

JOINT MEETING
Ext-LCC & Zoning Committee
Tuesday, May 6, 2025, 8:30 a.m.
Barron County Government Center - AUDITORIUM
335 E. Monroe Ave., Barron, WI 54812

AGENDA

1. Call to order
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of Agenda & Previous Meeting Minutes (8/21/23)
4. Staff Reports – UWEX, NRCS, FSA, and SWCD (10 minutes) information only
 Executive Committee Report
 Fair Board Report
5. Resolution: Support for Increasing Base Funding for County Conservation Staffing – action item
6. Farmland Preservation Plan: 2025 Update – discussion item
7. Adjournment.

Notice of Potential Quorum

Members of the Barron County Extension/Land Conservation Committee and the Zoning Committee will attend a joint meeting. No official action will be taken for either committee.

***If you cannot make this meeting, PLEASE call the Land Services Department at 715-537-6375.

ADA Statement for Agenda

Any person who has a qualifying disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act and requires the meeting or materials at the meeting to be in an accessible format, must contact the County Clerk's office at 715-537-6200 at least 24 hours prior to the meeting so that arrangements may be made to accommodate your request.

cc: Gores, G. Nelson, Cook, Langman, Kusilek, Huth, McCreedy, Rogers, Thompson, Jenkins, County Clerk,
County Administrator, Webmaster, Public postings

Department of Land Services
JOINT MEETING – LCC & Zoning Committees
August 21, 2023, 6:00 PM

Present: Bob Rogers, Randy Cook, Kirstin Huth, Audrey Kusilek, Fran Langman, Dale Heinecke, Marv Thompson, Louie Okey, Gary Nelson, Jim Gores, Jerry McRoberts, Jeff French, David Gifford, Tyler Gruetzmacher and Kim Collins.

Gifford called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. No public comment. He called for approval of the agenda. **Motion:** (Gores/Rogers) to approve to agenda; carried.

Gifford and Gruetzmacher presented information regarding the need for a staff person dedicated to Barron County lakes. This position would assist both SWCD and Zoning divisions. Group questions and discussion followed.

Next meeting date will be in March or April, 2024.

Motion: (Cook/Gores) to adjourn meeting 6:34 p.m.; carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Russell-Collins
Administrative Secretary, Land Services

BARRON COUNTY RESOLUTION NO. 2025 -

**Resolution in Support for Increasing Base Funding for County Conservation
Staffing to \$20.2 Million**

TO THE BARRON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

WHEREAS, County Soil and Water Conservation Department (SWCD) staff are relied upon to carry out a range of Wisconsin's state agricultural and resource management programs that reduce non-point pollution, preserve farmland, protect waterfront property, reclaim non-metallic mines, limit aquatic invasive species control, manage forests, and reduce floods; and

WHEREAS, SWCDs assist Wisconsin's farmers in many ways, including supporting producer-led watershed groups, developing nutrient management plans, engineering manure storage and transfer systems, and applying conservation practices that promote soil health and build profitability; and

WHEREAS, the shared conservation work of SWCD professionals and landowners has major water quality benefits, including preventing soil erosion, protecting drinking water supply, increasing rainwater infiltration into groundwater aquifers, and restoring native habitat; and

WHEREAS, SWCD experts are trusted, technical advisors that consult with landowners to understand their land management goals and then propose customized solutions that includes project planning and contracting, engineering, quality control, and securing of cost-share funding to reduce project expenses to; and

WHEREAS, building a partnership based on trust and understanding with farmer and landowner clients cannot happen instantly, but rather, requires a sustained commitment over time from SWCD professionals; and

WHEREAS, SWCDs leverage cost-share funding from federal and private sources, providing a 2:1 return on the state investment, and spurring local economic growth in industries including agriculture, construction, tourism, forestry, and recreation; and

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin codifies SWCDs' role in carrying out state conservation standards via Wis. Stats Chap. 92, defining a goal that the State fund staff positions in every SWCD at 100% of the first, 70% of the second, and 50% of each additional staff position; and

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin has not ensured baseline support of SWCDs by meeting this funding goal since its inception, and in the 18-year period from 2006 to 2024, base funding relative to SWCD staffing needs decreased by 24%; and

WHEREAS, supporting county SWCDs is a widely supported priority supported by conservation, environmental and local government groups alike; and

WHEREAS, this resolution was approved by the LCC / Extension Committee on _____, 2025 on a vote of _____ with _____ voting in favor and _____ voting against.

BARRON COUNTY RESOLUTION NO. 2025 -

Resolution in Support for Increasing Base Funding for County Conservation Staffing to \$20.2 Million

WHEREAS, this resolution was approved by the Executive Committee on _____, 2025 on a vote of ____ with ____ voting in favor and ____ voting against.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Barron County, does hereby urge the Wisconsin State Legislature to strengthen the viability of the State's County Soil and Water Conservation Staffing program by increasing base funding for the program by \$11,035,900 on an annual basis to a total of \$20.2 million annually.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that publication of this resolution may occur through posting in accordance with Section 985.02 of the Wisconsin Statutes and that a copy of the resolution be sent to WI Land + Water Conservation Association, all State Legislators, the Governor, DATCP Secretary, DNR Secretary, DOA Secretary, the Wisconsin Counties Association, and the Wisconsin Towns Association.

