

WSU Mason County Extension

Summary of Accomplishments, Feb. - March 2014

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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

4-H Youth Development Program

Staff: **Dan Teuteberg**, Regional Specialist - Assistant Professor
Kathy Fuller, Program Coordinator.
Mollie Taylor, AmeriCorps

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

Updates: 4-H Super Saturday was offered on March 1, 2014 at Panhandle Lake 4-H Camp in partnership with 4-H staff from many Southwest WA counties. The purpose of the event was to provide an inclusive environment for youth to partner with caring adults while developing confidence and building skills. Over 25 workshops were delivered to, and 30 volunteers shared their expertise with, 100 community members attending this event

Volunteer Leader Training was offered on March 13, 2014 at the Mason Co. Extension Office in partnership with Grays Harbor Co. This was a two hour interactive training covering the mission and goals of 4-H Youth Development, educational theories, life skill development available resources and more.

Public Presentations were delivered on March 15, 2014 at Del's Farm Supply. This was a volunteer led activity giving youth a public speaking opportunity to teach valuable communication skills. Youth members, with guidance from adult volunteers, planned and delivered a presentation on an idea or topic in a structured way. Two additional Public Presentation events will be held April 18 and 19 in Shelton and Belfair.

Several STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) Outreach programs were delivered. This included program outreach with Pioneer Schools "Link Up" after school programs, as well as "Wacky Science" program activities and 4-H STEM summer day camp planned at Shelton library for spring/summer.

Food Safety & Food Preservation Program

Staff: Lisa DeWall & R. Jeanne Rehwaldt, 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: WSU Food Safety and Preservation Information Assistants partnered with Shelton Timberland Library to provide the workshop "Grow and Preserve Your Own Food" on March 19th at the Shelton Library. 26 people learned the basics of canning safely and efficiently with a focus on pickling. A panel of 4 Master Gardeners led a questions and answer discussion regarding what types of vegetables to grow and how they preserve their own food from their gardens. Pressure gauges were also tested.

Check pressure gauges each Monday from 10-12.

Food Sense Nutrition

Staff: R. Jeanne Rehwaldt, Program Coordinator
Diana Castro & Pamela Lyons, Educators.
Michelle Lapp, AmeriCorps

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: Application for a WSC AmeriCorps member for 2015 has been submitted.

Lessons are continuing in classrooms at Evergreen, Mt. View, Olympic MS, Pioneer Primary and Intermediate schools. Environmental scan was completed at Olympic MS cafeteria to provide resources for a "Smarter Lunchroom Design" to encourage students to eat more fruits and vegetables and produce less waste. Work is beginning in the Pioneer School District for a pilot of the Whole School Approach.

Water Resources Program

Staff: Erica Bates & Cammy Mills, Water Resources Associates

Mission: The Water Resources program helps members of our community make the best choices in caring for our local waters by providing research-based tools and information. We connect people with appropriate resources through collaboration with other extension programs, government agencies, businesses, schools, and other organizations

Updates: Our new water resources associate, Erica Bates, started in March.

Work continues on social marketing grant to improve shoreline habitat through beneficial riparian vegetation. Audience research into landowner willingness to plant on their shorelines has been completed. In response to our audience research, we are now developing a variety of plant kits to be customized for location and conditions and to include specialized planting instructions.

Planning is continuing for the May on Oakland Bay event (replacing the Earth Day on Oakland Bay event) which will be held on May 18th, 11 am-4pm at Flying Dog Farm. We are currently accepting applications for vendors and educational exhibits and developing other family-friendly activities including bird walks, tree planting, tribal storytelling, and live music. This will be a free event, open to the public. This event will be part of the regional Puget Sound Starts Here Month.

Four onsite septic system homeowner workshops have been scheduled to be held in June-October at locations throughout the county.

Preparing a summary of relevant audience research conducted in Mason County to be presented at the Salish Sea Research Conference in late April.

Our work to help local organizations work more collaboratively through coordination of the Mason ECO Net and Hood Canal ECO Net continues.

Significant current partnerships include: Mason Conservation District, Mason County Public Health, Taylor Shellfish, Capitol Land Trust, Mason ECO Net, Puget Sound Partnership, Native Plant Salvage, Mason County PUD 3, Flying Dog Farm.

Master Gardener Program

Staff: **R. Jeanne Rehwaldt**, Program Coordinator.
Michelle Lapp, AmeriCorps

Mission: To provide relevant, research based, ecologically sound resources to meet the home horticultural needs of Mason County.

Updates: Gathered scion (small piece of branch) from trees in the old David Shelton pear orchard and grafted 9 onto pear trees growing next to the rain garden outside the WSU Extension office. Other scion will be grafted onto root stock provided by the City of Shelton.

Concluded “Thru the Garden Gate” garden workshops held at Memorial Hall. The six classes were well attended and class fees provide funding for program outreach in the community.

Plants are being grown, divided and purchased for the May 9 & 10 plant sale to be held at Kneeland Park.

Small Farms Program

Staff: **Erik Hagan**, Program Coordinator

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

Updates: KMAS News Radio: “Off the Land in Mason County” and “Environmentally Sound”

Eating for Health Program: Coordinating the “Local Food Access” workgroup to develop a success local food system program in Mason County.

May on Oakland Bay Event: Earth Day event on 5/18 at Flying Dog Farm.

Farm-to-School Initiative: Project development with key stakeholders and partners for Institutional procurement of local foods.

Farm Inventory: Database development of all agricultural operations in Mason County and ranking for priority needs for conservation and food system outreach efforts.

Key Partnerships include: Thurston Conservation District, Mason County Public Health Department, Squaxin Island Tribe, Mason General Hospital, CHOICE Alternative School, Taylor Shellfish, Capital Land Trust, Shelton and Belfair Farmers' Market.

Noxious Weed Program

Staff: **Patricia Grover**, Coordinator.
Connor Cordray, Assistant

Updates: The 2014 Mason County Noxious Weed list was adopted during a public hearing held February 26.

With remaining Title II funding, the program will continue to work collaboratively with the Olympic National Forest. Title II has recently been re-authorized and the Mason County Noxious Weed Control program will submit a proposal due March 28.

It is likely that the program will be overseeing invasive plant removal/control by a crew funded by the Aquatics Division of the Washington State Department of Agriculture again this summer.

Worked with the Skokomish Tribe, NRCS and WSDA to identify and develop a control strategy for a new noxious weed, *Phragmites australis*, recently discovered in Mason County.

Scotch broom is beginning to bloom and the "waiting list" for weed wrenches is growing.