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WM Interns Gain Hands-On Experience Through Sustainability Projects

From textile recycling to landfills and renewable natural gas, interns are helping advance projects that support WM's sustainability and business goals.



WM intern Quinn Dugger visits a gas well at WM's Meadowfill Landfill in Bridgeport, West Virginia.

At WM, interns do more than observe. They work on projects that support the company's waste management, recycling, sustainability and operational goals.

This summer, WM hired more than 70 interns, placing them in roles across the business, from our corporate headquarters to our field operations. WM interns work closely with employees in sales, engineering, operations, technology, finance, healthcare solutions, human resources and communications, helping support our business and serve local communities.

Interns have opportunities to visit WM recycling facilities, transfer stations, landfills and other sites, giving them firsthand experience of WM operations in action.

They work alongside experienced professionals to help solve business challenges while building practical skills and experience that can support future career opportunities.

WM intern Wendi Chen sits behind the wheel of a residential collection truck during a visit to WM's hauling site in Germantown, Wisconsin.

Supporting Recycling and Circularity

One intern helping advance WM's sustainability efforts is Xiaoyu "Wendi" Chen, an MBA student at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

Chen supports projects focused on textile recycling and a company-wide internal recycling initiative.

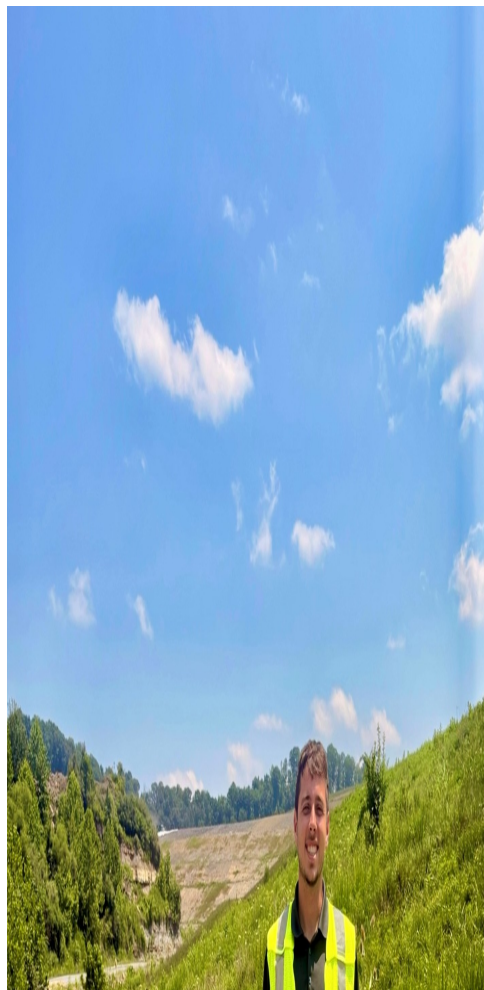
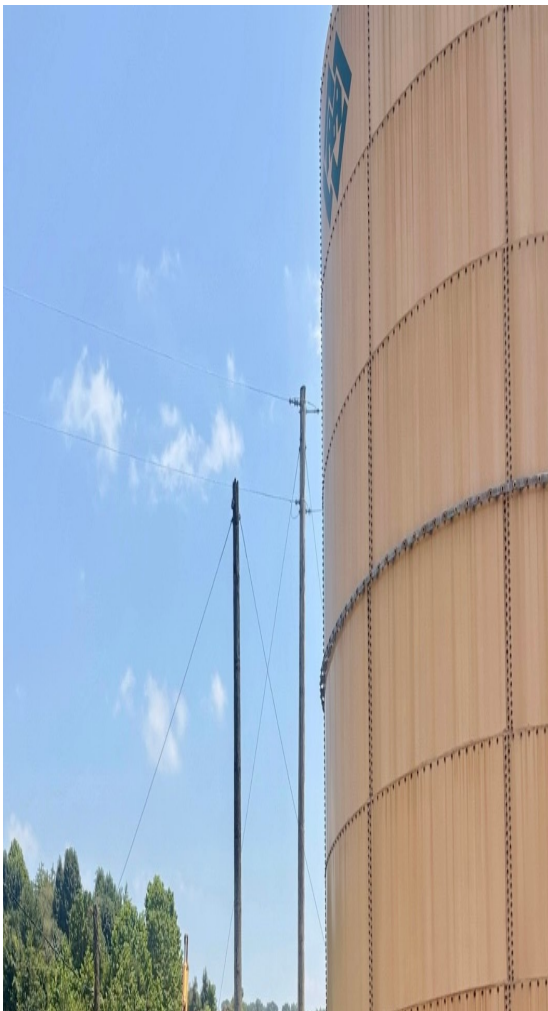
As part of WM's textile recycling efforts, Chen is helping standardize monthly reporting and performance scorecards while developing a tracking tool for downstream vendors that purchase recovered textile materials. The work is helping improve consistency, streamline reporting and support decision-making as WM continues to expand its textile recycling initiatives.

