

2020



Annual Report to the IRON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
IRON COUNTY

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Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
IRON COUNTY

WELCOME LETTER

January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020

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

2020 will go down in history as being a challenging year for all of us! Extension is about outreach education, and the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic certainly made it difficult to engage directly with community members.

Ever resourceful, our Iron County Extension educators and staff rose to the occasion and adapted their communication methods and program delivery modes. Despite the hurdles, we had another year of great Extension programming in Iron County and all of Wisconsin. We worked to continue connecting local people with the knowledge and research of the University of Wisconsin. We utilized our local, regional and statewide networks to support communities in responding to emerging issues, including COVID-19, and bring new ideas and great resources to Iron County.

This report highlights outcomes from our major educational programs in 4-H Youth Development, Community Development, Nutrition Education, and Horticulture/Agriculture. Our staff strives to address high priority local needs through our educational programming and valuable collaborations with community groups, volunteers, and program partners. Strong partnerships are at the heart of our programs -- we can achieve anything together!

THANK YOU to the Iron County Board of Supervisors and the Agriculture-Extension-Education Committee for your continued support of Extension Iron County during 2020. We appreciate the opportunity to serve Iron County residents and local efforts to strengthen our people, our communities, and our economy.

On behalf of the Extension Iron County staff,

Mary Pardee

Area Extension Director
Area 1 (Iron, Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas Counties)



2020 Agriculture- Extension-Education Committee Members

William Thomas
Opal Roberts
Jamey Francis
Larry Youngs
Ken Saari
Joseph Pinardi - *County Board Chair*

2020 Administration and Staff

Mary Pardee
Area Extension Director, Area 1

Neil Klemme
4-H Youth Development Educator

Amy Nosal
Community Development Educator

Deborah Leonard
FoodWise Nutrition Educator

Stephanie Bakker
FoodWise Nutrition Coordinator

Darrin Kimbler
Agriculture/Horticulture Educator

Rebecca Holm
Support Staff/Office Manager

Tabitha Morello
Gavin Ransanici
Summer Assistants



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
IRON COUNTY

4-H Youth Development



Neil Klemme served as 4-H Youth Development Educator in 2020.

All youth development programming out of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension Iron County is created by thinking of what outcomes we aim to achieve. "The first thing I have focused on over the years has been connecting youth to the region, or creating a 'sense of place,'" states Iron County 4-H Youth Development Educator, Neil Klemme. "Placemaking is that emotional connection to a place." From the Youth First Impressions Survey to the SISU Endurance Team, the over-arching program theme is to illustrate through programming the uniqueness of the Gogebic Range. Many times this is achieved through physical activity and the connection youth have to the outdoors. From the Shooting Sports program through the traditional 4-H program, to mountain biking, running, and Nordic skiing, youth are developing an understanding of the uniqueness of

our communities. They are exploring post secondary pathways or careers through STEM camp, serving on camp staff, and showing and raising animals through the livestock program.

In addition, each program has individual outcomes that we aim to achieve like leadership development, confidence building, teamwork, and critical thinking. Each program has these goals in mind when Klemme or his summer staff begin the planning process.

TECH CHANGEMAKERS

2020 started with regular programming that was planned or underway, including Tech ChangeMakers (TCM) and Youth Placemaking. The first was a statewide effort that Iron County received grant funding to develop. In Iron County the TCM team of youth promoted, developed, and taught educational lessons for senior citizens around use of technology and how technology can fit into their lives. Lessons included shopping online, choosing a secure password, streaming video, and setting up their smart phone. Much of the time was used to work one on one with the seniors who attended the courses. The participants had the opportunity to ask the students questions they had about their devices. Many times, the youth could not answer the questions immediately but would research the question and bring the answers back for the next session. Sessions were held at the Hurley Senior Center and the Mercer Public Library.



Pictured above: Digital Ambassador, Lili Benedicto, helps students set up their tablets.

Additional sessions were scheduled but were cancelled due to the pandemic.



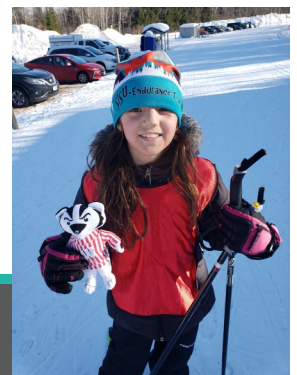
SISU ENDURANCE TEAM: PROVIDING NORDIC SKIING TO ALL YOUTH

The SISU Endurance Team (SET) has always aimed to be a program in which all youth in our community can participate. After the ski program ended, Klemme set out to further accomplish this goal. One of the main barriers to involvement in the sport of Nordic skiing is the cost associated with the gear needed to get involved. Over the course of the past year, organizers of SET have worked to purchase skis that could be checked out by the young skiers in our region.

The main goal of this is to take the cost of skis, boots and poles out of the responsibility of the families and create a lending library so families can check out equipment each season. Before the 2020 season, the program was able to purchase about twelve pairs of skis, six were used by youth participants. Over the summer Klemme saw a post on Facebook about a ski shop in Park Falls that was going out of business and they wanted to sell their rental gear. "We were able to buy everything they had, about 25 full sets of boots, skis, and poles," states Klemme. "We were very lucky." This will continue to be a focus of the program as the need to provide equipment will always be a barrier to participation.



Pictured right: Bucky enjoyed skiing with SET member, Addisyn Sbraggia.



4-H Youth Development

SUMMER PROGRAMMING HAD A DIFFERENT LOOK

Since COVID-19 restricted the normal programming that the Iron County 4-H program was able to offer youth in the county, Klemme and his summer staff needed to shift focus and adapt to offer programming that would be both impactful and interesting to the target audience. Instead of the typical outpost and resident camp experience, Iron County youth development shifted to offering multiple day camp opportunities for youth in the same age range that our traditional programming targeted. Five weeks of day camps were offered. Cloverbud camp was cancelled due to low enrollment numbers but it was replaced with multiple weeks of STEM Camp.