OFFERED THIS _____ day of May, 2025.

<p>Number of readings required: One (X) Two ()</p> <p>Vote required for passage: Majority (X)</p> <p>2/3 Entire Board (20) ()</p> <p>Source of funding: Budgeted () General Fund ()</p> <p>Grant () Contingency ()</p> <p>Other (X) Details: N/A</p> <p>Fiscal impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Current year total amount: \$ - 0 -- Future years total amount: \$ - 0 -- Effect on tax levy – current year - \$ - 0 -- Effect on tax levy – future years - \$ - 0 - <p>Fiscal impact reviewed by:</p> <p>_____ Jodi Busch, Finance Director</p> <p>Approved as to form by:</p> <p>_____ Jeffrey French, County Administrator</p> <p>_____ John Muench, Corporation Counsel</p>	<p>_____ Audrey Kusilek, Chair Zoning Committee</p> <p>(The Committee Chair signature verifies the action taken by the Committee.)</p> <p>Board Action: Adopted () Failed () Tabled ()</p> <p>Motion:</p>
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FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN OUTLINE

TRENDS, PLANS OR NEEDS – LAST 10 YEARS

- **POPULATION**

- Increase of less than 1000 people since 2010 (45870 at 2010 Census, 46711 at 2020 Census, and estimated 46856 in 2024)

- **MUNICIPAL EXPANSION**

- City Cumberland annexed apx 380 ac, 2 of these containing some cropland (Hospital annex total 65 ac & DeSantis annex total 33 ac) One large area on west side for residential & business use with no previous ag land. City golf course 127 ac.
- City of Rice Lake annexed apx 212 ac, 3 of these being mainly ag land (Rohde 74 ac, Schneider 52 ac & the solar farm on the north side at 58 ac)
- Village of New Auburn 2.7 residential acres annexed
- City of Chetek *detached* apx 40 acres which is now part of the Town of Prairie Lake. Minimal ag acres.
- County has no control over annexations

- **ECONOMIC GROWTH/BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (see also: INFRASTRUCTURE below)**

- Stats for # jobs related to agriculture
- Stats for income related to ag
- Stats for how Barron Co ranks in state per commodity (#3 poultry/egg)
- New - Aquaculture, mushrooms, others?
- Hormel reconfiguration/reinvestment
- Large dairies continue increasing acreage, investing in infrastructure
- Synergy – new facilities
- Ag product processing – several cheese packaging, meat processing
- Ag tourism?
- No longer making cheese at Comstock Creamery site?

- **HOUSING**

- Stats for change in # of households
- Stats for # vacant residentially assessed parcels
- Ag Pres Covenant well received to allow rural housing on smaller acreage. Reduces fragmentation.
- Large numbers of city lots & developments in last 10 years particularly in Rice Lake and Cumberland

- **UTILITIES**

- New power lines?
- Solar

- **TRANSPORTATION**

- Roads (same)

- Transload facility – possible transition from sand to other commodities?
- Decrease in rail traffic with less sand mining
- Airports (same)
- **COMMUNICATIONS**
 - Fiber optic installation continuing countywide
 - NG911 implemented
 - Continued use of GPS & WISCORS
- **COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**
 - USDA/NRCS local
 - County SWCD
 - UW Veterinary Diagnostic Lab
 - UWEX – no longer have Ag Agents
 - Ag education opportunities Northwood Tech
 - Parks, county forest
 - Healthcare, schools/childcare
- **ENERGY**
 - Methane digesters – Norswiss (& pending Four Mile Creek)
 - Saputo whey digester
 - Improvements at WTE?
 - Biofuel production / SAF (sustainable aviation fuel)?
- **WASTE MANAGEMENT**
 - WTE
- **ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION**
 - County MDV program
 - Groundwater study – baseline info
 - Lake Specialist
 - Continued outreach by SWCD staff regarding natural resource protection
 - County Forest

- **EXISTING AG USES**
 - Continued dairy, turkey, cropland, beef, vegetables (snap beans, potatoes)
- **KEY AG RESOURCES (NATURAL)**
 - Trend toward not maintaining associated non-ag acreage (woodlots, wetland areas, etc) as part of the farm...all acreage needs to be profitable.
 - Soils, topography, geology, water
- **KEY AG INFRASTRUCTURE**

