

Good communication skills key to succeeding on the job

It's clear that Tara Bergeson (BS 1995, MS 2001 Wildlife Ecology) enjoys her work with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Tara is the Wildlife Action Plan Implementation Coordinator and works with DNR staff and a variety of other groups to identify threatened native Wisconsin species and devise plans to protect them and their habitats.

"My job is to help people understand the Wildlife Action Plan so that they can use it to implement conservation actions that will protect wildlife and habitats," says Tara. Elements of her job that enable her to achieve this goal include acting as a liaison between WI DNR staff work groups and managers/administrators; making connections with and collaborating with organizations such as the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Teaming with Wildlife, and the National Wildlife Federation with the goal of implementing a Wildlife Action Plan; and giving presentations about the Wildlife Action Plan to DNR staff and partner organizations on ways they can use the Wildlife Action Plan. Lastly, Tara coordinates the State Wildlife Grants Program, writes grant proposals and manages budgets.

As you might guess, in order to be successful in her work, Tara must communicate effectively with a variety of people. In fact, she advises current students: "Polish your communication skills—all of them! Practice writing and speaking clearly and concisely. Whether it's with your supervisor, a co-worker, a farmer, a sportsman, an agency administrator, or a legislator, you WILL need to communicate. You may think that a particular job you are interested in won't require much communication, but it will!"

Tara says many experiences during her studies at the UW-Madison helped to prepare her for her career. At the top of her list are experiences that forced her to think critically and "stretch her bound-



Tara Bergeson demonstrates amphibian survey techniques during a field crew training session.

aries." Also, learning to work with teams to solve problems is a skill she uses daily in her current position. And her internships and summer jobs in natural resources provided insights on what it would be like to apply the skills and knowledge she was learning in the classroom.

Finally, Tara offers some advice that applies to us all. "Be confident in yourself. Take on new challenges that stretch your comfort zone. This will help you learn to manage change, which is certain to happen during your career."