"All of these programs were great opportunities for us to try out some new ideas and see what would work," states Klemme. "I think the best part was the engagement in learning that I saw."

BABYSITTER TRAINING

4-H Babysitter Training Day Camp was offered to youth ages 11 and up, in 2 sessions. To keep group sizes smaller, we offered the program in the morning to 8 youth and then again in the afternoon to another 8 youth. Instruction consisted of professionalism, first aid, proper discipline, ages and stages, and CPR. Students were trained in CPR and first aid by a local nurse and received their certificate upon completion of the course.



OUTDOOR ADVENTURE DAY CAMP

Outdoor Adventure Day Camp was an extension of popular summer programs, the SET Running Club and SET TrailBlazers, which were canceled this year due to COVID restrictions. Klemme wanted to continue connecting youth to the natural resources and recreational activities available in our region. Even though group sizes were smaller and transportation could not be provided, youth rode and hiked over 50 miles during the 2 week program.



STEM DAY CAMP

Through involvement in the Tech ChangeMakers Program, \$4000.00 worth of new tech was purchased to incorporate into the STEM Day Camp program which was offered to youth grades 5-8. This included a 3D printer that was used to introduce 3D printing into the program. We were able to upgrade our robotics equipment and acquired 4 EV3 sets that were used to teach programming after the youth finished building their robots.



SUPERIOR DAYS EVALUATION LOOKS TO MEASURE IMPACT OF PROGRAM

In April 2020, Neil Klemme, Ian Meeker and Doug Liphart, Youth Development Educators from Area 1, began the process of creating a survey that would be used to look at the success of a long standing program that Iron County youth have participated in for a very long time. Superior Days is a grassroots lobbying effort that brings residents from northern WI together to bring issues that affect our communities to the attention of the legislators in Madison. Youth have been involved in this effort for more than 25 years and the 3 educators wanted to assess the impact Superior Days has on young people's understanding of government, their role in government as well as other skills or knowledge they develop through their involvement.



Pictured above L-R: 2020 Superior Days Delegates Jackie Bradley, Ezra Manzer, Sean Their, Mackenzie Backman, Jack Manzer and educator, Neil Klemme.

The first round of evaluation included focus group interviews with youth who had participated in Superior Days in the last 2-3 years. This was then followed up by a Qualtrics survey in an attempt to gather some quantitative feedback to support the interview questions. Results from the study included strong evidence showing that Superior Days increases participants understanding of both their knowledge about how government works but also their role in the process. They reported stronger communication skills, increases in the development of social capital, and a better understanding of legislators as "regular people." Superior Days has shown to have a lasting effect on young people who participate.

4-H Youth Development

YOUTH PLACEMAKING

In 2019, a grant from the Innovative Programming Funds from the UW-Madison Extension Dean was awarded to create Placemaking curriculum to be used when working with youth during future Community Vitality and Placemaking Team efforts. The objective is to formalize and standardize the process of youth engagement in design charrettes by better preparing them for their involvement. Building lessons around placemaking and asset-based community development provides youth a new lens for which to look at their communities. In early 2020, youth from Amery, WI traveled to Hayward, WI to participate in a series of community visits.

During this weekend visit, youth explored the 19 principles of Placemaking that could be identified in Hayward. The idea was to show examples of the principles so the youth could make connections and identify them in their own communities. This was to be the first of a 3-4 session series that was cut short after one session due to COVID. Teens participated in a training developed by Klemme to introduce the Placemaking concept to young people. These trainings have been conducted over the past 3 years at various 4-H events and before Community Vitality and Placemaking (CVP) team charrettes. In September of 2020, Klemme partnered with youth development colleagues Christa Van Treeck (Extension Marquette County) and Sharon Krause (Extension Oneida County), to use these trainings for the CVP teams first virtual design effort held in Three Lakes. We will evaluate the program's effectiveness in increasing young people's understanding of placemaking and community development needs at the end of the program.



Youth from Amery, WI learn about Placemaking principles in Hayward.

IRON COUNTY YOUTH CONNECT TO ADDRESS SOCIAL JUSTICE

Iron County Extension educators Neil Klemme (4-H Youth Development) and Amy Nosal (Community Development) facilitated a community conversation on race and equity that resulted in the Iron County Board of Supervisors approving a Statement of Community Integrity and Respect.

In the statement, *the county board: does not tolerate any form of hate; encourages community members to hold themselves and their neighbors accountable for building awareness of hateful behaviors; empowers members of the community to engage in constructive and respectful conversations on the topic of hate; and commits to working with communities to create partnerships that further inclusion and collective integrity.*

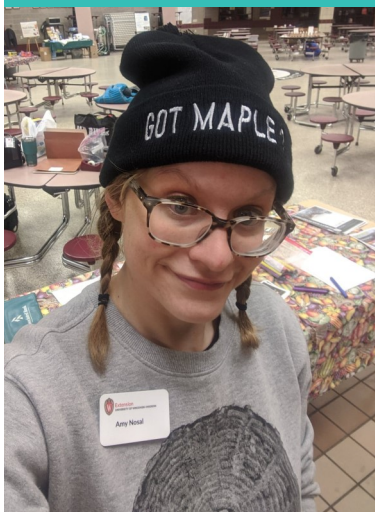
With programmatic guidance provided by Klemme, the Iron County Board of Supervisors has included 4 seats for youth in grades 9-12 since 2017. This year, however, the county board requested that youth not attend in-person county board meetings as a safety measure against COVID-19. The northern WI region where Iron County is located experienced several racist events that received national news attention. Seeing an opportunity to re-engage, Klemme and Nosal approached the youth involved in the local governance program to discuss their thoughts on positive community engagement around deep-seated issues like race and equity. Klemme and Nosal consulted the Extension's Office of Access, Inclusion, and Compliance for guidance on how to facilitate the conversations and two members of NICER (Northern Iron County Engaged Residents) also took part in the planning process.