- Synergy storage facilities (grain/chemical) Almena & Cameron
- Dairy manure pipelines & centralized spreading
- Manure storage facility closures as small farms are consolidated
- **SIGNIFICANT TRENDS IN AG**
 - Ag land prices increasing
 - Stats to show if ag acreage owned by non-residents/land held as investment is increasing
 - Shift from corporate turkey barns to private contracted barns
 - CAFO # stable at 6
 - Stats showing number of dairy herds down. Remaining herds of larger #? Loss in # of farms slowing as total # decreases.
 - Increased beef cattle (cow/calf) operations, often feeding and pasturing in areas such as wood lots or wetlands, causing significant damage to these areas. Often not primary income stream for farm.
 - Raising livestock at home for food & increased interest in having chickens
 - Average age of farmers 55.3 in previous plan (2014 reference) and 56.7 in 2020 and assumed to be increasing (county as a whole average age: 39 in 2010 and 44.8 in 2023).
 - Continued interest in rural lifestyle, whether or not a "farmer"
 - Continued conversion of forested acreage to cropland
- **ANTICIPATED CHANGES**
 - Continued consolidation of farm operations
 - More owners/operators looking for financial assistance to install BMP
 - Less acreage converted to nonmetallic mining
 - Acreage utilized for solar
- **ACTIONS COUNTY WILL TAKE TO PRESERVE & PROMOTE AG**
 - Farmland Preservation Program
 - Assistance with conservation plans & outreach to landowners
 - Encourage adoption of Land Use Ordinance and certification for any new towns
 - Continue promotion of Ag Enterprise Areas
 - Other education/outreach: Demo farm, farmer-led programs
 - Continue administration of Ch 91 standards via Land Use Ordinance
 - Work with other agencies to assist with BMP & farm planning
- **KEY LAND USE ISSUES**
 - Non-ag uses in ag areas allowed via Farm Family Business special exception – potential for conflict, impossible to administer
 - Economic decisions overriding resource protection?
 - Continued desire for rural lifestyle (ie: everybody wants their piece)
 - Idea that land has to pay for itself. It can't just serve as a residence.
- **STRATEGIES TO INCREASE HOUSING IN NON-AG PRESERVATION AREAS**
 - Maintain low residential density standard in Ag Pres areas

- Continue utilizing residential density standards more restrictive than those allowed in Ch 91 (25 ac vs 20 ac) via Land Use Ordinance
- Continue utilizing rezoning criteria to maintain acreage in A-1 district

Other stats, trends or concerns?

What other strategies can the county employ to assist with farmland preservation?

Family Engagement and Relationships Program

Human Development and Relationships Institute
University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension



Interagency collaborations bridge service gaps

Our county-based educators and statewide specialists prioritize partnerships with a variety of agencies and organizations to bridge service gaps for families. We partner with:

- Health departments and hospitals
- County human service agencies
- Local school districts
- Family courts and correctional facilities
- State government agencies

Campus connections drive innovative solutions

Our program responds to challenges families face by leveraging the research and resources of the university. We are currently designing support for:

- Early care and education professionals
- Families living in rural and low-resource areas
- Fathers, including those without custody
- Parents in jail/prison and their children

Select Initiatives

Early Childhood



- **Just in Time Parenting:** An age-paced newsletter with information about child growth and development delivered to parents during their child's first 5 years of life.
- **Triple P Positive Parenting Program:** An evidence-based series of programs designed to promote positive parenting and reduce challenges across childhood.

Family Transitions



- **The Literacy Link:** A suite of strategies designed to connect children and their parents in jail and prison through literacy-based experiences.
- **Parents Forever:** A program that supports effective communication and conflict resolution for those experiencing divorce, separation or custody changes.

2024 Program Snapshot

27

Extension county-based educators and statewide specialists

790+

Classes and events offered by Extension educators

14,000+

Educational contacts via in-person and virtual classes and events



Expanding Access to Parenting Education in Wisconsin Through a Multi-County Virtual Delivery Model

Coordinated Support for Wisconsin Families

The Family Engagement and Relationships program proudly serves families across Wisconsin. As a cornerstone of the Wisconsin Idea, we provide local, research-based education and resources to support children's learning and development, positive parenting, and family resilience. To broaden the support available to our communities, our county-based educators and statewide specialists collaborate to offer select classes virtually. This innovative approach ensures that every county investing in our program gains access to a diverse range of resources, far beyond what is available locally. Families benefit from enhanced accessibility, flexibility and convenience, cost savings, and connection to a wide variety of expertise.

VIRTUAL IMPACT SNAPSHOT

80+

Virtual classes
offered
in 2024

700+

Parents and
caregivers served in
2024

760+

Early childhood
professionals received
continuing education in
2024 and 2025*

Interested in learning more about our virtual delivery model? Visit our website for our class calendar and a library of free resources for families.

*Some of our virtual classes such as the Raising Wisconsin's Children Conference and the Fit and Healthy Kids series leverage campus faculty and other Extension systems. These are approved as continuing education for early childhood professionals. This number reflects classes delivered in 2023-2024 and 2024-2025.



