

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



**Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
BAYFIELD COUNTY



For More Information  
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**Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
BAYFIELD COUNTY



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*The University of Wisconsin–Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming in compliance with state and federal law.*

## About Us

### We Are the Wisconsin Idea

UW-Madison Extension embodies the Wisconsin Idea to extend university knowledge to every corner of the state, administering programming through six institutes: Agriculture, Community Development, Health & Well-Being (including FoodWise), Human Development & Relationships, Natural Resources, and Positive Youth Development (including 4-H). Extension's statewide network delivers services to communities and tribes across Wisconsin through partnerships and relationships to adapt the practical applications of research and inform studies with community input.

UW-Madison Extension's outreach creates key connection points for families, communities, businesses, non-profit organizations, government, and more. We support local volunteers and leaders to take action and serve as role models in their communities, and we make sure Wisconsinites have the latest research, best practices, and educational opportunities. With a presence in every county in Wisconsin and in partnership with First Nations we are:



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#### Promoting healthy relationships:

We embrace the philosophy that each stage of life is unique, exciting and filled with potential. Our programs promote aging friendly communities, coach parents and help families put technology, mindfulness and financial awareness into everyday use.



#### Empowering health & well-being:

We provide individuals, families and communities the tools and guidance they need to reduce stress, improve nutrition and support physical activity.

We work with community partners to increase access to healthy affordable food, create, environments that promote well-being, and address access to quality health care.



#### Fostering civic & economic leadership:

From educating elected officials to training the next generation of local leaders, we're committed to empowering citizens to make positive, transformative change in their communities.



#### Supporting Wisconsin's agriculture industry:

Whether on the farm or in the field, we're on the front lines of modern agriculture, helping producers build stronger and more productive food systems. From managing livestock to crops to strategic financial planning for farms, our educators and researchers help solve



#### Supporting positive youth development:

Our research-based youth enrichment programs give young people the hands-on experiences they need to grow into the global leaders of tomorrow. From youth governance to Wisconsin 4-H



clubs, we provide diverse educational opportunities to prepare youth for success in Wisconsin and beyond.



#### Building Community Support:

Housing is a crucial element of community economic development with many complex considerations, from affordability to quality and diversity. It is a central issue to the attraction and retention of community members.





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BAYFIELD COUNTY



January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024

Dear Bayfield County Board of Supervisors, Community Partners & Interested Readers,

In this 2024 annual report, you'll find that at the UW-Madison Division of Extension Bayfield County, our resourceful and resilient educators and staff are focused on helping the community members of Bayfield County to meet community challenges, protect natural resources, strengthen families and support young people. We worked to continue connecting local people with the knowledge and research of the University of Wisconsin. We utilized our local, regional and statewide networks to support communities in responding to emerging issues and we brought new ideas and great resources to Bayfield County.

We developed this report with data and stories from our work in 2024. We highlight positive outcomes from all of our major educational programs covering community and economic development, housing, 4-H and youth, nutrition, agriculture/horticulture, and individual and family well-being. Our staff works to address high priority local needs through our educational programming and our collaborations with community groups, volunteers and program partners. We could not be effective in our work without the valuable contributions of our various partners. Strong partnerships are at the heart of our programs -- we can achieve more together!

THANK YOU to the Bayfield County Board of Supervisors, the County Administrator and the Agriculture and Extension Education Committee for the continued support of UW-Madison Extension programming in Bayfield County during 2024. We appreciate the opportunity to serve Bayfield County residents and local efforts to strengthen our people, our communities and our economy.

On behalf of the Extension Bayfield County staff,

Mary Pardee

Area Extension Director

Area 1 (Bayfield, Douglas, Ashland and Iron Counties)

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**Learn more at**  
[extension.wisc.edu](https://extension.wisc.edu)

<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/ask-a-gardening-question/>

**Ask a Gardening Question**

Sponsored by the UW-Madison Division of Extension  
Horticulture Program

<https://extension.wisc.edu/agriculture/ask-an-agriculture-question/>

**Ask an Agriculture Question**

Sponsored by the UW-Madison Division of Extension  
Agriculture Institute





# Investing in Extension

In 2024, the work of the Bayfield County Extension office was completed by eight educators (some shared with adjacent counties), two support staff, a program assistant and a researcher. Not all those folks were on staff at once - needs change with the time of year, funding availability and special opportunities. Over the course of a year, Extension touches a lot of community needs!

The success of Bayfield County Extension programming relies on 4 aspects:

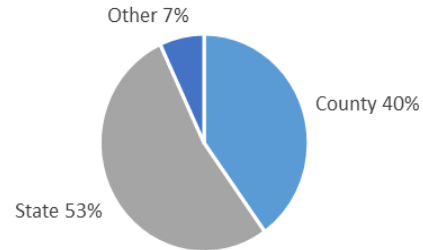
- County funding
- State funding
- Donations, Grants & Fees
- Volunteers

In Extension, educators are co-funded by the county and state. Bayfield County also supplied funding for a 4-H Operations & Communications Associate and a Housing Navigator. In addition, county funds help to outfit Extension with office supplies, technology, program and travel costs, as well as excellent support staff.