The conversations started in early July and utilized Zoom in consideration of the ongoing pandemic. As Klemme explains, "The first few weeks were spent talking through the issues and listening to the youth tell us what they see here in Iron County and coming to agreement on how we wanted to move forward." Nosal continues, "There was a lot of great discussion about what we were seeing on social media and reading locally that led to the idea and final draft of a county board statement." Above all else, the youth indicated the need for community education. Together the youth and participating adults reviewed statements created by neighboring communities and worked together to craft language that Iron County leaders and residents could support. Youth recognized that this effort could be seen as confrontational or politicizing the issue. They put significant effort into avoiding that perception.

The statement received support from State Senator Janet Bewley and Representative Beth Meyers as well as local law enforcement and various public agencies within the county. The statement went before the Iron County Board of Supervisors and was approved unanimously on September 29, 2020.



Community Development



Amy Nosal served as Community Development Educator in 2020.

A YEAR FOR EVERYTHING & ASSET-BASED RECOVERY

Asset-based community development lifts people's gifts and strengths to implement local opportunities and address challenges. 2020 was a year with many areas of growth and concern, and Amy Nosal learned that there is even an asset-based road to community recovery¹.

Consider these questions²:

- What has happened that you don't want to lose?
- Which unknown assets have come to light?
- What did you need or wish for that your community can now provide?
- Do you have a story that comes out of this experience that inspires hope?

In this section—and in other parts of this annual report (see pages 12 and 13), Nosal describes a variety of asset-based projects that were implemented in 2020, some of which were planned and others that arose in response to the year's historical events.

HIGHLIGHTS OF TAKING CARE OF YOU

Taking Care of You is the first UW-Madison Extension mindfulness for stress reduction program. Nosal has aimed to provide this program locally because a strong workforce must have skills to cope in difficult situations and the opportunity came when 2020 encouraged a virtual adaptation of the program—Highlights of Taking Care of You. Nosal's first local partner was Gogebic Community College, and in September, she and 5 other Extension educators delivered the 4 week program to 43 nursing program participants. Nosal also teamed up with two other Extension educators to deliver the program publicly to a total of 44 participants.

"It was very informative, I feel like I've learned more about myself and how to destress."

- GCC Nursing Student

TRAIL PROGRESS SLOW & SURE

Steady work on the Hurley to Montreal non-motorized trail was not hindered by the pandemic. Before nationwide lockdowns began, Nosal and the nonprofit ICORE—Iron County Outdoor Recreation Enthusiasts, hosted a 1.5 mile public hike from Hurley to an overpass bridge and back with 35 participants. Even after social distancing was in place, Nosal and ICORE safely hosted workbees at the Hurley trailhead, installing many new amenities including a walking path to the Montreal River.

Additionally, Nosal and ICORE partnered with the City of Hurley to write a successful Wisconsin DNR grant to purchase the property for the Hurley to Montreal non-motorized trail. However, no purchase will be made until Canadian National is willing to negotiate a price.

OTHER 2020 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS

- With the significant rise in interest around gardening and food preservation in 2020, Nosal teamed up with her FoodWise colleagues Bakker and Leonard, Office Manager Holm, MSU Extension Gogebic County colleagues and Gogebic Community College to host 2 pressure canner testing events in September. Seventeen canners were tested for 19 families, and relevant information was posted on the COVID-19 Response page on Extension Iron County's website.
- Nosal worked closely throughout 2020 with the Gogebic Range Health Foundation to implement short-term projects like their annual (and first virtual) June fundraiser, as well as long-term projects like community education and partnership planning that will help community stakeholders play greater roles in making the healthy choice, the easy choice.

1. Asset-Based Community Recovery Framework article by Jonathan Massimi; Tamarack Institute 2020 <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/asset-based-community-development-recovery-framework>

2. Asset-Based Community Recovery Workshops by the Military Family Readiness Academy, February and March 2020 <https://militaryfamilieslearningnetwork.org/event/92168/>

Community Development



Richard Jenkins/Daily Globe
VOLUNTEERS, FROM left, Amy Nosal, Ian Shackleford and Tom Kangas spread dirt at the Hurley trailhead between the Montreal River and Second Avenue Monday evening.

Hurley trailhead work continues

By RICHARD JENKINS
 rjenkins@yourdailyglobe.com

HURLEY — Work improving the Hurley trailhead between the Montreal River and Second Avenue continues as volunteers were out Monday spreading soil on the site.

The top soil was spread around the trailhead in areas with a lot of rocks and is intended to help improve the trailhead's grass cover and "make it more park-like," according to Ian Shackleford, one of the volunteers and a member of Iron County Outdoor Recreation Enthusiasts.

"Two or three years ago, back when the city bought this property, it was just bare ground over at this end," Shackleford said.

ICORE has been involved with helping develop the trailhead that runs between the parallel motorized and non-motorized trails as they enter Iron County from Michigan.

Along with the top soil, volunteers recently spent two days spreading a load of wood chips they got from the Iron County Highway Department on the path from the trailhead down to the Montreal River.

The wood chips act as a mulch, according to Shackleford, keeping the plants from encroaching on the trail and reducing the chances of people picking up a tick while using the trail.

The recent improvements are funded by a \$20,000 Gogebic Range Health Foundation grant awarded to ICORE in January.

"A good part of that grant paid for that new parking lot there, ... but then other parts paid for that dog waste station, this top soil. We've got money from them for a bike maintenance stations like they've got (at Depot Park in Ironwood), and we even want to put in some LED motion-sensing lights," Shackleford said.



Richard Jenkins/Daily Globe
VOLUNTEERS RECENTLY spent two days spreading wood chips along the path from the Hurley trailhead to the Montreal River, seen here Monday evening, as part of ongoing improvements to the trailhead between the Montreal River and Second Avenue.



HAVE YOU UPDATED YOUR PROGRAMS TO BLOCK THE VIRUS?

Please consider these safety guidelines while visiting this space:

- Wear a face mask
- Maintain 6' social distance
- Be mindful of your neighbors
- Wash your hands often
- Stay home if you are sick



2020



Top left clockwise: Nosal and the nonprofit ICORE—Iron County Outdoor Recreation Enthusiasts, hosted a Hurley Overpass Hike along the route of what will be the Hurley to Montreal Non-Motorized Trail.