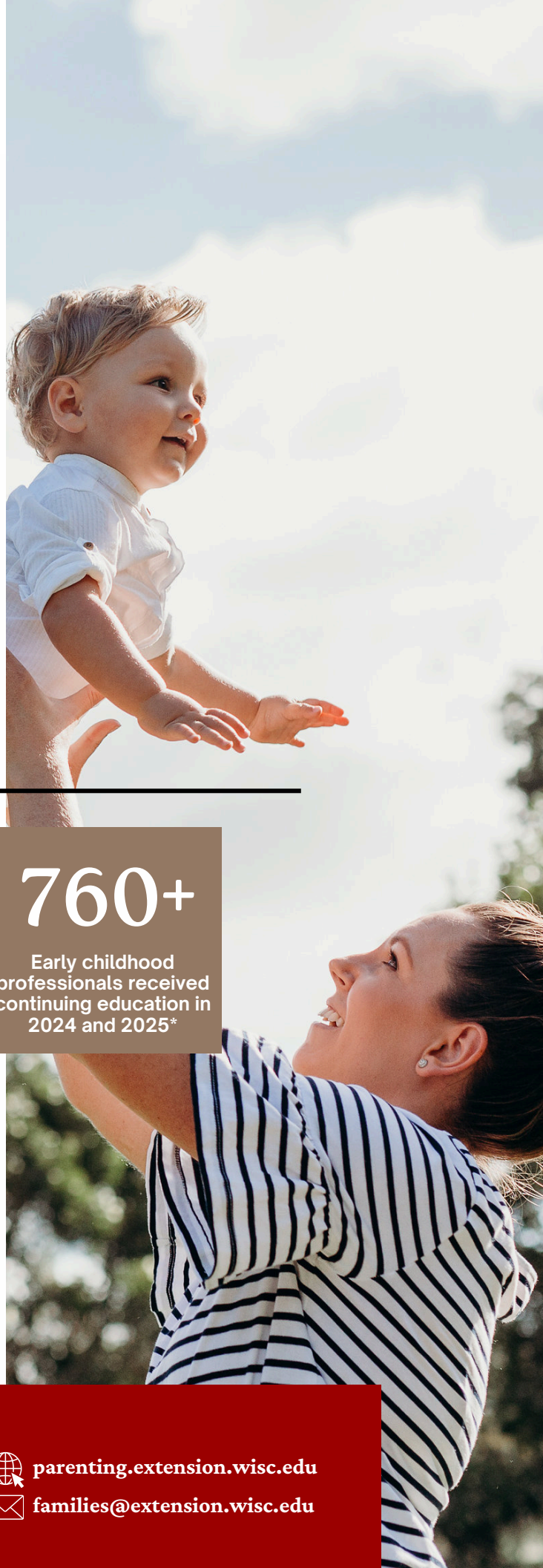
Human Development & Relationships Institute
DIVISION OF EXTENSION
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



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Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
BARRON COUNTY



