



Mason County

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

July Accomplishments, 2015

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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 of Community and Economic Development

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

Updates: The CED is continuing to work with local partners to support economic stabilization and address the needs of employees impacted by the closures of Simpson and Olympic Panel Products. We will be holding information sessions at the new Transition Center in August and September for employees interested in degree completion and worker re-training programs through WSU. WSU and the SBDC will also be conducting "Profit Mastery" trainings in September for new and existing businesses.

The CED continues to work with Mason EDC and Enterprise for Equity to develop micro-enterprise training and financial assistance program for the county. The final proposal and work plan is scheduled to be completed by the end of August.

The CED is also working on submitting a research proposal for investigating pathways for building up seaweed cultivation for food and biofuels. This would result in a roadmap for expanding the aquaculture industry in the county and the region. We have partnered with UW Sea Grant, the Bio-Systems Engineering Lab at WSU and the Pacific Shellfish Institute to explore the technical requirements, as well as the economic, social and environmental impacts of commercial seaweed cultivation in the South Sound and Hood Canal. The proposal is due August 7th and award notifications will be announced in September.

Noxious Weed Program

Staff: Patricia Grover, Coordinator
Connor Cordray, Assistant
Brayden Raber, Assistant

Updates:



New giant hogweed site

Activity and the weather continued to heat up during the month of July for the Mason County Noxious Weed Control program. The town of Tahuya hosted the Tahuya Day Celebration on July 4 and over 80 participants at the event visited the noxious weed booth. This type of public education continues to produce results as a new giant hogweed site was reported to the program and, with cooperation from the landowner, initial treatment at this waterfront property was implemented.



During this month, we said good-bye to our friend and five season field assistant, Connor Cordray. We wish him well as he pursues his Master's Degree in Public Health at the University of Texas.

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.

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 annual Garden Tour was held on July 11 and the gardens welcomed the first measurable rain that day. The rain was a pleasant change as nearly 200 "tourists" visited six gardens in the Pickering/Lake Limerick/Agate/Grapeview areas. All but one garden featured edibles along with the ornamental flowers, shrubs, and trees that one expects on a garden tour.



Bird bath repurposed as a planter

Visitors learned about beekeeping, raising fowl, how to conserve water in the garden and use repurposed objects to decorate the garden. Master Gardener volunteers were on hand to answer questions and point out the more unusual plants and other items in the gardens. Next year's tour will focus on the Union area, with Harmony Hill Cancer Retreat Center already agreeing to be included.

4-H Youth Development Program

Staff: **Dan Teuteberg**, Regional Specialist - Assistant Professor
Kathy Fuller, Program Coordinator
Jonathan Andrewski, AmeriCorps Member

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

Updates:



On July 25, 2015 the Mason County 4-H Youth Development Program hosted the first annual 4-H Extravaganza at Shelton High School. The closure of the Port of Shelton Fairgrounds presented Mason County 4-H an opportunity to plan and organize the 4-H alternative to fair. This event allowed Mason County 4-H youth to exhibit their projects, qualify for State 4-H Fair, and share their knowledge with the community in a whole new way. The community was invited to this free, family-friendly event and enjoyed educational displays, portable challenge activities, public presentations, project displays, and a style show. Animal projects held their qualifying events off-site prior to July 25. All state fair qualifiers were announced at the end of the event. Approximately seventy five 4-H youth and adults participated in the 4-H Extravaganza and approximately 30 community members attended the event.

Food \$ense Nutrition

Staff: R. Jeanne Rehwaldt, Program Coordinator
Pamela Lyons, Joshua Munro and Christine Ciancetta, 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: Food \$ense Nutrition has been instrumental in the development of the Eating for Health workgroup which is serving as a roundtable to create opportunity for partners from different sectors to collaborate, and share information and resources. Through such information sharing, community groups can align efforts and strengths to more effectively work for the shared goal of greater health and well-being of our community.

In the interest of expanding the strategic plan for 2016, the focus area *Healthy Eating, Knowledge, Skills, and Behavior to make the healthier choice the easier choice* will now include physical activity as a strategy to achieve the outcome identified to:

- Increase adopted policies or strategies that encourage healthier eating and increased physical activity.
- Decrease percent of youth and adults who are considered overweight or obese.



Food \$ense educators and program manager met with Allie Perline (Mason County Public Health) and Mark Ziegler (City of Shelton Parks and Rec) in July. Erin Hixson, Second Year Medical Student from U of W, presented research focused on strategies to promote physical activity through park utilization among adults in Mason County. Some strategies

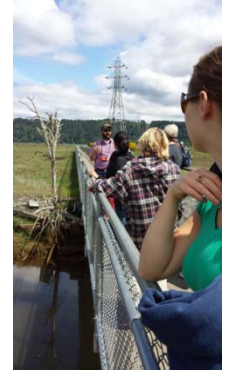
presented seem to be possible for our county and we will continue to develop this partnership to achieve the objectives outlined in the strategic plan. The bike rack (pictured) is located at Kneeland park is largely unused, let's fill it up!

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:



The Water Resources Program Coordinator also serves as the Coordinator of the Mason Education, Communication, and Outreach Network (ECO Net). The ECO Net is a community of professionals working collaboratively on environmental issues in Mason County. In July, the ECO Net completed and reported on a capacity building grant from the Puget Sound Partnership meant to increase membership and networking of the ECO Net to reach new audiences, elevate member engagement, and increase membership diversity. As a result of activities developed through this grant, we added 15 new members representing 12 different organizations, achieved a 50% increase in attendance at meetings, and held three new networking and professional development events including a tour of the Skokomish Estuary restoration project. We also developed a new partnership with Explore Hood Canal to promote our annual Oakland Bay Day event.

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:



On July 29th WSU Mason County Extension hired Mary DiMatteo as a part-time Small Farms Educator and Outreach Specialist. She will also be working with the Pacific Shellfish Institute (PSI) and other local partners to expand the Cultivating Success program for small farms to include sustainable aquaculture. This initiative will be the first of its kind in the State – bringing a proven training model for small farms to support small-scale aquaculture.

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.