Other trail activities in 2020 included work bees to improve the Hurley Trailhead, including a new walking path to the Montreal River (newspaper article from the Daily Globe, June 17, 2020).

While there were very few events to promote in 2020, Nosal utilized FeLiveLife.org resources to promote community safety and solidarity during the pandemic, and created a pair of guideline posters using local art and logos.

Agriculture/Horticulture



Darrin Kimbler served as Agriculture Educator in 2020.

The Iron County Agriculture/Horticulture program provided educational and technical programming throughout Iron County in 2020.

The Iron County Horticulture program greatly increased its reach in 2019 and 2020 by training 7 new Master Gardener Volunteers over the winter months. The new volunteers received 40 hours of education on a wide range of horticultural topics, allowing for greater programming throughout the community.

RANGE MASTER GARDENERS

Kimbler and UW-Madison Extension Iron County Master Gardener Volunteers provided over 299 volunteer hours of community education and area beautification. This was greatly diminished from previous years' activities because of restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Planted and maintained the Iron County Courthouse planter.
- Maintained the Iron Horse trailhead on Silver Street.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Kimbler provided community education by facilitating and/or leading workshops and demonstrations on:

- Presented at the Iron County Beginner Maple Syrup Conference on the topic of Navigating State and Federal Regulations for Maple Syrup Producers.
- Two virtual presentations in collaboration with the Mercer Public Library. Growing Garlic in Northern Wisconsin had approximately 60 participants. Preparing Your Gardens for Winter had approximately 40 participants (including YouTube views).
- As part of a Statewide team, presented a virtual series of horticulture topics for the citizens of Iron County and the state. Topics include, seed starting, ticks, and lawn care.
- Responded to horticulture inquiries to educate Master Gardener Volunteers on the latest insect and disease issues affecting state gardeners.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Kimbler provided direct technical assistance to community clients virtually by phone and email:

- Facilitated and explained over 5 soil tests and directed several other soil tests to commercial labs during the period that the state soil lab was closed because of COVID-19 restrictions.
- Provided research based answers to horticulture and agriculture questions including insect identification, disease management and assistance to farmers.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Kimbler's professional development for 2020 consisted of:

- Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producers Winter Institute.
- Extension Master Gardener Coordinators National Conference.

STATEWIDE WORK

As part of a team of educators from around the state, Kimbler developed and piloted a statewide online replacement curriculum for Level One Master Gardener Volunteer training, called Foundations in Horticulture.

- 150 students from select counties participated in the pilot.
- Twelve weeks of classwork and four optional labs.
- The class will be offered to Iron County residents in fall 2021.
- The class will be open to all residents, not just those interested in the Master Gardener Volunteer program.

As part of a statewide team, developed a new statewide enrollment system for new and continuing Master Gardener Volunteers.

- Similar to the 4-H enrollment process.
- New volunteers will need to pass a horticulture proficiency exam to be admitted to the program.
- This will provide consistency across the state and provide less confusion for our Master Gardener Volunteers.

Kimbler is a member of the state advisory committee from Extension for the Wisconsin Master Gardener Association (WIMGA). The committee advises and works with WIMGA to fulfill the UW-Madison Division of Extension Master Gardener Program's mission.

While working remotely, Kimbler was able to provide answers to a variety of horticulture related questions, such as the damaged plant to the right, which was caused by the four-lined plant bug.



FoodWise

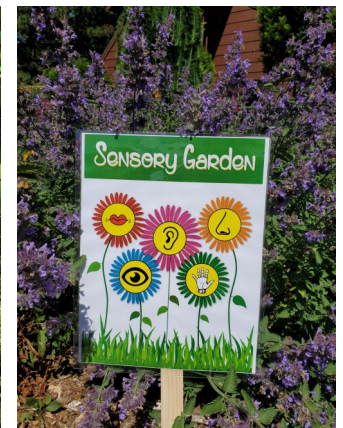
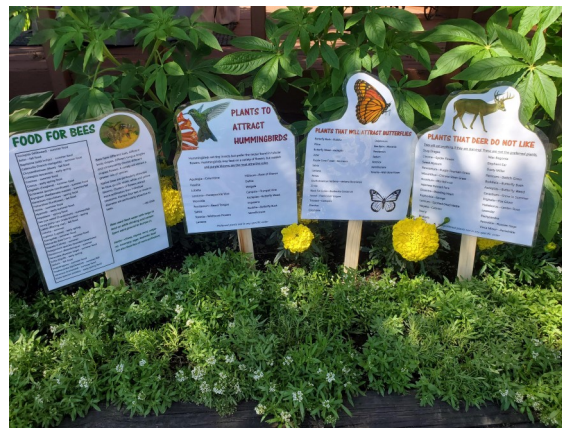
FoodWise is federally funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP). FoodWise advances healthy eating habits, active lifestyles and healthy community environments for Wisconsin residents with limited incomes through nutrition education at the individual, community and systems levels.

Stephanie Bakker, FoodWise Coordinator for Ashland, Bayfield and Iron Counties, and Deb Leonard, 50% part-time Iron County FoodWise Educator, provided many educational opportunities to the Iron, Ashland and Bayfield County communities in 2020.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Leonard was able to provide six nutrition education lessons to Hurley and Mercer School Districts and spent an afternoon snowshoeing with the Hurley Head Start class in January 2020. After transitioning to working remotely in March, Leonard continued to work on one of her usual spring projects, the Hurley School garden.



Stephanie Bakker (left) served as FoodWise Nutrition Coordinator for Ashland, Bayfield, and Iron Counties and Deborah Leonard (right) served as FoodWise Nutrition Educator in 2020.



HURLEY SCHOOL GARDEN

One of the goals of FoodWise is to connect students to their school gardens. In past years, Leonard made boiled dinner with the Hurley 5th graders out of produce that was grown, cared for and harvested from the Hurley School Garden. With direct education on hold, Leonard continued to be involved in the school garden and was hopeful for the possibility of working with students in the fall, however, direct education restrictions continued through the remainder of 2020. Leonard is hopeful to provide direct garden education in 2021.



