

## Summer 2026 Collaborative Conservation Internship

### Friends of Buck Creek Watershed & West Michigan Communities

#### Internship Overview

This paid summer internship offers students a hands-on, cross-organizational experience working with municipal, nonprofit, and conservation partners along the Buck Creek watershed and surrounding West Michigan communities. Interns will gain practical skills in urban ecology, watershed protection, green infrastructure, invasive species management, community outreach, and data collection while working alongside professionals in parks, public works, nonprofits, and conservation networks.

Partners will include the City of Wyoming, City of Grandville, LGROW, Friends of Buck Creek, and Kent County Parks, among others. The intern will rotate across close working organizations and projects to gain exposure to multiple approaches to land stewardship, planning, and community engagement.

Duration: June 15 – August 22, 2026

Compensation: Unpaid, potential Stipend \$550/week from Williams College

Eligibility: Undergraduate students

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#### Core Internship Responsibilities (Shared Across Partners)

Intern responsibilities may include a mix of the following, depending on interest and project timing:

- Install and maintain **green infrastructure** (rain gardens, buffers, native plantings)
- Assist with **invasive species identification, mapping and control** and restoration projects
- Support **Buck Creek data collection and analysis** (ecological, water, or vegetation data)
- Participate in **community cleanups, festivals, and parades** (e.g., Byron Days, Annual Buck Creek Cleanup)
- Assist with **public outreach** to schools, churches, and community organizations
- Contribute to **website updates, mapping, or educational materials**
- Support **fundraising and grant-related activities**
- Assist with event planning and tabling at watershed or community events

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#### Kent County Parks Stewardship Division – Internship Focus Area

Interns working with the Kent County Parks Stewardship Division will gain direct experience in park-based ecological management, restoration, and volunteer engagement.

Interns may be asked to:

- Receive training and use the county's **Survey123** app to inventory trees and vegetation planted along the **Buck Creek** corridor
- Assist with **tree and planting inventories**, long-term monitoring, and basic data management
- Co-lead or support **stewardship workdays**, working alongside staff, volunteers, and community partners
- Learn invasive species identification and management techniques, including:
  - Cutting and daubing **invasive bittersweet** along the Lemery riparian buffer
  - Cutting and treating **buckthorn** along Buck Creek at Douglas Walker Park

- Assist with **native insect and pollinator observations** along restoration corridors, including monitoring areas where monarchs and other pollinators have been observed in newly installed rain garden buffers
- Shadow Park Managers and Stewardship Team members to learn how ecological restoration, maintenance, and public use intersect in a county park system
- Participate in staff meetings, field days, and training opportunities related to parks management, volunteer coordination, and natural resources

## Professional Development & Trainings

Interns are given the opportunity to train on [Michigan Invasive Species Network \(http://learn.misin.msu.edu\)](http://learn.misin.msu.edu) (MISIN) on rainy days or to prepare them for field surveys and attend relevant summer workshops and trainings hosted by partners like the **West Michigan Conservation Network** and partner organizations. These may include:

Scheduled Trainings (2026):

- Watershed Jamboree 2026 - June 13, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
- Deer, Disease, and Damage: A Critical Conversation - June 18, 6:30 – 8:00 PM
- Are Honeybees Outcompeting Our Native Bees? July 24, 3- 5 PM, Aug. 7, 11:00a– 1:00p

These trainings provide interns with regional context, professional networking opportunities, and exposure to current conservation challenges and approaches.

### Ideal Candidate

- Interest in environmental science, ecology, engineering, planning, public works, or sustainability
- Willingness to work outdoors in varying conditions
- Comfortable working independently and as part of a team
- Curious, reliable, and eager to learn from multiple organizations
- Strong communication skills and interest in community-based work

**Requirements:** 1) Vehicle, 2) Laptop Computer, 3) Cellphone

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<https://mibuckcreek.org/>



<https://www.kentcountymi.gov/1423/Parks>



<http://lgrow.org>



Grand River, Grand Rapids, Michigan <https://www.experiencegr.com/>



Lake Michigan shore, Holland, MI