

AGENDA
CONSERVATION, EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, April 1, 2026
TIME: 9:00 AM
LOCATION: Courthouse – Room 302

Join by phone

+1-408-418-9388 United States Toll
Access code: 2493 329 1222

Join by WebEx App or website

<https://woodcountywi.webex.com/woodcountywi/j.php?MTID=m645995041c9adf1c1c97ddaf8553e319>

Webinar number: 2493 329 1222

Webinar password: 040126

1. Call meeting to order
2. Declaration of Quorum
3. Public Comments (*brief comments/statement regarding committee business*)
4. Approve minutes of March 4, 2026, meeting
5. Approve vouchers, staff reports, & committee reports
6. Risk and Injury Report
7. Recommend Producer Member appointment to County Board Chair
8. Land & Water Conservation Department
 - a. Review and approve Gilbertson grassed waterway project (bids)
 - b. ARPA water quality update
 - c. 2026 Land Conservation Committee (LCC) Training on June 9th in Merrill
 - d. 2025 LWCD Annual Report
9. Private Sewage
10. Land Records
11. County Surveyor
12. Planning & Zoning
13. Economic Development
 - a. Wood County Childcare Task Force Update
 - b. Consider release of 2026 economic development grant funds for Village of Vesper-Stemparosa Estates Garage Build in the amount of \$25,000.
 - c. Consider release of 2026 economic development grant funds for City of Wisconsin Rapids Witter Park Lights in the amount of \$20,000.
 - d. Update from Wood County Health Department Farmer's Market Website Development & Branding project.
14. Extension
 - a. Staffing Updates – Cranberry Outreach Specialist, Natural Resources Educator, 4-H Associate Educator
 - b. 4-H Americorps Member – Discussion and Possible Action
 - c. Program Update
15. Committee requests for per diem for meeting attendance
16. Schedule next regular committee meeting (to be set by new committee)
17. Agenda items for next meeting
18. Schedule any additional meetings if necessary
19. Adjourn

MINUTES

CONSERVATION, EDUCATION, & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, March 4, 2026

TIME: 9:00 AM

PLACE: Courthouse – Room 302

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Leichtnam, Tom Buttke, Wayne Schulz (WebEx), Russ Perlock, Tim Hovendick, George Gilbertson

OTHERS PRESENT: Trent Miner, County Clerk; See attached sign-in list

1. Chairman Leichtnam called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM and declared a quorum present.
2. There were no public comments.
3. Under Chair's Comments, Leichtnam recognized Shane Wucherpfennig on his 35 years of service to the county.
4. No bids were received for the Gilbertson grassed waterway project. Wucherpfennig will reach out to more contractors and may have this on the agenda for next month.
5. Wucherpfennig highlighted the activities of the Mill Creek Watershed large scale TMR grant. He reviewed the amount received for the grant and the projects that have been completed. He is reapplying for another grant for this purpose.
6. Wucherpfennig reviewed the current status of the Mill Creek chloride issue and noted that the City of Marshfield will be conducting a plumbing inspection of a facility that may be the source of the chloride in the next week and will involve the wastewater treatment department as well. More information will follow.
7. Wucherpfennig brought the committee up to date on the current violations.
8. Chair Leichtnam highlighted the upcoming Citizens Water Group meeting of March 16th and the speakers that will be presenting information to that group.
9. Representatives of the Remington Fire Department presented an update on their construction project at their fire station and requested the release of the assigned economic development grant funding. Motion by Buttke/Perlock to approve the release of the \$9,000 economic development grant funding assigned to this project. Motion carried unanimously.
10. The minutes of the February 4, 2026, meeting were presented. Motion by Hovendick/Perlock to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
11. Motion by Buttke/Hovendick to approve the vouchers, monthly department reports and committee reports. Motion carried unanimously.

12. Planning & Zoning Code Administrator Cook presented the annual report of private sewage systems put in place in 2025 in Wood County and reviewed past numbers as well.
13. County Planner Simkowski presented the United States National Guard & Reserve Patriotic Employer Recognition to Director Grueneberg for his support of Simkowski's involvement with the National Guard.
14. Code Technician Koziczowski presented the annual report of well permits to the committee and highlighted the total number of wells drilled and put in throughout the county. She reviewed the requirements and setbacks for drilled wells.
15. Extension Educator Rombalski reviewed the actions taken by the Child Care Task Force with the allocated ARPA funding including projects in both the City of Wisconsin Rapids adding capacity to an existing daycare, as well as in the City of Marshfield at a Montessori school.
16. Director Grueneberg reviewed the current status of the 2027 Economic Development Grant process. The request for proposals will go out in the next couple of weeks with a deadline for return in the beginning of July.
17. The new Extension Area Director, Jen McNelly, was introduced to the committee. With her promotion comes a vacancy in the Natural Resources area. The other natural resources educator was reassigned to a different location, so Wood County is down both Natural Resource educators at the present time. McNelly is requesting ideas on what is expected out of the 2 educators by the committee and get back to her with your thoughts. More information will be forthcoming in this regard as will the funding mechanism for both positions.
18. The following request for per diems were brought forth to the committee:
 - Leichtnam – Huddle Up Sports Tourism session.
 - Leichtnam – Leadership class/Heart of Wisconsin
 - Hovendick – Mill Creek Watershed annual meeting
 - Perlock – Citizens Water GroupMotion by Buttke/Hovendick to approve the per diem requests as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
19. The next regular meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at 9:00 AM.
20. Chair Leichtnam declared the meeting adjourned at 10:45 AM.

Minutes taken by Trent Miner, County Clerk, and are in draft form until approved at the next meeting.

Committee Report

County of Wood

Report of claims for: Extension Wood County

For the period of: March 2026

For the range of vouchers: 30260017 - 30260026

Voucher	Vendor Name	Nature of Claim	Doc Date	Amount	Paid
30260017	AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES	Computer Supplies	03/03/2026	\$29.99	P
30260018	AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES	Educational Materials	03/03/2026	\$16.99	P
30260019	JCEP WISCONSIN	Staff Conference Fees	03/03/2026	\$480.00	P
30260020	UW MADISON ACCOUNTING SERVICES	4-H Teen Winter Camp	03/03/2026	\$5,126.00	P
30260021	US BANK	March Credit Card Statement	03/24/2026	\$68.81	
30260022	UW MADISON EXTENSION	StrongBodies Training Fee	03/24/2026	\$350.00	
30260023	BORES TRINA	March Expenses	03/24/2026	\$184.15	
30260024	EBERLEIN BENJAMIN	March Expenses	03/24/2026	\$82.65	
30260025	HUBER LAURA	January-March Expenses	03/24/2026	\$640.40	
30260026	SCOTT HANNAH	February-March Expenses	03/24/2026	\$100.05	
Grand Total:				\$7,079.04	

Signatures

Committee Chair: _____

Committee Member: _____

Committee Report

County of Wood

Report of claims for: Land & Water Conservation

For the period of: March 2026

For the range of vouchers: 18260013 - 18260018

Voucher	Vendor Name	Nature of Claim	Doc Date	Amount	Paid
18260013	WI DEPT OF NATURAL RESOURCES	NMM Annual Report Fee	02/26/2026	\$4,115.00	P
18260014	WI DEPT OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (Madison)	Notary public filing fee (BP)	02/03/2026	\$20.00	P
18260015	GILBERTSON GEORGE & JILL	Cost share cover crops	03/09/2026	\$420.00	P
18260016	AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES	Office supplies	03/10/2026	\$27.73	P
18260017	US BANK	Conference / DLTS license fee	03/17/2026	\$3,171.74	
18260018	AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES	Grant expenses-backpack/icemkr	03/24/2026	\$169.93	
Grand Total:				\$7,924.40	

Signatures

Committee Chair: _____

Committee Member: _____

Committee Report

County of Wood

Report of claims for: Planning & Zoning

For the period of: March 2026

For the range of vouchers: 22260023 - 22260029 38260002 - 38260005

Voucher	Vendor Name	Nature of Claim	Doc Date	Amount	Paid
22260023	BOYER KEVIN	SU-Prof Services Other	03/01/2026	\$1,126.67	P
22260024	AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES	PL-Office Supplies	02/20/2026	\$13.51	P
22260025	INDUSTRY SERVICES DIVISION	PS-Sanitary Permit Fees Jan/Fe	03/01/2026	\$600.00	P
22260026	AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES	LR-Office Supplies	02/26/2026	\$20.88	P
22260027	HANDS ON CLASSIC CAR WASH	PS-R/M Serv Other-Vehicles	03/02/2026	\$250.00	P
22260028	CLOUDPOINT GEOSPATIAL INC	LR-ARPA Funding	02/28/2026	\$16,970.60	P
22260029	US BANK	LR/PL/ED	03/17/2026	\$747.44	
38260002	MARSHFIELD AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION INC	ED-Thrive Rural Grant	02/23/2026	\$925.00	P
38260003	MARSHFIELD AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION INC	ED-Thrive Rural (CranCity)	03/02/2026	\$1,375.00	P
38260004	CRANCITY CORNER	ED-GRANT FUNDS (CRANCITY)	02/01/2026	\$20,000.00	P
38260005	REMINGTON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT	ED-Grant Funds (Fire Dept)	03/08/2026	\$9,000.00	P
Grand Total:				\$51,029.10	

Signatures

Committee Chair: _____

Committee Member: _____

Extension Wood County staff led, delivered, planned or collaborated on all of the following activities:

4-H POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Laura Huber, 4-H Program Educator

Trina Bores, 4-H AmeriCorps member

- A series of lessons, Life Management, for students at River Cities High School, where we engage them in lessons around topics such as budgeting/renting, cooking, nutrition, basic home repairs, and other essential life skills to prepare them for life after high school and help support their overall health and well-being for when they are on their own.
 - **Total Reach:** 81 students
- A virtual meeting where families learned about 4-H summer camp and the changes for this summer's program so that families are well-informed as they make decisions for their children. Total Reach: 10 families with youth in grades 3-7.
- An in-person activity for youth enrolled in Pittsville Elementary's After School Program where participants used the scientific method to discover how salt changes the freezing point of water. Students measured temperature over time while making individual ice cream cups. This fun activity helped students understand why plow trucks salt roads in winter.
 - **Total Reach:** 33 students in grades 1-8
- A county-wide roller-skating party for 4-H members and their friends where youth built social connection through fun physical activity. This this activity, youth 4-H members and their parents met 4-H members from other clubs. Youth practiced life skills like empathy, concern for others, personal safety, cooperation, and persistence.
 - **Total Reach:** 19 youth 4-H members 10 adult parents/guardians
- A pen pal project for youth in grades 5K - 2 where young people practice reading and writing skills in order to create and build new relationships across 8 counties in central Wisconsin.

AGRICULTURE

Matt Lippert, Agriculture Educator

- Planning April 2026 in-person Save a Calf Save A Cow Workshops for dairy and dairy workers (with Spanish interpretation) and beef producers. The goal is to provide information and techniques to boost cattle caretakers' confidence in preparing the cow for calving, obstetric techniques and newborn calf care so that their health and reproductive programs maintain their farm's economic viability.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Kayla Rombalski, Community Development Educator

- Economic Development Presentation: Delivered a presentation to the Heart of Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce's A.C.E. Leadership program titled "What Is Economic Development?". The session



provided participants with a foundational understanding of economic development, along with specific insights into Wood County’s economic development strategy, priorities, and current initiatives. By grounding the topic in local context, the presentation increased participants’ awareness of and engagement with Wood County’s economic development work and set the stage for deeper learning, serving as the kickoff for the program’s economic development themed day of programming.

- **Total Reach:** 20 participants
- Small Business Academy: Preparation for the Central Wisconsin in-person session of the Lieutenant Governor’s Small Business Academy, to be held Friday, May 8, 2026, at the Marshfield Chamber of Commerce. The Academy is a free, statewide training and networking initiative hosted by the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation that supports small business owners, entrepreneurs, and individuals exploring business start-up opportunities. The program combines three days of virtual educational sessions with concurrent in-person events across Wisconsin. Preparation efforts are focused on coordinating logistics and local partnerships to deliver a high-quality learning experience that strengthens the small business ecosystem in Central Wisconsin.
- Ongoing Strategic Planning Support and Housing Summit Preparation: As reported previously, ongoing strategic planning support to the Wood County Health Department to strengthen organizational effectiveness and community-centered operations. Ongoing planning for the Central Wisconsin Housing Summit, a regional convening aimed at advancing collaborative housing solutions by elevating developer and municipal perspectives. Together, this work supports informed decision-making, cross-sector collaboration, and long-term community vitality.

