



Mason County

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

August Accomplishments, 2016

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Mission

Washington State University Mason County Extension connects the people of Mason County to the research and knowledge bases of the state's land grant research university providing solutions to local problems and stimulating local economies. Our county-based educators work with partners in your communities to provide educational programs and leverage the broad resources of a major university to resolve issues and create a positive future for the residents of Mason County.

Program Updates

Community & Economic Development

Staff: **Justin G. Smith, PhD.**, County Director & Assistant Professor
Greg Schundler, CED Research Assistant

Mission: Serve as leader in assisting Washington communities achieve their economic, environmental and social goals.

Updates: WSU Mason Extension CED was excited to make strides on several projects during the month of August. The CED Unit launched the WSU Community Intelligence Lab in Mason County. The County is the first in what will become a statewide initiative. As part of this launch CED staff developed the "Big Data and Information Technology Workshop Series". Three introductory sessions will be given to present state-of-the-art on data and IT, offer technical assistance, survey county needs, and assess local interest in further education and collaboration opportunities.

Please join us for three dates: September 28, 5pm to 7pm – Timberland Library, Shelton, October 4, 6pm to 8pm – Salmon Center, Belfair, October 11, 6pm to 8pm - Mason General Hospital, Shelton.

Finally, August saw WSU's accelerated involvement in the Mason County Agricultural Parcel VSP (Voluntary Stewardship Program). Learning from other "first mover" counties, WSU CED is excited to bring new analysis, management options, and bottom line incentives to farmers in the hopes of encouraging long term watershed health.

Noxious Weed Program

Staff: **Patricia Grover**, Coordinator
 Kendall Carmen, Assistant
 Keith Reitz, Assistant

Updates: During the month of August, Mason County Noxious Weed Control Board staff received assistance from two Puget SoundCorps crews, provided by the DNR Aquatic Resources Division. The bolstered Mason County Weed Warrior crew worked to remove and control non-native invasive plants detrimental to salmon fisheries and forest productivity on over 10 acres of riparian habitat throughout the county. Target weeds included English ivy, Scotch broom and Bohemian knotweed. Recipients of these efforts included the Great Peninsula Conservancy's Klingel Wetland, Capitol Land Trust's Bayshore and Twin Rivers Ranch Preserves, Belfair State Park and property owners along Coulter Creek, including Mason County and the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife.



Puget Sound Corps members work to control English ivy and bohemian knotweed at Belfair State Park.

Food Safety & Food Preservation Program

Staff: Lisa DeWall, Food Safety & Preservation Information Assistants

Mission: Provide resident's current up to date research based answers to their home canning questions to reduce risk of food borne illness.

Updates: Check pressure gauges on Monday's from 10-12. Answer questions regarding Food Safety & Preservation.

4-H Youth Development Program

Staff: Dan Teuteberg, Regional Specialist-Assistant Professor
Kathy Fuller, Program Coordinator

Mission: 4-H Youth Development empowers youth to reach their full potential, working and learning with caring adults.

Updates:



Mason County 4-H Summer Camp was held July 31st – August 5th at Panhandle Lake 4-H Camp. During this six-day educational experience Panhandle was home to 60 youth campers. Camp is a valuable learning experience that helps build independence and self-confidence in our campers. Camp staff provide a challenging yet nurturing setting, where children “learn by doing” in a hands-on

learning environment based on the philosophy of 4-H. The unplugged environment of camp allows children to try new things, open new doors, meet new challenges and make new friends. Camp was staffed by 18 trained adults and teen counselors who provided leadership, educational activities, nutritious meals and mentorship to the youth campers. Many campers have indicated a strong desire to become a counselor-in-training and then a teen counselor as they approach the appropriate age for these roles.

Master Gardener Program

Staff: **Johanna Willingham**, Master Gardener Coordinator

Mission: To provide relevant university based research to meet the home and community horticultural needs of Mason County and to promote responsible environmental stewardship. Public education is the primary goal of Mason County WSU Master Gardener Program.

Updates: Thus far Master Gardeners have harvested 1,350 pounds of produce from Catalyst Garden and distributed it to The Saint's Pantry Food Bank this year.

The 2017 Plant Sale preparations are underway as the Master Gardeners have begun grafting and potting native perennial plants to be sold at our annual fundraiser next May.

Bring your plant, insect, and weed samples and horticultural inquiries to the Master Gardener Clinic for identification on Monday's from 12-3 at the office or stop by the Master Gardener clinic at the Shelton Farmers Market through October on Saturday's from 9-1.

Food \$ense Nutrition

Staff: **Christine Ciacetta**, Interim Program Coordinator
Pamela Bish and **Joshua Munro**, Educators

Mission: Providing outreach to youth and adults via direct education, environmental supports, and policy work to reduce childhood obesity and stretch food dollars for SNAP recipients.

Updates: In August, our goal to provide nutrition education and support in our county took shape as we brought a few hard-working students from Shelton High School together with Saint's Pantry Food Bank volunteers. In just one morning, a team of students and volunteers were able to clean, organize and prepare the Food Bank for inventory. We envision this type of cooperation as a first step in building networks of cooperation among Mason County residents. Next steps include assisting the Food Bank with posting appropriate signage, providing access to nutrition education information in English and Spanish, and continuing to support on-going efforts to build a robust volunteer program.



Additionally, Mason County Food \$ense, SNAP-Ed Program will be transitioning to a new name in 2017. Our new Implementing Agency, WA State Department of Healthy, is working closely with WSU Food \$ense in Puyallup to develop a common brand for current WSU Food \$ense Programs.

Water Resources Program

Staff: Erica Bates, Water Resources Associate

Mission: In August, the Water Resources Program continued implementation of the Hood Canal Pollution Identification and Correction Outreach and Education program. GIS work was completed to determine the extent of properties to contact in the Northshore area. The project is focusing on 243 parcels in the Tahuya area as well as approximately 300 parcels in Hoodsport and Union. To date, the outreach team has doorknocked at over

Updates: 300 properties and conducted 7 site visits with additional site visits pending scheduling. We also purchased native plants and each site visit participant will receive a set of four plants as an incentive to participate. The purpose of the site visits is to work with local residents on best management practices for septic system operation and maintenance, pet waste practices, mud and runoff management, and shoreline buffers and native plants. Each of these issues has a direct impact on water quality in our area. Work on this project will continue through the end of 2016.

Significant current partnerships include: Mason Conservation District, Mason County Public Health, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Puget Sound Partnership.

Small Farms Program

Staff: Colin Stewart, Small Farms Education and Outreach Specialist
Greg Schundler, Small Farms Research Assistant

Mission: Work to build a socio-ecologically sustainable agricultural community through education, outreach and conservation programs.

Updates: With the changing of the seasons, the Small Farms team is focusing on pasture renovation, cover crop variety trials, and acquisition of grants that will best serve Mason County's community and economy. The Small Farms team is committed to developing a platform for Mason County agricultural producers and gardeners to communicate and collaborate via an online forum. Look for a county-wide harvest get-together that will be hosted in November.

Key Partnerships: Mason Conservation District, Mason County Public Health Department, Taylor Shellfish, Capital Land Trust, Shelton and Belfair Farmers' Market, KMAS News Radio, Mason PUD.

Cooperating agencies: Washington State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Washington counties. Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office.