



Mason County

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

February 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.

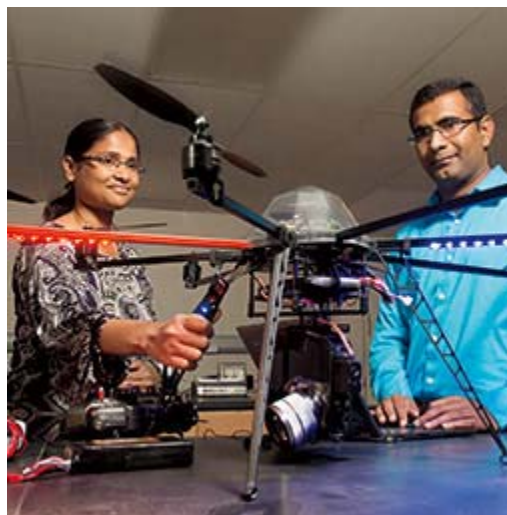
Program Updates

Community & Economic Development

Staff: Justin G. Smith, PhD., County Director & Assistant Professor

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

Updates: The CED Unit continues to develop the Community Innovation and Informatics Lab laying out an agenda that include three focus areas: IT for business development, technology to promote community engagement and practical education in technology. In February the CED began partnering with faculty at the Center for Precision Agriculture, Illionix, LLC., and Taylor Shellfish to explore the development and cost savings associated with unmanned aerial systems (UAS) for remote sensing to inventory oyster production, accelerate shoreline cleanup and monitor seagrass growth.



Faculty are also coordinating with local farmers market to develop easy to use software that connect farmers markets to local restaurants to increase the sale and purchase of locally produced foods within town centers.

Noxious Weed Program

Staff: Patricia Grover, Coordinator
Brayden Raber, Assistant

Updates: Noxious weed control staff recently met with five Spencer Lake residents and personnel from the Washington State Departments of Ecology and Fish and Wildlife. The meeting provided an opportunity for observation and discussion about current conditions at the lake. In addition, participants provided input to develop a framework for future meetings as part of the Integrated Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan (IAVMP) process.



As requests for participation at various events begin to arrive, the program is looking forward to incorporating the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board's new Bee-U-tify seed packets into an outreach campaign to support the National Pollinator Health Strategy.

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.

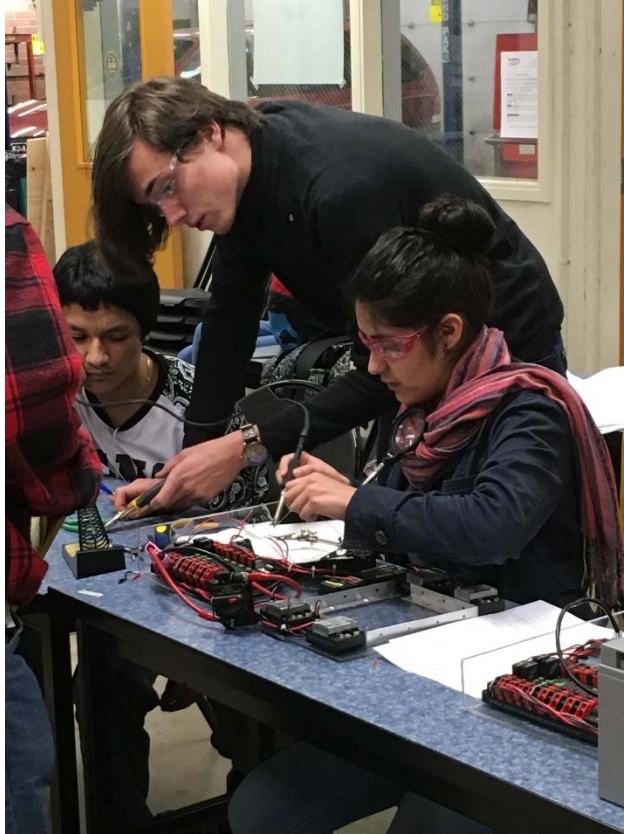
Updates: Check pressure gauges on Monday's from 10-12. Answer questions regarding Food Safety & Preservation.

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 volunteers have been spending many hours mentoring the 4-H youth of the Shelton FIRST Robotics Team 5295, Aldernating Current in preparation for the first of two competitions on March 4. The team has been working on completing the build of their robot, which will face off against robots built by teams from other communities. This year's challenge will place the robots in a playing field where they must overcome obstacles to capture a castle, removing and picking up boulders along the way. Youth are learning engineering, organization, teamwork, and public speaking skills. The team includes four 4-H adult volunteers and twelve youth 4-H members.