Additional funding sources benefit citizens of Bayfield County. FoodWise, our nutrition education program, is paid for by federal SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education) funds that come through UW-Madison Division of Extension. Bayfield County FoodWise is part of a three-county project which also includes Ashland and Iron Counties.

County funds are not involved in the salaries of the FoodWise Coordinator, FoodWise Educator, or Area Extension Director. Additional grant funds are a source for an agriculture research assistant focused on hazelnut production.

Extension Funding 2024



County	UW-Madison Staff Fees	\$ 227,348
	Support Staff	\$ 87,551
	County Educational Staff	\$ 4,513
	Office & Technology	\$ 7,517
	Educational Program Support	\$ 23,172
	Committee Expense	\$ 2,583
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 352,684</b>
State	Staff Salary/Fringe	\$ 323,584
	FoodWise Staff & Program Support	\$ 90,921
	Program Support	\$ 3,252
	Office & Technology	\$ 2,400
	Professional Development	\$ 8,287
	Director Salary/Fringe	\$ 37,063
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 465,507</b>
Other	Donations, Grants, Fees	\$ 61,007
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 61,007</b>
<b>TOTAL EXTENSION FUNDING</b>		<b>\$ 879,198</b>

Local educators are part of a statewide network that supplies programming support, topic expertise, professional development and funding. Bayfield County also benefits from the expertise of statewide Extension specialists on topics such as economic development and climate change.

# Committee Members and Staff

## 2024 Bayfield County Committee Members: (all are Bayfield County Board Supervisors)

**Jeff Silbert**

**Chair (January—May)**

District #6 - City of Washburn,  
Wards 1, 2, & 4

**Steve Sandstrom**

**Vice-Chair (January—May)**

**Chair (May-December)**

District #1 & 2 – Town of Russell

**Madelaine Rekemeyer**

**Vice-Chair (May-December)**

District # 11—Towns of Grand View, Kelly and Mason

**Larry Fickbohm**

District #3- Towns of Bell, Clover, Orienta, and Port Wing

**Fred Strand**

District #8 - Towns of Hughes, Oulu, and Tripp

**Jeffrey Olsen (May—December)**

(District 6 Map – City of Washburn (Wards 1, 2, & 4))

Committee emails follow the convention of  
firstname.lastname@bayfieldcounty.wi.gov  
(for example:  
steve.sandstrom@bayfieldcounty.wi.gov)

UW-Madison Extension  
Bayfield County Courthouse  
2nd Floor  
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Washburn, WI 54891-0218  
Phone: 715-373-6104  
Office Hours: Monday- Friday ~ 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM



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<https://www.facebook.com/Superior-Adventures-Bayfield-County>  
<https://www.facebook.com/bayfieldcounty4H>  
<https://www.facebook.com/AshlandBayfieldMGA>

Follow us on X (Twitter): <https://twitter.com/BayCoExtension>

Follow us on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/bayfieldcountvext/>

## UW-Madison Division of Extension Bayfield County Office Staff Members

**Mary Pardee**

Area Extension Director ~ Area 1

**Theresa LaChappelle**

Office Manager

**Stephanie Bakker**

FoodWise Coordinator Ashland, Bayfield & Iron Counties

**Tracy Henegar**

Human Development & Relationships Educator

**Jason Fischbach**

Emerging Crops State Specialist

**Kaylie Lukas**

4-H Operations & Communications Specialist

**Ian Meeker**

4-H & Youth Development Educator

**Kellie Pederson**

Community Development Educator

**Lindsay Larson**

FoodWise Educator

**Heidi Ungrodt**

Human Development & Relationships Educator

**Kelly Westlund**

Housing Specialist—Statewide and Local

Staff emails follow the convention of  
firstname.lastname@wisc.edu  
(for example: mary.pardee@wisc.edu)



# Office Manager

## INTERACTION WITH PUBLIC

Theresa LaChappelle continues in her role as Office Manager, many times serving as the first point of contact with the public. She continues to provide service to residents of the area, UW-Extension staff, and other Bayfield County employees as she handles phone calls, welcomes visitors, provides information on UW-Madison resources, and submits soil, forage, and insect samples to UW-Madison labs.

## OFFICE and FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

LaChappelle assists in coordinating bi-monthly Extension Committee meetings, including preparing materials, sending notices, setting up and hosting virtual meetings, and recording minutes.

She ensures the smooth operation of county resources by overseeing the maintenance of vehicles and equipment, managing the procurement of necessary supplies, and coordinating the scheduling of county vehicles and rooms.

Additionally, LaChappelle manages the financial records and documentation for the budgets, including office accounting for various grants and special programs. This also encompasses handling online registrations and payments and serves as a liaison to the Bayfield County Clerk's Office and County Auditors.

Overall, LaChappelle plays a crucial role in ensuring smooth office operations and effective coordination of office activities.

## EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

### Newsletters

#### "Just In Time" -

LaChappelle prepares and sends out the monthly

#### "Just In Time" (JIT)

Parenting Newsletter to

Bayfield County parents of children aged newborn to one year old, and the 'JIT' newsletters for children aged two to five years old every two months.

