

Ashland & Bayfield Counties

# ***AGRICULTURE NEWSLETTER***

Brought to you by the University of Wisconsin - Madison  
Division of Extension



Greetings,

UW Extension is pleased to bring you the fourth edition of the Ashland/Bayfield Counties Agricultural Newsletter to the farmers, gardeners, and homesteaders of the Chequamegon Bay region of northern Wisconsin.

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UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
BAYFIELD COUNTY

## Ashland/Bayfield Ag Extension Staff

**THE FRIGID WEATHER IS FINALLY THAWING, BUT WE ARE STILL IN THE GRIP OF THE COLD SEASON. WITH OUR WINTER EDITION OF THE QUARTERLY EXTENSION NEWSLETTER FOR ASHLAND AND BAYFIELD COUNTIES, WE BRING YOU MANY GUEST WRITERS ON LOCAL FARMING AND NATURE TOPICS.**

In this edition, we interviewed new, up-and-coming local farmers, expound upon old ways and farming traditions at Bad River, and explore the links between nature and farming with state naturalist Emily Stone. Read on to learn more!



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Jason has been in the Agriculture Agent position since 2007 with a focus on fruit crops, nutrient management, commercial horticulture, and recently hazelnuts. He is currently Co-Leader of the Upper Midwest Hazelnut Development Initiative, and in 2020, 80% of his time will be dedicated to helping develop the emerging hazelnut industry in Wisconsin.



Sarah DeGraff  
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Sarah DeGraff is the Agricultural Extension Educator, for Ashland and Bayfield County. Sarah hails from Grand Rapids, MI and has experience working on and managing vegetable farms as well as running vegetable variety trials through UW-Madison on the Spooner Agricultural Research Station in 2019.



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# New Growth, Old Traditions



**MINO BIMAADIZIWIN  
GITIGAANIN  
(RETURN TO THE  
GOOD LIFE FARM)**

[Mino Bimaadiziwin Gitigaanin  
Website](#)

Contact:  
(715) 779-3782  
[allissa.stutte@redcliff-nsn.gov](mailto:allissa.stutte@redcliff-nsn.gov)



Did you know that the Red Cliff Community Farm Mino Bimaadiziwin has 35 acres of farmland, including two almost 100 year old orchards? Read on to learn more about the community farm and its multifaceted efforts to connect community to healthy food and farming practices with Allissa Stutte, Farm Manager:

The mission of Mino Bimaadiziwin Farm is to support and advance tribal food sovereignty efforts and increase access to local and culturally appropriate foods, while simultaneously increasing the sustainability of the farm through diversified means. It is a very multi-dimensional place. We focus not only on stewarding the land and growing food, but also on building relationships with Tribal programs and home growers to continue to meet the needs of the community.

The Farm has gone through many transitions since it was established in 2004. It is currently housed within the Treaty Natural Resources Division of Red Cliff.

Each spring, we offer community garden support through the Annual Seed and Plant Give-Away. We also till backyard gardens and have collaborated on giveaways for raised garden beds. Farm staff are consistently on the lookout for more opportunities to support gardening throughout the community. The Farm has a rich history – some of these community traditions like the Annual Seed and Plant Give-Away were started almost a decade ago by dedicated farm volunteers. We're honored to carry on those traditions.

A main priority is food accessibility and finding the best outlets for the food produced. We offer subsidized CSA shares and a pay-what-you-can Farm Stand. We also work to build relationships and strengthen collaborative efforts with Tribal programs, such as Food Distribution's Summer Snack

Program, so we can grow veggies specifically to meet their needs. Other important relationships included working with the Red Cliff Community Health Center on programs to support folks in recovery, working with the Bayfield School District to supply cafeteria produce (when school is in session), and teaming up with the School District and the Red Cliff Early Childhood Center on the spring iskgamizigan (sugarbush).

Mino Bimaadiziwin Farm also collaborates with other food sovereignty initiatives such as the Red Cliff Fish Company (RCFC). Since RCFC opened last fall, the Farm has begun large-scale fish composting efforts and has received almost one hundred percent of the fish waste from RCFC. We hope to also supply vegetables and herbs for their value-added products as they are developed.

We are also very excited about the completion of a brand-new farm building that will be the home to office spaces, a kitchen, and a gathering space. With this new capacity, and when we can safely gather, we're looking forward to expanding on the workshops and events that have been traditionally held at the farm.

