



2021-2022 High School Internship Annual Report



NATIONAL
WILDLIFE
REFUGE SYSTEM



THE PROGRAM

Throughout the year, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, in partnership with American Conservation Experience (ACE), welcomed **19 High School Youth Interns** in a **paid internship**. Some of the interns completed a 9-week summer internship, some a school-year internship that met once a month, and some did both! Interns spent their time contributing to various refuge initiatives and projects, while gaining practical career readiness skills and exploring natural resource career pathways. To showcase their work at the end of their time, the interns put together presentations to show refuge staff and the intern's families. The following report provides an overview of the program and highlights from the 2021-2022 program.



3500+
HOURS CONTRIBUTED



95%
ATTENDANCE
Up 5% from 2021



20
PARTNER
ORGANIZATIONS



FOUNDING PARTNERS



Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Program development, logistics, and scheduling; intern salary and 70% Internship Coordinator salary; training and additional staff support ; transportation and equipment; provide Minnesota Valley NWR uniform.



American Conservation Experience (ACE)

Advertise and recruit interns; manage on-boarding and payroll; provide administrative support, and ACE uniforms.



Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust Inc.

Finance 30% of the Internship Coordinator's salary.



Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends

Provide stipend for guest presenters for green career pathways event.

OUR THREE PILLARS

**Work
Learn
Play**

PROGRAM EXPENSES

Youth Interns	\$72,900
Summer Team Leads	\$43,520
Internship Coordinator	\$74,214
Transportation *Fuel, maintenance, Go cards	\$4,400
MN Valley Uniforms	\$1,700
Total	\$198,734



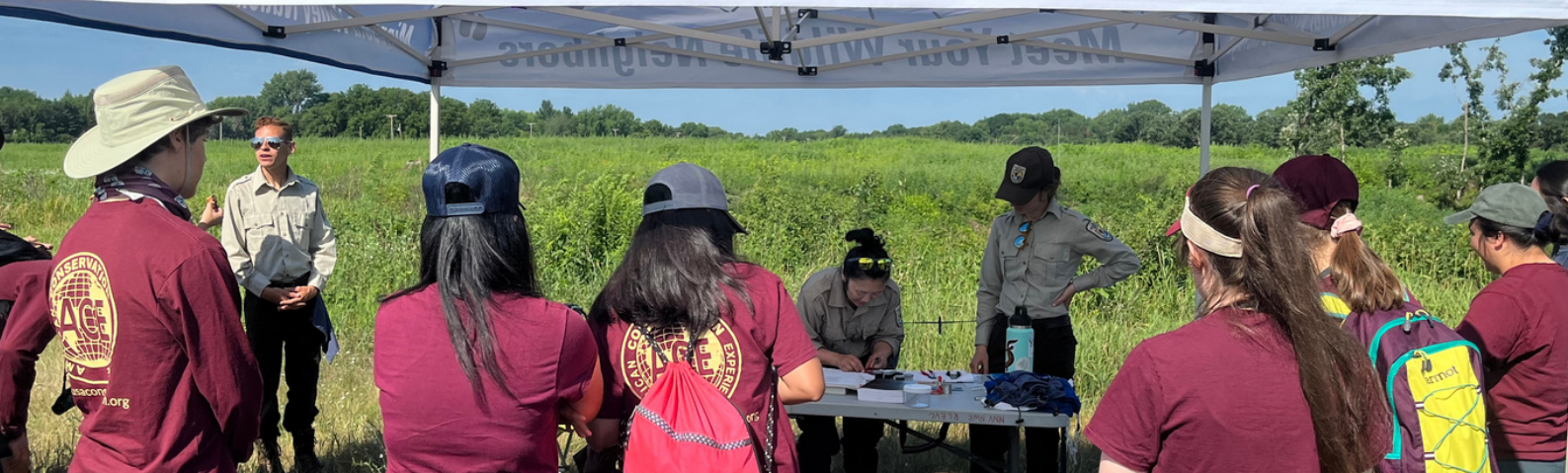
Sling

41m ago

Hey Alex! Your shift starts in 1 hour at Minnesota Valley Internship Program. Have a nice day.

WORK, learn, play

Meet Your Wildlife Neighbors



HABITAT RESTORATION & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Working alongside refuge staff and partners, interns participated in 8 restoration events on the refuge and in the nearby communities where they assisted with invasive species removal, native prairie seed collection, habitat monitoring, and trash clean-ups. Additionally, interns assisted with 14 Community Outreach programs including: Pop-up Fishing, Painting in Nature, Paddle with a Purpose and refuge special events. Here, interns developed skills in teamwork, communication, and perseverance while connecting members of the public to the refuge.