**2024 JIT Parenting**  
Number of Issues Mailed  
1st Year- 634  
2nd & 3rd Years-63  
4th & 5th Years-40

**"Parenting the Preschooler" and "Money Smart for Head Start"** - These are two additional parenting newsletters that LaChappelle sends out to the contacts at the Washburn Early Learning Center and the Red Cliff Early Childhood Center on a monthly basis while their classrooms were in session.

### Caregiver and Family News: Living Well in Our Best Years

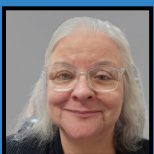
**Newsletter**— LaChappelle is responsible for designing the layout of the collaborative newsletter between the UW-Madison Division of Extension Bayfield County Office and the Bayfield County Human Services Aging and Disability Resource Office. Three times a year, these newsletters provide local seniors, caregivers, and their families with pertinent information on various aspects of their lives.

Three hundred seventy-five residents stay connected and informed by receiving the newsletter in their mailboxes, while others prefer the convenience of email or picking up a printed copy at various locations around the county.

Past issues of the newsletter are available on our website, so you can catch up on all the great content you've missed. Contact Theresa to receive future newsletters directly to your inbox or mailbox.

## OFFICE TECHNOLOGY

LaChappelle coordinates the office website and manages social media accounts, including Facebook, Instagram, and X (Twitter). She creates engaging posts for social media, ensures the website is updated with current programs, and updates the county calendar with new program offerings. She consistently upgrades her technology skills through training on new software programs and enhancements to common software, thereby improving the efficiency of office functions and equipment management. She also designs and coordinates the UW-Madison Extension Bayfield County Annual Report, as well as some program materials, including brochures, newsletters, flyers, and logos. Additionally, she maintains office documentation to ensure compliance with Federal Civil Rights laws.



## Office Manager

**Theresa LaChappelle**

715-373-3285

[theresa.lachappelle@bayfieldcounty.wi.gov](mailto:theresa.lachappelle@bayfieldcounty.wi.gov)

[theresa.lachappelle@wisc.edu](mailto:theresa.lachappelle@wisc.edu)







# Positive Youth Development



## Wisconsin 4-H

### Superior Adventures Engages Youth in Experiences that Last a Lifetime

In 2024, Ian Meeker led 23 separate programs that served over 275 youth. Many of these programs were collaborative partnerships with teachers in the Washburn, Bayfield, and the South Shore School Districts. These outdoor adventures start in May and conclude in the fall with back-to-school canoe days followed by a four-day Manoomin Harvest with the Bayfield School District.



One of the stated goals of the Superior Adventures program is for youth to develop an appreciation for wilderness locations. To evaluate the impact of these experiences, students completed an online survey after the program.

Fifty seven percent “strongly agreed” when asked if canoeing/kayaking to remote locations was interesting to them and they would like more opportunities like this and 94% said they would look forward to another outdoor adventure field trip. When asked to rate their overall experience on a scale of 0 being poor and 10 excellent the average score was 8.14. Fifty-two percent indicated the group dynamic of their classmates throughout the was ‘Excellent’ or ‘Very Good’.

In 2024 Meeker partnered with UW Extension’s Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve “Rivers 2Lakes program” to help students integrate kayaking remote estuaries of Lake Superior with hands on water quality testing.



Outdoor adventure experiences like kayaking, canoeing, biking and skiing engages youth in physical movement and skill development that provides immediate feedback. Additionally, outdoor adventures build teamwork, problem-solving, and leadership skills that improve confidence. Overcoming challenges during these activities help build resilience, self-confidence, and a sense of accomplishment. Overall, outdoor adventure experiences are a powerful tool for nurturing well-rounded, healthy, and capable youth in our community who learn to value the unique area in which they live.

Reflecting on a canoeing field trip to Long Lake a middle school teacher wrote:

*Whether our students were beginners or more advanced they all ended the day with improved skills and more importantly with greater self-confidence. Many of the group initiatives you have led are just as meaningful as a day spent canoeing. I appreciate the activities you share that students can repeat on their own or in other settings. They promote independent and lifelong enjoyment of being outdoors.*

~ Middle School Teacher



## Educator

4-H & Youth Development

**Ian Meeker**

[ian.meeker@wisc.edu](mailto:ian.meeker@wisc.edu) 715-373-3289



# 4-H and Youth Development

4-H Operations &  
Communications Specialist

**Kaylie Lukas**

[kaylie.lukas@wisc.edu](mailto:kaylie.lukas@wisc.edu) 715-373-3287



## 4-H Camp Counselors Build Leadership Skills, Help Kids Celebrate Summer and Have Fun



The 4-H Camp Counselor experience continues to be a premier leadership experience that demonstrates how effective training prepares counselors to assume responsibility and to create a caring and supportive environment.

In 2024, 16 local high school counselors were trained to facilitate a 3-day and 2-night 4-H Summer Camp that served 61 youth in grades 3-8. This experience is the highlight of many 4-H Campers' summer and helps to develop the Essential Elements of Belonging, Independence, Mastery, and Generosity.

## Bayfield Youth in Governance Team Builds Youth Adult Partnerships

Bayfield County added a new Youth in Governance Team for seven high school students in 2024. Initial meetings were designed to provide an overview of all the Bayfield County Departments to help the students understand the wide variety of programs the Bayfield County Board of Supervisors are responsible for overseeing. Then the focus turned to preparing the students to attend the Superior Days 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary event in Madison. Since 2005, Ian Meeker has identified, trained and provided active leadership for Superior Days for 113 Youth delegates from Bayfield County.

