



Mason County

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

July 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.

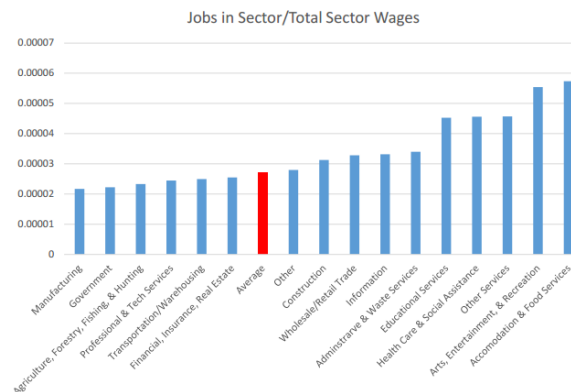
Program Updates

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: The CED unit continued to expand its data processing and analysis work during the month of July with a significant push to grow existing economic data sets that can be utilized to better understand economic trends in Mason County and across South Puget Sound. The combination of sophisticated GIS capabilities along with explorations in artificial intelligence are transforming the ways we collect, process and analyze information. In June, the CED began research to better understand the economic configuration of the county, and to assess ROI for public investment. The CED in Mason County is quickly becoming a national leader in data driven analytics, providing guidance to eXtension.org and the Association for Public Land Grant Universities for tracking trends related to innovation and public health threats across the country.

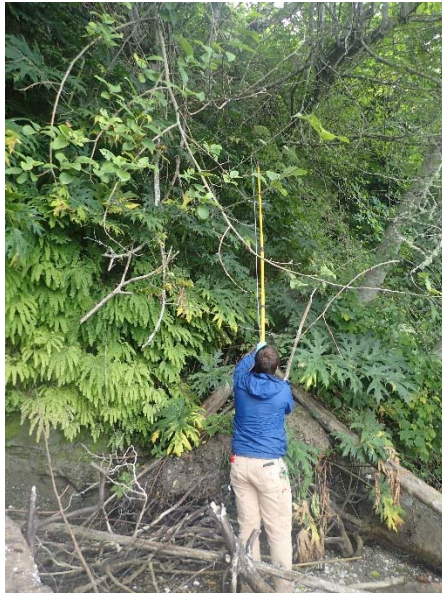


These efforts have the potential to serve local businesses, county government services and non-profit entities. Over the next several months the CED will continue with developing data products, develop a data repository and begin launching training programs in the county to familiarize local stakeholders with Big Data and data driven decision strategies.

Noxious Weed Program

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

Updates: A public meeting for the Spencer Lake Integrated Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan was held on July 22. Over 50 Mason County residents and property owners attended the meeting held at Mason PUD 3. Guest presenters included Spencer Lake resident Doris Zacher, Katie Otanez, from Mason County Public Health, and Arline Fullerton, an aquatic plants specialist residing in Mason County.



The noxious weed control team continues to assist citizens with the control of noxious weeds. A citizen report resulted in the detection of two new giant hogweed sites. The infestations were mapped, property owners contacted, permissions provided and control efforts initiated.

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:



From July 5 – July 22 the 4-H Summer Forestry Leadership Program provided ten teens an opportunity to develop their leadership, communication, and teamwork skills while gaining forestry knowledge and participating in a service-learning trail building project. The teens earned a weekly stipend and celebrated

completion of the program with a group hike to the summit of Mt. Ellinor. Alderbrook Resort provided the trail project site and financial support for the program.



The final three sessions of 4-H Summer Day Camp sessions were held in July. The sessions were filled with activity, creativity, and learning centered around natural disaster, energy, and nature themes. Each week twenty community youth ages 8 – 12 participated in creative art, engineering, gardening, and nutrition lessons, while making new friends.

