

had a giant 20-foot inflatable Smokey Bear in Jackson Square, and we played Smokey Bear trivia with nearly 400 kids,” Waskowiak says. “That was super fun because everybody was able learn more about fire prevention. In Star Valley, we helped the volunteer trail crew. It was really inspiring to see that people who really care can have such an impact.”

The interns also set up tents at trailheads and farmers markets to educate the public on recreating responsibility. In the process, Waskowiak says she gained public speaking skills.

“We spoke to people about how to put out their campfire safely, how to store food to minimize wildlife encounters and more,” she says. “We got to engage over 800 people throughout the summer. We were able to also interact with city councils, mayors and commissioners, so that was amazing.”

Waskowiak learned about the behind-the-scenes work that goes into running a successful nonprofit — a field she’s considering for her career.

“I really loved working for a nonprofit,” she says. “I felt like there was a lot of passion and purpose behind what we were doing every day, and that’s something I would like to continue for my future as well. I also really enjoyed how they incorporated recreation with conservation efforts because I believe that if people are outdoors having great experiences they’re going to be more likely to want to protect those environments.”

Wyoming Outdoor Recreation, Tourism and Hospitality (WORTH) Internship and Employment Coordinator Jordan Kobliska says: “We’re very fortunate at the Jay Kemmerer WORTH Institute to help support students build their career skills and explore opportunities in the outdoor recreation, tourism and hospitality fields. Internships, like those with Friends of the Bridger Teton, help students learn about the many opportunities to work in this state.”

### **Agricultural Immersion**

The Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics GrowinG Internship Program bridges the gap between classroom learning and real-world agricultural careers. It pairs interns ages 18 and up with hands-on experiences on working farms and ranches across Wyoming.

“This program isn’t just about ranch skills — it’s about life skills,” says co-Director John Hewlett. “It’s the living version of what we teach with tools like RightRisk — helping young people learn to make smart risk-savvy

decisions when things don’t go as planned. At the same time, it’s about succession, connecting experienced producers who have a lifetime of knowledge with the next generation that has the energy and passion to carry that legacy forward.”

Since it was launched in 2022, the program has supported nearly 40 interns who have worked with range livestock, specialty crops, direct-to-consumer meats and agricultural services. Internships typically last 10 weeks, and interns receive a stipend.

“We designed this program as a living laboratory, bridging the gap between economic theory in the classroom and the complex real-world decisions producers face every day,” says co-Director Benjamin Rashford. “From a policy perspective, it delivers a high return on investment — supporting local economies, fostering small business development and addressing the critical issue of agricultural succession. And the data is clear: By inspiring over two-thirds of our interns to pursue agricultural careers in Wyoming, the program is directly strengthening the state’s workforce pipeline and building long-term human capital.”

English and zoology senior Leigh Stockton of Burns, Wyo., completed two GrowinG internships — one in Sheridan and the second in Buffalo.

“On both ranches, I got an in-depth and hands-on education on what it takes to run a successful cattle ranch

COURTESY PHOTO



Leigh Stockton completed two GrowinG internships on cattle ranches, cementing his decision to enter the field.



PHOTO BY NICOLE OLIVIER

Forrest Cole served as a communications and media intern for the Cheetah Conservation Fund in Namibia, introducing him to conservation photography. He's pictured here helping to transport a cheetah to the clinic.

value,” says Quinlivan, who graduated this December with his degree in energy resource management and development with a concentration in professional land management. “By taking on an internship experience, I was able to find my strengths and weaknesses and get a real taste of what working in the energy industry was like. I think internships are important to students for determining how your skills align with your work and career goals.”

He also appreciated spending the summer at home near family, which enabled him to continue his volunteer work at Cheyenne Frontier Days. Quinlivan says that the internship helped him to gain experience and confidence as well as to determine his niche within the industry. This January, he will start a job as

a landman for Uranium Energy Corp. in Casper, Wyo.

School of Energy Resources Academic Director Kami Danaei says internships are one of the most valuable experiences students can have: “Internships bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world application. While our curriculum builds a strong foundation, internships put that knowledge into context — showing students how concepts play out in actual projects and decisions. They also help students explore different career paths, build professional networks and often open doors to full-time opportunities after graduation. Most importantly, internships give students the confidence and clarity they need to step into the energy industry prepared and ready to contribute from day one.”

### A Summer with Cheetahs

Forrest Cole grew up in Wheatland, Wyo., and developed a passion for skiing and photographing action sports. This led him to study journalism with a photography focus at UW, graduating this past spring. During his final semester, Namibia's Cheetah Conservation Fund founder visited campus, noting the organization's need for a communications and media intern. The nonprofit focuses on cheetah conservation, education and research.

Cole applied for a grant from WyoGlobal, and the rest is history. He spent the summer there, documenting the

in today's age,” Stockton says. “I learned basic skills like how to ride on a hillside, move cattle, rope and shoe horses, build and tear down fence, vaccinate cattle and work a skid steer, but the most valuable lessons I learned were about community. The ranching world lives on helping a neighbor, on reaching out and giving someone else the hand you wish you got when you stood in their shoes. Both internships taught me the value of teamwork and the incredible connectedness of Wyoming.”

The connections he formed range from a handyman in Sheridan to the governor of Wyoming. What's more, the internship made his career choice clear.

“If I wasn't a cowboy before, I'm set on being one now,” he says. “If you're thinking you've got what it takes to be in the ranching world, give it a try. Any day you can swing a leg over a horse beats even an hour spent at a desk.”

### Exploring the Energy Industry

School of Energy Resources student Lars Quinlivan of Cheyenne secured an internship with the energy land service company Hoover & Stacy Inc. in his hometown over the summer, where he helped with title-related projects.

“I learned that being a landman and a professional overall requires a mindset that the learning is never over and that it is important to find where you can bring