The six youth delegates did an excellent job representing Bayfield County and like many delegates before them, reflected through a group debrief that participating side by side with adults was a profound political experience. The most significant highlight noted was visiting the office of and having a conversation with their Assembly Representative Angela Stroud.

When asked to reflect on how they benefited from the experience the delegates said:

- *I never really realized how willing and approachable our representatives are. It was cool to see how they listened and how they are here to help!*
- *I was never aware of issues in our area or even thought about them and how being a rural area makes things more difficult until Superior Days. There are so many issues that need to be addressed that no one actually knows about!!! So thanks to Superior Days I am able to be informed and try to make a difference!*
- *I learned at Superior Days how different issues are handled and who is in charge of deciding what happens with them.*
- *It definitely makes a difference to have youth participation in Superior Days because the more we understand about our government, the more likely we are to want to be involved!*



*Pictured: Ian Meeker, 4-H & Youth Development Educator, Prescott Bell, Lu Seloadi, Brooklyn Benson, Raina Ungrodt, Gifty Cook, Avana Beeksmma, and Rep. Angela Stroud, Assembly Representative District 73.*





# Human Development & Relationships

We promote the development of resilient individuals and communities across Wisconsin and at every stage of life through meaningful partnerships and research-based education.

## PARENT AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION



Our Family Engagement and Relationships programs offer an array of educational classes and resources for parents and caregivers in Bayfield County. Decades of research show that high-quality parenting is linked with children's healthy development, social and emotional skills, and health and wellness across the lifespan. Virtual parenting classes continue to be the most sought-after option because they make it easier for everyone to participate, eliminating barriers such as childcare and transportation.



### Triple P: Positive Parenting Program

This international evidence-based program continues to be the foundation of our parent outreach. Virtual Triple P classes are offered on a regular basis to Bayfield County families throughout the year, including: *Triple P* for parents of children 0-12, *Triple P* for parents of teens, *Triple P* for parents experiencing separation or divorce, and new this year, a 6-session series, *Fear-Less Triple P*, for parents whose children are experiencing moderate or severe anxiety.



### Trauma-Informed Caregiving

Based on previous years' success and demand, this program was offered virtually three times in 2024, reaching 62 participants from across the state. This 8-session program by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network is designed for caregivers to foster positive relationships with children who have experienced trauma. Parents, foster parents, kinship providers and youth-serving professionals come together to learn about trauma and its effects on children, as well as tools and strategies to support healing and healthy development.



### Literacy Link Team

This Extension initiative aims to connect parents in jail with their children through positive, literacy focused interactions. In 2024, 18 parents at the Bayfield County Jail attended a workshop on reading aloud and created video recordings reading storybooks, which were mailed to their children. Over the course of the year, 22 children received a total of 50 books and videos.



### Parenting Inside Out

Originally a 90-hour program for parents in prison, the Literacy Link adapted this national evidence-based initiative into a 15 hour version for county jails, which includes a family literacy component and family outreach. In 2024, the program was offered virtually and in-person, reaching 14 parents at the Bayfield County Jail.



### Co-Parenting

We continue to offer programs for parents experiencing separation or divorce. *Parents Forever* teaches skills for better communication, problem-solving, and supporting children emotionally. *Resilient Co-parenting* provides monthly topic-specific sessions that recognize the evolving nature of co-parenting over time.





Educator

Heidi Ungrodt

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## Human Development & Relationships



Educator

Tracy Henegar

[Tracy.henegar@wisc.edu](mailto:Tracy.henegar@wisc.edu) 715-395-1426



## MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Positive mental health and well-being are essential for overall health and well-being, influencing every aspect of our lives, from our physical health to our relationships, productivity, and ability to contribute to society. In order to strengthen families, it's critical that we support parents' individual mental health and well-being. Likewise, to strengthen our community, we must provide support to those that may be struggling. Our programs teach skills to help individuals manage stress, practice mindfulness and access mental health resources.



### Mental Health First Aid

In 2024, this full-day evidence-based program that teaches participants how to recognize and respond to someone experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge was offered eleven times, reaching 147 adults. Additionally, 146 youth in Bayfield County were reached through teen Mental Health First Aid, which focuses on how to recognize when a friend may need support and how to connect that friend to a caring adult.

*"What mental health needs is more sunlight, more candor, and more unashamed conversation." — Glenn Close*



### WeCOPE

This 6-session evidence-based program that helps adults cope with stress was offered multiple times in 2024, as well as a shortened "sneak peek" version, reaching 155 virtual participants statewide.



### ACEs Workshops

Professional development workshops on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Trauma Informed Care (TIC) were offered four times in 2024, reaching 77 participants throughout the region.

**LifeSpan** programs assist individuals, families and communities in navigating aging by offering resources and support for family caregiving, healthy aging and creating aging-friendly communities. Bayfield County, with over 30% of residents aged 65 or older, is among the oldest counties in Wisconsin. Local LifeSpan efforts foster a supportive and inclusive environment for older adults.