FOODWISE COMBINES MULTIPLE RESOURCES INTO A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Based on feedback from partners, the FoodWise program for Iron, Ashland and Bayfield Counties began providing monthly newsletters that include nutrition education, local information on food resources, recipes, wellness topics and much more.

The newsletters combined previous publications such as, weekly recipes, bi-monthly senior newsletters and monthly menu backs into one comprehensive resource and is shared to partners via email, on the Extension Iron County website, social media pages and is distributed monthly at the Iron County Mobile Food Pantry.

FoodWise

PARTNERS & PARTICIPANTS

Partners for 2020 included Mercer and Hurley Schools, five senior dining sites, Hurley Head Start, and the Iron County Mobile Food Pantry.

The Ashland, Bayfield and Iron County FoodWise team partnered in January 2020 to provide a fun-filled outdoor nutritional lesson to the Hurley Head Start class.

The lesson included snowshoeing at Wolverine Ski Trails in Ironwood, Michigan and a fruit and vegetable scavenger hunt. Leonard provided snowshoes to the students, using the Extension Iron County community snowshoes, which are available for families, groups, organizations and school to checkout from the Extension office for **FREE!**



Snowshoeing with the Hurley Head Start class, January 2020.

VIRTUAL LEARNING

During the pandemic, the Ashland, Bayfield, Iron County FoodWise team successfully transferred education to a mostly virtual format. This gave the team the opportunity to work together to provide programming across the three counties.

Below are some of the virtual programming provided:

- Leonard participated in an oven pancake cooking class with Joy Schelble, Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program Educator and Scott Griffiths, Spark Program Director.
- Using skills she learned at the above class, Leonard created an oven pancake recipe video and shared it with Hurley Head Start parents and students.
- Snazzy Summer Snack Series nutrition lessons in partnership with the Mashkisibi Boys & Girls Club.
- Bayfield School Community 4K Family event, which included families making yogurt parfaits.

Leonard and her friend, Show-Me Chef, during her Hurley Head Start oven pancake recipe video.



COVID-19 CHALLENGES

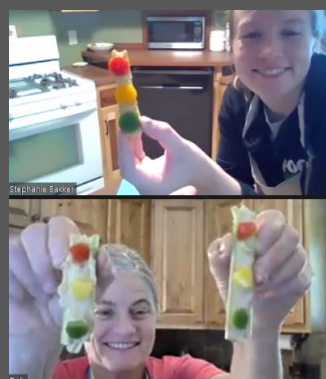
The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the food security of Iron County residents due to income and job loss, as well as significant changes in local, regional and national food systems.

Our FoodWise team supported the Iron County community by providing education on how families can stretch their food dollars in these difficult times and continue to put healthy meals on the table in their homes.

Iron County has seen a **13% increase in FoodShare participation**

from prior to the pandemic.

**Percentage includes adults and children. Based on comparison of FoodShare participation in February 2020 and September 2020. Date from WI Department of Health & Human Services.*



Bakker and Leonard showing off their celery, hummus and pepper "stop lights," which were created during the virtual Snazzy Summer Snack Series in partnership with the Mashkisibi Boys & Girls Club.

The Snazzy Summer Snack Series also included yogurt parfait and celery sailboat recipes.

Support Staff/Office Manager



Rebecca Holm served as Support Staff/Office Manager in 2020.

Rebecca Holm provided support to all Extension Iron County Educators and Summer Assistants. In addition to being a 4-H leader for the Iron County Green Team and SISU Endurance Team, Holm also volunteered as President of the Iron County 4-H Parent Leader Association.

INTERACTION WITH PUBLIC

Serving as the first point of contact with the public, Holm provided assistance with requests in person and over the phone for information and resources including:

- Research of UW-based information and response or referral to client.
- Submission of soil samples, plant samples, and insect identification samples to University laboratories.
- Iron County Mobile Food Pantry registration, documentation, newsletters. Approximately 114,984 meals were distributed to Iron County residents in 2020, a 15% increase over 2019 due to the pandemic.
- Maintained and distributed community snowshoe inventory. 123 pairs were checked out by organizations and individuals in 2020.

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

- Distributed monthly "Just in Time Parenting" newsletters to 41 parents of new babies born in Iron County in 2020.

PROGRAM SUPPORT

- Coordinated enrollment and documentation of all 4-H programming in 2020, including the SISU Endurance Team (SET) and summer day camps.
- Maintained and distributed SET Ski Club equipment. 6 members were able to check out equipment in early 2020.

FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

- Maintained financial records and documentation for Extension and 4-H and Youth Club budgets.
- Maintained office accounting including spreadsheets, vouchers, invoices, accounting and record keeping for grant funded programming.
- Served as liaison to Iron County auditors.
- Processed all receipt collections, deposits, invoices and bill paying.
- Created financial reports for Extension Iron County Committee and, as requested, for the Iron County Finance Committee.

OFFICE TECHNOLOGY

- Served as liaison for office to local computer repair services and to UW-Technology Services.
- Served as office website and social media coordinator.
- Coordinated internet connections with local and Extension servers.
- Upgraded skills with training related to new software programs to create more efficient management of office functions.
- Secured and maintained contracts for leased equipment, maintenance agreements, repairs and supplies needed to run office equipment such as copier, duplicating, fax, video projection machines.
- Assisted courthouse staff with using the boardroom AQUOS Smart Board.

- Researched methods and means for office equipment upgrades.
- Maintained the federal 4-H database.

