

This summer, Hannah Krause attended the Wildlife Leadership Academy PA Bucktails field school, which focuses on whitetail deer biology and management. The mission of the Wildlife Leadership Academy is to empower youth to become ambassadors for wildlife conservation in order to ensure a sustained wildlife legacy for future generations. The academy offers high-achieving youngsters, ages 14-17, 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 Wildlife Leadership Academy will announce 2015 field school offerings and locations on their website at www.PICEweb.org. Applications are available January 1, 2015; the submission deadline is April 1, 2015. Interested students may download the 2015 application at www.PICEweb.org. For more information, contact Wildlife Leadership Academy Director Michele Kittell at mkittell@piceweb.org or (570)245-8518.

Pictured at right, Hannah is learning how to press plant samples.

In the far right photo, she is working with her team to identify plants used by deer for browse.

PA Bucktails Field School

by Hannah Krause

I attended the Pennsylvania Institute for Conservation Education's Wildlife Leadership Academy this past summer. I chose to go to the PA Bucktails field school because of my interests in whitetail deer and hunting. During field school, we learned things related to the deer like their habitat, age, diet, behavior, and population management. Time was spent identifying plant species that impacted the deer and how those plants (and others) were used to give us information about the deer. We also took time to appreciate nature through journaling and photography.

During the week I couldn't believe how much I *didn't* know about deer that I was able to learn through the different instructors. It was great to be in a small class size with other students who shared my passion. The week was balanced with team building, learning, games, and competitions. I made a lot of new friends and had a lot of fun. Also, the program is set up so that the skills that have been acquired provide

the confidence to continue working on service and educational projects once you leave.

Since June, I've had so many experiences as a function of my Academy outreach. I've done duck and owl banding with the PA Game Commission biologists to study population and migration patterns. I volunteer at Red Creek Wildlife Center to help injured and abandoned animals and birds to rehabilitate. Poster boards and presentations have been shared to educate others about whitetail deer and monarch butterflies, one of my other passions. I realized how much I enjoy the hobby of photographing nature and wildlife. Truly the best part of all, however, is how many more things I have lined up that I'm really looking forward to so I can continue my learning and outreach. Everybody I work with is open to helping me achieve my goals. I feel I am being groomed as the next generation's leader in wildlife ecology.