QUARTERLY REPORT

Q1

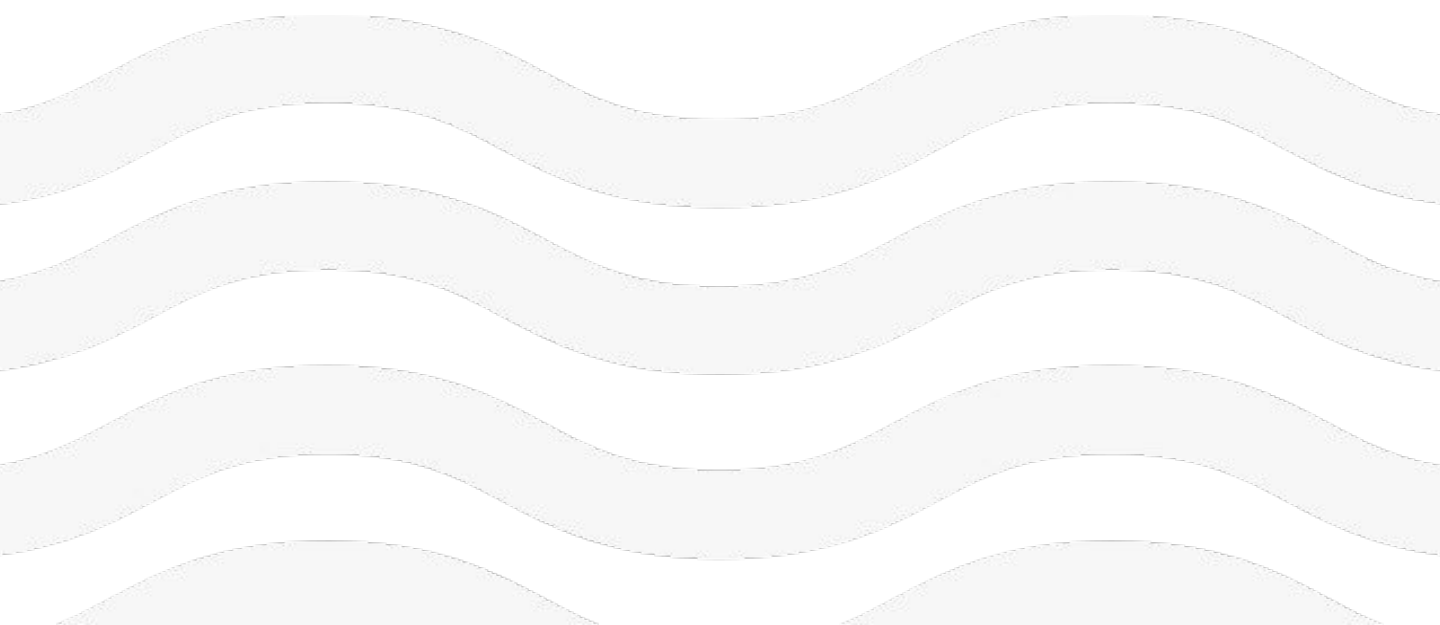


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University of Wisconsin–Madison Extension Barron County

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Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

UW-Madison Extension's outreach creates key connection points for families, farms, communities, businesses, nonprofit organizations, government, and more. We support local volunteers and leaders to take action and serve as role models in their communities, and we make sure Wisconsinites have the latest research, best practices, and educational opportunities.



Learn more at
extension.wisc.edu





Agriculture

Manure Applicator Training

Manure applicators handle approximately 2/3 of Wisconsin's 12-billion-gallons of dairy manure produced annually. Proper training about accurate and efficient manure applications is critical to applying manure where and when it is needed to reduce environmental risk and improve farm profitability. Manure applicator training 101 sessions were offered to commercial applicators and farmers. These sessions are part of a series of statewide applicator training. A **new interactive mapping exercise was created to engage applicators and farmers in problem solving and decision making.** The mapping exercise focused on manure storage siting, transportation, environmental setbacks and impact, application methods, safety, spill response, and communication. A new Manure Application Workbook was developed to correspond to the new mapping activity. The workbook and materials were created by UW-Madison Extension team members.



Becky Brathal
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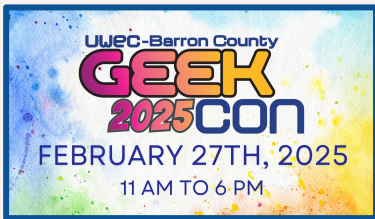


A training session for manure applicators and farmers was held in Barron County on March 7th. This training was an opportunity for participants learn to apply manure safely and accurately to keep themselves safe, protect the environment, respond to manure spills and increase farm profitability. 144 commercial manure applicators and farmers participated in manure applicator training statewide.

FOOD WISE Healthy Choices, Healthy Lives

Outreach - building partnerships, sharing resources and impacts

In February, Andrea and Lori worked with community organizations at the **Centerpoint Event**, which is a multi-agency resource event that is held quarterly in Barron County. They represented FoodWise and helped serve meals to 109 people who came to learn about support systems in Barron County.



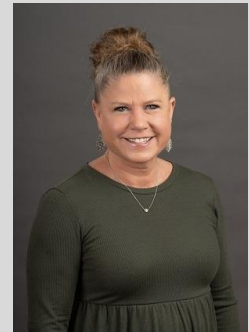
Andrea and Bridget also joined Extension Barron County colleagues at GeekCon, which was a UWEC-BC event to celebrate creativity. Extension hosted a table to answer questions about our resources and community organizations. Attendees also stopped to decorate a pot and plant a seed to take home.

Planning for 2026

Bridget is currently connecting with partners and community members as she and her team of FoodWise Educators develop their program plan for FY26. Part of this process involves attending community events, coalition meetings, and taking time to listen to partners and community members about needs and gaps in resources. **Please reach out if you have feedback you would like considered as the programming plan is finalized.**



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StrongBodies

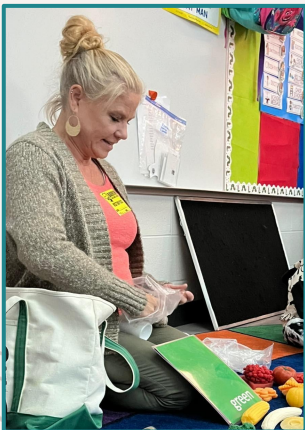
FoodWise collaborated with several colleagues to provide a virtual StrongBodies strength-training to more than 80 adult participants in NW Wisconsin. The ADRC supported us in marketing the program and letting local older adults know about the **free** opportunity. **StrongBodies is a physical activity program where middle-aged and older participants improve strength, balance, and flexibility, and receive nutrition and health education.** The goal of this effort is for participants to stay healthy, prevent injury, and socially connect. This class is offered consistently throughout the year, so reach out to FoodWise if you would like more information!



