How did your internship opportunity happen?
I learned about this internship through my advisor, John Peterson. There was an email sent out to all Bio majors and I decided to apply. Thankfully, I got accepted and I couldn’t wait to begin my summer in Madison.

How does your internship complement your academic goals?
I was having a difficult time finding experience in my field. Working with the Madison Audubon Society/Prairie Partners has given me experience that will take me in many different directions. This experience will clearly have a great impact on my future, not from just what I have learned, but from all the great people I’ve met.

How are you spending your days?
Most of our days consist of removing invasive species at four different sites in Dane and Columbia Counties. We work at Pheasant Branch Conservancy, Lakeshore Nature Preserve, Goose Pond Sanctuary, and Westport Drumlín Prairie. Some of the major invasive species that we remove are buckthorn, honeysuckle, sumac, sweet clover and garlic mustard. We’ve learned about restoration ecology and we were able to apply that information directly to the sites. We also do some seed collection, which is my favorite. I wish we were able to do more, but the internship isn’t quite long enough.

What type of skills are you learning?
My plant identification skills were terrible. Now I can identify many various plants without asking. And I’m seeing parts of Wisconsin that I’ve never seen before!

Michelle Atkinson
UW-Platteville
Student & PACCE
Summer Intern

Interning at Madison Audubon Society in Madison, WI
Junior majoring in Biology
Hometown: Beloit, WI

“We learned how to chainsaw...received training and used the training that same day!” - Atkinson

Michelle’s’s aha moment:
“When I was finally able to start identifying plants without asking. It was great to know that I was picking up such useful information within one week of starting my internship!”

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