

We teach, learn, lead and serve, connecting people with the University of Wisconsin, and engaging with them in transforming lives and communities.

4-H – Positive Youth Development

Connie Creighton, 4-H Youth Development Agent

Currently wrapping up the 2022 fair season. Working on-on-one and in committee meetings with leaders, parents, and youth on what worked well this year and what challenges we had.

- Two new programs were held at the fair this year.
 - A hands-on beef workshop planned and implemented by 4-H Teen Leader with an attendance of 20 youth after the dairy show. Youth learned about animal care and showmanship. She plans on holding a similar workshop in 2023.
 - A youth 4-H activity station where youth of any age could make arts & crafts including door knockers and windsocks. 4-H Ambassadors helped to facilitate the station throughout the fair weekend. The station was very popular, and we are planning to continue it next year.
- The carcass contest was held the first Thursday after the Rosholt Fair. This year's contest included five processing plants: Becks in Oshkosh, Niemuth's Steak and Chop Shop in Waupaca, Pond Hill in Wittenberg, and People's Meat Market and Butcher Block in Stevens Point. We followed this with a results program at Niemuths. The carcass contest teaches youth what makes a good product and what buyers and retailers look for.
- Youth participated and showcased their animals at State Fair or 4-H State Show. Shows included: the State Dog Show, State Horse Expo, and State Fair where members showed rabbits, swine & beef.





Agriculture

Ken Schroeder, Agriculture Agent

- Published the August editions of the Farmers of Mill Creek and Farmers for Tomorrow River Watershed Council newsletters. Content included articles on: Adopting the Paul J. Olson Wildlife Area, Planning for a Successful No-Till Crop, Using Cover Crops to Improve Weed Suppression, Introducing the Midwest Cover Crop Council's Cover Crop Selector Tool, Farm Safety and Health Reminders, Using Aerial Application of Cover Crops, and a Farmers of Mill Creek Youth Education Field Day. If interested in receiving these newsletters, contact Extension Portage County 715-346-1316.



Assisted the Farmers of Mill Creek and Farmers for Tomorrow with their DATCP Producer-Led Watershed grant applications for 2023 funding.

- Working with University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension colleagues, Mid-State Tech, and DATCP to plan fall Nutrient Management Farmer Education Courses to be held in October, November, and December at Stevens Point, Marshfield, Wisconsin Rapids, Adams.

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*

Community, Natural Resources & Economic Development

Nathan Sandwick, Community Development Educator

- Reviewed and offered comments on a draft of a current community needs assessment prepared by CAP Services. The assessment will serve as an informative and useful resource for leaders of community programs aimed at expanding solutions for families with limited means in this region.
- Assembled resources about fair housing law in order to inform discussion with several community leaders exploring and refining suitable strategies to expand housing options for people for whom



commonly used tenant screening criteria present a major obstacle in their search for market rate rental housing.



Assembled resources with brief descriptions for inclusion in a groundwater guidance document underway as part of a grant-funded research project of interest to the Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative (the study noted below).

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*

- A library of videos highlighting successes and challenges farmers are facing while implementing soil health practices in Northeastern Wisconsin. This effort was designed to allow farmers to learn from other farmers about how to implement soil health practices. – *Maranda Miller, Natural Resource Educator, UW Madison Division of Extension*
- A virtual outreach program for farmers using social media to amplify our messages beyond in-person field days. The intent of this style of programming is for farmers to learn about soil health conservation farming practices including how to implement them, equipment options, and obstacles other farmers have overcome. – *Maranda Miller, Natural Resource Educator, UW Madison Division of Extension*
- An ongoing training effort to demonstrate to Demonstration Farm project management teams how to visually represent their otherwise abstract soil health and conservation agricultural practices. The intent of this effort is to get partners SHOWING the strategies and results of conservation agricultural practices, so farmers understand how they work, and are able to implement them on their land. – *Maranda Miller, Natural Resource Educator, 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, OPEN; Nutrition Administrator

- A partnership with ADRC that provides "Stockboxes for Seniors", a monthly food box service where low-income seniors can receive at least 10 pounds of pantry staples and nutritious foods. The goal of this partnership is to promote the boxes with community partners with the overall goal to improve food security. Helped create and carry out evaluation over the summer to review the addition of fresh produce, results can be seen at [WIIP Internship Data on Stockboxes in Portage County](#).
- Interactive research at 7 Central Wisconsin Farmers Markets including Stevens Point is starting to wrap up for the summer, results from this study will help farmers markets to improve access to low-income communities through expanded EBT/FoodShare access. a partnership with UWSP Business students and UW-Madison graduate students will analyze data over the next few months. Preliminary research can be seen [here](#).

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.
- A 12-session virtual series (Aging Mastery Program) for seniors, where participants learn how to navigate longer lives through healthy eating, exercise, financial fitness, healthy relationships, medication management, and community engagement. The purpose of this program is to develop sustainable behaviors that lead to improved health, stronger economic security, enhanced well-being, and increased societal participation among seniors.
- A virtual and in-person training for university students where they learn how to be good financial coaches to their peers as part of the Financial Security Association. The goal of this effort is to increase financial literacy among college students.