In the 2020 growing season, the Farm produced over 5,700 pounds of fruits and vegetables from our field, high tunnels, and orchard. Each year we also tap approximately 80-100 maple trees for syrup production.

We also maintain a small flock of laying hens, usually between 15-20 hens. The eggs add diversity to our CSA shares, are available for sale on-site, and will soon be available for sale in the retail space of the Red Cliff Fish Company.

We plant a Three Sisters garden of corn, beans, and squash, which is a traditional form of agriculture for indigenous communities across North America. Last season, the seeds for the Three Sisters garden were gifted from the Indigenous Seed Keepers Network, and we are careful to save the seeds from the harvest so they can be grown and gifted again.



We also have several ode'immin (strawberry) beds and maintain a nearly century-old orchard. The orchard includes not only apples but a handful of other native fruit trees such as plums. Local fruit is an important part of local food production, and we plan to continue planting additional young fruit trees throughout the orchard.

We also have a series of Medicine Beds which include traditional plants like sage and asema (tobacco), along with other native herbs and plants used for teas and medicines. The teas and medicines are available for community use and harvest. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic the farm was mostly closed to volunteers and visitors last season. (For updated information on volunteering opportunities, call or email Allissa using the contact information on the article's title page).



Food and agriculture go hand in hand with history, culture, and relationship to place. At Mino Bimaadiziwin Farm, we believe that maintaining a balance with the land and respecting all beings is of utmost importance. All food, whether it's a tomato trellised in the high tunnel or maple sap gathered in the spring, is grown and harvested with respect. Although we do not hold an organic certification, we grow using organic methods. We focus on crop rotations, increasing pollinator habitats, and planting native species so we can support a healthy, balanced, and diverse ecosystem.

Please note, our CSA shares are available to everyone! You do not have to be a tribal member. However, we do offer a reduced rate for tribal members and an additional subsidized option for low-income tribal members. Feel free to reach out if you'd like more information on our CSA offerings.



## **\$3.50/dozen for Farm Fresh Waawanoon (Eggs)**

**Available year-round!**

**Call (715) 779—3782**

**Email [allissa.stutte@redcliff-nsn.gov](mailto:allissa.stutte@redcliff-nsn.gov)**

**Or stop by the farm!**

**Located next to the Health Clinic on  
Aiken Road**



# Nature First

A candid interview with  
Naturalist Emily Stone

**“My job at the Museum is incredibly varied, which means that I get to use my strengths and follow my interests. Being a naturalist and sharing my love of nature are integral parts of who I am—far beyond any particular job.”**

In our interview with local naturalist and award-winning author Emily Stone, she reveals herself to be an intelligent, knowledgeable, and impassioned about sharing her affinity and expertise of the natural world with others. Emily explains her experiences below:



"My career path was winding and varied, but it always angled toward teaching people about nature in beautiful places. I grew up as a shy nature kid in Iowa, and my experiences moving through the leadership pipeline at Girl Scout camp are what gave me the skills and confidence to even think about a career that included public speaking. After earning an Outdoor Education degree at Northland College, I spent 5 years traveling back and forth across the country as a seasonal naturalist.

Years later, I attended graduate school in the Field Naturalist Program at the University of Vermont, and that did indeed open the door for me landing a full-time permanent job at the Cable Natural History Museum."



Describe your role as a naturalist.

"Life at the Museum looks different in every season. One of the few constants is writing my weekly Natural Connections column. It takes about a day for me to research, write, edit, and publish each column to the newspapers, social media, and produce a podcast. During the winter months, we are typically focused on building our next exhibit. That involves committee meetings, research, text writing, and designing the interactive pieces. I also coordinate our MuseumMobile classroom visits throughout the school year. In spring, we plan and teach field trips to the Museum for local elementary students. on various projects."

Over the summer we all stay super busy with leading and coordinating public programs for kids and adults, and greeting Museum visitors. I've led the Museum's involvement with the Wisconsin Master Naturalist program since its pilot course in 2012, and run several Advanced Trainings each year. In the midst of all that, I give presentations to book clubs and lake associations, write grants, plan for the future, and partner with other local organizations."

Are there any links with your job to farming or gardening?

