right is a site we visited to conduct a compliance check, as we can see it has been heavily tilled.

#### Introduction

The Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (WTCAC) internship helped me see the opportunities available to a young Ho-Chunk woman who aspires to strengthen the community by promoting healthy lifestyles through food. Prior to this internship I had limited knowledge of agricultural land, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Ho-Chunk Nation (HCN) Agriculture Department. I was excited to learn that I would have the chance to work with both the NRCS and the HCN throughout the summer.

I discovered I was interested in environmental studies my sophomore year of college but did not find my passion until last summer. Last summer I wrote a research proposal that focused on food sovereignty, food security and the importance of incorporating Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) into community gardens. I really began to understand the depth of the words "food sovereignty" and "food security". I learned that there is no singular definition and read many articles geared towards food sovereignty and food security. As I was doing research for my proposal I discovered that the Ho-Chunk Nation Land Management Division is responsible for over 11,000 acres of land with over a thousand of those acres being cropland. After learning this I knew it was something I wanted to look further into and I wouldn't be able to do that unless I had the chance to work with the agriculture division and see it with my own eyes.







I became acutely aware of the impact NRCS had on reshaping my perspective. The realization occurred to me on a trip to La Crosse with my mom. As we were driving, I initiated a conversation about the crops we were passing by. While I have grown accustomed to the sight of corn fields, it wasn't until then that I truly observed and took the time to think about the estimated tillage percentage and whether the crops were corn, alfalfa or soybeans.

My primary involvement in compliance checks focused on croplands, yet I was also presented with the opportunity to participate in the assessment of wildlife restoration habitats. I went with our resource conservationist and partner, Pheasants Forever to complete compliance checks on transitioning land from cropland to wildlife restoration through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Throughout these compliance checks I honed my ability to distinguish between native plant species, which are primary producers for their ecosystem, and invasive species that pose a threat to the natural balance. There is a diverse spectrum of pasture mixes meant for different purposes offered to farmers. Most of the CRP pasture mixture includes native plants such as the black eyed susan, little bluestem, big bluestem, switchgrass and Canada wild rye.

### **Ho-Chunk Nation**

My first week working with the Ho-Chunk Nation I was able to see all the land we have acquired that is dedicated to agriculture. My understanding of what we do with the land and where it is was very little before I began working here. I now know we have an estimated 11,000 acres of land managed by the land management division with over 1,000 of those acres for agriculture.

This past year we did not renew any of our leases and have more cropland accessible for the Ho-Chunk Nation than what we are used to. With a bright future ahead of us we are trying to take the multifaceted approach required to navigate our economic, cultural and federal aspirations. A distinct challenge we face is how checkerboarded our land is across Wisconsin. To the left we can see all the agriculture land the Ho-Chunk Nation is managing throughout Wisconsin. The most important goal for me is finding a balance between cash crops and traditional produce for our people. We are trying to create innovative ideas to engage with community members and ensure interest in locally grown, traditional food remains high.

Realistically, two people cannot manage and maintain such a large quantity of land. We had talked about establishing BIPOC community gardens in some of the areas to strengthen the local communities. We had valuable discussions involving increased establishments of BIPOC community gardens, increased partnerships with other departments, establishing community gardens, providing basic food preservation and gardening workshops, partnering with neighboring tribes and farmers, using government assistance and so much more.



## How NRCS helped me understand fundamental aspects

During my time with NRCS, I was introduced to the USDA's Web Soil Survey. My familiarity with the USDA's Web Soil Survey helped provide insight into Whirling Thunder, a significant property under the stewardship of the Ho-Chunk Nation. This is a user-friendly website that provides information on critical aspects such as soil texture and slope percentage. The more time spent on this website, the more intricate it becomes. Starting off with soil texture I was also able to look at the drainage class, runoff class, flooding frequency and more to help determine what crops would be best integrated into that land space.

The Ho-Chunk Nation has engaged in multiple contracts with NRCS, reflecting on their values of land stewardship. The oldest one I found on file was an EQIP project in Vernon County from 2005 to 2009. This project involved three key components: a year-long wildlife upland habitat management, a five-year prescribed burning plan and a two-decade commitment to streambank and shoreline protection. Then, in 2019 they completed an FSA CRP in Vernon County on 48.21 acres of land. Under this contract, the Ho-Chunk Nation dedicated efforts to controlled burns during specific seasonal windows. It was aimed at fostering the growth of grasses and late blooms in native planting. The goal was to eventually replace annuals with perennial grasses and inevitably work towards woody plants.

Learning about the programs NRCS has to offer made me think about the ones Ho-Chunk should consider. Working with NRCS on more projects will help the tribe move into taking a more restorative approach allowing the foundation of our agriculture department to be regenerative agriculture. I think it would be a great idea to take the time to look at all of our agricultural land and see if we could apply for the Regional Conservation Stewardship Program, Conservation Stewardship Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. I am excited to see what is in store for the Ho-Chunk Nation and how their partnership with NRCS will continue to flourish.







**WTCAC is looking for an**  
**Outreach and Education**  
**Coordinator**  
**&**  
**Community**  
**Conservationist**



**For more information, go**  
**to [www.wtcac.org](http://www.wtcac.org)**



# WTCAC Summer Internship Program Announcement

## Internships for 2023 Include Potential Opportunities to Work With:

- Tribes in WI
- US Forest Service
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services
- National Agricultural Statistical Service
- Ottawa National Forest Visitor Center



## Minimum Qualifications:

- Must be 18 years or older
- Must be enrolled full-time in a college or university located in Wisconsin
- Must be an enrolled member of a federally recognized Tribe in Wisconsin
- Must have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher

To apply, go to [www.wtcac.org](http://www.wtcac.org) to access the online application form!





WISCONSIN TRIBAL CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

**NOVEMBER 7-9, 2023**

**MENOMINEE NATION**

**KESHENA, WI 54135**

## **TRIBAL PRODUCE SAFETY TRAINING SERIES**

- GLIFWC TRADITIONAL MODEL FOOD CODE
- PRODUCE SAFETY ALLIANCE TRAINING
- FARMERS MARKET AND ELDER FOOD BOX TRAINING



**Produce Safety**  
ALLIANCE


**REGISTRATION LINK**



National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE







WE AT WTCAC WOULD LIKE TO  
EXPRESS OUR DEEPEST  
CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY,  
FRIENDS, AND COLLEAGUES OF  
TYRONE LARSON.



MAY YOUR HAPPY MEMORIES  
BRING YOU PEACE AND COMFORT  
DURING THIS CHALLENGING TIME.



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