## LIFESPAN



### Aging Mastery Program

This program helps older adults learn how to adapt sustainable habits in various aspects of life and has been shown to improve health, economic security, well-being, and social connections. In 2024, we hosted an 8-session program at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center, reaching 26 older adults across Ashland and Bayfield Counties.



### Art of Aging

Based on interest from our *Aging Mastery Program* graduates, for ongoing sessions, we introduced monthly *Art of Aging* booster sessions in the fall of 2024. Offerings included sessions on Scams Targeting Seniors, Inheritance Decisions and Memory Matters. To meet demand, we are excited to continue providing these topic-specific sessions throughout 2025.



# Health & Well-Being



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## Healthy Choices Healthy Lives

FoodWise in Bayfield County is federally funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed). With local strengths, we support healthy eating habits, active lifestyles and healthy community environments for Wisconsin residents experiencing limited incomes through nutrition education at the individual, community and systems levels.



### Bayfield County Landscape

Whether people are healthy or not is affected by systems, policies, and environmental factors.

**52%**

of children in schools were eligible for free or reduced-price meals.<sup>^</sup>



**9%**

of county residents use SNAP benefits to purchase food for themselves and their families.\*



<sup>^</sup>Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

\*WI Dept of Administration and WI Dept of Health Services

## Achieving More Together

UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin throughout urban and rural communities to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work. In Bayfield County, FoodWise partners with schools, after-school programs, Head Start programs, and food programs to help make the healthy choice the easy choice in our communities.

### 2024 Updates

We continue to distribute our monthly newsletter throughout our three counties to a large number of partners and participants. We include information on food security resources, recipes, Harvest of the Month, program updates, and more.

We continue to offer a virtual StrongBodies strength training series throughout the year in collaboration with other FoodWise teams.

At the beginning of 2024, Marisa started in a new position on our team as a Healthy Communities Coordinator. She is overseeing the CDC HOP grant that Ashland County received, as well as creating Harvest of the Moon materials.

We are excited to share that we hired Lindsay Larson to fill the vacant Educator position! Lindsay has been an amazing addition to our team. She brings many experiences to her position and has hit the ground running in her new role.

## Turtle Island Tales



In 2024, we started a pilot program called Turtle Island Tales with Red Cliff Early Childhood Center.

- The goal of this program is to promote family wellness for American Indian families with young children.
- Each month, families receive a wellness packet highlighting a different topic and includes a variety of activities, resources, and information on that topic.
- We worked together with the Red Cliff GLITC SNAP Educator and other community partners to include tribe-specific cultural resources.
- Additionally, we provide direct education in the classrooms each month about the packets/wellness topics that families received.
- We look forward to seeing what impact these packets have with the families!

To learn more about this program, check out the website below:  
<https://turtleislandtales.org/>



## FERN (Food Educator Resource Network)



In 2024, our team helped to create a coalition space for food Educators in the Chequamegon Bay Area called FERN (Food Educator Resource Network).

This group meets quarterly at a different sites where we learn more about each site, receive a tour, and set time aside to share information about programming efforts in the community, share resources, and gain opportunities to collaborate on topics or projects beyond this meeting space.

Some site visits in 2024 included the Red Cliff Food Distribution, Red Cliff Food Pantry, and Bayfield School Gitigaan (Garden).

We are excited to check out some new spaces and programs in 2025!

## Connect

## With Us

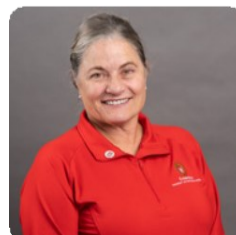
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 117th East 5th Street  
 Washburn, WI 54891



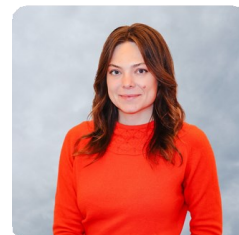
Stephanie  
Bakker  
Nutrition  
Coordinator



Marisa Dyer  
Healthy  
Communities  
Coordinator



Deb Leonard  
Nutrition  
Educator



Lindsay Larson  
Nutrition  
Educator

FoodWise education is funded by the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program – EFNEP. An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.





# Community Development

## A Year of Impact

In 2024, the Community Development Program advanced major efforts to strengthen quality of life, bolster local services, and support the aging population in one of Wisconsin's oldest counties. With a focus on capacity building, workforce development, and sustainable organizational infrastructure, we collaborated with dozens of organizations and community leaders to launch, support, and sustain impactful initiatives across the region.

### Nonprofit Sector Growth & Leadership Development

*Building nonprofit capacity is critical for maintaining community services and leadership pipelines in rural areas.*

- Formed a training collaboration with Head of the Lakes United Way and Apostle Islands Community Fund
- Hosted six educational events:
  - Who's Next: Engaging the Next Generation of Board Members & Volunteers
  - Nonprofit Resource Summit
  - FUN in Fundraising
  - "Be On Board" training series
  - Demystifying Strategic Planning
  - HR for Small Nonprofits
- Provided strategic planning and board development support to:
  - Cable Community Farm
  - Barnes Historical Society
  - Traditional Ways Gathering



**Looking ahead to 2025:** Continue to build our nonprofit collaboration to include more events and facilitate new strategic plans for additional community organizations.