"The Museum has worked closely with the Cable Community Farm (CCF) since it was founded in 2013, and that has meant co-hosting programs about wild edibles, pollinators, and more. Pollinators were also the focus of two exhibits in a row: Bee Amazed, and Pollinator Power. In conjunction with those two exhibits, we designated one of our summer interns to work with CCF on their pollinator gardens and education programming. The Museum grounds have pollinator gardens as well. We also host a Native Plant Sale every other year, led by a truly dedicated volunteer."



You have an award-winning weekly nature blog that has recently been published in two separate volume, "Natural Connections." Now, you have a podcast too! What is your podcast about and how can we listen to it?

"My podcast is simply me reading my article each week. After taking a four-month road trip to Alaska, I came to appreciate podcasts, and wanted to make sure people had access to my columns even if they are super busy. You can listen on Google Podcast, iTunes, and pretty much any other pod-catcher, I believe. You can also find them on the Museum's website. **Links to all of my Natural Connections resources can be found at [www.cablemuseum.org/connect](http://www.cablemuseum.org/connect).**"



How we can help and get involved as community members?

"Become a Museum member and attend our programs, events, and more! Sign up for our newsletter in order to read my articles, plus weekly posts by our Naturalist and Curator.

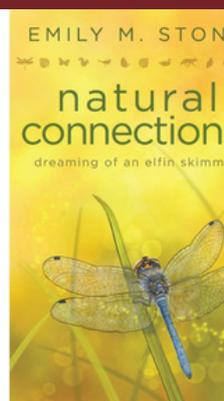
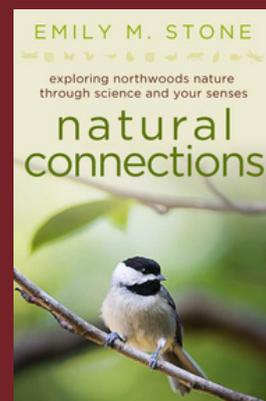
Our website has several online exhibits, as well as links to online resources from other organizations. We have a wonderful community of volunteers, and often need additional docents who greet people at the front desk, and also craftsmen who can help us build our exhibits. We also need gardeners to help keep our pollinator gardens in good shape.

**Just give us a call, (715) 798 - 3890, or email [deb@cablemuseum.org](mailto:deb@cablemuseum.org).** Things are currently a bit odd due to the pandemic, but hopefully we'll return to normal by the end of the summer."

**[www.cablemuseum.org](http://www.cablemuseum.org)**

**715-798-3890**

**[info@cablemuseum.org](mailto:info@cablemuseum.org)**



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# 24

MARCH  
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6:30PM



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BAYFIELD COUNTY



CHEQUAMEGON  
FOOD CO-OP

# Farmer Focus

## Defiant Field Farm



With guest writer and farmer  
Sarah Tarkington

### On Founding the Farm

Defiant Field Farm is the farm dream (ever-evolving) of myself, Sarah Tarkington, supported by my husband Bob Gross (in infrastructure, planting assistance, animal wrangling, website design, and occasionally feeding a hangry farmer who worked too late in the field). We are located a few miles away from the shores of Lake Superior outside of Washburn, Wisconsin. We are situated on 20 acres just outside of the Chequamegon National Forest. Our lives have been lived on this defiant plot of land for the past seven years, with the farm business in operation over the last four.

Our primary focus of production is mixed vegetables and pasture-based eggs. We grow on a one acre market garden and have started high tunnel production within the last year to help us with season extension in the predominate snow and cold we encounter up here on top of Wannebo Road. We are mostly wooded and use our precious open acreage as strategically as possible to grow a wide array of taste forward, well-adapted, northern annuals with a few perennial crops in the mix.

Over the years we have been slowly expanding our fruit trees and berry bushes as well as small rhubarb and asparagus patches and perennial herbs. We share the farm with a sassy family of barn cats, a frequently shifting flock of equally sassy chickens (approx. 45 at the time of this writing), dogs, a small herd of homestead dairy goats, a few hives of honey bees, and 2 horses that are excellent at providing fertility for our extremely sandy soil.



Deer, bobcat, coyotes, bear, snowshoe hares, eagles and ermine along with other wild friends, also scurry our paths and weave through our large woodlots.



Our respect for the innate intelligence and design of ecology means we practice regenerative and organic food production techniques and we delight in growing food for ourselves and our community, building soil, and supporting flourishing wild ecosystems.