CRANBERRIES

Allison Jonjak, Cranberry Outreach Specialist

- Allison is transitioning from her role as Cranberry Outreach Specialist to a terminal role as a Research Development Outreach Specialist, which will end on June 30, 2026.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Ka Zoua Thao, Bilingual (Hmong) Community Health Worker *Hannah Wendels Scott, Health and Well-Being Educator*

Behavioral Health

- Bi-weekly support groups for Hmong students where they learn about feelings, safety, and respect through storytelling, art, and guided conversations. Using age-appropriate terms, basic concepts of mental health, personal boundaries, and trusted adults while honoring Hmong traditions and values will be introduced. Through this program, Hmong students will feel safe, heard, and confident to lay the foundation for lifelong emotional well-being and opening the door to healthier conversations in their families and communities.
 - **Total Reach:** 61 students
 - 7 students in grades 4-5



- 33 students in grades 6-8
- 21 students in grades 9-12
- A Tai Chi class for older adults and individuals with arthritis, where participants learn gentle, low-impact movements designed to improve balance, flexibility, and joint health. Through this activity, the program help reduce the risk of falls and empower participants to lead healthier, more active lives, fostering independence and confidence in their daily routines.
- A weekly program for incarcerated men in the Wood County Jail, where participants practiced healthy coping strategies, built emotional awareness, and strengthened skills for managing stress in daily life. Through this effort, men gained tools that support their well-being during incarceration and increase their capacity to navigate re-entry with resilience and confidence.
 - **Total Reach:** 8 incarcerated males
- An after-school program for elementary and middle school students, where Extension colleagues across various institutes lead engaging activities focused on their area of expertise. My focus is on teaching simple coping skills and emotional awareness. Through this effort, students will strengthen their well-being and build confidence in managing everyday challenges.
 - **Total Reach:** 25 students each time
- A weekly virtual program for educators from the Wisconsin Rapids Public School District, where participants practice healthy coping strategies, built emotional awareness, and strengthened skills for managing stress in daily life. Through this effort, educators will gain tools that support their well-being in their personal and professional lives.
 - **Total Reach:** 19 registered participants
- A monthly gathering for Hmong elder women where they connect with one another and learn ways to care for their mental and social well-being. Through this effort, they will strengthen community bonds and build healthier habits.
 - **Total Reach:** 6 Hmong women
- Building and maintaining relationships and engaging with partners to address health needs with the Hmong community of Wood County.
- An as needed meeting with Hmong clients, where I met one-on-one with clients to listen to their needs, offer support, and help them identify and access local health and community resources. Through this effort, participants will gain personalized support, clearer pathways to services, and greater confidence navigating systems.
 - **Total Reach:** 5 one-on-one Hmong clients
- A monthly food pantry pick-up for Hmong community members in Wood County, where I support families in choosing foods that their household needs and share information about additional local resources. Through this effort, Hmong residents gain reliable access to healthier food options and feel better connected to community supports.
 - **Total Reach:** 12 Hmong families



- The Hmong Women's Social Space serves as a monthly gathering for Hmong women to engage in discussions about often overlooked topics within their community. This initiative aims to foster relationships among participants and empower them to advocate for the recognition of their voices.
 - **Total Reach:** *7 participants*
- A presentation at the Wisconsin IDEA Conference for educators, community partners, and university professionals, where I shared my work as a Bilingual Community Health Worker and highlighted how CHWs bridge cultural, linguistic, and system gaps for Hmong and other underserved families. Through this effort, participants gained a deeper understanding of culturally responsive support, the importance of trust-building, and the impact of CHWs in improving access, confidence, and wellbeing across communities.
- A roundtable discussion for Farmers Market managers across Wisconsin, where I shared cultural insights about Hmong traditions, communication styles, and market practices, and guided participants in strategies to better support and engage Hmong vendors. Through this effort, managers strengthened their understanding of culturally responsive approaches and gained tools to build trust, improve vendor relationships, and create more inclusive, welcoming market environments statewide.

HEAL (Healthy Eating and Active Living)

- A 5-week nutrition education series for kindergarten classrooms at Grove 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 how making healthy food choices will help them to be healthier in school and at home.
- A series of lessons for adults who are incarcerated participating in the STRONG Recovery Pod Program in the Wood County Jail. Through this series, participants will learn nutrition education, cooking skills, and participate in the StrongBodies program that improves their physical and mental health.
- A listening session for individuals and families experiencing food insecurity hosted at FOCUS Food Pantry by Extension Wood County and the Wood County Health Department as part of a grant award to engage community members in conversations around food insecurity to learn about the barriers in place. Through this effort we will take information gathered to implement at least one effort to reduce food insecurity in Wood County. This is the first of three listening sessions.
- A 5-week nutrition education series for third grade classrooms at Howe Elementary School, where students will learn about MyPlate, making healthy food choices, how to read nutrition facts labels, and about being physically active to help students to be healthier in school and at home.
 - **Total Reach:** *57 third grade students*
- A 5-week nutrition education series for third grade classrooms at Mead Elementary School, where students will learn about MyPlate, making healthy food choices, how to read nutrition facts labels, and about being physically active to help students to be healthier in school and at home.
 - **Total Reach:** *35 third grade students*



- A partnership with United Way/Hunger Coalition, FOCUS Food Pantry, and the Housing Authority of Wisconsin Rapids that provides "Stockboxes for Seniors", a monthly food box service where low-income seniors can receive around 25–30 pounds of nutritious foods to stock their pantry with. The goal of this partnership is to promote the boxes with community partners with the overall goal to improve food security.
- A 15-week series of strength training sessions (StrongBodies) for older adults/adults in the Nekoosa community, where participants engage in regular, progressive strength training and health education to improve their physical and mental health and enhance social connectedness. This series is led by two Extension StrongBodies volunteers.
 - **Total Reach:** 38 participants
- A weekly virtual program for educators from the Wisconsin Rapids Public School District, where participants practice healthy coping strategies, built emotional awareness, and strengthened skills for managing stress in daily life. Through this effort, educators will gain tools that support their well-being in their personal and professional lives.
 - **Total Reach: 19 registered participants**
- A series of lessons, Life Management, for students at River Cities High School, where we engage them in lessons around topics such as budgeting/renting, cooking, nutrition, basic home repairs, and other essential life skills to prepare them for life after high school and help support their overall health and well-being for when they are on their own.
 - **Total Reach:** 81 students
- A series of after-school lessons for elementary and middle school students at Pittsville Elementary School, where students learn about the five food groups, how they benefit their overall health and well-being, and how to make healthy food and physical activity choices both at home and at school
 - **Total Reach:** 24 students
- Planning for 4 community listening sessions with individuals and families who are experiencing food insecurity in collaboration with the Wood County Health Department. The goal of these sessions is to gather qualitative data from residents with lived experience of food insecurity to better understand the barriers they face and the solutions they believe would be most effective. The second half of this project will be taking the feedback from each session to help guide our strategies to reduce food insecurity in Wood County. Sessions are held in Wisconsin Rapids, Marshfield, Pittsville, and Arpin.
- An ongoing series of strength training sessions (StrongBodies) for older adults/adults in the Pittsville community, where participants engage in regular, progressive strength training and health education to improve their physical and mental health and enhance social connectedness. This series is led by two Extension StrongBodies volunteers.
 - **Total Reach:** 26 participants



HORTICULTURE

Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator

- Planning for a bilingual agricultural conference for Hmong farmers in collaboration with local agencies and educators. The goal is to provide education on sustainable farming, business development, and pest management, so that participants can improve farm profitability, adopt resilient practices, and strengthen community connections.
- A program for the general public where Pittsville library constituents learned how to utilize the integrated pest management framework to reduce the impact of plant diseases. The goal of this effort is to reduce pesticide misuse in consumer landscapes.
 - **Total Reach: 15**
- A program for the general public where Arpin library constituents learned the framework of Integrated Pest Management and how to apply IPM principles to backyard gardens. The goal of this effort is to reduce pesticide and fertilizer misuse in consumer landscapes.
 - **Total Reach: 3**
- A presentation for Garden Dreams participants, where participants learned how to apply integrated pest management principles to early spring landscape activities. The goal of this effort is to reduce pesticide and fertilizer misuse in consumer landscapes.
 - **Total Reach: 52**

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS & DEVELOPMENT

Ben Eberlein, Human Development & Relationships Educator

- A series of lessons, Life Management, for students at River Cities High School, where we engage them in lessons around topics such as budgeting/renting, cooking, nutrition, basic home repairs, and other essential life skills to prepare them for life after high school and help support their overall health and well-being for when they are on their own.
 - **Total Reach: 81 students**
- A 6-session 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 supports.
- A direct education activity for elementary & middle school students in which participants learn basic financial concepts like the difference between needs & wants and to identify personal financial values and goals. Through this, they establish a foundation of knowledge for positive money management later in life.
 - **Total Reach: 30 students**

- 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.
 - **Total Reach:** *1 individual*

NATURAL RESOURCES

Anna Mitchell, Natural Resources Educator

- A four-session facilitated strategic planning workshop series for the Nepco Lake District Board and stakeholders, where participants created a shared 3–5-year practical vision, analyzed underlying contradictions that hinder progress, developed strategic directions to address those barriers, and identified first-year measurable accomplishments with timelines and responsibilities. Through this strategic planning process, the district built a clear, community-driven roadmap that strengthens organizational alignment, supports effective decision-making, and guides long-term stewardship of Nepco Lake.
 - **Total Reach:** *9 members of Nepco Lake District*



- As of March 9, 2026, Anna transitioned into a new role within Extension as a Natural Resources Educator supporting the Between the Lakes Demonstration Farm Network and Ozaukee County Demonstration Farm Network.



LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORTS – MARCH 2026

Barb Peeters

Conservation Administrative Specialist

- Processed payment to Wi-DNR for the DNR portion of nonmetallic mining annual permit fees (a total of \$51,970.00 in NMM permit fees were received with \$47,855.00 to Wood County and \$4,115.00 to Wi-DNR).
- Processed orders for fruit trees and fielded phone calls/emails regarding availability of fruit trees. Had a good response from the flyer placed on the Wood County Facebook page regarding the fruit tree sale.
- Responded to inquiries via phone and email regarding tree/shrub/seed sale (orders closed on January 16th). Took customer names/contact information for waiting list in the event there are any extra trees after distribution.
- Completed February sales tax report and forwarded to Finance.
- Processed 4th quarter Wildlife Damage Claims & Abatement Program reimbursement payment (\$22,998.84).
- Worked on Outlook email cleanup between Feb. 23 and March 6 (requested by Information Technology for all county staff) prior to deadline of March 9th. I.T. extended deadline to March 23rd so was able to finish clean-up of the Land Conservation shared Outlook email account.
- Worked with fruit tree nurseries and fruit tree broker to schedule delivery of fruit trees to coordinate with tree distribution dates and allow sufficient time for LWCD staff to sort, bag and label tree orders. The 2026 annual tree sale distribution dates are set for Thursday & Friday, April 16 & 17, 2026 at the Forestry Garage.
- Completed application, Oath of Office form and passed mandatory online test for renewal of my Notary Public with the State of Wisconsin. Submitted required documents to the Aegis Corporation for the Notary Bond.
- Generated cost-share contract for a manure pit closure in Portage County utilizing Mill Creek grant funds totaling \$6,615.00 (at direction of County Conservationist) and emailed contract to Shawn O’Connell, Senior Conservation Technician with Portage County.
- Processed late fee payment from BTE nonmetallic mine. Per county ordinance, if NMM permit fee is paid after payment deadline of January 31st, the permit fee is doubled.
- Completed 2025 NMFE Program Grant Extension Request for 2025 to extend remaining grant funds to 2026 (totaling \$3,455.00). Kirk Langloss/Marathon County initiated request. Obtained approval and submitted 2025 NMFE Program extension request to DATCP.
- Attended March 4th CEED meeting at courthouse.
- Attended the Wisconsin Land+Water Annual Conference in Wis. Dells on March 4-6. The conference was very beneficial with lots of great information provided at the breakout sessions that was taken back to share with LWCD staff. The conference also provided networking opportunities (i.e. made contact with Pheasants Forever representative regarding seed mixes and promotional items that have been out of stock on website with immediate follow-up on site at the conference). Also volunteered and assisted with the Silent Auction on March 5th & 6th which benefits conservation youth education programs. Attended the following break-out sessions:
 - Artificial Intelligence Policies and Elements of Governance;
 - Not Just for Pretty Pictures: Drone Uses in Ecological Restoration;
 - Advocating for Conservation;
 - Wisconsin Retirement System;
 - Taking Your Partnership to Light Speed Returns;
 - Protecting What We Can’t See: Municipal-Farmer Partnerships Drive Conservation;
 - Enhanced Wakes: Understanding Ecosystem Impacts and Local Management Approaches;
 - Solar Watering Systems, Design and Implementation (presented by Kyle Andreae, Wood Co. LWCD)
- Printed and mailed Citizens Water Group materials (agenda and meeting invitation flyer) to landowners who were contacted regarding nitrates exceeding 20ppm and/or installed nitrate removal systems in late 2025 as requested

by Chairman Leichtnam. Worked with Kendra Wilhelm/Conservation Technician & Chairman Leichtnam to identify landowners for mailing due to the fact the County Conservationist was out of the office/working remote.

