



*Celebrating 15  
years of land and  
water  
stewardship in  
the Kickapoo  
.. ..*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **LOCAL STUDENT WILL SHERWIN RECEIVES STATEWIDE RECOGNITION FOR VOLUNTEER STREAM MONITORING EFFORTS**

**VIROQUA, WI December 14, 2015** –Youth Initiative High School Senior Will Sherwin has been recognized with the 2015 Wisconsin Volunteer Stream Monitoring Award-Student Category for his exemplary work in stream monitoring with the Valley Stewardship Network (VSN) Water Action Volunteers program. The University of Wisconsin-Extension and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources recognizes individuals and groups for their efforts leading to increased participation in stream monitoring, collecting stream data and sharing their knowledge of stream monitoring. UW Extension Natural Resource Educator Peggy Compton presented Will with his award plaque at VSN’s annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner on November 16.

Will Sherwin has served as a volunteer for VSN’s water quality programs since the spring of 2013, when he helped with VSN’s new “Kids and Clean Water” educational events for 2nd and 5th graders. VSN Water Quality Coordinator Vicki Ramsay shares that, “Kids love Will and are avid listeners when he explains the ‘hows’ and ‘whys’ of stream monitoring. Will’s kindness and conscientiousness are revealed in his attention to the macroinvertebrates we study as indicators of stream health. He passes on this kind of care to the students with whom he works and teaches. His thoughtfulness is contagious!”

Will has helped with VSN’s youth education events over the past three field seasons whenever his schedule allowed. “Will loves working stream-side and teaching kids about the natural environment of the river,” says VSN Executive Director Shelly Brenneman. “In addition to being an extremely reliable stream monitor, he is an excellent and kind



role model for younger students. The world can use more young mentors like Will.”

Will has inspired several more of his classmates from Youth Initiative High School to become involved as volunteers for VSN’s youth education programs. Because of Will’s leadership in showing how high school youth can serve as successful educators and monitors, Valley Stewardship Network and Youth Initiative High School have started an on-going training, volunteer and education program for grades 9-12.

Service work is an integral part of student life at Youth Initiative. “Involvement in and service to our greater community is at the core of our school’s Vision and Purpose statement, and the act of service—of fostering connection and action within the community—is at the heart both of healthy societies and of personal development,” says Susan Nesbit, Youth Initiative faculty member. “Working with Valley Stewardship Network has provided several students, including Will Sherwin, the opportunity to do meaningful work while learning important life skills. We are grateful for the connection we have with VSN.”

Valley Stewardship Network offers WAV trainings for interested community members in May and June in the greater Kickapoo Valley region and southwest Wisconsin. Information is available at 608-637-3615 or [info@kickapoovsn.org](mailto:info@kickapoovsn.org).

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Based in Viroqua, Valley Stewardship Network is celebrating 15 years of land and water stewardship in the Kickapoo Valley and adjacent watersheds. Best known for its water quality monitoring programs, VSN also offers outreach and education programs to help farmers, landowners, residents and visitors understand and support our local ecology for the health of our communities. More at [www.valleystewardshipnetwork.org](http://www.valleystewardshipnetwork.org).