



CONSERVATION WARDEN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

**Sponsored by the
Department of Natural Resources
Bureau of Law Enforcement**

Guidelines, Procedures, Responsibilities
An Information Packet for Wardens and Students

WARDEN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Wisconsin DNR and many universities and colleges have jointly coordinated a warden internship program since the 1970's. The program has been very successful in providing students with real-life experience to help them decide if the job of a warden is what is right for them. From the viewpoint of students, warden internships are without exception the highlight of their college experience. Many current Wisconsin wardens were warden interns at one time. Following are some excerpts from final reports which previous warden interns wrote:

"This internship allowed me to experience all of the daily duties of a warden. I found that this job, like any, has its good points and its bad points and I found out just what it takes to be a warden. I think that if anyone is looking for a job that will give them something different to do every day, this is it. After spending a semester working with Warden Horn, I can't think of a job I would rather have. Hopefully this internship will have provided me with enough experiences and added job opportunities that I will soon be able to wear the Wisconsin Conservation Warden uniform."

--Boyd Richter, former intern and current Wisconsin Conservation Warden

"I experienced more in my two month internship than I have during my four years of classroom study. I was able to experience parts of the law enforcement field that you can never learn from a book or through a lecture. It allowed me to see the good and bad parts of being a conservation warden, helping me realize that environmental law enforcement is definitely the career I wish to pursue."

--Todd Schaller, former intern and current Wisconsin Conservation Warden Supervisor

"This internship has been the best learning experience I have ever had. Warden Halverson has taught me more about being a good, fair conservation warden, and about life, than any classroom situation ever could. I think anyone really interested in being a warden should experience the fall that I did. Then they will know for sure if they want to be a warden."

--Chris Wunrow, former intern and current WI Conservation Warden

Warden Internships

An internship is a formalized arrangement between the Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Law Enforcement, an accredited college or university, and a student enrolled in such a university that allows the student to accompany a conservation warden during their job duties. This unique opportunity allows students real life experience in order to determine if they want to pursue a career as a Conservation Warden.

Applicant Requirements:

- Junior, Senior, or Graduate Student enrolled full-time at a four year College/University
- Will be a Second Year Technical Student at a Technical College
- Have a 2.5 GPA or higher
- Pass a background investigation conducted by the Department of Natural Resources

Warden internships can be either paid or voluntary. WI DNR will **not** provide funding for internships. Students completing an internship may receive college credits for the internship. School policy will dictate how many hours of work are required per credit a student signs up for.

Voluntary Warden Internships

A voluntary intern does not receive tuition reimbursement. To apply for or a voluntary internship, the student completes the forms listed below. A background investigation will be conducted on applicants for all warden internships.

The internship application packet includes the following forms to complete and return:

- ★ Warden Internship Program Application form
- ★ Intern Experience Profile

- ★ Intern Essay
- ★ Warden Intern Liability Waiver
- ★ Release of Information for a Background Investigation
- ★ Background Investigation Questionnaire

Internship Length

The school may require an intern to work a certain number hours for every credit they are applying for through the school. Generally the internship would start around April 1 and end after the gun deer season. This allows the student to experience the wide variety of work a conservation warden does over a course of eight months. The time frame of the internship can be adjusted to fit the student's and warden's schedule as long as the minimum number of hours are worked for the amount of credits the student signed up for.

The number of hours the intern devotes to the internship is based on the number of credits the student signed up for. The hours the intern works can exceed the number of hours the student must work for the credit. If, for example, by the end of the summer the student reached 240 hours (80 hours of work for each credit and signed up for 3 credits), it is expected the student will still be available to work during the fall hunting season. This is typically one or two weekends a month and some days during the gun deer season.

The internship program is very flexible to accommodate the interests of both students and wardens.

Choosing a Warden Internship Supervisor (WIS)

The student seeking an internship chooses a warden internship supervisor from the list attached to the application packet. The wardens on the list have expressed interest in being an internship supervisor. Their knowledge about the warden service, their interest in helping students deciding on a future career along with the training they have had, will give you a positive internship experience. The student should rank their preference (1st, 2nd and 3rd choice) of a warden from the warden internship supervisor (WIS) list. The Assistant Training Director (ATD) will contact the wardens the students have chosen.

If the student has a prior, prearranged commitment from a warden or the warden is not on the internship supervisor list, the student should submit that name on the application to the internship coordinator. The internship can still be approved if the warden requested has approval from his supervisor and the Bureau of Law Enforcement. When making a choice on which warden to select, considerations need to be made on where the student can find lodging accommodation.