### Workforce Solutions for a Shrinking Labor Pool

*Kellie Pederson, UW-Madison Extension Educator is assisting Bayfield County prepare for a projected employee shortfall by coordinating planning and workforce support initiatives.*

- Pederson facilitated the Bayfield County Workforce Workgroup with monthly meetings and research development of recommendations to the County Board
- Hosted a local roundtable with Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Amy Pechacek

**Looking ahead to 2025:** Complete recommendations to the County Board and implement workforce retention solutions.





Educator

Kellie Pederson

kellie.pederson@wisc.edu 715-373-3289

## Community Development



### Elder Care Co-Operative: Building a Caring Economy



*The Elder Care Co-Operative community-owned care model aims to expand access to personal care services, allowing older adults to age in place with dignity.*

Pederson partnered with ICA consultants to develop business and financial models

- Received a favorable feasibility study in September
- Began recruitment of founding caregiver-owner members

**Looking ahead to 2025:** Focus on member recruitment and training, with the goal of launching operations in 2026.



### Affordable Housing with CheqBUILT

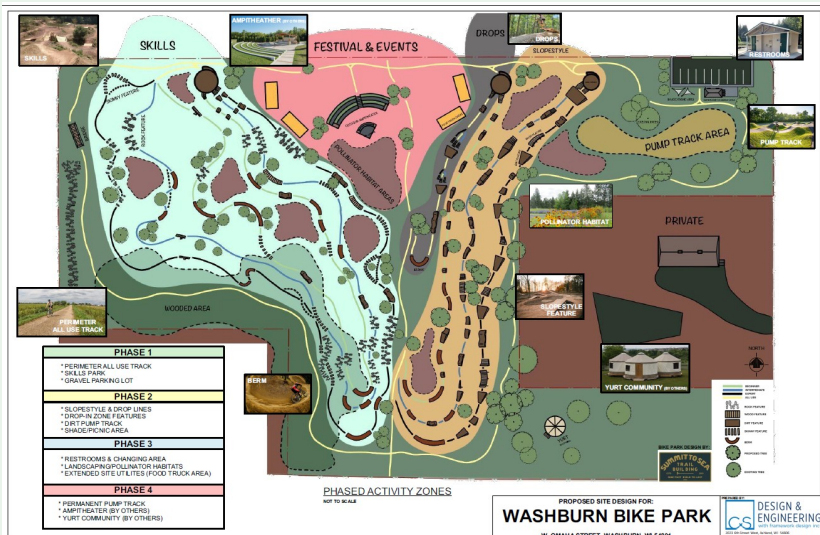
*CheqBUILT (Chequamegon Bay United Impact Land Trust) was formed to create and preserve permanently affordable housing in Ashland and Bayfield Counties.*

- CheqBUILT officially incorporated as a nonprofit
- Secured \$100,000 from WHEDA
- Formed internal committees and hired first Executive Director
- Began planning a revolving loan fund for home acquisition and rehab

**Looking ahead to 2025:** Onboard new leadership, launch strategic planning, and acquire the first homes into trust.

### Enhancing Community Amenities

*Extension continues to support local partners in creating vibrant, accessible public spaces that strengthen quality of life and attract workforce.*



- Completed the design and siting of the Washburn Bike Park with the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA)
- Facilitated a formal merger with North Coast Cycling Association
- Negotiated a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Washburn
- Secured additional grant funding for final engineering and design

**Looking ahead to 2025:** Support Phase 1 construction and fundraising, and assist with long-term park planning.





# Housing

## County-Based UW Housing Educator Pilot Continues Through 2024

In 2024, Kelly Westlund continued her work in this pilot position as the Housing Outreach Specialist based in Bayfield County. Over the course of the year, relationships with area housing practitioners and community-based groups were strengthened and expanded, laying the groundwork for a number of new housing development opportunities in Bayfield County. In addition to County-based work, Kelly was part of a multi-state grant-funded project through the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, working with other land grant universities to develop a curriculum that Extension professionals can use to improve access to affordable, quality housing in



rural communities. She also participated in several statewide housing collaborations, including organizing events with the badger State Housing Alliance and hosting their monthly webinar, Curds of Wisdom, formalizing the Wisconsin Community Land Trust Network, joining the WEDC's Office of Rural Prosperity Housing Community of Practice and the UW Housing Research Group. Kelly presented at a number of conferences, seminars, and local government meetings and secured a UW Innovation Grant to host a series of Rural Regional Housing Summits across the state. The first summit was held at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center in November.



## Aurora Place, A New 40-Unit Affordable Housing Moves Forward in the City of Washburn

It was an exciting year for Bayfield County and the City of Washburn! A community-led housing initiative moved forward in part thanks to a federal Congressional appropriation secured through U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin's office. This \$1,000,000 grant allocation helped secure nearly \$9,000,000 in Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) equity for this \$14,000,000 project. The housing will be constructed on



what was previously County-owned land, using LIHTC, City of Washburn Affordable Housing (TIF) funds and other funds from a variety of state and philanthropic sources. Development partner Cinnaire Solutions worked with Bayfield County and Extension to host public engagement sessions for interested residents. The sessions were well-attended and feedback was used to refine the designs to better suit the needs and preferences of the community. Plans were finalized in late 2024, with construction scheduled to begin in April 2025.