- Sold out of the Wolf River apple trees the first week of March. Updated order form and had it put on website.
- Downloaded the March DATCP monthly report and shared with LWCD staff.
- Worked with Finance to create revenue and expense accounts for two DNR Surface Water Grants that were awarded to LWCD (grant applications submitted by Kendra Wilhelm, Conservation Specialist for the Fourmile Creek Watershed Surface Water Grant (3-year grant) totaling \$37,631.00 and Nepco Lake Surface Water Grant (3-year grant) totaling \$37,531.80).
- Processed payment to landowner for cover crop cost-share contract utilizing Mill Creek grant funds (\$420.00). Delay in payout due to the fact the land is being rented by grant recipient and the landowner passed away. Additional time was needed to obtain signature of family member.
- Revised bid letters for grassed waterway project to be sent out for re-bid (G. Gilbertson).
- Completed I.T. annual training (Security Snippets: How to Identify Malicious Links).
- Drafted letter regarding notification to customers of tree pick up dates and a survey requesting customer suggestions for the 2027 tree sale. Mailed/emailed to 170 customers (tree distribution is set for April 16 & 17).
- Finalized 2025 LWCD Annual Report and worked with I.T. to have report placed on LWCD website. Due to the fact the file was too large to send as an email attachment, sent link to the CEED committee and to the Wisconsin Land+Water email distribution group.
- Continued to compile spreadsheets/supporting documents and run reports for the upcoming Wood County 2025 Audit. Finance set a submission deadline of April 8, 2026 with the audit occurring April 27 to May 8, 2026. This includes compiling data for ARPA Grant funds (*Water Quality Practices, Groundwater Program; Drone; and Field Days/Training*); DATCP Grant funds (*Structural & SEG Grants, Staffing & Support Grant, Innovations Subaward-Hypoxia Grant*); Wildlife Damage Claims & Abatement Program; LMPN Grant, Mill Creek 9-Key TMDL Grant; MDV funds; DNR Surface Water Grant; and DNR TRM Grant. The Farmland Preservation Plan Grant was extended for two years at the request of the County Conservationist (Wood County's Farmland Preservation Plan was due for full revision by 12/31/25). Processing documents for the audit was time consuming and meticulous!
- Prepped for tree sale (printed tree tags to attach to trees, compiled spreadsheet for order pick-up, etc.)
- Scheduled, set agenda, attended and took minutes at March 18th staff meeting to discuss summer intern duties and for follow-up by County Conservationist on agenda items from the Feb. 5th & Feb. 24th staff meetings.
- Vacation days March 20 & 23, 2026.
- Worked with Finance dept to gather additional info for the Nonmetallic Mining program 2025 year-end justification.
- Created orientation checklist for summer intern (Abby Leis) who will be with our dept. May 18th to Aug. 7th (note: the intern will be out of the country on a mission trip between June 12th-30th). Scheduled intern to attend June 3rd CEED meeting with County Conservationist.
- Completed LWCD payroll percentages and forwarded to Finance prior to the March 5th & 19th payrolls.
- Organized County Board packet materials and electronically submitted to the County Clerk's office.
- Processed MDV payments as received. Followed up with Wi-DNR Phosphorus Implementation Coordinator regarding discrepancy in MDV payment and one late payment not received to date. Verified the revised 2026 MDV payments for Wood County with a total of \$23,215.89 (an increase of \$150.59).
- Ordered department supplies as needed.
- Processed department invoices/vouchers and deposits weekly for submission to Finance/Treasurer.
- Reviewed payroll reports and verified distribution by accounts/department.
- Served as point of contact for LWCD staff when Conservationist was out of the office full days Feb. 27, March 9, 13, 30 & 31 and partial days March 2, 3, 11, 19, 25, 26, & 27.
- Electronically submitted staff reports/packet materials to the County Clerk's office for the CEED meeting packet and set/entered LWCD agenda items.

Emily Salvinski

Conservation Specialist

- **March 2-4.** Vacation
 - **Tuesday, March 10.** Reviewed NMFE materials. Assisted farmer with their NMP. Caught up on emails. Prepared for upcoming farmer meetings.
 - **Wednesday, March 11.** Assisted multiple farmers with their nutrient management plan updates.
 - **Tuesday, March 17.** Assisted multiple farmers with their nutrient management plan updates.
 - **Wednesday, March 18.** Attended staff meeting. Processed nutrient management plans sent by e-mail.
 - **Thursday, March 19.** Added NMP acres to shapefile. Worked on issue relating to plans not opening. Helped with tree sale prep.
 - **Wednesday, March 25.** Processed nutrient management plans sent by e-mail. Worked on updating nutrient management plan ahead of meeting.
-

Kendra Wilhelm

Conservation Specialist

- Out of office unexpectedly and unable to submit staff report by deadline. Will include with April report.
-

Kyle Andreae

Engineer Technician

- March 2 – Solar Presentation Preparation
 - March 3 – Solar Presentation Preparation
 - March 4 – CEED Meeting, Annual Land and Water Conference
 - March 5 – Annual Land and Water Conference
 - March 6 – Annual Land and Water Conference (gave presentation at conference on *Solar Watering Systems, Design and Implementation*)
 - March 9 – Lippert Design
 - March 10 – Lippert Design
 - March 11 – Lippert Design
 - March 12 – Lippert Site Visit, Keuffer Site Visit, Ciesielski Design
 - March 13 – Ciesielski Design, Baltus Pit Review
 - March 16 – Off
 - March 17 – Baltus Pit Review, Ciesielski Design
 - March 18 – Staff Meeting, Lippert Design
 - March 19 – Technical Committee Meeting, Lippert Design
 - March 20 – Lippert Design
 - March 23 – Ciesielski Design, 2025 Aerial Conversions
 - March 24 – Eastling Design, 2025 Aerial Conversions
 - March 25 – Eastling Design, 2025 Aerial Conversions
 - March 26 – Eastling Design, Gilbertson Site Visit
 - March 27 – Gilbertson Design
 - March 30 – Gilbertson Design
 - March 31 – Gilbertson Design, Cohort Meeting
-

Rodney Mayer

Conservation Program Manager

- Reviewed financial assurance (for Earth Maple Ridge 2, Schneider, I Brandl (2 sites), and Laidlaw) and updated spreadsheet, software and files.
- Brehm file review – disturbed maps, Fruin plan, violation file, 2024 wetland review, correspondence, etc. Completed timeline summaries for both Fruin Site and Vision Site.
- Completed NMM Annual Report – records reviews, acres calcs (added/removed), fee amounts and DNR portions, completed DNR database input, signatures, submitted to DNR.
- Completed annual “Know Before” I.T. training.
- Correspondence for Brehm meeting set up.
- Plan review for Bach – Mid Wisconsin draft 2 NMM reclamation plan (120 pages) – completed notes, went over issues with Shane, drafted 2 page review for needed clarifications and sent to Quest Engineering. Copy sent to DNR stormwater.
- Contact and over phone correspondence with Wendt farm for stored crop damage. Existing shooting permits, keep deploying fox light, gave bag armor info.
- Attended staff meeting on 3/18/26.
- Correspondence with Quest for info on digital layers available for the plan etc.
- Held in office meeting with Brad Brehm (operator), Chris Lindemood (landowner of Vision), Scott Brehm (County Board), Nick Flanagan (Corp Counsel), Shane Wucherpfennig, and myself. Discussed Vision mining without a permit violation, timeline to get a plan, Star Environmental hired – will contact for extension of timeline for compliance, township issues, financial assurance requirements, etc. Discussed Fruin site mining outside of existing permit issues, will confirm Star environmental will be doing plan to get into compliance, wetland issues and DNR need for restoration of wetland ditch, explained and showed original plan vs where the mining took place causing out of compliance and destruction of wetlands, etc. Updated meeting notes into event summaries.
- Records reviews and drafted listing of plans needed in 2026 – Bach -Mid WI (transfer), Brehm Vision (Violation), Brehm Fruin (Violation), possible Tom Altmann/Ron Bohn (new Chapter 30), Earth Hansen Sand, Earth MR 1, Weichelt amendment maps.
- Completed new files for Brehm Fruin site records – re-organized.
- Had some time off due to son’s work accident and surgeries.

Shane Wucherpfennig

County Conservationist

- No report submitted.
-



TO: Conservation, Education & Economic Development Committee

FR: Jason Grueneberg, Planning & Zoning Director
Emmett Simkowski, County Planner
Paul Bernard, Land Records Coordinator
Brad Cook, Code Administrator
Kayla Rautio, Code Technician
Victoria Wilson, Program Assistant
Julie Mancl, Program Assistant

RE: Staff Report for April 1, 2026

1. **Economic Development (Jason Grueneberg)**

TDS Telecommunications LLC (Telephone & Data Systems, Inc) - On March 5th, TDS announced a spring kickoff for the installation of nearly 400 miles of high-speed infrastructure to connect more than 3500 addresses in Wood County. This infrastructure will improve internet speeds to at least 100Mbps and up to 8 Gigabit in some locations. These network upgrades are being supported by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Enhanced America Cost Model (E-ACAM) program along with TDS investment. The upgrades will begin this spring and be completed by the deadline of December 31st, 2028. The March 5th press release is attached to this report.

Central Wisconsin Economic Development (CWED) Fund – On March 9th, I participated in the CWED Executive Committee Meeting to discuss renewing the administrative service provider contract. On March 18th I participated in the CWED Board of Directors' meeting. Agenda items for that meeting include approval of January and February financials, Loan Committee update, Administrative Service Provider update and monthly fund status report, and approval of a 1-year contract extension to Redevelopment Resources for administrative services.

UW-Marshfield/Wood County Commission Meeting – On March 11th, I attended the UW Commission meeting. At the meeting I provided a status update on the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) grant application that I submitted to secure \$2,000,000 in funding for the renovation of the Helon Connor Laird Theater. The grant application is currently going through the underwriting process with the WEDC.

Understanding AI: A Forum for Local Government – On March 18th, I attended an AI forum facilitated by UW Extension in Eau Claire. The forum provided an opportunity to learn about AI and how it can be applied through a variety of AI platforms. Sessions were held to discuss responsible use of AI as well as considerations for integrating AI tools in the workplace. A session was also held to learn how to effectively query or prompt.

Hub City Wind Farm – The past few years Wood County has considered participating in the Hub City Wind Farm. Wood County owns 144 acres in the project area in Marathon County, and leases (for \$1 per year) the property the UW-Board of Regents (BOR) for use by the Marshfield Agricultural Research Station. The Board of Regents has signed an agreement with Alliant Energy to participate UW-BOR-owned land in the Hub City Wind Farm. In January of

2026 the Wood County Conservation, Education, and Economic Development Committee decided not to sign an agreement with Alliant Energy, and as a result the 144 acres of County-owned land is not participating in the Hub City Wind Farm.