### **Finding a Niche in the Farming Community**

Having worked for several years in local Chequamegon Bay food systems, when it came time to get our own farm business up and running, I noticed a gap in options for accessing local foods that expanded the traditional offerings of CSAs, Farmer's Markets, and food coops. Having worked and learned for many years from my amazing farm mentors at Hermit Creek Farm, Steven and Landis Spickerman, I knew I wanted to start a veggie-focused, diversified farm that connected with eaters. Thus, our Online Farmstand model was born. We offer an online farmstand where each week our eaters can select from our available offerings and create their own custom share that is specifically , harvested, packed, and delivered directly to their door.

Each week, we also offer a more traditional "Best of the Farm Share" option: we select an array of the crops that are the best and brightest of that week—if you're a vegetable lover that enjoys the surprise!

We typically offer weekly shares from June through October. We're a great fit for someone who wants to eat a season of vibrant, local produce or those that may simply want to supplement a garden or other farm or local food ventures.

### **Navigating the Epidemic for Customer Safety**

Though Covid-19 has thrown so much of our lives into chaos, our business model was uniquely situated to pivot through the pandemic without too many alterations. We pride ourselves on food safety and post-harvest handling, so those systems were already in place. We are already a no-contact shop as customers simply log in from their device to select, purchase and fill out their delivery request. We were already a farm-to-door delivery model as well- we simply asked our customers to direct us to where outside their home they would like us to drop their order, so social distancing was well maintained.

We did make the hard choice to have a "no visitors" policy on the farm this year, to

minimize the contact of products with outside entities. Our food is truly from our hands (and hearts!) to your plates. As many of our farm friends also experienced, we did have to weather supply chain challenges dealing with sold out seeds or very long backorders of packaging materials.

Community Food systems, food security, food justice, sustainability and resilience are all causes I work to support in both my professional and personal time. In that spirit, I currently serve as the Vice President of the Ashland/Bayfield Wisconsin Farmers Union chapter.

Wisconsin Farmers Union, a member-driven organization, is committed to enhancing the quality of life for family farmers, rural communities, and all people through educational opportunities, cooperative endeavors, and civic engagement.

My off-farm employment is with CORE Community Resources in Bayfield, working as the Food Pantry Coordinator. Teaching yoga around the Chequamegon Bay for the past several years, has aided my aging farm body to keep on trucking, and provides me the opportunity to help others feel at home and at ease in their bodies as well.

Come visit us on our website [defiantfieldfarm.com](http://defiantfieldfarm.com) to stay in touch with our most up-to-date offerings sign up for our email newsletter while you're there!

BE WELL, LIVE WELL, DO WELL, EAT WELL.

Defiant Field  
FARM STEAD



In an effort to support the local food system and increase the availability of local products, the Chequamegon Food Co-op offers biannual, no interest micro-loans. These small, no interest loans are capped at \$5,000 and have up to a 3-year payback period. **Proposals for the spring cycle are due by March 1, 2021 with funding decisions made by March 15.**

Chip in for the Kitchen will provide grant funding to local producer to subsidize the cost of using commercial kitchens. The Chequamegon Food Co-op wants to help offset these costs to support our local producers and our local foods economy. The grant is a matching 50/50 grant available for local producers. Applications will be continually accepted as funding is available starting in March 2021. Applications can be found in-store at the customer service desk or online [HERE](#)



## Wisconsin Cover Crop & Conservation Conversations Spring 2021

Brought to you by



**March 19**  
12 p.m. to 1 p.m.

Session I: Highlights from Farmer-led Projects Across Wisconsin



**March 26**  
12 p.m. to 1 p.m.

Session II: Engaging Diverse Audiences in Cover Crops, Soil Health, and Conservation Education



**April 2**  
12 p.m. to 1 p.m.

Session III: Research Highlights on Cover Crops and Conservation from Across the State