Educator

Kelly Westlund

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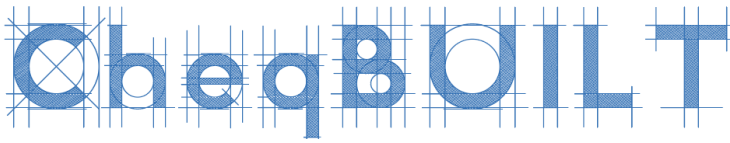
## Housing



Housing Navigator

Claire Sunsten

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There is a new affordable housing nonprofit organization serving Ashland & Bayfield Counties. CheqBUILT is a community land trust (CLT), which acquires property for resale at an affordable price to households at or below 120% of Area Median Income. The CLT model has been instrumental in helping thousands of people across the country become homeowners. Once a property becomes part of the trust, a one-time subsidy and resale restriction ensure the home will stay affordable for low- and middle-income households in perpetuity. Key to preserving the supply of affordable homes, properties in the land trust can



never be used as short-term rentals or vacation homes. In 2024, CheqBUILT secured a two-year technical assistance grant through Minnesota Housing Partnership, which complimented funding from WHEDA. These resources were used to build out the organizational infrastructure and launch the search for an Executive Director. Alex Nelson (pictured) accepted the position in December. Both WHEDA and Bayfield County have made financial commitments to the organization, which aims to have the first 2-5 homes in trust by the end of 2025. For more information, visit [www.cheqbuilt.org](http://www.cheqbuilt.org).



## New Senior Housing Proposed in the Town of Bell



Thanks in part to a grant from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and the Office of Rural Prosperity, the community-led effort to develop a proposal for new housing for independent seniors in Cornucopia is moving forward. As part of the two-year Thrive Rural grant initiative, the Bayfield County Housing Authority can use up to \$50,000 to cover pre-development expenses related to the effort, including necessary market research, site assessments, legal expenses, community engagement, and more. With Bayfield County Extension, Design Wisconsin, and the Town of Bell Senior Housing Work Group, a housing survey was completed in the Town of Bell, followed by a well-attended interactive "Design Charrette" to gather public input and design ideas for the future development.

## Other Housing Partnerships and Initiatives in Bayfield County



In 2024, Bayfield County created a **Housing Grants Outreach** position and hired Claire Sunsten



Bayfield County continued investing in the **Bayfield County Housing Authority**. A \$90,000, three-year commitment was enough to bring a part-time staff position to full-time, which ensured retention of an experienced employee and provided the Executive Director (Jennifer Toribio-



Warren, pictured) time to pursue new efficiencies and financial resources. They have leveraged millions in new funds to address deferred maintenance and build their capital reserves.



In collaboration with the private property owners, C&S Design, Northwest Community Services Agency, and other partners, Bayfield County is exploring the potential for renovating the historic **Ondossagon School** to provide up to 21 new units of affordable housing for seniors. Stay tuned!

for the role. Claire works to raise awareness about existing resources and hosts informational office hours for interested residents. A testament to her efforts, applications to the Regional Housing Fund from Bayfield County residents tripled in the first half of the year as compared to 2023.



# Emerging Crops

## New Crop Development—A Long-Term Project

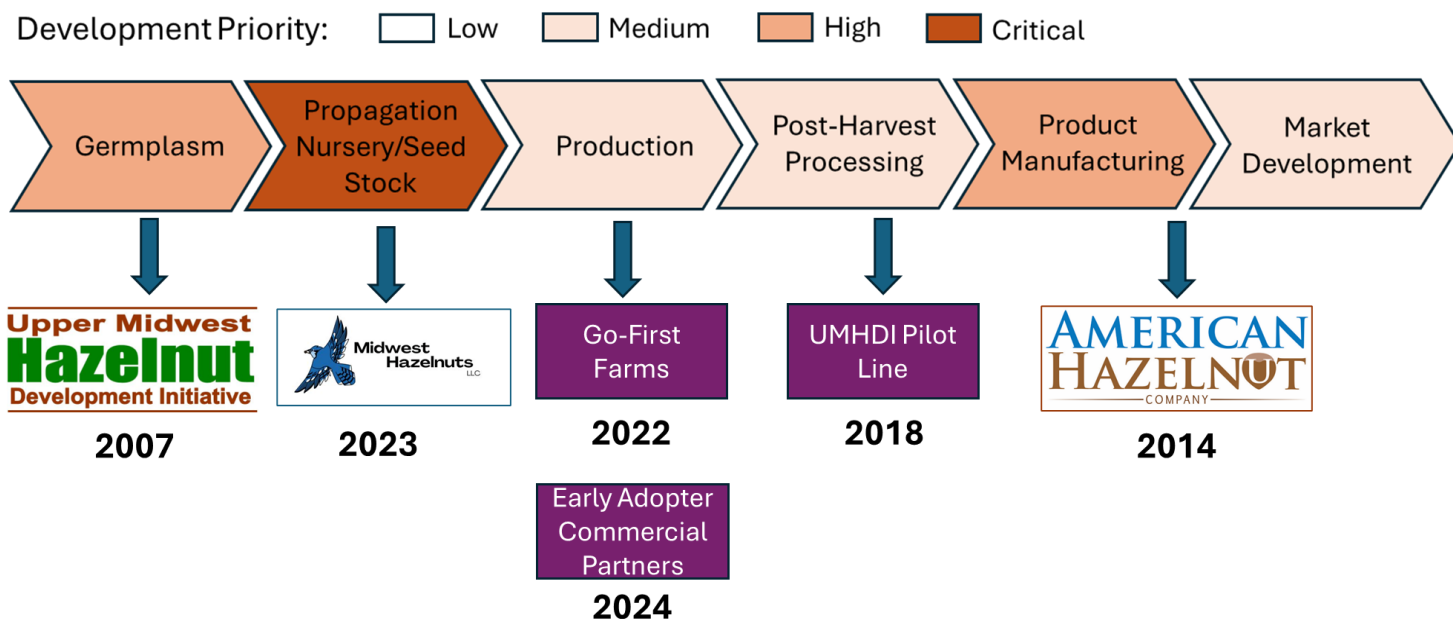
Innovation and crop diversity have long been the backbones of Wisconsin agriculture, but 85% of farm gate sales are from just four crops: corn, soy, beef, and dairy. New crops represent new economic opportunities for farmers, especially those that haven't gotten big enough to compete in our current low-margin environment. They also represent new solutions to persistent water and soil quality problems.