After the background investigation is reviewed and a warden agrees to consider to be an internship supervisor, the ATD will notify the student of what warden has agreed to consider to be the WIS along with the office phone number for the WIS. The student will then contact the WIS to arrange a meeting to discuss the internship. At this meeting, the beginning and ending dates of the internship should be established. The student and the warden should also discuss the expectations they have about the internship and get acquainted with each other. If all are in agreement the internship should proceed, all applications forms will be signed and then forwarded to the Team Warden Supervisor. Students do not contact the WIS directly until the ATD notifies them.

Students should be aware that the wardens they have chosen might have prior commitments that will not allow them to be an internship supervisor. If none of the three choices the student submitted are available, the Bureau of Law Enforcement will contact the student to discuss further opportunities and possibilities.

Background Investigation

Prior to contacting a warden to be an internship supervisor, the background investigation questionnaire of the prospective interns will be reviewed by the ATD. Since this is a law enforcement position, a background

investigation will be conducted on the applicants chosen for an internship. If the background investigation reveals that the student would not be suitable for an internship, the Bureau of Law Enforcement will notify the school and the intern applicant. For those students who pass the background investigation, the Bureau of Law Enforcement will then make contact with the warden that the student indicated on the application.

Supervision of Interns

A warden who agrees to supervise an intern may choose to have sole supervision or to arrange for the intern to work with nearby wardens. Frequently both wardens and interns view the latter as being preferred. In many cases decisions are made on a day-to-day basis about the warden with whom a student will work. The advantage to students working with more than one warden is that they are exposed to a variety of work areas, working styles, attitudes, and resources.

What is Expected of Wardens?

Wardens are expected to expose students to the multiple responsibilities and duties which wardens have on a day-to-day basis. Depending on the season of the year, interns will accompany wardens on boat patrol, observe how shining stops are made, observe duck hunters in a marsh, or check ice fishermen. Essentially, the intern does whatever the warden does on any given day.

Wardens will not unduly involve interns in dangerous situations and will drop off interns when entering a known dangerous situation. Examples of known dangerous situations are:

- Apprehension of a known armed felon(s)
- Securing evidence of a toxic spill
- Physically chasing down a violator

NOTE: While we certainly do not want to hamstring this program to the point where it doesn't work, we want to preclude intern involvement in situations where they do not have training and/or authority. Both the Warden and the intern must recognize the reality that it may be impossible to avoid some dangerous situations. The point is that we recognize some dangerous situations ahead of time and the intern can be left at the perimeter until the situation is secure.

Based on a review of final reports turned in by interns in previous years, activities in which interns have been involved included:

- Hunting incident investigations
- Checking duck hunters
- Compiling a complete file of all the boathouses and houseboats in the county
- Posing as an angler to collect information on overbagging of fish below a dam
- Assist in searching an outlying building on a farm for a suspected illegal deer (based on a search warrant)
- Working shiners both with and without the plane
- Helping to investigate a water pollution case
- Learning how to interview witnesses to a violation
- Maintenance of outboard motors, snowmobiles, and vehicles
- Filing citations which were settled in court
- Interviewing purchasers of hunting or fishing licenses who had completed a Declaration of Residency form
- Checking installers of riprap for proper permits
- Teaching a boating safety course
- Distributing boating safety placemats to restaurants
- Participating in firearm shoots
- Participating in training scenarios for recruit wardens
- Rewiring patrol boat, installing blue light, siren, interior lights, and radio speaker

- Investigating illegal mooring of watercraft and illegal wetland fill
- Moving and replacing slow-no-wake buoys
- Working a DNR booth at the county fair
- Becoming familiar with state statutes, NR code, and manual code
- Completing dispositions, entering citations into a computer, making sure the court docket was up to date.
- Searching for bear baits
- Investigating a diesel fuel spill
- Working with deer and grouse decoys

The tasks in which an intern can become involved are limited only by a warden's imagination. During slow periods interns can spend time becoming acquainted with state statutes, Natural Resources code, and manual code. Wardens will be expected to offer suggestions to interns as needed. This will vary greatly with the past experience and ability of each intern.

Warden interns will be juniors, seniors or graduate students in a four-year school or a second year technical student at a technical college. Most will not have any field experience in law enforcement. Interns do not have law enforcement authority and their duties must be limited to activities that do not require law enforcement authority to perform. Interns are students gaining field experience and are **not** DNR employees.

