



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
MARATHON COUNTY

April 2023 Report

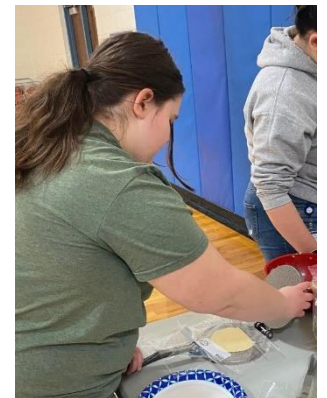
*We teach, learn, lead, and serve,
connecting people with the University of Wisconsin, and engaging with
them in transforming lives and communities.*

4-H – Positive Youth Development

Holly Luerssen, 4-H Program Educator

Jasmine Carbajal, 4-H Associate Educator

- A fun and interactive event for Marathon County youth and their families at a local indoor county pool where the goal was to increase knowledge about 4-H and create an inclusive, safe, and welcoming environment for youth and families to interact.
- A hands-on educational session where Marathon County youth in 3rd grade and older learned how to make flour and corn tortillas using a rolling pin and a tortillera. The goal of the program was to expose youth to a new cuisine, teach them kitchen skills they can use in their lifetime, and help them gain confidence in the kitchen in a safe and welcoming environment.
- Family Game Night was a family engagement event for 4-H families. The goal of this event was to provide an opportunity for families to make connects while having fun. Family Game night was attending by 95 youth and adults who laughed while engaging with others and learned about upcoming summer programs.
- Camp Staff Trainings were held both in-person and virtually in March. We are preparing a team of 25 youth counselors and 7 adults to be purposeful leaders at the June 12-14, 2023, summer camp. Camp staff training to date has included making connections, building the team, understanding roles, how to navigate camper behaviors, and begin to understand positive program quality. Camp staff will continue with 3 more trainings before camp.





Agriculture

Heather Schlessner, Dairy Agent

- This past month Heather has received a grant to investigate the prevalence of *Prototheca bovis* mastitis. *Prototheca* is an algae that has recently been found to cause mastitis. There currently is not a cure for this kind of mastitis and early detection is necessary for control. Heather is currently in the process of cleaning lab space and ordering supplies for this project.
- Heather is continuing to prepare for the colostrum management research project. In the past month Heather has completed the paperwork for hiring a person to help with this project. All animal handling protocols have been submitted and approved for this project.
- Planning for a regional Farm Stress Summit at the Marshfield Clinic is underway. The planning committee is looking at an October/ November time frame. We are currently trying to determine when we can get room space.
- Heather and Jasmine are currently working on putting together a program for youth for May Beef Month.

FoodWise

Mallory McGivern, FoodWise Administrator

- FoodWise is hiring a full-time Marathon County Nutrition Educator: <https://go.wisc.edu/00olu3>
- A monthly nutrition education Healthy Eating Series was offered to SNAP-eligible residents, where participants learn healthy lifestyle choices, food preparation, food safety, food resource management and physical activity. The goal of the series is to improve healthy eating and physical activity habits for Marathon County residents. Nutrition Educator, Penny Schmitt, taught participants about reading labels and whole grains.
- An 8-week session of Strongbodies was concluded and 100% of respondents reported that their physical health was better as a result of the twice per week strength training classes. Virtual statewide Strongbodies continues through the spring: <https://go.wisc.edu/71ptii>





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Horticulture

Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator

Lifelong learning is beneficial for Marathon County's aging population because it supports overall cognitive function, sense of accomplishment and personal growth, positive social engagement that combats social isolation (common in older adults) and develops technology skills.

In "Starting Seeds Indoors", 22 participants from The Landing, a community for adults over 55, learned how to choose an appropriate seed starting medium, the requirements for seed germination, and how to provide conditions for seedlings to thrive.

As a result of the program,

-100% of participants stated that they understood how to choose the appropriate growing media for starting seeds.

-100% of participants stated that they understood the requirements needed for seed germination..

-100% of participants stated they understood how to provide the conditions for seedlings to thrive.

One pleased participant shared, "I have never done this but (I) can't wait to get started."