OFFICE OPERATIONS

- Maintained and ordered proper level of supplies and resources as needed for office operations and equipment.
- Served as designer of program materials, such as brochures, newsletters, flyers, logos.
- Maintained office documentation to demonstrate compliance with federal civil rights law.
- Maintained postage accounts, equipment records and reports.
- Served as designer and coordinator of the Extension Iron County Annual Report to the Board of Supervisors.
- Coordinated, attended and recorded minutes at Extension Committee meetings.
- Coordinated, attended and participated in Extension Department staff meetings.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

- Assisted Extension Ashland County with website posts and other minor projects prior to hiring their new office manager.
- Created a video presentation for the 2020 FoodWise Golden Awards ceremony, which was presented to the state FoodWise team.
- Volunteered at the Hurley School USDA Farmers to Families dairy box distribution in July 2020.



Holm and Amy Nosal at the March 2020 Iron County Mobile Food Pantry.

Area Extension Director Area 1

This Annual Report highlights some of the programming efforts of our educators and staff members. In 2020, 2 full-time and 2 part-time educators, 1 full-time office manager, and 2 summer assistants made up the relatively small office staff that gets all this work done! How do we do it?

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

COUNTY FUNDING
STATE FUNDING

DONATIONS, GRANTS & FEES
VOLUNTEERS

In Extension, most educators are co-funded by the county and state. Iron County also supplies funding for a horticulture/agriculture educator and assistance with the extensive summer youth programs. In addition, county funds help to outfit Extension with office supplies and technology and program and travel costs, as well as an excellent office manager to hold it all together.

FoodWise, our nutrition education program, is paid for by federal SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education) funds that come through UW-Madison Division of Extension. Iron County FoodWise is part of a three-county project which also includes Ashland and Bayfield Counties. County funds are not involved in the salaries of the FoodWise Coordinator, FoodWise Educator, or Area Extension Director.

The charts show the basics of where our funding comes from. Due to travel and programming restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 budget is atypical.



Mary Pardee served as the Area Extension Director for Area 1 in 2020 (Area 1 includes Iron, Ashland, Bayfield and Douglas Counties).

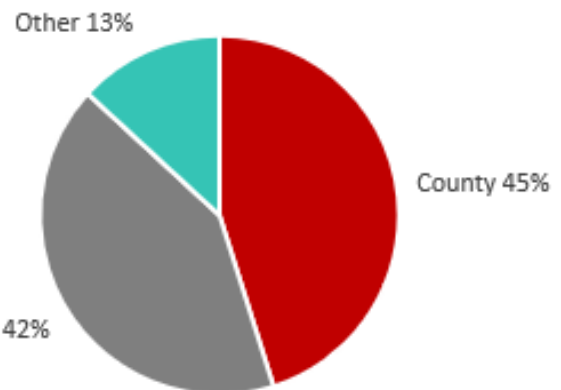
	Co-Funded Staff Fee	\$	71,498
	County Funded Staff Fee	\$	32,501
	Support Staff	\$	63,695
County	County Educational Staff	\$	7,849
	Office & Technology	\$	5,323
	Educational Program Support	\$	10,186
	Committee Expense	\$	480
	TOTAL COUNTY	\$	191,532

	Co-Funded Staff Salary/Fringe	\$	93,342
	FoodWise Staff & Program		
State	Support	\$	51,538
	Office & Technology	\$	1,200
	Professional Development	\$	903
	Director Salary/Fringe	\$	30,123
	TOTAL STATE	\$	177,106

Other	Donations, Grants, Fees	\$	18,028
	Volunteer Value*	\$	37,781
	TOTAL OTHER	\$	55,809

TOTAL EXTENSION BUDGET \$ 424,447

EXTENSION BUDGET 2020



VOLUNTEERS

Extension's programming success relies on volunteers! 2020 volunteer hours include:

- Community projects by Master Gardener Volunteers – 299 hours
- 4-H Clubs and activities by 4-H Volunteers – 730 hours
- Mobile Food Pantry Volunteers – 300 hours
- Trail project Volunteers – 60 hours

THANK YOU, EXTENSION VOLUNTEERS! We could not do all this work without you!

*Using the standard "Independent Sector" rate of \$27.20 (2020 rate).

A Natural Asset for the Economy & Community



Since late 2018, Extension Iron County has engaged in collaborative efforts to bolster local economic development and community identity by encouraging maple syrup production. Iron County contains some of Wisconsin's densest distributions of sugar maple and Wisconsin ranks as the 4th largest maple syrup producing state.

On a Saturday in late February, Educators Kimbler and Nosal delivered a day-long conference at the Hurley School District for area maple syrup producers.

Thirty-one participants selected breakout sessions based on level of production (hobbyist vs. commercial) to learn how to increase quality and/or scale and to gain a greater understanding of the cultural perspectives of maple syrup production in the Upper Midwest.

Six expert producers from Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan covered topics including sugar bush and sugar shack basics, measuring maple syrup quality, improving stand management, tubing versus buckets, state and federal regulations, and reverse osmosis.

Kimbler delivered the regulations breakout session, and local Master Gardeners helped host the event. A focus on the cultures of maple syrup production in the Upper Midwest was woven in with a land acknowledgement, a breakout session on indigenous maple syrup production and a presentation of successful maple syrup collaborations in Wisconsin's evolving scenes of local food and tourism.

Participant feedback indicated that the presentations were educational and useful. The topics on cultural perspectives and local food collaborations were mostly well received, and many participants noted new ways of thinking and product application.

Other anticipated maple syrup programs, like the return of the maple syrup competition featured in the Iron Maple Festival, were postponed until 2021.



The maple syrup conference organized by Kimbler and Nosal served as a vital networking opportunity. Jesse Randal (pictured left) is a Michigan State University Extension Specialist who connected with Roger Peterson at the conference (pictured above), leading a tour of the Hurley School's Northwoods Manufacturing facilities) and later secured funding for Peterson's youth maple syrup program.



Collaborative Projects

In 2020, NICER – Northern Iron County Engaged Residents - became an official non-profit after starting to form its vision and momentum with the assistance of the Extension Iron County office in 2019. Extension Iron County will continue to serve as a strong partner to the resident-led group, as is indicated in our partnership success stories below.

