



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
PORTAGE COUNTY

October 2024 Activity Report

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

- **October:**
 - Three sewing workshops: one via Zoom and two in person.
 - Hmong UPLIFT Program: 4-H youth and adults will conduct a pumpkin carving program, providing an opportunity to expand Extension programming outreach.
- **November:**
 - Leaders Banquet: Recognizing 4-H leaders for their accomplishments.
 - 4-H Award Program: A youth-directed program recognizing young people's achievements.
 - Fall Forum: A state 4-H program offering workshops and hands-on activities for 4-H teen and adult leaders.
 - After 30 years as Portage County Extension 4-H and Youth Development agent, Connie Creighton has retired. Her last day is November 4th.

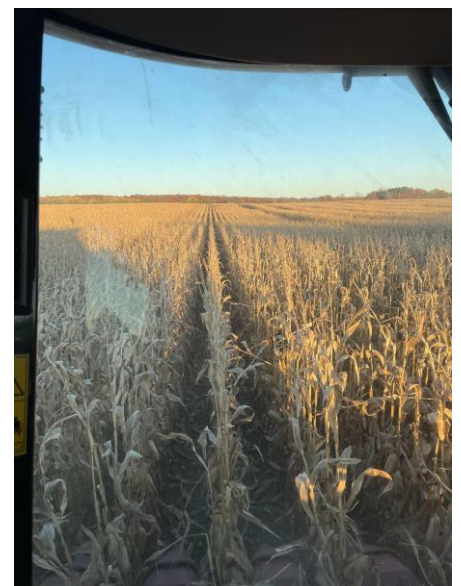
Agriculture

Ken Schroeder, Agriculture Agent



A presentation to Portage County Land and Water Conservation Committee where participants learned about the Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program (NOPP) and the local 2-year nitrogen rate study on irrigated loamy sand soils in Portage County. The goal is to improve our understanding of nitrogen cycling on our sandy soil in central Wisconsin so that we can implement and adapt nitrogen management practices that optimize economic returns while improving efficiency of nitrogen fertilizer use resulting in more sustainable corn production.

- Harvested the Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Project corn nitrogen rate research plots 10-23-2024. Data analysis will be completed, and a report compiled for the 2-year project.





- Harvested the Soybean on-farm research study to learn about the effects of Boron and Calcium rates on soybean yield 10-7-2024. Data analysis yet to be completed.

Additional Agriculture work being conducted in Portage County



A program for adults over 55, where participants learned how to conserve beneficial insects in their landscapes. The goal of this effort is to increase awareness and knowledge of resources to increase pollinator habitat while also decreasing environmental contamination and pollution due to overuse of horticulture chemicals in urban and suburban environments. - *Janelle Wehr, Wood & Marathon County Horticulture Educator*



- A one-day workshop for farmers, agronomists, and crop consultants, where participants learned about the latest research in optimizing weed management through the use of improved technology, precision agriculture, and conservation practices. The purpose of this effort is to help increase the resiliency of cropping systems in Wisconsin and manage weeds effectively while minimizing resistance and increasing profitability and sustainability in agriculture. Total Reach: 89 participants who affect 220,200 acres - *Natasha Paris, Extension Regional Crops Educator; Daniel Smith, Extension Nutrient and Pest Management Program and Jordyn Sattler, Lafayette County Crops and Soils Educator*
- An event for college students of agronomy and precision agriculture where participants learned about the harvest operations of potatoes and sweet corn as well as disease management in potatoes. The purpose of this effort was to educate preservice agribusiness professionals about specialty crops and how to sustainably manage disease in potatoes through prevention and technology. Total Reach: 36 preservice agribusiness professionals - *Natasha Paris, Extension Regional Crops Educator*

Community, Natural Resources & Economic Development

Katie Livernash, Community Development Educator

- A one-day workshop focused on Entrepreneurship and Placemaking efforts in Marathon, Portage, and Wood Counties. The goal, under the Strategic Doing framework, was to bring together stakeholders from across the region in order to establish action-based work groups to support, enhance, and grow efforts towards placemaking and an entrepreneurial ecosystem within the region.
- Serving on the local project team for the Portage County Safe Streets and Roads for All Action Plan



creation, whereas this effort seeks to engage community members through demonstration and education activities as well as through public input during the planning process. The goal of this plan is to eliminate roadway fatalities and serious injuries through the development of a comprehensive safety action plan.