Witter Field Ribbon Cutting for New Lighting – On Tuesday, April 7th, at 7:30pm at Witter Field there will be a ribbon cutting to celebrate the new ball field lighting. The much-needed lighting was installed in 2025, and \$20,000 of Wood County economic development funding was put towards this \$200,000 project. All Wood County Board Supervisors are invited to attend the ribbon cutting to celebrate this investment and the impact that it will have on our regional economy by providing modern lighting for historic Witter Field for years to come. The invitation is attached to this report.

2. **Planning & Zoning (Emmett Simkowski)**

It is clear the field season is starting, and surveyors and property owners have been reaching out about CSM's and general zoning questions. On March 18th I attended the Wisconsin County Code Administrators conference and attended multiple presentations on large scale solar, joint development agreements, comprehensive planning, farmland preservation planning and DOT access and development near state and federal highways. I am continuing to iron out the finer details and maps for the Town of Rock's Comprehensive Plan and hope to have a complete draft to the Town early April. I received a couple requests from townships on an easier way to notify neighboring property owners for items like conditional uses, zoning changes, road projects etc. and worked with Paul to create a mailing list builder. You can select a parcel, portion of road or area and it will generate a list of all property owners' names and mailing addresses. Credit to Paul, it can be accessed here:

<https://woodwi.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/notification/index.html?appid=c5077f5932d3460c984d627c8df1b251>

3. **Land Records (Paul Bernard)**

- Map Printing – Town of Saratoga Zoning Maps
- Developing new Permit Explorer Web Mapping Application (Dashboard)
- Working with OnQ on the 2026 Right of Way Scanning Project
- Working with DATAMARK on the Street Centerline project
- Parcel Mapping
- Address Mapping

4. **Code Administrator (Brad Cook)**

2-27-2026- (2) HS 26-004 & HS 26-004 reviewed, written, and sent to owner TN: 07, TN:21, gather and compile FP documentation for Dept, answer, review, and gather information for phone calls and inquires with POWTS, SL, FL/

3-02-2026- Organize office room and documentation, answer, review, and gather information for phone calls and inquires with POWTS, SL, FL.

3-03-2026- (1) well permit reviewed and issued TN:07, organize office room and documentation, answer, review, and gather information for phone calls and inquires with POWTS, SL, FL.

3-04-2026- CEED Annual Report/Meeting, answer, review, and gather information for phone

calls and inquires with POWTS, SL, FL

3-05-2026- (1) HS 26-005 reviewed, written, and sent to owner V:28, ACE Leadership Program Powerpoint, answer, review, and gather information for phone calls and inquires with POWTS, SL, FL.

3-06-2026- (2) well permits reviewed and issued TN: 07, 18, (1) HT plan review & HTA sent to owner TN: 11, ACE Leadership Program Powerpoint, answer, review, and gather information for phone calls and inquires with POWTS, SL, FL.

3-09-2026-(2) Reviewed soils, plan review, issued permit for new HT TN: 11, V: 28, (1) Reviewed soils, plan review, issued permit for rep conv TN: 07, answer, review, and gather information for phone calls and inquires with POWTS, SL, FL

3-10-2026- DSPS County Training-Wausau

3-11-2026- DSPS County Training-Wausau

3-12-2026- ACE Leadership Program

3-13-2026- (1) well permit reviewed and issued TN: 07, (1) SF 26-001 reviewed, written, and sent to owner TN: 22, answer, review, and gather information for phone calls and inquires with POWTS, SL, FL.

3-16-2026- Gather material/documents for WCCA conferenece, Answer, review, and gather information for phone calls and inquires with POWTS, SL, FL

3-17-2025-KnowB4 County training, (1) Reviewed soils, plan review, issued permit for new mound TN: 15, answer, review, and gather information for phone calls and inquires with POWTS, SL, FL

3-18-2025- (1)Reviewed soils, plan review, issued permit for rec conv TN: 18, answer, review, and gather information for phone calls and inquires with POWTS, SL, FL

3-19-2026- WCCA County Conference-Wausau

3-20-26- WCCA County Conference-Wausau

3-23-2026- (1) soil eval TN: 15, (1) soils eval, plan review, rep HT TN: 05, (1) SL permit reviewed and issued TN: 07, answer, review, and gather information for phone calls and inquires with POWTS, SL, FL

3-24-2026- (1) POWTS inspection report written and reviewed TN:13, answer, review, and gather information for phone calls and inquires with POWTS, SL, FL

5. **Code Technician** (Kayla Rautio)

- A. Reviewed and approved POWTS & well permit applications
- B. Reviewed and approved soil evaluations

- C. Studied floodplain zoning; FEMA, state, & county regulations
- D. Cleaned up email folders
- E. Assisted with daily phone calls/emails/office questions
- F. Attended Meetings/Trainings/Etc.
 - 3-4-26: CEED Committee Meeting
 - 3-5-26: KnowBe4 Security Training
 - 3-10-26 & 3-11-26: DSPS County Training – Wausau
 - 3-19-26 & 3-20-26: WCCA Spring Conference - Weston

6. Office Activity (Victoria Wilson & Julie Mancl)

- a. Monthly Sanitary and Well Permit Activity – There were 8 sanitary permits, 1 shoreland permit and 5 well permits issued in 2026.
- b. Septic Maintenance Postcards – Septic maintenance postcards are targeted to be mailed Monday April 20th. Approximately 3,110 cards will be mailed for various types of septic systems. The due date for maintenance in 2026 is Friday August 7th.
- c. ArcGIS Pro Software Project – Julie continues working on a “Parcel History Cards” GIS project and Victoria continues working on an “Address Enhancing Features” GIS project for Paul.
- d. TRIP - \$876.50 from the Tax Refund Interception Program was received in February from two past court cases.
- e. Attended the following meetings/trainings & activities:
 - i. March 4th CEED meeting (VW)

TDS expanding fiber connections in rural Central Wisconsin

March 5, 2026

More than 3,500 Wood County addresses will gain high-speed internet service upgrades

TDS Telecommunications LLC (TDS®) is kicking off work on a major network upgrade project to expand access to high-speed internet connections to its rural customers in Wood County. All TDS-served addresses in the county, including the areas of Arpin, Auburndale, Babcock, Hansen, Lincoln, Pittsville, Remington, Richfield, and more, will be included in the upgrade plans.

“Bringing faster internet connections to rural America is not just about the technology—it’s about ensuring everyone has the same opportunity for education, healthcare, and economic growth,” said TDS Senior Vice President of Corporate Affairs Drew Petersen. “We look forward to connecting customers to the faster connections they’ve been waiting for.”

Construction will kick off this year and extend until at least 2028. This year’s plans call for installing nearly 400 miles of high-speed infrastructure to connect more than 3,500 addresses. This build plan, expected to start this spring in many locations, includes accessing public utility easement areas to bury conduit and fiber-optic cables, as well as upgrading aerial cables. TDS services of at least 100 Mbps and up to 8 Gigabit in some locations, will launch to customers in phases as sections of the network are completed.

The network upgrades are being supported, in part, by the Federal Communication Commission’s (FCC) four-year Enhanced Alternative Connect America Cost Model program (E-ACAM) along with TDS investment. The program funds the increased costs of bringing and maintaining broadband connections to rural areas. Companies participating in E-ACAM have until December 31, 2028, to launch upgraded speeds to the required locations.

TDS is also investing its own capital to bring faster speeds to area addresses not supported by the federal program. The company is accelerating its fiber expansion plans and crossed the 1 million fiber address passings milestone in 2025. TDS recently announced it is raising its long-term fiber service goal to 2.1 million fiber service addresses.

“We remain committed to making reliable, high-quality connections affordable, as well,” said Petersen. “TDS Connect, our low-cost high-speed internet product, will remain available to qualifying customers in our service footprint even after our upgrade work is complete.”

TDS is leveraging E-ACAM to help close the digital divide in 22 states. Residents and businesses interested in learning more about TDS’ E-ACAM builds can visit: tdstelecom.com/support/networkupgrades (<https://tdstelecom.com/support/networkupgrades.html>).

Share this article:

1-866-571-6662 (tel:18665716662)

[Contact Us \(/contactus.html\)](/contactus.html)

2026 LAND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE (LCC) TRAINING

JUNE 9TH, 2026

**LINCOLN COUNTY SERVICE CENTER
801 N SALES STREET, MERRILL, WI 54452**

AGENDA

Training: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Complimentary lunch is provided after the training!

Bonus: North Central Area Association meeting: 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (Following Lunch)

New and returning supervisors are encouraged to attend. County Land and Water Conservation Department (LWCD) staff are also encouraged to participate.

HOSTED BY:

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN:

- This training is designed for committee members to understand roles, responsibilities, and policy development.
- Meet land conservation committee members from throughout North Central Wisconsin.
- Gain tips for working with staff to implement local, state, and federal cost-sharing programs.
- Learn the importance of LCCs and staff working together.
- Hear directly from other LCC members and LWCD leadership.



WI LAND+WATER



**For more information and additional
LCC Resources, visit:**

<https://wisconsinlandwater.org/members-hub/lcc-resources>



2025

 Wood County
Land & Water
Conservation

Annual Report



Prepared by:

Barb Peeters, Conservation Administrative Specialist
Wood County Land & Water Conservation Department

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Our Team	4
- Best Management Practices	5-6
- Field / Grazing Events	
Grant Funding	7
Wildlife Abatement Program	8
Nonmetallic Mining Program	9
-Nutrient Mgmt Farmer Education	10
-ARPA Grant Funds	
-Central WI Farm Profitability Expo	11
-Annual Tree/Shrub/Seed Sale	
-LMPN & Surface Water Grants	12
-UW Extension - Agency Partner	13
-NRCS - Agency Partner	14
-2025 Poster Contest	
-LWCD Cell Phone	
-Mill Creek Watershed	15
-Stream Flow Monitoring	
-CREP	
-Miscellaneous Accomplishments	
-CEED Tour	16
-Invasive Species Summit	
-Surface Water Grant/Buffers	



The foundation of the Land and Water Conservation Department (LWCD) is to put in place an underlying assessment of the land and water resources with accompanying goals, objectives and strategies to achieve the county's overall goal to protect and improve our land and water resources. This must be done within the framework of protecting our community's land and environment because the economic strength and vitality of our community is dependent on the quality of our resources.

Through leadership, accountability, engagement of community stakeholders and collaborative partnerships, Wood County Land & Water Conservation staff strive to promote thoughtful and deliberate use of the natural resources and innovative solutions to ensure Wood County has healthy people, a healthy economy and a healthy environment today and tomorrow.

LWCD MISSION STATEMENT

Protect, improve, and manage land and water resources in the County through technical and financial assistance, educational opportunities, enforcement of County Ordinances, and administration of State programs to permanently benefit land and water resources for the citizens of Wood County.



Meet Our Team



(L-R) Rod Mayer, Conservation Program Coordinator; Kyle Andreae, Engineering Technician; Shane Wucherpfennig, County Conservationist; Kendra Wilhelm, Conservation Specialist; Barb Peeters, Conservation Administrative Specialist; Emily Salvinski, Conservation Specialist



**CONSERVATION,
EDUCATION AND
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**



(L-R) Tom Buttke-Vice Chair, Tim Hovendick, Bill Leichtnam-Chair; Russell Perlock & Wayne Schulz. Not pictured: Producer Representative George Gilbertson

LAND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE (LCC)

Chapter 92 of the Wisconsin State Statutes requires counties to have an LCC that oversees the administration and implementation of conservation programs that meet local priorities and the needs of land users. These programs might be local programs or state programs that are implemented at the local level. The Wood County CEED Committee held 12 regular meetings and 4 special meetings in 2025.



IN 2025,

11

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPS) WERE INSTALLED/INITIATED

BMPS	UNITS INSTALLED
Streambank / Shoreline Protection	560 Feet (photo top right)
Waste Facility Storage Closure	4 closures
Nitrate Treatment Systems	13 systems
Residue Management	700.8 acres
Cover Crops / No Till	1,886.96 acres
Stream Crossing*	130 Ln feet
Grassed Waterway*	580 Ln feet
Harvestable Buffers	95.5 acres (photo bottom right)
Heavy Use Protection*	1
VTA* (vegetated treatment area)	190 Ln feet
Settling Basin*	1 settling basin

NOTE: *Projects with asterisk (*) extended to 2026

13 farmers participated in no-till and/or cover cropping in Wood Co. or within the Mill Creek watershed. A total estimate of 3,820 lbs. of phosphorous and 3,405 lbs. of sediment were reduced.



