Dear <insert name of Newspaper Person you are sending it to>,

This summer, I was selected to participate in the 2017 Wildlife Leadership Academy <insert which field school you attended> field school, a rigorous leadership training program for high school students focusing on wildlife and fisheries conservation and habitat management.  Below is a general press release about the program. If you are interested, I would be happy to speak with you about my experience at the field school. I can also provide photos of the 2017 field school.

I look forward hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Your Name

**<put CURRENT DATE here>\*Note, always change this to the date you send the email or letter\***

**For Immediate Release**

Photos available upon request

Contact: Katie Cassidy, Wildlife Leadership Academy Program and Outreach Coordinator; kcassidy@wildlifeleadershipacademy.org; 570-939-5109

**«your town name» youth completes challenging wildlife leadership field school**

<Your Town>, PA - Celebrating its eleventh year, the Wildlife Leadership Academy provided an unmatchable opportunity during a series of summer field schools for Pennsylvania teens.

This summer, the Academy offered five field schools for Pennsylvania youth. The Pennsylvania Bucktails focuses on white-tailed deer, was June 13-17, and took place at Stone Valley Recreation Area in Huntingdon County. The Pennsylvania Bass field school, which focuses on bass, was June 27-July 1, and took place at Camp Oak Hill in southern Lancaster County. The Pennsylvania Brookies field school, which focuses on our state fish the brook trout, was July 18-22, and took place at the Sieg Conference Center in Clinton County. The Pennsylvania Drummers, which focuses on our state bird, the Ruffed Grouse, was July 18-22 and took place at Stone Valley Recreation Area in Huntingdon County. The Pennsylvania Gobblers, which focuses on turkey, had its inagural year, and ran July 25-29, taking place at Stone Valley Recreation Area in Huntingdon County.

One hundred new participants, ranging in age from 14-to 17-years old and demonstrating leadership skills, were selected from a competitive pool of applications. Among these students, «insert YOUR NAME» of «insert YOUR TOWN NAME» applied and was chosen to take part in this extraordinary statewide program this past summer.

The Academy is an exceptional program offering high-acheiveing youngsters a comprehensive study of specific wildlife species, including classroom and field-based, hands-on education. Led by experts, including biologists and educators from across the state and beyond, the program also engages participants in team work, friendly competition, and an awareness of their natural world.

The program guides youth through an intense but rewarding educational experience. Claire Orner, a Team Leader for the PA Drummers field school, describes how she felt after field school as “Exhausted, but so inspired to see the energy of up and coming leaders in the field of conservation. These students *will* make positive change.”

Freya, a graduate of the PA Bucktails and PA Ursids field schools, commented “Joining the Wildlife Leadership Academy has given me focus and direction.  I feel it’s cleared a path that could take me all the way into my adulthood and career.”

Instructor and professional ecologist Lisa Smith also commended the program.

 “The high caliber and sheer number of conservation professionals who are involved as instructors in this camp are beyond impressive, but more than that is the commitment of time, energy and passion that each of these instructors give to the students.”

Academy students return to their community sharing what they have learned with their school, conservation organizations, local parks and more. They also keep a record of their conservation outreach efforts. Top outreach achievements qualify students for educational field trips, opportunities to return to field school tuition-free as mentors, and for college scholarships. Through field school and outreach projects, students learn and implement valuable life skills, such as leadership, communication, and responsibility.

Bernie Schmader, a member of the Conservation Officers of Pennsylvania Association (COPA), said how impressed he was with a young woman from the Academy who presented at their annual meeting.

“Her article and oral report reassures our members and others that there are intelligent, interested, dedicated and understanding young people who are preparing to step up and carry on in our efforts to promote and safeguard Pennsylvania’s precious fish, wildlife and other natural resources.”

In the last ten years, 371 Pennsylvania teens from 61 counties in the state have participated in Wildlife Leadership Academy. These youth have taken the Academy’s mission to heart. To date, graduates have conducted 1,840 conservation education, communication, and service projects; engaged in more than 7,600 contact hours with the public; and reached an audience of more than 32,000 Pennsylvania citizens across the commonwealth.

Academy Director Michele Kittell said the participants are “the next generation to speak for wildlife conservation."

"We hope the leadership of Academy youth in their home communities will inspire others to care more and therefore act more on behalf of the environment,” she said.

The Wildlife Leadership Academy is a cooperative initiative involving state agencies and conservation organizations and is administered by the Pennsylvania Institute for Conservation Education. Expert instructors at the field school include representatives from Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Pennsylvania State University, Quality Deer Management Association, Trout Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, Dickinson College, Kutztown University, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and many more.

For more information, contact Wildlife Leadership Academy Program and Outreach Coordinator, Katie Cassidy, at kcassidy@wildlifeleadershipacademy.org or (570)939-5109.