- A therapeutic horticulture program for lifelong learners through UWSP LIFE, where participants learned best practices in creating container gardens. This effort is designed to support lifelong learning, healthy wellbeing, and positive socialization.
- A presentation for the general public (Clark County Master Gardener Annual Spring Garden Conference), where participants learned about basic landscape design. This effort is designed to increase awareness and knowledge of resources to increase addressing environmental contamination and pollution (due to overuse of horticulture chemicals).
- A presentation for the general public hosted by the Marathon County Public Library-Wausau Branch, where participants learned about growing media, the requirements for seed germination and conditions needed for seedlings to thrive. This effort is designed to increase knowledge of resources to encourage home gardeners' success.
- A presentation hosted by the Waushara County Association for Home and Community Education for the general public, where participants learned how to install pollinator habitats in their landscapes. This effort is designed to increase awareness and knowledge of resources to increase pollinator habitat.
- A therapeutic horticulture class (Starting Seeds Indoors) for community members aged 55+, where participants learned about growing media, the requirements for seed germination and conditions needed for seedlings to thrive. The goal is to support lifelong learning, healthy wellbeing, and positive socialization.
- An orientation for Marathon County Master Gardener Volunteers who answer diagnostic questions on behalf of the Extension office, where volunteers learned how to process and document horticultural inquiries for Marathon County. This effort was designed to address environmental contamination and pollution due to overuse of horticulture chemicals in urban and suburban environments.



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Natural Resources

Kris Tiles, NRI Program Manager

Anna James, Regional Natural Resources Educator

This spring Wood County Land and Water Conservation hosted the Central Wisconsin Farm Profitability Expo, in partnership with UW-Madison Extension, Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association, and Mid-State Technical College. The event was held at Mid-State Technical College in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin on March 22nd, 2023, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Central Wisconsin Farm Profitability Expo is a revitalization of Healthy Soil, Healthy Water events that first took place in 2016 as a part of the Wisconsin River Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) project. The event has since blossomed into a diverse gathering of stakeholders coming together to encourage profitable farming by building resiliency, diversifying farming operations, reducing inputs, and increasing farmer return on investments. Attendees can often find themselves in the company of producers, shoreline property owners, and staff from multiple agencies and organizations.



This year's event covered an abundance of topics relevant to Central Wisconsin. Attendees learned about conservation practices farmers use to increase profitability and self-sufficiency while being stewards of the land, and challenges and opportunities for nitrate reduction in the Central Sands. Central Wisconsin farmers also discussed the specific barriers they are experiencing when adopting best management practices, and conservation professionals covered funding programs available to help with adoption of best management practices.

This year's event saw close to 50 participants that joined in person and virtually. Registration and lunch were free thanks to Pettenwell and Castle Rock Stewards and Wood County Land and Water Conservation. To learn more about the event, please visit <https://www.mstc.edu/farm-expo>.

- A facilitated discussion with members of the Eau Pleine Partnership for Integrated Conservation, a producer-led watershed protection group, where participants discussed the group's strategic plan and reviewed the efforts made to meet outlined goals and objectives within the plan. Through this activity, the group was able to identify areas where they could be focusing next steps to meet their current strategic plan, and/or parts of the strategic plan that need to be updated to meet the group's future goals and objectives.
- An educational display for landowners within the Fenwood Creek Watershed where event attendees learned about the watershed approach and water resources by engaging in hands-on activities. Attendees also learned about the effects of non-point source pollution to groundwater and surface water resources. The goal of this display was to help landowners take an active role in a watershed restoration project by learning ways that they can reduce their impact to water resources while being good stewards of the land.



- A facilitated discussion for lead producers and collaborators from producer-led watershed groups in the North Central Region where attendees discussed future events, such as field days, and explored opportunities for future collaboration of events. Attendees also discussed their needs within the producer-led watershed group and planned for a future meeting to review plans of work and grant proposals as a team. Through this activity, producer-led watershed groups within the North Central Region had the opportunity to share their planned activities and group ideas while asking for feedback from other groups.
- A series of webinars for new Wisconsin landowners, where participants networked with conservation professionals from extension, local, state, and federal governments, and non-profit organizations to improve private land stewardship in Wisconsin.

Upcoming Programs

- **4-H Programming** – Information at marathon.extension.wisc.edu/projects/programs/
- **StrongBodies** – StrongBodies Spring 2023 Session – Register at <https://go.wisc.edu/71ptii>
- **Horticultural Programs** – Information at <https://marathon.extension.wisc.edu/horticulture/programs/>

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