



Agriculture

Ken Schroeder, Agriculture Agent

- Taught 24 Kindergarten through 8th grade students about cover crops and healthy soils as part of a Mill Creek youth education field day at Eron's Farm along with Tracy, Dan, and Jen from Portage County Land and Water Conservation teaching about prairies and pollinators and macroinvertebrates.
- Taught a class on soils and soil health to 8th graders and the High School Ag class at Almond Bancroft along with John Ruzicka from the Farmers for Tomorrow River Watershed project and Dan O'Connell, Portage County Land and Water Conservation. Youth learned about soil types, soil layers, water infiltration, and the importance of using soil conservation practices to improve soil health and water quality.
- Taught Phosphorus and Potassium management sections for the first of our Nutrient Management Farmer Education classes at Mid-State Technical College. Students learned about the importance of soil testing and tracking of P and K inputs including crediting the P and K from manure to produce an economically and environmentally sustainable crop.



Additional Agriculture work being conducted in Portage County



A study to learn about how much neonicotinoid pesticides from seed treatments and from field applications leach into groundwater in areas of sandy soil. Results will help WDNR regulate this class of pesticides to protect water supplies statewide and agricultural producers to design farm management practices to mitigate pesticide impacts. – *Geoffrey Siemering, Outreach Specialist, UW-Madison, Department of Soil Science*

- A virtual program for members of the UWSP Continuing Education LIFE (Learning is FoEver), where participants learned best practices for reduced risk lawn care. The goal of this program is to increase awareness and knowledge of resources to address environmental contamination and pollution due to overuse of horticulture chemicals in urban and suburban environments. – *Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator Wood & Marathon Counties*





Community, Natural Resources & Economic Development

Nathan Sandwick, Community Development Educator

- Gathered information about resources currently available for expanding access to broadband. Attended the Broadband for All: Connecting Wisconsin Kick-Off hosted by NTIA and PSC-WI. Identified providers in Portage County that participate in the Affordable Connectivity Program that funds discounts for qualifying subscribers.
- When meeting with community leaders and colleagues, I've continued to suggest ways (supported by evidence) for communities to realize more of the value of public management expertise with well-structured decision processes to address complicated or controversial issues (such as water quality) and opportunities (such as improved infrastructure).
- Engaged in discussions at a Small-Town Community Forum near Rosholt, where I joined colleagues from the League of Wisconsin Municipalities and the Local Government Institute in underscoring the problematic nature of tight municipal budgets in Wisconsin and noted fire protection as a service that tends to directly benefit those who pay for it by way of local property tax. I also joined in discussion of opportunities for infrastructure.
- Preparing contributions for an upcoming Portage County LIFE Report Steering committee session Employment, Income, Post-secondary Education, and Transportation (as work on an updated LIFE Report progresses).

Additional Natural Resources work being conducted in Portage County

 A study to better understand neonicotinoid concentrations in groundwater and surface water in the Central Sands Region of Wisconsin. Results from this study will help farmers, citizens, scientists, local/county/state officials, and regulatory agencies make decisions regarding water-resources. – *Michael Parsen, Hydrogeologist, UW Madison Division of Extension*

 Denotes educational or planning efforts that work toward improving water quality in Portage County, Central Wisconsin, and the State as whole. While these efforts are highlighted in this report, there is more work being done by Extension to address water quality concerns outside of what is here. For more information about these efforts, or other efforts Extension has undertaken regarding water quality, please reach out to our office.

FoodWise

Kelly Hammond, Healthy Community Coordinator; Hannah Wendels & Penny Schmitt, FoodWise Nutrition Educators; Mallory McGivern Nutrition Administrator

- A 5-week nutrition education series for sixth grade classrooms at McKinley Elementary School, where students learn about MyPlate, making healthy food and beverage choices, and being physically active to encourage healthy behaviors in school and at home.
- FoodWise and ADRC continue to partner to provide "Stockboxes for Seniors", a monthly food box service where low-income seniors can receive at least 10 pounds of pantry staples and nutritious foods. Marshfield Clinic donation has allowed for the addition of fresh vegetables purchased through Farmshed. Research shows improved retention in program with addition of produce.
- Strongbodies, 12-week series in partnership with the Portage County ADRC for low-income seniors, where nutrition education is offered to compliment the physical activity to build strength and community resilience.
- Provide support to Hunger and Poverty Prevention Partnership for Empty Bowls campaign and volunteer support at event. Raising over 20K for local hunger and poverty awareness and prevention grants and scholarships in Portage County.
- A quarterly nutrition education series utilizing the MyPlate for MyFamily curriculum for adults with teenage children as part of the Children's Wisconsin Parents and Teens connecting series where they learn about incorporating healthy eating habits into the family routine, including family meals, and eating more fruits and vegetables. The goal of this effort is to encourage healthy eating behaviors at home.
- Welcome Mallory McGivern! Mallory will serving as the FoodWise Nutrition Administrator for Clark, Marathon, Portage and Wood Counties. Mallory will work with Nutrition Educators and community partners to provide direct education to help to make the healthy choice, the easy choice. She graduated from UW-Stevens Point with a BS in Sociology and has a passion for health promotion, building community partnerships and strengthening food equity, security and sovereignty.
- FoodWise team supported local Boys and Girls Club Trunk or Treat event by handing out clementines, children's books and flyers for upcoming events.





Human Development and Relationships

Sherry Daniels, Human Development and Relationships Educator

- A program for families and individuals, where participants learn how to create financial goals and gain money management skills. The goal of this program is to enable participants to prepare for and take charge of household financial situations that occur due to changes in income or unforeseen hardships.
- A course for renters where participants learn how to find and apply for rental housing, understand their responsibilities as a renter, how to communicate effectively with their landlords, and manage housing expenses. Through this, homeless populations and those who have negative rental records are able to increase their ability to find and keep safe affordable housing, thereby increasing their stability and decreasing their reliance on public support.