Shoreline protection on Wis. River in Nekoosa

Wood County LWCD has several funding sources available to provide cost-sharing for the installation of eligible conservation projects. These funds help financially aid operators and landowners with the installation of various eligible Best Management Practices (BMPs). Along with the funding assistance, our department provides surveying, engineering design, and construction supervision to ensure the projects are installed according to proper design specifications. Installing these BMPs will reduce the sediment and phosphorus loading to our local waterways and provide protection of surface water and groundwater resources throughout Wood County.



Harvestable Buffer on water edge in Milladore

2025 BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Starting in 2000, the Land & Water Conservation Dept. began securing state funds from the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to fund local conservation practices on an annual basis. The selected conservation practices are outlined as priorities in the Land & Water Resource Management Plan that was written for Wood County. The following Wood Co. landowners installed Best Management Practices in 2025:

DATCP	Surface Water Grant (DNR)	Mill Creek TMDL	ARPA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam Strobel • Dwayne Hayden • Alan Weiler • Kerry Lewis • Tyler Bulgrin • Clarence Boerboom • Mike Duckett • McMillan Farms • Leslie Jagodzinski • Douglas Vruwink • George Gilbertson • Roth Golden Acres • Ray Fait • Kevin Heeg • Allen Grassl 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ron Knuth • Glen Peplinski • Roth Golden Acres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tyler Bulgrin • Roth Golden Acres • George Gilbertson • Barry Richardson • Allen Grassl • Carl Baltus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roy & Barbara Randorf • Michelle Sorenson • Richard & Julie Millard • Dave & Dawn Pearson • David & Susan Newman • Nancy Oltesvig • Linda Goodwin • Jeff & Cindy Daugherty • Mary Warner • Paul Hobart • Gordon & Tammy Bredl • Tim & Jody Egland • Ron Knuth • Glen Peplinski • Roth Golden Acres

2025 FIELD EVENTS

Wood County LWCD sponsored the following field/grazing events in 2025:

- August 12, 2025 - *Grazing Tour at Luke Keuffer's Farm* A unique grazing tour that showcased Luke's managed rotational grazing system, a solar watering system and stream crossing.
- October 7, 2025 - *Albert Acres' Demo Trials Field Day* Co-sponsored with EPPIC (Eau Pleine Partnership for Integrated Conservation) on Dustin Albert's farm for interseeded cover crops in skip-row planted corn, new cover crop species, and soil health.



Keuffer Streambank Crossing



Albert Acres' Demo Trials Field Day



\$ 877,511.61 in Conservation Grant Funding

Administered by Wood County LWCD

Conservation program grant funds were utilized to cost-share and support the installation of BMPs and reward conservation land practices throughout Wood County.

DATCP (Dept. of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection) - \$ 167,730

Staff and Support Grant: Support of land conservation personnel under the soil and water resource management program with reimbursement of up to 3 LWCD staff salaries (1st position at 100%, 2nd at 70% and 3rd at 50%)

DATCP - \$ 50,000

Structural/Bond - Funding for cost-sharing of “hard” or “structural” practices to resolve discharges on farms and address priority non-point runoff projects.

DATCP - \$ 54,000

SEG (segregated funds) - Funding for cost-sharing of soft practices including nutrient management, cover crops and residue management.

DNR (Surface Water Grant, 3-year grant, 2025-2027) - \$ 50,000

For cost sharing of harvestable buffers, cover crops and conservation tillage practices to help reduce phosphorous, nitrogen and sediment runoff in the Wisconsin River Basin within Wood County and the entirety of the Mill Creek Watershed.

DNR (LMPN Grant - Lake Monitoring and Protection Network) - \$ 13,097.11

Grant to implement aquatic invasive species (AIS) network activities/prevention in Wood County and provide technical assistance on how to prevent the spread of AIS.

DNR - \$ 70,420

Targeted Runoff Management (TRM) Grant - Grant to cost-share the Lewis rip-rap project on the Wisconsin River (streambank and shoreline protection).

DNR - MDV (multi-discharger variance) (voluntary program) - \$ 27,764.50

The DNR determines annual MDV payments based on the number of point source participants in the watersheds. In Wood County, these funds are used in the Castle Rock, Lake DuBay and Black River watersheds to cost share implementation of practices to reduce phosphorus to offset discharges from point sources.

DNR (Mill Creek TRM - Phase II, year 2 of 3 year grant) - \$ 200,000

Mill Creek 9-Key Element Plan (3-year \$600,000 grant) - Large scale targeted runoff management (TRM) grant to reduce phosphorous entering surface waters within the Mill Creek watershed which also impacts the Wisconsin River.

ARPA (funds to be spent by Dec. 31, 2026) - \$ 244,500

Drone(\$19,500), Water Quality Improvement Projects (\$90,000), Field Test Plots/Training/Field Days (\$10,000), Groundwater Program (\$125,000)

Wildlife Damage

Abatement & Claims Program (WDACP)

The Wood County Land & Water Conservation Dept. administers the Wis. Dept. of Natural Resources WDACP which assists landowners experiencing crop damage caused by wildlife. Wood County received \$ 54,008.45 from the Wis. DNR for expenses and administration of WDACP in 2025.



Wildlife Damage Abatement & Claims Program

WDACP assists landowners experiencing crop damage caused by deer, bear, geese, and turkeys. WDACP provides damage prevention assistance and partial compensation to farmers when wild deer, geese, and turkeys damage their agricultural crops. Rod Mayer, Wood County Conservation Program Manager, works with the WiDNR to assess damage, assist with abatement, and issue agricultural damage shooting permits to farmers for removal of deer that cause damage.

In 2025, Wood County had 25 crop owners participate in the program. 23 were enrolled in Act 82 (permit only). 3 were enrolled in managed public hunting lands with claims, opening 1,510 gross acres & approximately 559 huntable acres to public hunting.

Wood County LWCD staff completed 30 crop appraisals with crop damage claims paid out totaling \$1,643.09 (paid through WDACP). A claim of \$316.92 was denied due to the landowner not meeting program objectives.

***FACT:** Wisconsin Act 82 allows landowners participating in the Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claim Program (WDACP) to receive deer shooting permits without opening their land to public hunting. Under this act, farmers waive damage claim payments and, if approved, cannot charge fees for hunting. To maintain eligibility for subsequent years, harvest objectives set by the DNR must be met. This act specifically addresses agricultural damage from deer while allowing landowners to maintain private property control, often referred to as the “no public hunting” option within the WDACP program.*

Wisconsin Deer Donation Program

Hunters can help Wisconsinites in need by donating deer harvested in the state through the DNR's Deer Donation Program. Venison from donated deer is processed by local meat processors and distributed to food pantries. Wood County Land & Water works with the DNR, processors and food pantries to implement and administer this program.

In Wood County 9 deer were donated by local hunters. 466 pounds of venison were processed and donated to the St. Vincent de Paul Pantry (J&S Processing) in Wood County.

Fact: Since the program began in 2000, Wisconsin hunters have donated over 100,000 deer, which were processed into over four million pounds of ground venison.

Non-Metallic Mining (NMM)



County and local zoning bodies are responsible for all mine siting requirements and regulations. Under ch.NR 135, Wis. Adm. Code, the DNR Nonmetallic Mining Program is responsible for ensuring uniform statewide implementation of nonmetallic mining reclamation requirements. It does this by overseeing county & local reclamation programs, known as regulatory authorities (RAs).

As of December 31, 2025, there were 51 permitted nonmetallic mines in Wood County. All sites were inspected for reclamation progress and active acres. Site inspections are done annually and involve creation of maps and calculations for each mine site. In 2025 there were violations on seven sites. Of these seven, two sites remain with shut down orders on the sites. Wood County LWCD staff works closely with the operators and permit holders to bring sites into compliance. Work is ongoing to assure all Wood County mine sites are working within their boundaries, have up-to-date plans with appropriate financial assurance on file and sites are mapped.

In 2025 Wood County LWCD received and reviewed six nonmetallic mine (NMM) reclamation plans (*this includes site visits, mapping and calculations, 30-day published notice (for new sites), contact with landowners, multiple plan reviews and edits, verification of financial assurance, fees collected, and issuance of the permit*). Three of these were new plans (one due to mining without a permit), two plans were done due to violations, and one plan was done as an amended plan for planned changes. Wood County LWCD staff also works closely with partnering agencies with issues discovered for runoff and wetlands, which fall under the jurisdiction of the Wis. Department of Natural Resources - with several citations being issued in 2025 through the WiDNR.

Wood County LWCD received \$47,855.00 in reclamation permit fees under the Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation Program in 2025 and holds \$3,531,600.00 in financial assurance for nonmetallic mine reclamation.



Reclaimed nonmetallic mine site



Mine Site Violation



NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT / FARMER EDUCATION

Wood County LWCD partnered with Marathon, Clark, Lincoln, Taylor and Portage counties to hold multiple courses that qualify farmers to write their own nutrient management plans (called NMFE Class). Wood County LWCD was the financial manager for those counties in 2025 and processed payments to 56 landowners. 13 area farmers covering 6,652 acres and multiple farmers from surrounding counties attended the Wis. Rapids Classes. LWCD staff also provided assistance to past/present attendees to keep up their plans.

2025 NMFE GRANT

The shared grant totaled \$45,186 for 2025 with eligible participants receiving a stipend payment upon completion of a nutrient management plan as well as reimbursement of up to \$750 of eligible soil testing costs. Wood Co. LWCD received \$876.19 in staff support for assisting with the Nutrient Management Farmer Education (NMFE) classes.

Nutrient Management Plans

LWCD staff worked with landowners to get the maximum number of nutrient management plans turned in which came to 92 plans. These 92 plans covered 58,574 acres of farmland (44,177 within Wood County boundaries).



ARPA FUNDS

The Land & Water Conservation Dept. received county ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds in Sept. 2024 for the following projects. (NOTE:: the ARPA grant funds must be expended by Dec. 31, 2026.)

\$5,606.00 Balance 12/31/25	Purchase of a drone & equipment/training (\$19,500)
\$46,012.50 Paid out in 2025	Water Quality Improvement Practices (\$90,000)
	Residue Management Cover Crops Harvestable Buffers
\$5,858.53 Paid out in 2025	Field Test Plots / Training / Field Days (\$10,000)
\$5,962.52 Paid out in 2025	Groundwater Testing Program (\$10,000)
\$40,000 Balance 12/31/25	Incentivize best management practices to address nitrate contamination (\$40,000)
\$58,400.00 Paid out in 2025	Nitrate Removal Systems Cost Share Program (\$75,000) (see below)

NITRATE REMOVAL SYSTEMS

\$75,000 of the ARPA grant funds were earmarked for a nitrate removal system cost-share program for private wells in Wood Co. testing over 20 ppm (parts per million) for nitrates. No-cost well testing of private wells was provided with ARPA grant funds to 186 landowners between March - May 2025 to test nitrate levels in private wells in identified "hot spot" areas (testing done by the Wood Co. Health Dept.).

Landowners testing above 20 ppm for nitrates were then contacted. Those interested in the cost share program to install a nitrate removal system completed an application to help rank requests due to the limited amount of grant funds. (A total of 11 systems were cost shared with the ARPA grant funds in 2025.)

Wisconsin faces significant nitrate contamination in its groundwater and public water systems, with levels exceeding safe standards in many areas and posing health risks. The primary source is agricultural runoff, particularly fertilizer and manure, but septic systems and other sources also contribute.

Central WI Farmers Profitability Expo

The Central WI Farm Profitability Expo (CWFPE) was held at the MSTC Wisconsin Rapids Campus on April 30th, 2025. The CWFPE encourages profitable farming by building resiliency, diversifying farming operations, reducing inputs and increasing farmer return on investment. Attendees at the expo learned about conservation practices that farmers can use to increase profitability and self sufficiency while being stewards of the land, such as regenerative management, cover and companion crops and no-till farming. Central Wisconsin farmers discussed specific barriers experienced when adopting best management practices through panel discussions with fellow farmers who have implemented these practices. Attendees also explored the unique partnerships that can be created when merging agriculture and conservation.