Master Gardener Program

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

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

Updates:



On July 25th, Johanna Willingham started her part-time (.20) position as Master Gardener Coordinator. Johanna is a 5th Generation animal and vegetable farmer that hails from Georgia. She returned to gardening in earnest in 2003 establishing community gardens and school gardens throughout the world. Following graduation from Mercer University in 2004, she had the unique opportunity to serve with Peace Corps Ukraine's inaugural Youth Development Program teaching gardening and environmental education in an orphanage while living and working on a draft horse farm in the Carpathian Mountains. In 2009, she ventured north to Sitka, Alaska where she learned to successfully farm and wild harvest terrestrial, intertidal and oceanic crops on extreme coastal island conditions. While in Sitka, she

received her Master Gardener training through University of Sitka, Alaska program in 2009, helped to establish the local farmers market, various community garden projects as well as building a sustainable farm-to-school and seed-to-plate culinary arts program. She received her Bachelor's degree in Food System Change and Sustainable Agriculture in 2011 from The Evergreen State College. Since graduation she managed the Vashon Farmers Market and continued to manage the Sitka Farmers Market from a distance, worked for Washington State Department Agriculture's Organic Food Program and continued to farm organically in Thurston County at both The Evergreen State College Organic Farm and Calliope Farm. Over the past year and half she has launched her sustainable wild-harvested seaweed business, Skipping Tides Sea Greens selling her specialty products throughout Oregon and Washington. She has continued to study draft horsepower on farms throughout the Pacific Northwest. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of Seattle Tilth advocating for farmers throughout Washington State as well as presiding as the Secretary of the Executive Board for the West Olympia Farmers Market. In addition to her position as the Master Gardener Coordinator at WSU Mason County, she is a Field Hand and Market Manager for Calliope Farm in Olympia, Washington.



In spite of a misty drizzle on Saturday, July 9, over 220 people showed up to tour the six beautiful gardens in the Union area that comprised this year's Master Gardener Garden Tour. The tour received rave reviews on the survey cards complimenting the variety and creativity displayed in the gardens. Folks from Olympia and beyond attended the tour. One person from Seattle was overheard saying just visiting the Smith garden was well worth the long drive.



Highlights for many was the VanBoven garden secreted away on a private 5-acre lake, other comments praised the art work in the Kelley garden, and everyone wowed over the giant eggplant at the Alderbrook Community garden and the amazing diversity there. A special treat was getting to hear Kim Wheeler play her Russian pan drum. After the tour the docents and garden owners had a fine time at the Close Castle for a lovely dinner.



Kelley Garden



Kenner Garden



Alderbrook Community Garden

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: Food \$ense Nutrition Program and 4H have partnered for a popular and successful free camp at the Mason Transit Authority Community Center. We served 30 youth using the “Kids in the Kitchen” curriculum to provide hands-on learning experiences in cooking kid-friendly snacks like homemade whole-wheat pretzels, nutty whole-grain granola cookies, and fruit smoothies. Each lesson features an exercise component to get kids moving and underscore the importance exercise in overall health.



Nutrition staff members met important Federal reporting deadlines and entered class size and demographic information for all our partner schools including Shelton HS, Olympic MS, Hood Canal SD, Mary M Knight SD, Mountain View Elementary and Evergreen Elementary schools. This amounts to 1,945 students for 2015/16 in schools where free and reduced-lunch students are more than 50% of the population.

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 July, the Water Resources Program continued implementation of the Hood Canal Pollution Identification and Correction Outreach and Education program. Recent work has included conducting audience research with shoreline homeowners in Hoodspout and Union. Fifteen homeowners participated in a thirty minute phone interview designed to assess their current level of knowledge in best management practices, desire to participate in an educational site visit, preferred organization to deliver educational information, preferred incentive to participate, and many other topics. The information gathered during this research is being used to guide the current and potentially future projects. We have also begun knocking on doors in Hoodspout and Union to offer free educational site visits to local residents. We will also work on the Northshore of Hood Canal and are currently gathering information about the residential parcels near our focus area of Tahuya so that we can begin contacting those homeowners. Work on this project will continue through the end of 2016

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:



It's late July and the growing season is in full swing - this month the Small Farms program devoted time to mapping the food infrastructure currently present in Mason County, visiting multiple Mason County farms, learning about the new Volunteer Stewardship Program for farmers, and analyzing potential agricultural infrastructure investments that would best benefit the county at large. Work in August will include more visits to farms, organizing a post-season meeting for farmers, planning workshops that will be held in the fall, and continuing to assess which agricultural facilities are most needed in Mason County.

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.