Webinars are free. Registration: <https://go.wisc.edu/zpuyc2>



**2021**  
**Wisconsin**  
**Water Week**  
March 8-12



**Lake Superior Regional Events**  
**Thursday, March 11<sup>th</sup> 2021**

**Schedule at-a-glance**

- 9:00 AM – 10:15 AM    **Keynote:** The Art and Practice of Earth Repair: Stories from Around the World  
**Speaker:** Judith Schwartz
- 10:30 AM – 11:15 AM    **Morning Concurrent Sessions**
- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <i>Cultivating Reciprocity:<br/>Growing Sustainably with<br/>our Water Resources</i> | <i>Friends of the Water:<br/>Citizen-Led Friends Groups<br/>in the Lake Superior Basin</i> | <i>Tourism futures: adapting<br/>outdoor recreation &amp;<br/>tourism to climate change<br/>&amp; changing visitation in<br/>Northern Wisconsin</i> |
|--|--|---|
- 11:15 AM – 11:30 AM    **Break (Networking, Exhibitors, & Sponsors)**
- 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM    **Keynote:** Sustaining Lake Superior: Hope for the Future in a Warming World  
**Speaker:** Dr. Nancy Langston
- 12:30 AM – 1:15 PM    Break (Lunch)
- 1:15 PM – 2:15 PM    **Afternoon Concurrent Sessions**
- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <i>Building Resilience in the<br/>Lake Superior Basin: Using<br/>Green Infrastructure &amp;<br/>Natural Management to<br/>Reduce Flood Impacts</i> | <i>Superior makers: A<br/>celebration of regional<br/>arts and water<br/>appreciation</i> | <i>Ma'iingan: Ecological and<br/>Cultural Importance of<br/>Lake Superior Wolves</i> |
|--|---|--|
- 2:15 PM – 2:30 PM    **Break (Networking, Exhibitors, & Sponsors)**
- 2:30 PM – 3:30 PM    **Keynote: United, We Can Solve This**  
**Speaker:** Tia Nelson
- 3:30 PM – 3:45 PM    **Regional Closing (Friday events & closing remarks)**

Visit <https://wisconsinwaterweek.swoogo.com/wisconsinwaterweek/> for full event information.

# Ashland County's Cleansweeps Collection Event Keeps Toxics Out of the Environment

By Lissa Radke, Community Development Educator,  
Ashland County's UW Extension office



Over 200 participants from farms, households, and businesses in five counties brought about 12,000 pounds of hazardous materials to an annual Cleansweeps collection event held late last year in Ashland County. The collection events have been organized through the Northwest Regional Planning Commission and supported with site planning and outreach efforts by the Ashland County UW Extension office since 1995.

Most materials are accepted at no charge, although some large quantity generators are charged small fees to cover disposal and recycling costs. The Cleansweeps program, which costs Ashland County about \$9,300 per year, is the only free and safe disposal and recycling option for most farm and household chemicals in northern Wisconsin. Farmers are encouraged to clear out storage buildings and look for unused products that are no longer needed to prepare for the 2021 Cleansweeps. Farmers can attend one or both events scheduled for June 22 in Bayfield County at the County Fairgrounds, and on June 23 at the WITC campus parking lot in Ashland. Both events are open from 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM.

**If you have large quantities of pesticides, herbicides, or fertilizers, please call NWRPC at 715-635-2197** to reserve a spot in a collection and receive the current list of acceptable chemicals and items. **New this year is a free Plastic Wrap collection** for agricultural feed bags, marina boat wrappers, and other plastic wraps to be held on June 22 at Bayfield Fairgrounds only. Feed bags can be cleaned as best as possible, but can have some dirt or feed on them. They can be bundled or compacted. For more information, please call Sarah DeGraff at (715) 373-3293.

Due to very restrictive Ashland County budget conditions, this year may be the last Cleansweeps offered for county users. So, clean your barns, storage buildings, and garages and make sure you get those unneeded toxic items to a safe place!



# Information & Resources

## Local Farm & Food Resources

- Ashland County Extension [Website](#)
- Bayfield County Extension [Website](#)
- Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Grant Programs
- USDA Ag Services: Farm Business Marketing Resources and Assistance
- UW Extension Horticulture
- FEAST by the Bay: local farms & food resources - [website](#)
- SFA local, in-season recipes
- SFA Webinars on premium crop production, silvopasture, resources for beginning farmers, applying for grants and financial assistance
- The Cutting Edge: in Search of New Crops for Wisconsin [PODCAST](#)
- Midwest Grazing Exchange [Website](#)

## Events

March 2021

8 - 12: WI Water Week  
More information [here](#)

August 2021

13th: Virtual Summer Conference, WI Farmers Union. Register [here](#)

## Resources for Farmers/Grants:

- SFA How to apply for grants webinar
- SFA How to apply for an AGRI grant webinar



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