"Wendi brings fresh energy and perspective," said Jessica Kenny, program manager, enterprise strategy, WM. "She uses her engineering background and MBA analytical skills to observe, ask insightful questions and prototype digital tools that make our work more efficient."

Chen is also helping support WM's internal recycling initiative, which aims to improve recycling practices across company facilities. Her work includes coordinating project activities, developing educational resources and supporting employee engagement efforts designed to increase participation.

"One day, when I see the recycling bins, new signage and educational materials in WM facilities, I'll know I had a small part in helping make it happen," said Chen.

Engineering Projects With Lasting Impact





WM intern Grant Barcheck uses a 360-degree camera during a walkthrough of the leachate storage tanks at WM's Meadowfill Landfill in Bridgeport, West Virginia.

Returning for a second summer with WM, Grant Barcheck, an environmental systems engineering student at Pennsylvania State University, and Quinn Dugger, a civil engineering student at West Virginia University, are supporting projects tied to landfill operations, infrastructure planning and renewable natural gas (RNG) development.

Their work includes evaluating landfill gas performance at sites being considered for future renewable natural gas facilities, as well as developing an asset-management tool that uses drone technology and 360-degree imagery to help engineering teams assess infrastructure conditions, prioritize maintenance and plan future investments.

"Working on renewable natural gas projects has helped me see how sustainability and business performance go hand in hand," Dugger said. "It's important to make sure we're investing in the right opportunities so we can maximize both environmental impact and long-term value."

Barcheck said the asset-management project has shown him the value of taking a proactive approach to infrastructure planning.

"The goal is to be proactive rather than reactive," Barcheck said. "By understanding the condition of our assets, we can better plan for future investments and make more informed decisions."

The internship has also exposed both students to much more than traditional engineering work.

"I expected a more traditional engineering internship," Barcheck said. "Instead, I've been exposed to everything

from operations and construction projects to environmental compliance and sustainability initiatives. Every day is different, and you can see that the work you're doing matters."

Dugger said the opportunity to take ownership of projects and learn from experienced leaders has been one of the most valuable aspects of the internship.

"They've given us real responsibility and pushed us outside our comfort zone," Dugger said. "It's helped me think more intentionally about my career and the skills I want to develop, while also giving me confidence that I can contribute in a professional role."

As part of a hands-on sustainability project, intern Quinn Dugger launches a drone to inspect a leachate tank at DSI Landfill in Hurricane, West Virginia, while certified drone pilot Travis Bayes supervises the flight from off camera.

Investing in the Future

At the conclusion of the program, interns present their projects and recommendations to company leaders, sharing insights gained through their work and field experiences.

"It is fantastic to see the next generation learning, contributing and succeeding within our business," said Travis Bayes, engineering manager, Capitol Market Area, WM. "The projects they support provide meaningful value to WM while giving interns confidence in their abilities."

For WM, internships are more than a summer experience. They are an investment in the future workforce and an opportunity for students to make meaningful contributions. As Chen reflected on her work this summer, "It's just a little piece of the whole puzzle, but piece by piece, together we can make it work."

The 2026 WM Summer Internship Program included opportunities across engineering, operations, technology, finance, healthcare solutions, human resources and communications.

Explore Careers at WM

Interested in internships or career opportunities in sustainability, recycling, environmental services, engineering, operations or technology?

[Visit the WM Careers page](#) to search current openings and learn more about opportunities across North America. Summer 2027 internship positions will be posted soon.

Curious what a day as a WM intern looks like? To celebrate National Intern Day, summer intern Julia created a video offering an inside look at her experience. [Watch it on LinkedIn.](#)

<https://mediaroom.wm.com/WM-Interns-Gain-Hands-On-Experience-Through-Sustainability-Projects>