Presenters/emcees included: Scott Provost, Dan Marzu, Chris Bandura, Pat Socha, Ken Kayhart, Tyler Bulgrin, Craig Vitort, Tenzin Botsford, Ken Schroeder, Scott Bordeau and Larry Altman.



Scott Provost, Water Resources Management Specialist with Wi-DNR

2025 Tree/Shrub/Seed Sale

April 24-25, 2025

The annual tree/shrub/seed sale was conducted in April 2025 with sales of \$23,631.15 for trees, shrubs, seed mixes, tree root gel and tree shelters. Twenty-five customers purchased seed/food plot mixes with both food plot mixes and a pollinator seed bear for a 400 square foot pollinator plot being the top sellers. Trees in the sale included douglas fir, hybrid poplar, hybrid willow, red osier dogwood, sugar maple, highbush cranberry, white spruce (our top seller), bird & butterfly packet and fast-growing packet.

We are excited to offer fruit trees as part of the upcoming 2026 tree sale. If fruit tree sales are well received, we'll look at expanding our offerings for future annual tree sales. Stay tuned!



2025 Tree Sale Metrics

Total Number Customers	Trees Sold	Tree Root Gel Sold	Tree Shelters Sold
------------------------	------------	--------------------	--------------------

190	16,550	13 pounds (in 4 oz & 1 lb bags)	532
-----	--------	------------------------------------	-----



CLEAN BOATS CLEAN WATERS

Performed 46 boat inspections and made contact with 65 boaters at Lake Dexter and Lake Wazeecha to assist with boat and trailer checks, handed out informational brochures and educated boaters on how to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.



LAKE MONITORING & PROTECTION NETWORK (LMPN) FUNDING

Wood County received \$13,097.11 from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Surface Water Grant Program to administer activities eligible under the Lake Monitoring & Protection Network (LMPN). The LMPN focuses on outreach, education and aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention and lake monitoring activities.



Snapshot Day

Hosted Snapshot day on August 9, 2025 at Lake Wazeecha. Snapshot Day is a one-day statewide event where volunteers learn how to identify and monitor for aquatic invasive species. Eight total volunteers joined to learn and monitor for invasive species. The only new invasive species found was the shell of a Chinese Mystery Snail. Follow-up surveys will be completed to verify if there is a living population in Lake Wazeecha.

Water Quality Sampling

Wood County LWCD staff collected water quality samples in July, August, and September for total nitrogen, total phosphorus, chlorophyll-a, and water clarity on both Dexter and Wazeecha Lakes. Sampling will continue in 2026.



Lake Wazeecha Survey

An early detection survey was completed following the Wisconsin State Water Ski Show Championship on Lake Wazeecha. No new invasive species were identified.

Dexter Lake Survey

Wood County LWCD staff partnered with DNR staff to complete an early detection survey on Dexter Lake. The only new invasive species found was aquatic forget-me-not.



SHORELINE ASSESSMENT

In partnership with Portage County Land & Water Conservation staff, a shoreline assessment on Nepco Lake was completed as part of a joint effort to gather baseline data within the Fourmile Creek Watershed. The assessment was completed on August 25th and 26th with over 200 individual parcels assessed from the ordinary high-water mark to 35 feet landward for disturbance, vegetative cover, bare soil, and more. General results were shared with the Nepco Lake District and three educational sessions to dive deeper into the data are scheduled for 2026.



Extension Wood County assists the Wood County Land & Water Conservation Department by providing educational support for county conservation programs.

Extension agriculture educators provide information on the management of soil, nutrients, water, livestock, crops and other related resources. Matt Lippert, Regional Dairy Educator in Wood County, provides information related to the dairy industry, the largest segment of Wood County's agricultural economy. He emphasizes the production of forages, dairy herd nutrition, dairy cattle genetics and dairy farm management. Lippert is a Certified Crop Advisor and a Professional Animal Scientist. Lippert and the Agriculture Institute utilizes webinars, farm magazine articles, e-newsletters and print newsletters to broaden the reach beyond the face to face, workshops and other outreach methods. Extension also offers a statewide helpline for assistance with any question agriculture related.

Extension also utilizes its regional and statewide network of UW-Madison specialists and area educators to assist with nutrient and pest management and assisting producers to develop their own nutrient management plans. Dan Marzu, North Central Wisconsin Nutrient & Pest Management Outreach Specialist, works closely with the Wood County Land and Water Conservation Department.

Anna Mitchell, Natural Resource Educator, utilizes outreach and education programs to increase local knowledge and skill regarding strategies to reduce nonpoint source pollution and improve water quality. She supports multiple producer-led watershed groups and lake protection groups in Central Wisconsin and provides spaces for these groups to connect and collaborate in order to achieve shared water quality goals. One of Anna's main goals is to ensure that nonpoint source pollution activities are shaped by the needs of community members and local stakeholders. In order to achieve this goal, Anna strives to create intentional relationships with community members, and she utilizes social science research techniques, like social indicator surveys, to better understand the needs of the audiences she serves.

Jen McNelly, Natural Resources Groundwater Educator, provides Wood County and Central Wisconsin Communities with information, tools and resources to better understand groundwater and drinking water concerns and challenges. This includes the development of the Wood County Nitrate Risk Map that can be found in the Wood County Land and Water Management Plan. Jen also helps to facilitate County and citizen groups working on groundwater related issues.

Wood County is the top cranberry-producing county in North America so it is a natural fit to have Cranberry Outreach Specialist, Allison Jonjak, home based with Extension Wood County. Her efforts are focused on improving grower education in cranberry production practices and aligning researcher focus with grower needs. Allison hosts virtual and in-person events focusing on nutrient use efficiency, water use and quality, profitability and integrated pest management. Annual Nutrient Management Plan trainings continue to have excellent participation and support growers in sustainable ecosystem management. The Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers' Association has awarded Allison the Education Advocate award, and cranberry growers appreciate wetlands-specific management decision support and guidance.

Extension also provides educational programs in Horticulture, 4-H and Youth Development, Human Relationships and Development, Community Development, Natural and Environmental Resources and Health and Well-Being.

Stop by the Extension Office for plat books, farm record books, soil sample information, water quality and radon test kits.



Pictured above: Back (left to right): Matt Lippert (Agriculture Educator), Wendy Young (Administrative Support), Laura Huber (4-H Program Educator), Ka Zoua Thao (Bilingual Community Health Worker), Mallory McGivern (Interim Area Extension Director); Middle (left to right): Kayla Rombalski (Community Development Educator), Anna Mitchell (Natural Resources Educator), Jennifer Swensen (Wisconsin 4-H Regional Program Manager), Ben Eberlein (Human Development and Resources Educator); Front (left to right): Janell Wehr (Horticulture Educator), Karli Tomsyck (Administrative Support), Hannah Wendels Scott (Health and Wellbeing Educator), Jen McNelly (Natural Resources Groundwater Educator); Staff not pictured: Allison Jonjak (Cranberry Outreach Specialist); Trina Bores (4-H Americorps Member)

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) 2025 Annual Report

By: Andy Richardson, Resource Conservationist

The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.

NRCS Mission: *Helping People Help the Land.*

Workload and landowner interest in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) remained strong in 2025. We received 16 applications to participate in the CSP. We obligated \$420,031 to 10 landowners in Wood County through CSP to maintain existing levels of conservation and apply new conservation practices on 3,121 acres of land. We received 48 applications to participate in the EQIP. Through EQIP, we obligated \$621,321 to 9 landowners in Wood County to plan and apply new conservation practices on 503 acres of land. We managed 72 active CSP and EQIP contracts that cover over 25,000 acres of Cropland, Farmstead, Associated Ag Land, and Forestland to continue to protect existing farm resources and implement additional conservation enhancements.

In 2025 we welcomed our new District Conservationist, Nicholas Besasie, covering Wood and Portage counties. Nick is taking over for Roy Diver, who retired in 2024. Current Wisconsin Rapids NRCS staff include Nicholas Besasie (District Conservationist), Andy Richardson (Resource Conservationist), Tristyn Vruwink (Soil Conservationist), Russ Biebl (Soil Conservation Technician), and Pat Murphy (Retired-ACES).

The following is a partial list of landowner accomplishments completed with NRCS assistance during our 2025 fiscal year running from October 2024 through September 2025:

Managed Grazing Plans Written.....3 ea	Forest Management Plans Written.....3 ea
Cover Crop Applied..... 2,196 acres	Pasture and Hayland Planting Applied.....97 acres
Prescribed Grazing Applied.....58 acres	Residue Management, No-Till Applied.....713 acres
Conservation Crop Rotation Applied.....743 acres	Pollinator Habitat Applied.....6 acres
Irrigation Water Management Applied.....73 acres	Forest Stand Improvement Applied410 acres
Native Tree/Shrub Planting Applied.....17 acres	Brush Management for Inv. Species Applied.....68 acres



Wood County Conservation Poster Contest

In April 2025 the annual Wood County Conservation Poster Contest for Wood County students in grades K-12 was held. The 2025 theme was “Home is where the Habitat Is”. The 1st place winner was Henry Gunderman, 2nd place winner was Aubree Bellanti and 3rd place went to Joey Petersen, all from the 5th grade class at Auburndale Elementary School.

Effective Sept. 8, 2025, the Land & Water Conservation Dept. obtained a cell phone and have the ability to receive/send text messages. **The number is (715) 712-6664.** The phone is monitored for calls/texts during business hours, Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

High quality water is more than the dream of conservation, more than a political slogan; high quality water, in the right quantity at the right place at the right time, is essential to health, recreation and economic growth.

~Edmund Muskie

Mill Creek Watershed

As part of the 9-Key Element Plan, surface water samples were tested for total phosphorous and total suspended solids at four locations throughout the Mill Creek Watershed once per month from May to October.

Stream Flow Monitoring

LWCD staff conducted stream flow monitoring at six sites once per month for six months as part of a six county-wide monitoring project. Data was reported to DNR's Surface Water Integrated Monitoring System (SWIMS) Database. SWIMS is the state's repository of monitoring data for Clean Water Act work and is the source of data sharing through the Water Quality Exchange Network.

FUN FACT: In the Central Sands region, monitoring is crucial because streamflows (baseflow) are heavily influenced by groundwater levels.

FUN FACT: Wood County has 39 miles of classified trout streams. 15 miles are Class I trout streams. The water in trout streams is cold due to the input of groundwater as opposed to surface water runoff found in other streams in Wood County.

Miscellaneous LWCD 2025 Accomplishments

- Conducted annual transect survey in early summer 2025 to determine soil erosion rates in Wood County.
- Maintained prairie/pollinator garden outside of the River Block Building.
- Managed use of the Great Plains 10 foot No-Till Drill which is in its 8th year. It was used by 18 landowners on 315.25 acres with revenue of \$3,966.00 in 2025.
- LWCD staff developed programs and supervised daily activities of summer intern from UWSP.
- Processed and issued 6 Animal Waste Ordinance (AWO) permits for manure pit closures and/or new pits with revenue of \$3,650.00.



Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

LWCD Staff administered the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) with no new enrollments in 2025. The 1,164.84 acres enrolled in CREP in Wood County provide the following benefits:

- At least 1,919 lbs. of phosphorus loss to waterways prevented per year.
- At least 1,003 lbs. of nitrogen prevented from entering waterways per year.
- At least 1,045 tons of sediment prevented from entering waterways per year.

CREP is a resource to help landowners enroll in long-term conservation contracts, removing environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and implementing conservation practices. CREP pays landowners to install filter strips along waterways or to return continually flooded fields to wetlands while leaving the remainder of the adjacent land in agricultural production. The size of land put into CREP varies, and can be a strip as narrow as 30 feet with no minimum acreage size. This allows landowners to enroll land as needed and leave the remainder for farming. Enrollment options are either a 15-year agreement or a perpetual easement. CREP is a joint effort between the federal, state and county governments.





Honey extracting equipment
Hauke Honey - Marshfield, WI



CENTRAL WISCONSIN INVASIVE SPECIES SUMMIT

LWCD staff hosted the first Central Wisconsin Invasive species summit at the UW-Marshfield campus on May 20, 2025. Other collaborators were the Wisconsin First Detector Network Coordinator, Matt Wallrath; Central Wisconsin Invasives Partnership Coordinators, Jacob Fluor and Claire Harwood; and Master Naturalist, Bridget O'Brien. A total of 35 attendees attended the event with much enthusiasm towards learning about invasive species and how they connect with native species. Although it was a stormy day and the nature walk was cancelled, many invasive species specimens were brought inside for attendees to view first-hand.