HYGGE HIKE

February 29th, 2020, marked the 2nd annual Hygge Hike at the Historic Montreal Ski Trails, organized by NICER, Extension Iron County and Hurley Chamber of Commerce. Sixty community members attended the free, 1.5-mile community snowshoe hike, a substantial increase in attendance after last year's frigid January temperatures. The annual Hygge Hike continues to focus on raising awareness to the beautiful snowshoe and ski trails that the City of Montreal has to offer.

Participants were asked to park at the Montreal City Hall and were shuttled to the trailhead by our volunteer chauffeur, who was driving a van loaned to the event by the Iron County ADRC. Extension Iron County had their free community snowshoes on hand for anyone in need of a pair and collaborated with the Hurley Chamber on a fun trail activity that highlighted historical mining sites along the trail.

2020's Hygge Hike also included the new addition of a chili cookoff, which proved to be a delicious success!

The Hygge Hike serves as a fundraiser, with proceeds benefitting the Penokee Rangers, who continue to maintain the trails on a volunteer basis.



EXPLORE

NORTHERN IRON COUNTY

BACKYARD ADVENTURE MONTH

SEPTEMBER, 2020

15 NATURAL AND HISTORICAL LOCATIONS—COOL PRIZES—FAMILY FRIENDLY FUN



NICER
NORTHERN IRON COUNTY ENGAGED RESIDENTS



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
IRON COUNTY

Download and print your booklet at:
www.nicer715.com or www.iron.extension.wisc.edu
Or call 715-561-2695 to request one.

Pictured above: Explore Northern Iron County Backyard Adventure Month was an event that families and community members could participate in during the COVID-19 shutdown. Is there any better way to social distance than exploring the unique and historical locations in your community?

EXPLORE NORTHERN IRON COUNTY BACKYARD ADVENTURE MONTH

NICER board members, Ken Saari, Kelly Traczyk and Rebecca Holm (Extension Iron County office manager) took the lead on the Explore Northern Iron County Backyard Adventure Month project, a fun event highlighting the unique natural and historical locations that are available right in our own backyards.

Organizers narrowed down 15 locations in the Northern Iron County area that were categorized by a point system based on travel and trail difficulty. Participants were encouraged to visit as many locations as they could during the month of September for a chance to collect points and win prizes. Participants kept track of their adventures using a checklist found in the Explore Northern Iron County Backyard Adventure Month booklet, designed by Holm. In order to qualify for prizes, participants were required to submit completed checklists and photos to event organizers. Prize sponsors included the Iron County Development Zone, Iron County Forestry, Edward Jones (Ken Saari), White Cross Pharmacy, and the Hurley Area Chamber of Commerce.

NICER received checklist and photo submissions from 13 participants. The hashtag *#ironcountybackyardadventure* was also used in social media posts shared by participants and showed that there were others who participated just for fun.

NICER EARTH WEEK

In the spring of 2020, NICER and Extension Iron County organized a "Spring Cleaning" of our streets and roadways. Due to COVID-19, we were not able to gather in large groups so we improvised and asked families to go out and clean up around their homes. In honor of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, we made April 20th – April 26th Earth Week and residents were asked to lend a hand to prepare our communities for those who would be visiting our community for the summer. Because of the involvement of so many we were able to clean miles of roadways and parks.

COVID-19 Response

EXTENSION IRON COUNTY PROVIDED COMMUNITY SUPPORT DURING PANDEMIC

Across the state, the nation, and the globe, we saw phenomenal efforts to keep people safe and informed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are the ways Extension Iron County's staff worked to keep the Iron County community informed in 2020.

- A COVID-19 response page was added to the Extension Iron County website, highlighting limited office hours while staff worked remotely, food security information and numerous local and state resources.
- The Ashland, Bayfield, and Iron County FoodWise Team shared FoodWise Friday recipes, which were posted on the Extension website, as well as the Extension Iron County Facebook page from April through August 2020. The recipes gave families healthy, budget-friendly meal ideas to prepare while spending more time at home during the pandemic.
- The FoodWise team also published an article in local newspapers on food security and what local entities are doing to help.
- Staff shared numerous COVID-19 resources on the Extension Iron County Facebook page throughout the year, reaching 622 followers.
- Nosal and Holm collaborated with Iron County Human Services to send weekly, "Thought of the Day" emails to the all-county staff email list, which included COVID-19 resources from the state and local level, wellness tips, and the FoodWise Friday weekly recipes.
- Extension staff members continued to volunteer at the Iron County Mobile Food Pantry, which saw a 15% increase in participants during the pandemic. This included a new partnership with Union Station, a local nonprofit, which offered to deliver 30+ meals to residents at public housing facilities in Hurley each month.
- Holm collaborated with Extension Ashland County and the Chequamegon Bay Region COVID-19 Response Team in designing a series of Message of the Day graphics. The graphics were shared on Extension Ashland, Bayfield and Iron County and numerous partners' Facebook pages from April through June 2020.
- In partnership with many local municipalities and chambers of commerce, Nosal led an effort to create a pair of COVID-19 public health posters that use local art, products and logos, encouraging residents and visitors to consider COVID-19 safety guidelines.



MESSAGE OF THE DAY

Saturday, April 25, 2020

#SAFERATHOME



This message is brought to you by the Chequamegon Bay Region Cooperators Response Team:



"Call grandparents, elders & other people that you love"

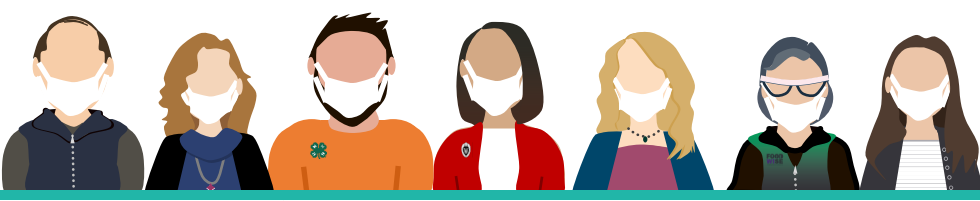


STAY SAFE—STAY STRONG

Pictured upper right: A kind message that was shared by mobile food pantry participants at the Iron County Mobile Food Pantry, March 2020.