“
"The internship helped me narrow my focus on what I would like to study."
~ Youth intern
”



320
PEOPLE REACHED



350
POUNDS OF
TRASH
COLLECTED



150 ACRES RESTORED

“

"One thing I will take away is that it's really important to think about the actions we take in nature."
~ Youth intern
”



work, LEARN, play



THE NEXT GENERATION OF CONSERVATION PROFESSIONALS

Through a combination of career-readiness skill development, staff interviews, and refuge-based projects, interns explored various natural resource career pathways in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In addition to the in-depth career exploration of the Service, interns worked with 12 organizations in the Twin Cities Metro giving them opportunities to network and broaden their understanding of careers with the field of conservation.



BUILDING COLLABORATIVE PATHWAYS



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INTERNS HIRED TO OTHER PROGRAMS

Friends of the Mississippi River
Right Track
University of Minnesota

“One thing I learned throughout this internship is how to network with other people -- peers and adults.”
~ Youth intern



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PROGRAM GRADUATES

completing 2 years of internship



“I gained a lot of knowledge about different career paths I could take.”
~ Youth intern



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INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

conducted with FWS staff

work, learn, PLAY



CONNECTING TO THE REFUGE THROUGH PLAY

Interns engage in weekly outdoor activities including archery, biking, geocaching, birding, hiking, paddling, and nature photography. These first-hand experiences build interns excitement and connection to nature while creating ambassadors who share the value of the refuge among the Twin Cities community. The interns also took a 5-day camping/kayaking trip with Wilderness Inquiry, which was some of their first times camping.





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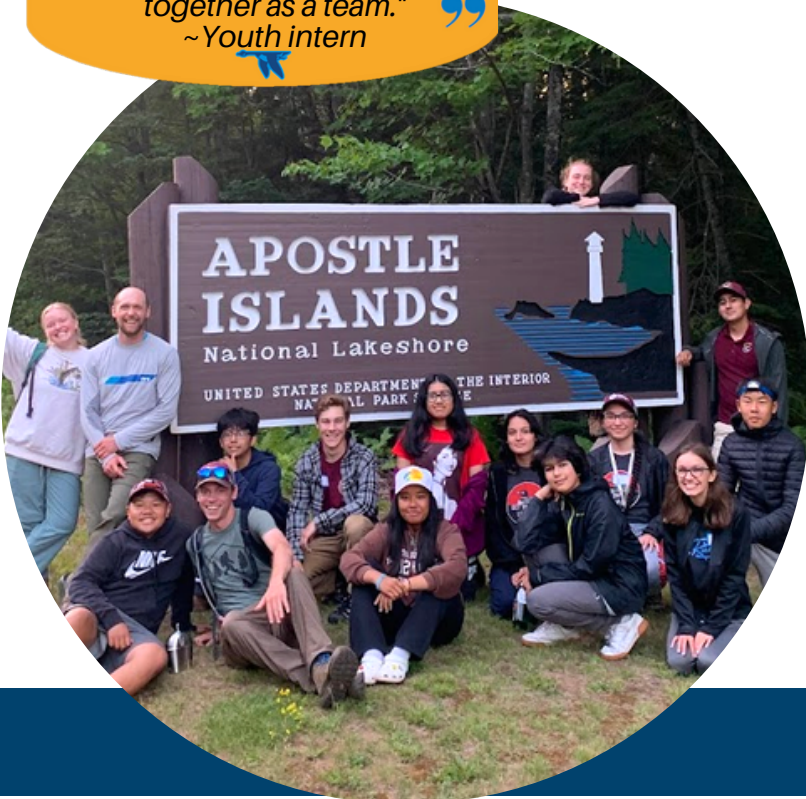
PEER NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

60%

OF INTERNS TRIED AT LEAST ONE NEW ACTIVITY



“One of my favorite parts about the summer was the Apostle Islands trip because we got to grow together as a team.”
~ Youth intern



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PADDLING OUTINGS

PROGRAM PARTNERS



Wilderness Inquiry

Coordinate, outfit the group, and lead a 5-day trip in the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.



Friends of the Mississippi River

Co-lead intern career day for Collaborative Pathways program.



Urban Roots

Intern tour of garden and cook fresh programs. Partnered on conservation work at Willow Reserve.



Capitol Region Watershed District

Lead programs at Como Lake and Trout Brook Nature Sanctuary. Assist with Paddle with a Purpose programs, and conservation work at Willow Reserve



National Park Service

Led tour of Lock and Dam at Saint Anthony Falls and discussion of careers with the Park Service.

60+
HOURS WORKING
WITH PARTNERS



INTERN FEEDBACK

- Keep the 2 Summer Team Lead positions.
- Travel to the Apostle Islands again.
- Learn more about the Native American community.
- Do more trail maintenance.
- Revisit projects we have worked on.
- Continue to use Sling for communicating.
- Continue creating a yearly magazine and send them to alumni.

\$13,500

CONTRIBUTED FROM PARTNER TIME AND RESOURCES

**Based on national value for volunteer hours*

INTERNSHIP ENGAGEMENT



**Refuge management, law enforcement, and maintenance departments.*