HARVESTABLE BUFFERS - SURFACE WATER GRANT

Wood County LWCD received a Management Plan Implementation Surface Water Grant from the DNR to establish harvestable buffers within 300 feet of rivers/streams. 68 acres of buffers were established in 2025 under 3- and 5-year contracts. By the end of the contract periods, 544 lbs. of Phosphorus, 268 lbs of Nitrogen, and 237 tons of sediment will be prevented from reaching our waterways. Remember, 1 lb. of Phosphorus can fuel 500 lbs. of algae. That is 272,000 lbs. of algae kept from producing in our waterways.



Harvestable buffers on Peplinski Farm in Wood County

CEED TOUR

Land & Water Conservation Dept. staff attended the annual CEED Tour on September 12, 2025 and coordinated a tour of Hauke Honey in Marshfield as part of the tour. Hauke Honey works with Wood County LWCD through the Wildlife Abatement & Claims Program to address bear abatement issues with bee hives in Wood County. Dave Hauke, CEO of Hauke Honey, led the group on a tour of his production facility. He runs over 3,000 bee colonies in Wisconsin across Wood, Clark, Marathon & Portage counties.



Dave Hauke, CEO of Hauke Honey with some of the wax extracted during honey processing.





**Wood County Economic Development
(Planning & Zoning/Extension)**
400 Market Street/ P.O. Box 8095, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495
Phone: 715-421-8466

2026 Wood County (WI) Economic Development Funding Request

Proposal Title:

Applicant Organization:

Website:

Mailing Address:

Street Address: (if different)

Contact Name & Title:

Phone:

Email:

Proposal Narrative

1. REDI Alignment (select one)

If selected other, please describe:

2. Please provide a summary of your proposal. Explain how it is consistent with and supports the Wood County REDI (Rural Economic Development Initiative) Plan.

3. Have you received funds through this grant in the past? (if yes, check box)

Have you applied in the past? (if yes, check box)

If yes, in which years did you receive funds and in which years did you apply?



Wood County Economic Development
 (Planning & Zoning/Extension)
 400 Market Street/ P.O. Box 8095, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495
 Phone: 715-421-8466

Funding Considerations/Request Summary
 (provide separate spreadsheet/budget if needed)

Budget Summary		Budget Detail	
Total Organization Budget	\$ 50,000	Revenue/Income	
Total Proposal Cost	\$ 100,000	Funding Source A	\$
Total Amount Requested	\$ 50,000	Funding Source B	\$
Total Match *	\$ 100,000	Total Revenue/Income	\$
* Please provide a match explanation in question 6.		Expenses	
		Expense A	\$
		Expense B	\$
		Expense C	\$
		Total Expense	\$

Project Reporting Requirement

As a reporting requirement of receiving an Economic Development Grant, a one-page summary project report will be prepared and presented to the CEED Committee. **This report must be submitted no later than Tuesday, October 1, 2026.** Funding will not be released to the applicant prior to the reporting requirement being met. Please also note that funds are not able to be carried over into the following year.

Signatures

I attest that the information in this application submitted to Wood County is true and correct.

Applicant

	Scott Brehm	07/11/2025
Signature	Printed Name	Date

Highest Organization Elected Official/Board Chair

	Daniel Vollert	7/11/25
Signature	Printed Name	Date

2026 Garage Construction Expense Summary For Stemparosa Estates in Vesper 2- Stall Garage (Completed in 2026)

Vendor / Category	Description	Cost
Kolo Excavating	Prep for Slab	\$4,600.08
Ivan - Visual Building	Concrete Slab	\$10,000.00
Menards	Materials	\$15,335.12
Ivan - Visual Building	Builder Labor	\$7,000.00
Triple M Construction	Tin for Roof	\$4,786.65
Triple M Construction	Roof Installation	\$1,600.00
Raingutter	Gutter System	\$450.00
Stucco America	Stucco Siding	\$11,350.00
(Equipment)	2 Garage Door Openers	\$400.00
Electrical	TBD	?
Total		\$55,521.85

3- Stall Garage (Completed in 2026)

Vendor / Category	Description	Cost
James Morel	Concrete Slab	\$16,516.00
Menards	Materials	\$24,616.64
Ivan - Visual Building	Labor	\$10,780.00
Triple M Construction	Tin for Roof	\$7,531.00
(Contractor)	Roof Installation	\$1,150.00
Raingutter	Gutter System	\$600.00
Stucco America	Stucco Siding	\$17,000.00
(Equipment)	3 Garage Door Openers	\$600.00
Electrical	TBD	?
Total		\$78,793.64

The garages are in place, but completion of the Stucco siding will not be completed until the 4-car garage is completed this year. This is a 50/50 grant with \$25,000.00 authorized by CEED in 2025 as well as \$25,000.00 coming from the Village of Vesper.









**Wood County Economic Development
(Planning & Zoning/Extension)**
400 Market Street/ P.O. Box 8095, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495
Phone: 715-421-8466

2026 Wood County (WI) Economic Development Funding Request

Proposal Title:

Applicant Organization:

Website:

Mailing Address:

Street Address: (if different)

Contact Name & Title:

Phone:

Email:

Proposal Narrative

1. REDI Alignment (select one)

If selected other, please describe:

2. Please provide a summary of your proposal. Explain how it is consistent with and supports the Wood County REDI (Rural Economic Development Initiative) Plan.

3. Have you received funds through this grant in the past? (if yes, check box)

Have you applied in the past? (if yes, check box)

If yes, in which years did you receive funds and in which years did you apply?



Wood County Economic Development
 (Planning & Zoning/Extension)
 400 Market Street/ P.O. Box 8095, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495
 Phone: 715-421-8466

Funding Considerations/Request Summary

(provide separate spreadsheet/budget if needed)

Budget Summary		Budget Detail	
Total Organization Budget	\$ 167,752	Revenue/Income	
Total Proposal Cost	\$ 200,000	Funding Source A	\$ see attachment
Total Amount Requested	\$ 40,000	Funding Source B	\$
Total Match *	\$ 40,000	Total Revenue/Income	\$
* Please provide a match explanation in question 6.	Expenses		
	Expense A	\$ see attachment	
	Expense B	\$	
	Expense C	\$	
	Total Expense	\$	

Project Reporting Requirement

As a reporting requirement of receiving an Economic Development Grant, a one-page summary project report will be prepared and presented to the CEED Committee. This report must be submitted no later than Tuesday, October 1, 2026. Funding will not be released to the applicant prior to the reporting requirement being met. Please also note that funds are not able to be carried over into the following year.

Signatures

I attest that the information in this application submitted to Wood County is true and correct.

Applicant

	Jake Klingforth	7-9-25
Signature	Printed Name	Date

Highest Organization Elected Official/Board Chair

	Matt Zacher	7/10/2025
Signature	Printed Name	Date

2. Please provide a summary of your proposal.

Replacing and installing new baseball field lighting at Witter Park directly supports and aligns with the goals of the Wood County REDI (Rural Economic Development Initiative) Plan by advancing community development, economic growth, and quality of life.

This proposal is a strategic, high-impact investment in community infrastructure that will yield a measurable return through tax revenue, tourism, economic activity, and quality-of-life benefits. This project aligns with REDI’s vision by making Wood County more competitive, more livable, and more economically resilient in several key ways:

A. Supports Tourism and Recreation-Based Economic Development

- This project prioritizes leveraging local assets, including parks and recreational facilities, to attract visitors and stimulate economic activity.
- Witter Park is a central venue for baseball tournaments, youth leagues, and community events. Upgraded lighting enables evening and nighttime games, increasing scheduling flexibility and allowing for larger regional and state-level tournaments.
- This extended usability draws in more visitors, which supports local hotels, restaurants, and retailers, contributing to the local economy.

B. Enhances Quality of Life and Community Livability

- Improved lighting enhances safety and accessibility, making Witter Park more inviting for families and participants of all ages during the evening.
- It helps retain and attract residents by supporting vibrant, active community spaces—a central component of livability.

C. Promotes Youth Development and Workforce Retention

- Sports and recreation opportunities contribute to youth engagement and community attachment, which the REDI Plan identifies as important for retaining young people in rural areas.
- By supporting organized sports and extracurricular activities, upgraded lighting plays a role in developing teamwork, leadership, and social skills among youth—critical soft skills for future workforce readiness.

Investing in new baseball field lighting at Witter Park is a practical, high-visibility project that supports the Wood County REDI Plan’s goals of economic vitality, community engagement, and rural resilience. It strengthens tourism, fosters youth and family activities, encourages investment, and enhances the overall attractiveness of the area as a place to live, work, and visit.

3. Have you received funds through this Grant in the past. YES, See below.

The grant request in 2021 was for \$24,999, the CEED committee awarded the request for \$15,000. This was the Wayfinding project.

The grant request in 2023 was for \$9,020, the CEED committee denied this request. This was the Sculpture project.

The grant request in 2024 was for \$25,000, the CEED committee awarded the request for \$25,000. This was the Waterfront project.

4. Describe the timeline for this proposal.

Project Timeline for Witter Field LED Lighting Replacement

- **Order & Delivery (8–10 Weeks):**
Upon approval, the new LED lights will be ordered immediately. Delivery is expected within 8 to 10 weeks.
- **Installation (Late Fall – Early Winter 2025):**
Once the lights are received, installation will take place during late fall to early winter of 2025, minimizing disruption to field use.
- **Completion & Readiness:**
The new lighting system will be fully installed and operational ahead of the 2026 Wisconsin Rapids Rafters baseball season, which begins at the end of May.

5. Explain how this proposal will provide a Return on Investment (ROI) to Wood County.

This proposal is a strategic, high-impact investment in community infrastructure that will yield a measurable return through tax revenue, tourism, economic activity, and quality-of-life benefits. Like the housing incentive program, this project aligns with REDI’s vision by making Wood County more competitive, more livable, and more economically resilient.

Sports tourism creates reliable foot traffic for:

- Hotels/motels
- Restaurants
- Retail (gas, grocery, etc.)

Even modest increases in annual revenues at these businesses contribute to:

- Higher sales tax collections
- More stable small business operations, helping maintain commercial property values, and the county’s long-term property tax base.

6. Describe the match for this proposal.

The total project cost for the new LED lighting system is **\$200,000**, and a **1:1** funding match is preferred. The City has assembled a strong funding package through a combination of grants and local contributions, as outlined below:

- **Legacy Grant:** \$100,000
- **League Park Grant:** \$18,372
- **American Legion Donation:** \$1,500
- **Witter Field Outlay Funds:** \$47,700

Total Secured Funding: \$167,572

This funding structure meets the 1:1 match requirement and reflects a collaborative investment from grant partners, community organizations, and city resources to support the Witter Field lighting upgrade in time for the 2026 baseball season.

This proposal is a strategic, high-impact investment in community infrastructure that will yield a measurable return through tax revenue, tourism, economic activity, and quality-of-life benefits. Like the housing incentive program, this project aligns with REDI's vision by making Wood County more competitive, more livable, and more economically resilient.