Pictured middle right: One of the Chequamegon Bay Region COVID-19 Response Team's Message of the Day graphics, which were shared via social media by Extension Iron County and various partners.

Pictured left: Extension Iron County office manager, Rebecca Holm created this graphic, which was used as the Extension Iron County Facebook cover photo as a way to encourage followers to wear masks during the pandemic.



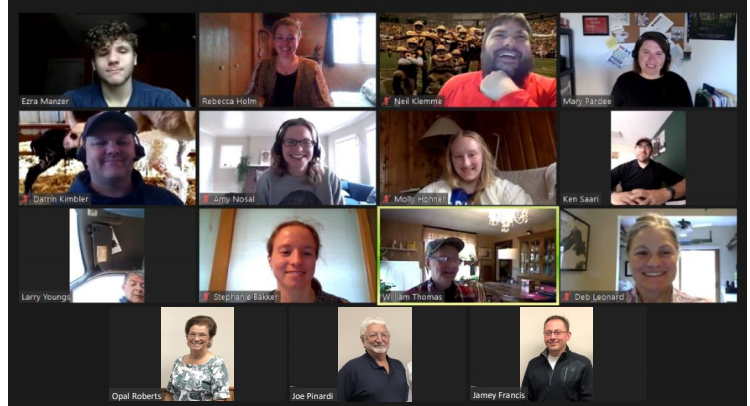
Iron County Agriculture-Extension-Education Committee

THANK YOU

The 2020 Iron County Agriculture-Extension-Education Committee was comprised of William Thomas—Chair, Opal Roberts—Vice-Chair, Jamey Francis and newly elected committee members, Ken Saari and Larry Youngs.

The picture to the right was taken during the Extension Education Committee meeting in May 2020. This was the committee’s first time adapting to a virtual committee meeting via Zoom.

We would like to thank our committee members and County Board Chair, Joe Pinardi, for their continued support of Extension programming.



Extension Iron County was able to transition to virtual committee meetings while working remotely during the pandemic thanks to Zoom.

Extension Iron County Web Analytics

YEARLY INSIGHTS FOR WWW.IRON.EXTENSION.WISC.EDU

Total Users:

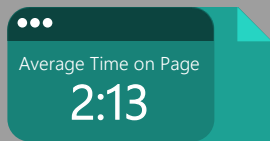
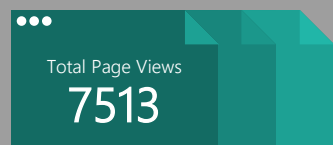
2888 ↑ 5.6% Last year: 2729

New VS. Returning:

● New visitors Total: 2851
● Returning Total: 37



Total Page Views:



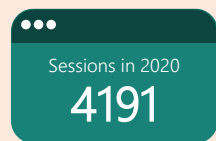
**Average amount of time users spent viewing webpage content.*

Top 10 Page Views:

Extension Iron County Home Page	1754
FoodWise/Iron County Mobile Food Pantry Application Form	424
FoodWise/FoodWise Friday Recipes	404
Community Development/Beginner Maple Syrup Conference	398
Staff Directory	327
Community Development/Maple	251
Community Development/Next Gen	237
Home/Extension to Offer New Youth Programming	161
Home/COVID-19 Response	135
Home/4-H	125

Sessions:

A period of up to 30 minutes during which users interacted with iron.extension.wisc.edu.



Average session time: 1:46



Sources of Traffic:

How did visitors find the website?

Google	1172
Direct Traffic	744
Facebook	644
Bing	133
co.iron.wi.gov	61
counties.extension.wisc.edu	51
Yahoo	36

Social Media:

Extension Iron County ended the year with **622** Facebook followers, an increase from 553 followers in 2019.





IT'S NOT REALLY WORK IF YOU ARE HAVING FUN

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Extension Iron County
300 Taconite Street, Suite 118
Hurley WI 54534

Phone: 715-561-2695

Toll Free: 1-888-561-2695

Fax: 715-561-2704

<https://linktr.ee/ExtensionIronCounty>

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday - Friday
8:00 am - 4:00 pm



STAFF EMAIL ADDRESSES:

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Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
IRON COUNTY

UW-Madison Division of Extension - Iron County
Iron County Courthouse - 300 Taconite Street, Suite 118
Hurley, Wisconsin 54534
715 561-2695
715 561-2704 (fax)
888-561-2695 (Toll free from Mercer and Springstead)

Dear Iron County Residents, Agencies and Local Officials,

UW-Madison Division of Extension - Iron County is committed to providing equal access to educational opportunities for all Iron County residents. Extension provides affirmative action and equal opportunity in education, programming and employment for all qualified persons regardless of race, color, gender/sex, creed, disability, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital or parental, arrest or conviction record or veteran status.

In addition, we are committed to providing equal access to educational opportunities for persons with disabilities in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990. We realize that individuals with disabilities may need accommodations to participate in or benefit from educational programs, activities or services. Reasonable accommodations for a disability will be made to allow individuals to fully participate in our programs by contacting the Extension Iron County office in advance. [(715) 561-2695, toll-free 1-888-561-2695, 711 For Wisconsin Relay (TDD)]

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the Extension Iron County office.

Extension Iron County is interested in reaching Iron County and area residents with information about our upcoming programs. Our intent is to provide programs that target the diverse interests and needs of area residents. We identify interests and needs for programs by exploring specific requests and by examining issues identified in our strategic planning efforts. We want to be effective in our efforts to communicate about our programs.

We release news of upcoming programs to the following news sources: Iron County Miner, Ironwood Daily Globe, Lac du Flambeau News, Lakeland Times, North Country Sun, Park Falls Herald, WJMS/WIMI Radio, and WUPM/WHRY Radio. Please notify us of other sources you use for getting news about local events.

Thank you for your support of Extension Iron County programs. Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns you have about the above information.

Regards,

Mary Pardee
Area Extension Director
Area 1 (Iron Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas Counties)