Master Gardener Program

Staff: **R. Jeanne Rehwaldt**, Program Coordinator

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

Updates: The February training class was held at Mason County Public Works in their training room. The subject was something all gardeners know determines whether or not you have a successful growing experience. SOIL! The best way to improve soil is to add organic amendments to it annually, namely – high quality compost.



Two Mason County MGs completed Master Composter/Recycler training in Thurston County last fall. They taught the Mason County trainees about techniques for composting waste and answered questions about composting and how to amend native soil with compost. An activity, “Soil in a Jar” helped trainees determine their soil type.

Mason County currently does not offer Composter/Recycling

training. With trained volunteers to hold classes around the county, teaching sustainable methods to improve soil and reduce waste, we can take a step in the right direction to improve the health of the county while saving valuable resources at the same time.

Food \$ense Nutrition

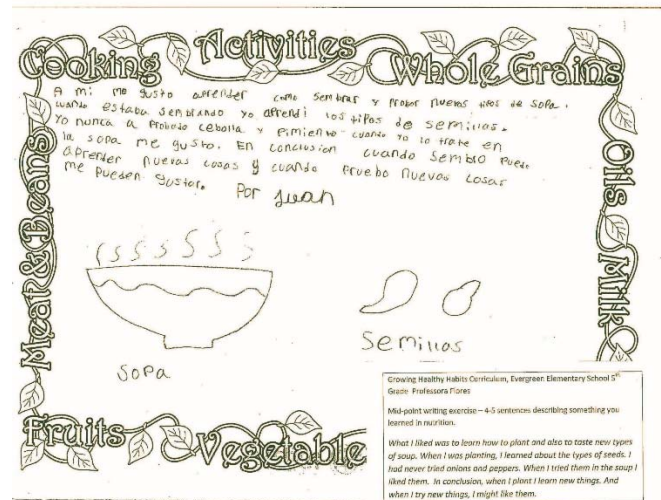
Staff: R. Jeanne Rehwaldt, Program Coordinator
Pamela Lyons, Joshua Munro and Christine Ciacetta, Educators

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: Gardening classes at Evergreen Elementary are growing connections between nutrition, healthy lifestyles and growing food. Growing Healthy Habits curriculum from University of Maryland Extension. It includes lots of great gardening lessons and can be used effectively without a garden. Food \$ense Nutrition Educator Christine Ciacetta has engaged the 5th grade students at the school. One teacher, Mrs. Flores, assigned a mid-point writing exercise of 4-5 sentences, directing students to describe something they learned in nutrition class. Here are examples of how the lessons impacted students’ behaviors and knowledge around healthy lifestyles. An exciting outcome is that the students are sharing what they learn with their parents!

“What I liked was to learn how to plant and also to taste new types of soup. When I was planting, I learned about the types of seeds. I had never tried onions and peppers. When I tried them in the soup I liked them. In conclusion, when I plant I learn new things. And when I try new things, I might like them.”

"I liked the apple with almond butter. I also like the fruit smoothie. I told my parents that rainbow-colored fruits are good for you. In conclusion, fruits and vegetables are good for you to have a healthy life."



Water Resources Program

Staff: Erica Bates, Water Resources Associate

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:



In February, the Water Resources Program worked with the Mason Education, Communication, and Outreach Network (ECO Net) to collaborate with the Alliance for a Healthy South Sound (AHSS), our Local Integrating Organization. AHSS supports the coordinated and collaborative decision-making aimed at restoring and protecting the ecological and socio-economic health of South Puget Sound. Mason ECO Net is a community of professionals working collaboratively to protect and enhance the health and vitality of the Puget Sound region through education and outreach. Due to their similar missions, the ECO Net and AHSS are working to determine ways to collaborate and coordinate more effectively in order achieve environmental and social successes in the South Puget Sound region.

Mason ECO Net and AHSS were a part of a meeting with all ECO Net and LIO coordinators from throughout Puget Sound to determine how best to coordinate and support each other. ECO Net members will be a part of a newly formed education and outreach subcommittee for AHSS and will also help develop strategies for education and outreach in the South Sound Strategy that AHSS is currently developing. These coordinated efforts should support the work of the ECO Net member organizations and help AHSS member organizations develop and produce more complete programs with an education and outreach component. This will support the goal of encouraging public behavior change that is beneficial to Puget Sound recovery.



Small Farms Program

Staff: Mary DiMatteo, Small Farms Educator and Outreach Specialist

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

Updates: Small Farms staff worked with local farmers, and the Mason Conservation District to update the Mason County Farm map. This will be an important addition to the county and one of many ways we can support food producers in the county. Small farms staff is also coordinating the CED faculty to gather requirements and work with farmers market managers to develop software that will make it easier to turn farmers markets into local food hubs for area restruarants.

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.