Hazelnuts can deliver both. They are a high value crop with strong market tailwinds and as a perennial woody species, hazelnuts hold soil, filter water, and provide wildlife habitat.

However, new crop development is not for the faint of heart or those looking for immediate success.

For a new crop to be successful there must be an entire value-chain in place from proven germplasm to strong markets. Without a nut crop in Wisconsin we've had to build the chain from scratch.

Below is a schematic showing the efforts of the Upper Midwest Hazelnut Development Initiative, since we launched it in 2007. It is a regional effort, but Bayfield and Ashland Counties are an integral part of it.



## New Hazelnut Cultivars By and For Bayfield County



**IceAge™**  
(Cuddy 2-28)

**TrailRunner™**  
(Stap N7-6)

**Cache™**  
(Price W41)

**Forager™**  
(Rose 9-2)

**Adventure™**  
(Arb 7-1)

Twenty-five years in the making, we are proud to announce the release of five hazelnut cultivars, the first ever for the Upper Midwest.

Much of the work to develop these happened in Bayfield County and now, the plants are being propagated for growers by Hauser Superior View Farm. Learn more at [www.midwesthazels.com](http://www.midwesthazels.com).





Educator

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## Emerging Crops

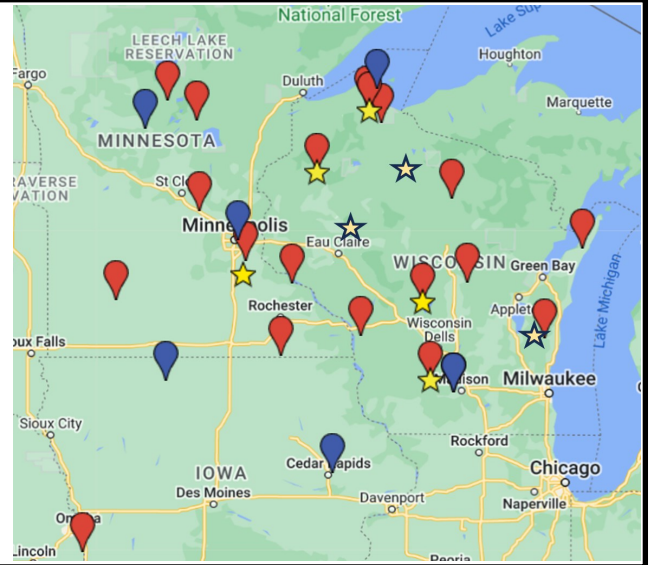


### Hazelnut Research Here and There

Back in 2007, we launched the Upper Midwest Hazelnut Development Initiative with zero staff and zero funding.

Who would have thought 18 years later we'd have 30+ research sites across three states. Bayfield County is at the epicenter of it all.

- **RED**—Germplasm trials that led to development of the Adventure™ Series.
- **BLUE**—Joint performance trials evaluating new cultivars.
- **YELLOW**—Go-First Hazelnut Farms jumpstarting the industry.



### Supply Side Push, Market Pull

Successful development of a new crop like hazelnuts requires a supply side push (production) and a market pull (a place for growers to sell). Both have to be aligned.

Over the last year, we've worked closely with the American Hazelnut Company, a grower-owned hazelnut processing and marketing company to develop branded products that feature Midwest-grown hazelnuts.

Right now, we have more demand for hazelnuts than we have supply. That's a great problem and an opportunity for new farmers!



### Seedless Table Grapes!

The dream of every gardener (and farmer) here in the north is a juicy cluster of seedless table grapes picked fresh from the vine. We have lots of varieties of seeded grapes, like King of the North, but who wants to crunch through or spit out seeds.

Seedless varieties just haven't survived the winters consistently to be viable. But, new options are almost here.

In 2023, we established trials to evaluate new releases from the UMN grape breeding program and preliminary results are exciting. The new varieties aren't available yet, but hopefully by 2026! Shown at right, MN1296.







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For More Information

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