Final Internship Evaluation

In prior years some wardens have taken it upon themselves to give written tests to interns at various times during the internship. These tests have traditionally covered knowledge of laws and regulations, law enforcement procedure, and hypothetical "what if " situational questions. Wardens are not mandated to do this but certainly are encouraged do so if their schedule and inclination permits. Any tests given should be sent in with the intern evaluation.

At the completion of the internship, wardens will complete the Final Internship Evaluation form supplied by the ATD. The school may have an evaluation form as well. The evaluation should be discussed with the intern and then mailed to the school with a copy to the Bureau of Law Enforcement in Madison. The warden also has input in the final letter grade for the internship.

What is Expected of Interns?

Once the student has been notified a warden has agreed to consider to be the internship supervisor, the student will contact the warden and arrange a meeting to discuss such things as:

- The beginning and ending dates of the internship
- The expectations of the warden and the student
- How many credits the student intends on signing up for
- Where the intern will be living during the internship.
- For their own protection, interns will not be included in dangerous situations and must sign the enclosed Intern Liability Waiver form and return it with their application form.
- Interns are expected to dedicate themselves 100% to the internship and to keep up the good image of the school and the Department of Natural Resources.
- Students are expected to familiarize themselves with appropriate state laws and Natural Resource codes prior to the internship. After the internships have been assigned, the intern will contact the warden and discuss the laws that will be encountered during the internship. The intern will make arrangements to get copies locally or from the warden sponsor. Interns will be expected to read them a minimum of one time prior to the internship and review them as needed.
- Interns are expected to take full advantage of the internship by being inquisitive, asking questions, and constantly learning. They are expected to be available to assist with the tasks the warden assigns them.
- Interns are expected to show up on time, exercise sound judgment, be neat and thorough in their duties and

to have the proper gear. Most of all they must be willing to learn, to digest information, to analyze and evaluate situations, and to demonstrate common sense. Interns will be expected to provide ideas and comments where appropriate.

- Within one month of completion of the internship, students will draft a written report which summarizes their activities and identifies what they learned during the internship and submit it to their college for approval. Five copies of the final corrected report will be distributed as follows:
 1. original to the school
 2. copy to the DNR, Bureau of Law Enforcement, Assistant Training Director
 3. copy to the warden supervising the internship
 4. copy to the warden supervisor
 5. copy retained by the intern

What is Expected of the school?

The school shall:

- Hold one-on-one discussions about the intern program with interested students and cooperate with the student and the DNR warden or the Bureau of Law Enforcement in Madison on setting up an internship.
- Duplicate and distribute internship application forms, warden evaluation forms, and other reporting forms the school utilizes to students. Provide prospective interns with this information packet.
- Assist students in completing various forms associated with signing up for internships.
- Determine the number of credits interns shall sign up for.
- Collect and transmit warden internship application forms to the DNR, Bureau of Law Enforcement Assistant Training Director for review each year.
- Notify successful and unsuccessful warden internship applicants.
- Assist interns in acquiring copies of appropriate state laws and regulations prior to the internship.
- Consult with student interns and wardens during the internship. This may involve on-site visits, phone calls or written communication depending on the commitments and work schedule of the interns and wardens.
- Review warden's evaluation of student and student's final report.

What is Expected of the Bureau of Law Enforcement?

The Bureau of Law Enforcement Assistant Training Director shall:

- Provide this information packet to all field wardens, team warden supervisor, and regional warden supervisors and to new wardens when they are hired
- Conduct a Background Investigation when information supplied by the intern applicant.
- Contact the appropriate team warden supervisor to advise them a warden they supervise has been chosen by a student to be a WIS and get their approval to contact the warden to see if the warden will consider being a WIS.
- Upon approval of the supervisor, contact the warden and advise them they were selected by a student on the application packet and ask if they would consider being a warden internship supervisor.
- If a warden agrees to consider to be a WIS, the ATD will contact the student, provide the student with contact information for the perspective WIS so the student can arrange a meeting to discuss the internship.
- Draw up the Internship Agreement between the Department, the school and the student and forward to each for signature.
- Provide direction on an as-needed basis to individual warden internship supervisors concerning the scope and type of activities in which interns shall be involved.
- Work with any wardens or interns to resolve any conflict or problems that may develop during the internship.
- Review and file any evaluation report forms.

10/30/11