- Serving as a member of the founding board for the Portage County Community Land Trust start-up, where the goal is to establish a community land trust that ensures long-term housing affordability and stability in Portage County.

Additional Community, Natural Resources & Economic Development work being conducted in Portage County

- Two legal clinics about business law for Wisconsin's community action programs to promote rural entrepreneurship among low-income people. *Maggie Cornelius, Rural Entrepreneurship Specialist*



A guest lecture on groundwater protection and policy for UWSP students in the Land Use Planning course, where students will learn about options for groundwater protection utilizing different land use planning and policy options. *Jen Mcnelly, Wood County Natural Resources Groundwater Educator & Lynn Markham, Shoreland and Land Use Specialist*

- A video series called "Fielding Questions" highlighting successes and challenges farmers are facing while implementing soil health practices in Northeastern Wisconsin. This ongoing effort was designed to support peer-to-peer learning amongst farmers by featuring local producers sharing how they're implementing soil health practices. Total Reach: Facebook reach was 5,000 to 13,000 people, with full video plays (on Facebook and Youtube combined) ranging from 90-205 on 5-minute videos. - *Maranda Miller, Extension Regional Natural Resources Educator*



A study to better determine times of travel for groundwater in the central sands. This study will also check for correlation between land use and nitrate concentration in streams in the central sands. These results can be used by county conservationists and citizens to better understand the source areas of their groundwater and the length of time needed to see changes in water quality with changes in land use. - *Jen Mcnelly, Wood County Natural Resources Groundwater Educator, David Hart, Extension Wisconsin Sea Grant Program Leader & Maureen Muldoon, Extension Hydrogeologist*



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

Mallory McGivern, Nutrition Administrator; Michelle Van Krey, Healthy Communities Coordinator; Penny Schmitt, FoodWise Nutrition Educator

- A quarterly nutrition education series in Portage County for adults and teens in partnership with Children's Wisconsin, where families 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.
- FoodWise attended the Hunger Relief Federation of Wisconsin's Summit in Stevens Point, where Farmshed provided the introduction, and presentations included food pantry nutrition policy, food sourcing, as well as presentations from DATCP and USDA.
- A series of strength training sessions (StrongBodies) in partnership with Berkshire, where older adults also receive nutrition and health education. Participants engage in regular strength training exercises to improve muscle strength, balance, and flexibility so they can stay healthy and socially connected.
- A 5-week nutrition education series for 5th grade classrooms at McKinley and Jefferson Elementary School, where students will learn about MyPlate, the five food groups, and try new fruits and vegetables. The goal of the series is for students to learn about being physically active and help them make healthy choices in school and at home.
- Shared leadership in the Giving Gardens committee of HPPP (Hunger & Poverty Prevention Partnership), where emphasis is placed on promoting and supporting efforts to maintain community gardens, improve food security, and provide educational programming in Portage County.



Human Development and Relationships

Sherry Daniels, Human Development and Relationships Educator

- A series of strength training sessions (StrongBodies) in partnership with Portage County ADRC, where older adults also receive education. Participants engage in regular strength training exercises to improve muscle strength, balance, and flexibility so they can stay healthy and socially connected.
Total Reach: 27 senior adults



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- A coaching 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.
- An online 14-module program ("Money Matters") for adults, where they learn about credit scores and reports, making a spending plan, what to do when you can't pay your bills, and identifying financial strengths. The goal is for participants to set and achieve their financial goals, save for their future, build good credit and pay off debts, and maintain positive relationships with financial institutions.
- 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, those with negative rental records and those new to renting are able to increase their ability to find and keep safe affordable housing, thereby increasing their stability and decreasing their reliance on public support.

Additional Human Development and Relationships work being conducted in Portage County

- A 1.5-hour workshop for older adults focused on social isolation and loneliness, where participants learned strategies to mitigate the negative impacts. Through this effort, older adults are better equipped to improve their social well-being and mental health. Total Reach: 60 Wisconsin Association for Home and Community Club Members - *Alicia Utke-Becher, Waupaca County Human Development & Relationships Educator*

Upcoming Events

- The required RentReady training is held the last Wednesday of every month, from 4:30 to 5:30pm in the Annex building, in conference rooms 1 and 2. The next training will be on November 27.