Feedback about StrongBodies:

"Thank you for making this a fun experience and promoting healthy habits!" "I have noticed it is easier to put on my pants (especially pj's). My balance has greatly improved when standing on one leg." "I have been struck by my ability to get up from a seated position. Seems like a small feat, but my efforts are rewarded several times a day."

Nutrition Education



Andrea continues to offer nutrition education to students at schools throughout Barron County, including Tainter (third and fourth grades), Cumberland (first and third grades), Turtle Lake (Head Start, first grade, and third grade), Ridgeland (first grade), and Woodland (Head Start and fourth grade). Nutrition lessons focus on a variety of topics, including the five food groups, trying new fruits and vegetables, and being physically active. Some of her tastings included tofu banana pudding, couscous, orange velvet smoothies, and papaya.





Human Development & Relationships

Raising a Thinking Child

Raising a Thinking Child (RTC) is an evidence-informed, 6-week program that teaches parents and early childhood educators how to build social-emotional skills useful to problem-solving in their children. RTC trains adults to teach children how to think, not what to think. Research indicates that teaching skills related to critical thinking, impulse control, problem solving, and conflict resolution set a foundation for prevention of school problems, juvenile delinquency, and substance use.

Raising a Thinking Child was conducted in the Spring of 2025, serving 21 families. Post-evaluation data revealed that 100% of parents reported moderate to significant improvements in managing anger and frustration when addressing issues with their children. Additionally, 92% of parents observed moderate to significant enhancements in their children's problem-solving abilities, while 93% noted similar improvements in their children's capacity to think before acting. Furthermore, 100% of parents experienced improvements in their ability to assist their children in expressing their feelings. All participating parents indicated they would recommend this class to others.

The RTC program supports caregivers as they raise and educate children who are independent, empathetic problem solvers who will be the next generation of employees, parents, and community members



Missy Bablick
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Other outreach includes:

- Parents Forever
- Triple P -Positive Parenting Program
- Strong Couples
- Resilient Co-Parenting
- Focus on Fathers
- WeCOPE



Human Development & Relationships

Raising Wisconsin's Children Series

The Raising Wisconsin's Children series offers free, monthly online parenting classes throughout the year. As the coordinator, I collaborate with colleagues to develop and update classes that address the current needs and challenges faced by parents. This program provides practical and positive parenting strategies designed to foster growth in both children and parents.

Parents who participate in the series are better equipped to handle difficult parenting situations. The program also enhances connections among parents, providing a supportive community where they can share experiences and learn from one another. Additionally, the information and learning provided through these classes help reduce parental stress, offering valuable insights and techniques for managing the complexities of parenting.

The series covers a wide range of topics, including Learning Life Skills Through Household Chores, How Kids Develop Self-Control, Parents' Guide to the Teenage Brain, Playful Parenting, and Teens and Screens. These classes aim to empower parents with the knowledge and skills necessary to support their children's development effectively, ensuring that both parents and children continue to grow and thrive.





Human Development & Relationships

Financial Coaching Partnerships

Financial Coaching Services for Barron County Residents

Financial coaching is a complimentary service available to residents of Barron County. Through personalized one-on-one sessions, clients collaborate with a financial coach to develop a tailored money management plan that aligns with their individual priorities. This service offers comprehensive support, enabling residents to manage expenses, pay off debts, save for emergencies, and achieve their financial goals. Participants can engage in multiple sessions as needed to create and implement effective strategies to overcome their financial challenges.



The primary outcomes of financial coaching include:

- Increased awareness of local resources previously unknown to participants.
- Enhanced knowledge of Extension resources that were previously unfamiliar.
- Acquisition of financial management skills and steps necessary to achieve personal financial goals.

I work closely with various Barron County programs, ensuring that services are meticulously tracked and monitored by case managers and program coordinators. Each program has specific procedures designed to facilitate participant success. My collaboration includes working with Barron County Drug Court, Family Treatment Court, and Benjamin House. These services are particularly impactful for participants undergoing transitional phases in their lives, many of whom are new to managing their finances or receiving regular paychecks. My goal is to empower them with the skills and support needed to achieve financial success.

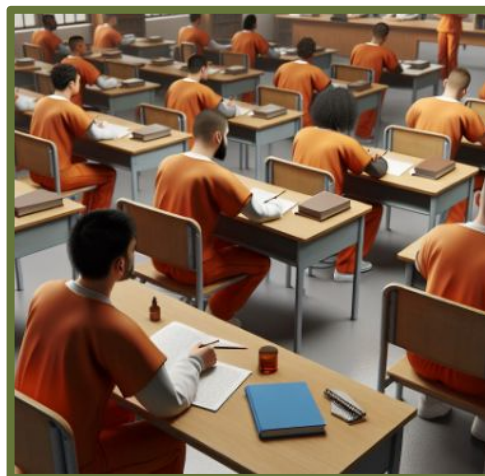


Human Development & Relationships

Virtual Classes in the Jail

Barron County recognizes the pivotal role of education in the rehabilitation process for inmates. As an instructor of a parenting class, a program deemed essential by the county, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative power of education in reducing recidivism. According to research by the Department of Education, inmates who participate in correctional education programs have a 43 percent lower likelihood of returning to prison compared to those who do not. With roughly 2,000 individuals booked annually, as highlighted by Captain Timothy Evenson, Barron County Jail Administrator, there is a substantial opportunity to contribute to the education of Barron County residents.