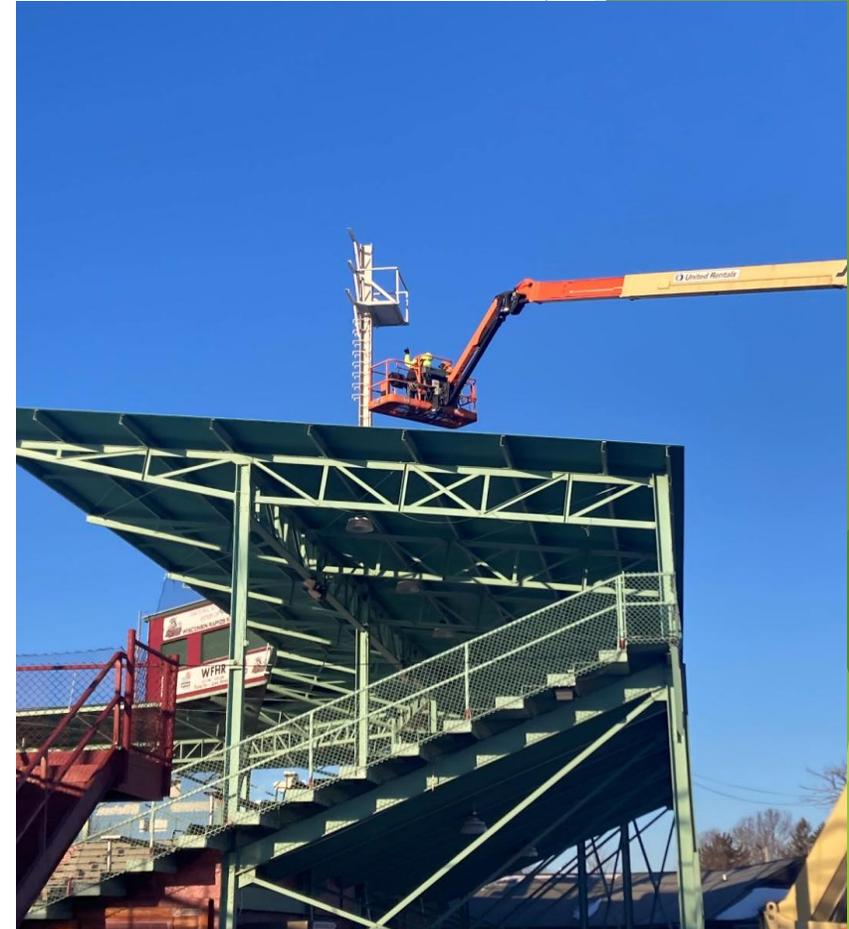
WITTER FIELD
LIGHTING PROJECT
CITY OF WISCONSIN RAPIDS
PARK & REC



Jake Klingforth- Superintendent

Current fixtures/lighting Issues:

- Energy Efficiency-the existing fixtures are roughly half as efficient as new LED fixtures.
- All lighting has reduced light output over the lifespan and it is particularly evident in metal halide, high pressure sodium, and fluorescent lighting. This does happen to LED's as well but at a reduced rate. Currently the existing fixtures are producing a much lower lumen output than when originally installed. This can cause dark spots on the field.
- Wiring run inside of the pole is over 30 years old and generally is at the end of it's lifespan in these types of installations.
- Existing ballast, capacitors and fuses are corroded and need to be replaced inside of the lower junction boxes.
- The replacement parts for these are generally only found on secondary markets and getting more difficult to acquire and costly each year.
- Start-up time on the existing lights is length and on power outages start up time can take up to 15 to 20 minutes to full brightness.



New Lighting Advantage

- New lights weigh substantially less than the existing fixtures.
- Will maintain light lumen levels for 15-years or more.
- The new LED fixtures will consume roughly half of existing fixtures.
- LED fixtures turn on instantly with no delay on originally startup or after power outages.
- 100,000 hours of run-time is generally the standard for LED fixture lifespan.
- No remote ballast, capacitors, or other additional components to maintain.
- Increased and better light levels on the field per layout.



PROJECT BUDGET

EXPENSE		
MUSCO LIGHTING		\$200,0000
UNITED RENTAL		\$5,350
ECONN ELETRIC		\$9,650
BUDGET/REVENUE		
LEGACY FOUNDATION		\$100,000
WITTER FIELD OUTLAY		\$47,700
WOOD COUNTY CEED GRANT		\$20,000
LEAGUE PARK GRANT		\$18,372
CITY OF WISCONSIN RAPIDS-PARK OUTLAY		\$3,928
WISCONISN RAPIDS RAFTERS	\$5,000 X 5 TIMES	\$5,000







THANK YOU !



Legacy Foundation of Central Wisconsin, Inc.





Be There When The Lights Turn On.

This season, night baseball at Witter Field is even brighter.

Join us as we officially turn on the brand-new stadium lights and celebrate the future of Rafters baseball.

 **Tuesday, April 7**

 **7:30 PM**

 **Witter Field**



What to Expect:

- Official ribbon cutting
- Stadium lights countdown
- First pitch under the lights
- Photos at Witter Field – pending field conditions**
- Ability to play catch on the field – pending field conditions**
- Access to one-night only ticket offer

These lights will power Rafters baseball all summer long – and the 2026 season is right around the corner.

Be there when the lights turn on – and purchase your tickets to the night games at Witter Field!

[Join the Celebration](#)



Copyright © 2026 Wisconsin Rapids Rafters, All rights reserved.
You are receiving this email because you opted in at our website.

Our mailing address is:

Wisconsin Rapids Rafters

521 Lincoln Street

Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494

[Add us to your address book](#)

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).



Wood County Farmers Market Spending Report for CEED Committee

\$6,000 received in September 2025

\$2,000 Wisconsin Rapids Downtown
Farmers Market Double Dollars Program

\$4,000 Marshfield Farmers Market
Co-operative Business Start Up
Expenses

WISCONSIN RAPIDS DOWNTOWN

BUY LOCAL *Farmers Market* EAT LOCAL

**Thursdays & Saturdays
8AM - 1PM**



\$2,000 Wisconsin Rapids Downtown Farmers Market Double Dollars Program

With help from this funding and state funding we will be offering \$20 in Double Dollars EVERY market day this season!*

*previously only offered on the last week of the month

Get **DOUBLE** the fruits and vegetables with our matching program



1



Market Manager swipes your Quest Card & provides you with SNAP tokens + Double Up Food Bucks tokens

2



You shop.
Use SNAP tokens for:
any SNAP-eligible items
Use Double Up tokens for:
fruits & vegetables

3



You purchase items.
Market vendors take your tokens as payment for the items

Double Dollars purchases will now be for fruits and vegetables only this season

SNAP stands for **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**. SNAP provides food benefits to families with limited income to supplement their grocery budget. After submitting proof of eligibility, SNAP recipients get an EBT card that has money added to it monthly.



**Supplemental
Nutrition
Assistance
Program**

MARSHFIELD FARMERS MARKET TIMELINE OF PROGRESS



Group photo after MFMC signed their articles of incorporation

April 2025: Marshfield Area of Chamber and Industry (MACCI) takes over interim management of Marshfield Farmers Market with assistance from the Regional Farmers Market Coordinator

July 22, 2025: First monthly vendor organizing meeting

September 2025: Received CEED business start up expenses

October 28th, 2025: Marshfield Farmers Market Cooperative (MFMC) signs their articles of incorporation to become an official co-operative

November 2025: MFMC sets up bank account and receives the CEED funding

January 2026: MFMC hosts first-ever Marshfield Winter Farmers Market at 2nd Street Community Center

April 2026: MFMC hosts first-ever annual member meeting

June 2026: MFMC hosts farmers market in Festival Foods lot as a vendor-run co-operative

MARSHFIELD FARMERS MARKET

Business Start-up Expenses: \$4,000

Sept. 2025 Proposed expenses	Estimated spend	Actual Spend
WIX website subscription	\$350.00	\$234.00
Domain purchase Marshfieldfarmersmarketwi.com	\$100.00	\$9.97
Logo Design	\$900.00	\$1,480.00
Website build	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
Large advertising signs/banners	\$560.00	\$28.00
Business Registration - Co-op or Non Stock Corp or Non-profit	\$100.00	\$76.00
Business consultation, chart of accounts set up, filing taxes	\$465.00	\$0.00
Market Manager Workshops/education	\$200.00	\$0.00
Farmers Market Insurance through WI Farmers Market Association	\$325.00	\$364.00
TOTAL	\$4,000.00	\$2,191.97



This funding has allowed the market board to focus on building community partnerships, and a sustainable business model - led by community members, for community members.



MARSHFIELD FARMERS MARKET

Business Start-up Expenses: \$4,000

2026 Planned Expenses with remaining funds	Estimated spend
Marshfield Farmers Market Merchandise (tote bags, t-shirts)	\$1,000.00
Signage for booth and market banner	\$200.00
Facebook ads and market bucks	\$282.00
Tax filing	\$150.00
Summer market vendor printing and postage	\$100.00
TOTAL	\$1,732.00



The assistance of these start-up funds has helped the Marshfield Farmers Market establish itself in a way that will allow them to maintain their farmers market for years to come.



Contact: marshfieldfmc@gmail.com or
meliss.haack@woodcountywi.gov with questions

REDI Plan Connections

Establishing an Entrepreneurial “ecosystem” in Wood County

Farmers Markets are exactly where many existing and emerging local entrepreneurs in our area have gotten their start or scaled their business. This funding will allow farmers markets to continue being a significant part of their business models and livelihoods (some for decades!).

Tourism in Wood County

Farmers Markets are more than just a place of economic development.

- they are a community staple where people connect with their community weekly
- a place to become a part of the community story of growth and development
- farmers markets are a weekly attraction that tourists can visit



Healthy Communities & Healthy Economies

The REDI Plan acknowledges that in order to have a healthy economy, you also need to have a healthy community - farmers markets are where these two concepts intersect.

Thank you for the opportunity to impact a multitude of businesses and community members at two of our greatest gatherings of entrepreneurs in Wood County.

Hello Wood County CEED Committee,

I want to thank you so much for the opportunity to work alongside you in my role with UW-Madison Extension these past 6 years. Year on year I become more and more impressed with how your foresight and investment enriches so many within Wood County.

I am transitioning from my Cranberry Outreach Specialist role, to a terminal role as a Research Development Outreach Specialist, which will end on June 30 of this year. In my new role, I will continue with some of my primary duties while wrapping up other one-time projects. I am grateful to have the opportunity to follow through my commitments to wrap up outstanding projects for UW's research faculty, and for Wood County and all cranberry growers. If you have questions about future plans for the Cranberry Outreach Specialist role, or need help finding a contact within UW Extension, please contact my supervisor, Anne Pfeiffer at anne.pfeiffer@wisc.edu .

After my employment with UW-Madison ends, I will remain easy to contact (612.276.2872, allison.jonjak@gmail.com or allison@allisonjonjak.com). Thankfully, I do have time during this transition period to pass information and resources smoothly, but I want you to feel welcome to reach out.

While I am sad to be departing from this role that I love, my health simply has not allowed me to return to the capacity & fieldwork required to serve UW and cranberry growers at the caliber they deserve. I feel optimistic that the person who follows in my shoes will bring even more to the state of Wisconsin.

I will be communicating this to the growers as the shift is finalized. Thank you again for your partnership, your support, and your enthusiasm for these six years. Please feel free to pass my thanks along to prior committee members that I may no longer have contact info for.

Allison

Allison Jonjak, MS, CCA

Cranberry Outreach Specialist

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension

allison.jonjak@wisc.edu

612.276.2872



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
WOOD COUNTY

March 23, 2026

To: Wood County CEED Committee

RE: April CEED Committee Agenda Item on Funding for 4-H AmeriCorps Position

The April CEED Committee Agenda will include an item for discussion/possible action regarding approval of match funding for a 4-H AmeriCorps position. Wood County Extension would like to utilize the Wisconsin 4-H AmeriCorps program to host an additional AmeriCorps position during the summer of 2026.

We are asking for the CEED Committee to approve utilizing \$2,000 from within the Wood County Extension budget to provide match towards the position. This request does not require any new dollars from the County but rather utilizes cost savings that already exist with the Wood County Extension budget due to vacant positions within the department during March and April. This action would simply allow for the reallocation of those funds towards the AmeriCorps position. The remaining funds will still be available to fill vacant positions. Wood County Extension will also still retain the existing AmeriCorps position that they host through the Marshfield Clinic.

The Department feels like this is an appropriate way to utilize funds to help staff the 4-H program during an especially busy time of the year. If you are interested in learning more about the 4-H AmeriCorp Program you can visit: [Wisconsin 4-H and AmeriCorps – Wisconsin 4-H](https://4h.extension.wisc.edu/wisconsin4h-ameri-corps/) (<https://4h.extension.wisc.edu/wisconsin4h-ameri-corps/>)

Please feel free to reach out to me at any time with any additional questions you might have. I look forward to discussing this item with you at the April CEED Committee meeting.

Sincerely,

Jen McNelly
Area 7 Extension Director
UW-Madison Division of Extension
jennifer.mcnelly@wisc.edu
Work Cell Phone: 715-214-8913

Extension Wood County

400 Market St. PO Box 8095 Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin 54494
715-421-8440 (phone) <https://wood.extension.wisc.edu>