



# Mason County

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

## June 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:** CED is expanding with a new hire, Greg Schundler. Greg will be working part-time within CED and with our Small Farms Team.



Greg hails from Princeton University with an Ecology and Neuroeconomics degree; the University of Washington with a Master's in GIS for Sustainability Management; and ten years of diverse work experience including agriculture, aquaculture, manufacturing, finance, marketing, nonprofit, and public sector activism.

Greg will be working with Dr. Smith, and Colin Stewart (our new Small Farms Outreach Coordinator) to quantify the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Rural Economy. Current economic accounting is incomplete as it does not quantify critical sectors such as outdoor recreation, baby boomer real estate and consumer expenditures, and non "non-farm income". The framework includes 10 sectors including: Agriculture, Tourism, Retirement, DIY/Off-Grid, Tribal Economies, Real Estate, Public Sector, Healthcare, Ecosystem Services, Extraction, and Transportation/Distribution. Temporal and spatial data will augment our research to help quantify, localize, and track triple bottom line outcomes including economic, social, and environmental attributes of interest. Results will be available on the CED page for Mason County Extension (<https://extension.wsu.edu/mason>), in late August.

CED is also slated to provide a series of Information Technology and Big Data Workshops beginning August 10<sup>th</sup> and continuing through December. Dr. Smith has produced a number of tools that provide trends-tracking capabilities for public health, business intelligence and opinion tracking of local policies. These tools will be showcased, and made available to Mason County residents.

## Noxious Weed Program

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

**Updates:** The Mason County Noxious Weed Control program welcomed Keith Reitz to the program in June. Keith and Kendall hit the Mason County ground running as we worked to control blooming noxious weeds given a boost by the warmer than normal temperatures.



With the assistance of volunteers, Allan and Norma Borden, the program participated in the Oakland Bay Day event on June 12. Nearly 80 attendees learned about noxious weeds and had an opportunity to participate in a fun activity to learn about native pollinators.

In addition, a mailing to 160 Spencer Lake property owners was completed. This letter, originating from the Spencer Lake Steering Committee, informed recipients of the Public Meeting planned for June 22, 2016 to learn about the Spencer Lake IAVMP.

## 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:



4-H summer learning is here! Mason County 4-H kicked off summer programs in June with a week-long educational overnight horse camp at Panhandle Lake 4-H Camp. Thirty-four youth and ten adult volunteers spent the week learning teamwork, leadership, responsibility, science and horsemanship skills.

The first of four free 4-H Summer Day Camp sessions was held in June. This session was filled with activity, creativity, and learning centered around a “Washington” theme. Twenty community youth ages 8 – 12 participated in climate and environment activities, nutrition lessons, and physical activities, while making new friends. Financial sponsorship from a local business made holding the day camp at the Mason Community Transit Center possible.



## Master Gardener Program

**Staff:** Nancy Dillon, Master Gardener Volunteer

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

## Updates:



It's a very busy time for Catalyst Park, Master Gardener volunteers harvest produce every Tuesday and deliver to The Saints Pantry Food Bank. The 2016 production is at about 300 pounds thus far.

The Community Garden also located at Catalyst Park has 18 raised beds, 16 are rented to community members. Master Gardeners hold workshops monthly at the garden for those with raised beds, approximately 12 attend

each workshop. Topics vary from beginning gardening, composting, mulching, fall planting, seed saving and much more.

This year the goal is to build a structure at Catalyst Park to hold public workshops and add new signage outside of the food bank garden. Master Gardeners will continue to seek donations to help with the cost of water, seed, soil, improvements and etc...

## 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:** The Food \$ense Nutrition Program concluded teaching activities in the Shelton, Pioneer and Mary M Knight School Districts. Despite cutbacks in budget and staff, this year our educators were able to reach over 2,000 school-aged youth in their classrooms. A major new program to introduce fresh fruit and vegetable tasting to every single student in school cafeterias was unfortunately not able to be finalized and implemented. Food \$ense contact projections for 2016 dropped by about half, due to this shift. Constraints in time and procedures in school cafeterias make this an admirable yet ultimately very difficult program to begin. We will continue to collaborate with our partner schools to find more ways to reach students.

Similarly, our proposed Sound to Harbor Head Start nutrition program was not able to begin due to staffing and budget constraints. Department of Health in Mason county will now be working with this organization and small population of about 40 contacts. We are on target to meet projected 250 contacts at Saint's Pantry Food Bank and are working closely with the food bank director to increase access to educational materials and improve the distribution of healthy items in the school backpack program. Grocery store demonstrations are on hold as we transition to moving from a higher-end market to one frequented more often by our target population. Behavioral Health Resources' Harvest Program continues to gain accolades (The *Olympian*; <http://www.theolympian.com/news/local/article87293672.html>) with a unit on Cooking Matters and healthy meal planning delivered by our veteran Food \$ense educator, Pamela Bish.



Food \$ense and 4H are pleased to begin a collaborative venture. The last week of June was our first free 4H summer camp to include lessons from "Kids in the Kitchen", a hands-on approach to learning about healthy living through cooking and physical activity.



## 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 June, the Water Resources Program coordinated the annual Oakland Bay Day event. This event is organized by Mason ECO Network each year to celebrate the natural



**A family constructing a bird house to take home at the Mason Conservation booth.**

resources in Mason County. For the second year the event was held at the Bayshore Preserve. The Preserve is the site of the former Bayshore Golf Course and is now owned by Capitol Land Trust and undergoing activities to restore it to a natural state. Local resource agencies, educational groups, and non-profits provide educational information on topics like water quality, wildlife, noxious weeds, and best management practices for property owners. Activities for this year included a bird walk, restoration site tour, native plant walk, trivia scavenger hunt, live music, and a shellfish snack from Taylor Shellfish. Approximately 150 people attended with 50 completing the scavenger hunt by visiting and talking with the representatives at each educational booth.

## Small Farms Program

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

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

**Updates:** June oversaw the installation of Colin Stewart as joint Research and Outreach support for Community Economic Development and The WSU Small Farms Program at WSU Extension Mason County. Colin joins Greg Schundler to provide additional support for our programs. Colin will be working with Greg and Dr. Smith on various economic development efforts, but will be primarily focused on:

- coordinating our up-coming training programs designed for local farmers, land owners and food processors.
- Implementing an updated communications plan to increase communication between farmers, business, EDC and other entities.
- Working directly with farmers to address production issues and explore new farming opportunities.
- Working WSU agriculture and natural resource faculty to investigate opportunities for farm diversification, and organic grains production.



Colin is a Senior at Evergreen, designing his own course work around small scale organic grain cultivation. Colin is a part-time farmer at Hidden River Farms, Montesano, WA where he co-manages organic wheat, and barely cultivation. On the weekends, he helps run Hidden River's farmers market stand in Ballard, WA.

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.