In collaboration with Amanda Poppe, Barron County Jail Supervisor, Extension has enhanced educational programming within the jail. Extension's involvement has expanded, and classes are continuously offered. The initial parenting education program has evolved into a comprehensive curriculum encompassing **financial education, wellness, parenting, and relationship education**. These classes are tailored to the needs of the current inmates and are recommended by Amanda Poppe, further enriching the educational experiences provided to inmates. Furthermore, inmates are introduced to the opportunities Extension offers beyond the confines of the jail and often seek to continue their education through Extension upon release.





Barron County 4-H

New 4-H Team Member

Our Barron County
Extension office is
very excited to
welcome Kelly Drake
to our 4-H team!

A note from Kelly...

I'm Kelly Drake, and I'm excited to be part of the Barron County 4-H community! As the 4-H Program Assistant, I'm here to support our 4-H Program Educator, along with our youth, volunteers, and families, to help make their 4-H experience as rewarding and impactful as possible.

My background includes leading statewide programs focused on family support, youth development, and community collaboration. I've worked closely with counties and organizations to strengthen programs that empower families and help young people thrive.

As a former 4-H'er myself and a parent of current members, I've seen firsthand the incredible impact of this program, and I'm excited to help it continue to thrive in Barron County.

Outside of 4-H, I love spending time on my hobby farm, working in my garden, and baking delicious treats. I'm excited to be part of this community and look forward to working together to support and grow Barron County 4-H.



Sara Waldron

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Kelly Drake

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Barron County 4-H

The 4-H Cloverbuds in Barron County have been participating in a variety of activities throughout the 4-H year and connecting with friends from Burnett, Rusk, Sawyer and Washburn Counties. Cloverbuds are 4-H youth in grades K-2, who participate in a variety of fun and educational activities designed to introduce them to the world of 4-H. As part of a new effort to help them feel connected to the county and to learn more about 4-H and 4-H projects,

Cloverbud members receive a monthly newsletter full of project ideas and information. They have also been able to participate in 2 virtual connections and an in person winter family fun day. Some Cloverbuds even have a Cloverbud penpal from another club or county! The Winter Family Fun Day was held at Hunt Hill in February. Participants learned about tracking animals in the winter and how animals stay warm when it's cold outside. They had fun connecting with friends from their county and meeting others from neighboring counties.

Cloverbuds



WAE4-HYDP Awards



Sara Waldron received the 2025 Promotional Package-Team Communicator Award and Feature Story-Team Communicator award from the Wisconsin Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals (WAE4-HYDP) through their annual recognition program. The Promotional Package-team award recognizes excellence in the development of a promotional package about a single program or event and features work created to promote the Jibbitz program. This was completed as part of a state team with educators from Polk, Adams, and Calumet Counties. The Feature Story award recognizes excellence in writing of a feature story and was received for the story co-authored by Bob Zientara of the Barron News Shield and Sara about the 2024 placemat sewing project.



Wisconsin State 4-H Hall of Fame



Barron County 4-H Volunteer, Joyce Ann Nelson has been selected for the 2025 class for the Wisconsin 4-H Hall of Fame.

This Hall of Fame was established to recognize 4-H volunteers, financial supporters, staff, and pioneers who made major contributions to the 4-H movement at the local, state, and national levels. The candidates represent 4-H in the broadest sense – they may be 4-H volunteers, financial supporters, UW–Madison Division of Extension professionals, or staff employees who had an impact on the lives of children, their community, or state through significant contributions of time, energy, or financial resource to 4-H and its members.

Joyce's Biography -

"Where there's a need, there's a way!" perfectly captures Joyce Ann Nelson's incredible journey through 4-H. Starting in 1967, Joyce has been a dedicated 4-H **volunteer for 58 years**. Known affectionately as "Grandma Joycie," she has worn many hats in 4-H, including clown, Santa Claus, leather craft project leader, Project Discovery Days Coordinator, club leader and more. Joyce's greatest joy has been being part of 4-H through **four generations**: herself as a volunteer, her children, grandchildren, and now her great-grandchildren.

Joyce has dedicated most of her adult life to making the youth of Barron County 4-H her top priority, helping them explore and develop their passions and explore their sparks through her **trademark program, Project Discovery Days**. Coordinating 20-25 sessions a year covering a wide range of activities, from woodworking and small engines to sewing, stitching, crocheting, and painting--Joyce has coordinated sessions for at least 12,500 participants over the years--while some of these are repeat participants--that's a lot of projects! She is also well known for her work with the Leathercraft project.

The list of Joyce's involvement outside of 4-H is just as extensive. She is a clown and does lots of face painting, has been a member of the Friendship Homemakers Club (HCE) for more than 20 years, and served as the area's Red Hat Scarlet Queen for more than 20 years. She reads to youth at school and does crafts with them, leads religious education classes, participates in the local quilters guild, and more. She has taught hunter's safety, is a certified judge for Wisconsin Fairs, a superintendent for the Barron County Fair, on her church council, and so much more.

Her career as a seamstress at the Barron Apron Factory for 37 years, eventually becoming a manager played a role in Joyce's life accomplishments and skills she shared with the 4-H program.

As of 2025, Joyce continues to organize Project Discovery Days, lead the Leathercraft project, and serve as club leader for the Prairie Lake Eagles 4-H Club. As she says, "you can't quit just because your kids are out of 4-H!" She loves working with and teaching kids, and adults too!



Barron County 4-H

Club Service Activities

Service activities allow 4-H members to make a positive impact in their communities. Whether it's through environmental projects, helping those in need, or community beautification, these efforts contribute to the well-being of their local areas. Here are a few of the community service projects our clubs have been involved with this year:

Doyle Juniors

Doyle Juniors 4-H Club passing out ornaments and singing carols at a local nursing home.



Section Ten

Section Ten 4-H Club making ornaments for the local nursing home.



Cosmic Clovers

Cosmic Clovers 4-H Club making and serving a monthly meal at Benjamin House.





Other Office Information

Hi! My name is Alyssa and I am the Administrative Assistant in Barron County. I joined the team in September 2024, working two days. I'm also the Office Manager at the Spooner Ag Research Station in Spooner, 3 days a week.

Quarter one has been busy with:

- Transitioning our purchasing system through UW Madison
- Organizing reports (such as this one)
- Answering and directing questions that come through the front office
- Organizing Agriculture resources to get ready for spring questions
- Putting together and mailing materials for our 4-H Educator and our Human Development and Relationship Educator
- Updating the website and social media accounts
- Issuing Pesticide Applicator Training Testing to local farmers
- Making weekly deposits and directing Point and Pay transactions
- Recording transactions and reconciling accounts

We are working to determine next steps for Agriculture coverage in Barron County, assessing needs and options to serve the county best.

We continue to work with Eau Claire Barron County Campus to serve our community better and hope to hire a work/study student this Spring.

With the hiring of our new part-time 4-H Program Assistant, we are looking forward to better support for 4-H.

I couldn't be more excited for Extension in Barron County. Thank you for allowing us to serve you.



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Other Ways Extension Serves Barron County

Community Development

Solar Energy Opportunities: Extension planned in-person and virtual workshops in collaboration with Wisconsin Farmers Union and the R-STEP Collaborative. **The goal is to provide an overview of large scale solar energy opportunities in the economy and to discuss common contract terms in solar leases with Wisconsin farmers and landowners so that participants can analyze legal risk when considering these new economic opportunities.** Developers are approaching farmers and rural landowners to secure land leases or options to purchase. The agricultural industry remains heavily reliant on the 'handshake deal,' and farmers and rural landowners are often encouraged by developers to sign these written contracts with limited legal review. Extension presented an in-person workshop to instruct participants on large scale solar opportunities in the current economy and what to expect in the solar development contracting process as a landowner.

Chippewa Valley Health Cooperative- U.W.-Madison Extension Local Government Education Program staff were contacted to assist in an effort to create new healthcare access in the region. The goal of the cooperative is to create renewed healthcare access in a region adversely impacted by the recent closure of two closed hospitals and 19 clinics, to preserve nearly 1,400 high paying jobs, and to support local economic development efforts and to support the local tax base. UW-Madison Extension staff connected local business and civic leaders with a financial consulting firm, helped to obtain an initial cooperative development grant from WEDC, helped create a Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 193 cooperative by writing draft articles and bylaws, helped vet and train cooperative board members, assisted in apply for IRS Section 501(c)(3) charitable status, assisted in reviewing fundraising agreements, co-led efforts to obtain hospital/clinic construction and operational financing, educated state healthcare policymakers and acted as liaison with local units of government across 15 counties in West Central Wisconsin. **With Extension's substantial assistance, the Chippewa Valley Health Cooperative (CVHC) was formed in April of 2024.** The CVHC Board of Directors is meeting weekly; CVHC financial, legal and public relations consultants are working with Extension staff on a variety of tasks, including meeting with local units of government across 15 counties, working with lenders and federal agencies to obtain construction and operational financing, working with federal agencies and cooperative organizations to obtain grant funding to form the necessary equity base, and working with CVHC board members on setting up a fundraising program.



Extension

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