



Mason County

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

March 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.

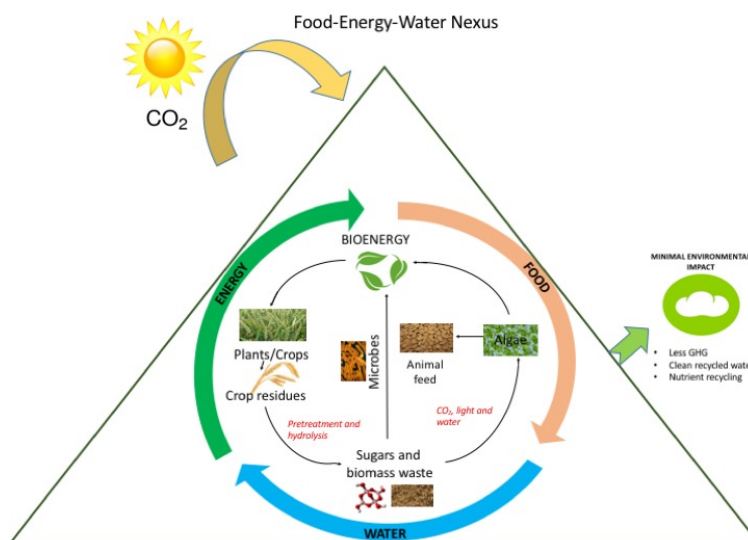
Program Updates

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: Mason County CED Faculty is playing a central role in a new research initiative at WSU. Dr. Justin Smith worked with faculty in the Biosystems Engineering Lab, and the School of Economic Sciences to develop a \$2,998,342.00 NSF proposal that would result in research and training that would establish "Recycling Enabled Sustainable Technologies" for Food, Energy and Water Systems. Proposed technologies include algae based filtration in waste-water treatment facilities, and bio-processing of residual forest products for energy, and co-products. The goal of this research is to maximize food production in both terrestrial and aquatic environments, recycle energy, produce or protect clean water, and generate economic opportunity throughout WA State.



Noxious Weed Program

Staff: **Patricia Grover**, Coordinator
Brayden Raber, Assistant

Updates: Twenty-six Spencer Lake residents and property owners gathered at the home of a local resident on Saturday, March 19 to learn about the Spencer Lake Integrated Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan (IAVMP), meet fellow lake property owners and ask questions. This informal community meeting initiated the IAVMP process. Ten attendees volunteered to participate in a steering committee which plans to meet on April 09.

The unseasonably warm spring weather has prompted multiple calls to the MCNWCB office seeking assistance with noxious weed control. The word is getting out about the highly invasive nature of noxious weeds and the threat that they pose to our local ecosystems and economy. Three of the contacts have been for knotweed control information. Our outreach efforts are working!

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: On March 12 Mason County 4-H hosted 4-H Community Day at Memorial Hall. This free event was open to all youth in the community and provided hands-on educational activities in a fun and safe environment. The activities which included baking apple pies, sewing tote bags, learning the art of photography, creating origami animals, and constructing blankets for a local shelter were led by trained adult volunteers. Shelton Police Chief Darrin Moody also stopped by to speak about citizenship and his connection with 4-H. Approximately 29 people were in attendance.



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 Master Gardener's have been busy answering questions in the plant clinic, completing the Through the Garden Gate community gardening workshops, and planning and planting for the May 6 & 7 plant sale. In addition, the class of trainees has been learning about composting, recycling and reducing waste, planting perennials for the plant sale, and cleaning the greenhouse and garden at Pioneer School. It's a very busy time of year that included conducting orientation for the new Community Gardeners at Catalyst Park.

Shelton Kiwanis donated \$500 to ensure Catalyst Park is able to continue growing and providing fresh produce to Saint's Pantry clients this summer. Thank you Shelton Kiwanis for your continued support!

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: SNAP Ed draft grant for FY 2017 was submitted to Department of Health, the new Implementing Agency for Region 5. This Region encompasses all counties west of I-5 from Vancouver to Olympia, then over to Mason County and up the Peninsula. Funding was reduced by 26% for this region compared to the FY 2016 budget. DSHS, who distributes the funds, posted a RFP rather than distribute the funding to WSU Food \$ense and DOH in Olympia. Out of the five regions created by DSHS, just one region will have WSU as the Implementing Agency. This change resulted in many programs losing personnel and struggling to continue programming currently.

In Mason County, Extension Coordinator Supervisor Jeanne Rehwaldt will be leaving the program to accept the position of Executive Director of Mason Matters. The program will be led by Christine Ciacetta, interim manager, until the position is announced and filled. With the budget reduction, the program manager will work .49 FTE and the two nutrition educators will be retained to continue programming in the county. One school was dropped from the program due to this reduction and many grade levels of classes were also cut. Jeanne Rehwaldt will be completing her work with Food \$ense April 8, 2016 and be taking annual leave through June 2016.

Note from Jeanne: As the CEO for Food \$ense for the past four years, beginning in 1999 as a part time educator, I must say it has been a pleasure getting to know so many people as the program grew. The community has always seen the value of teaching residents about healthy lifestyle choices, including gardening in many schools over the years. The decision to leave was a difficult one, but in the best interest of the program and because of the unique opportunity to lead Mason Matters' efforts to create a culture of health, I took the plunge. I'm excited to be able to focus fully on the work ahead and I look forward to interacting with the Commissioner's and their staff. I will continue to manage the WSU Master Gardener Program.

Water Resources Program

Staff: Erica Bates, Water Resources Associate

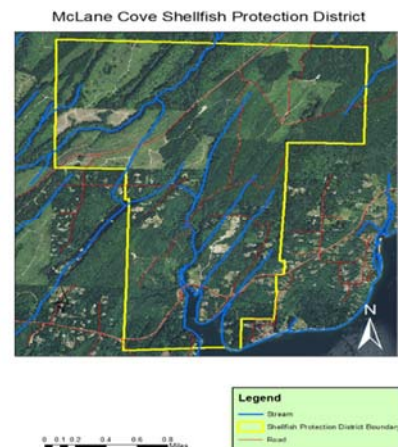
Mission: The Water Resources program helps members of our community make the best choices in caring for our local waters by providing research-based tools and information. We connect people with appropriate resources through collaboration with other extension programs, government agencies, businesses,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

Updates: The Water Resources Program participated in the formation of two new shellfish protection districts in Mason County. The McLane Cove area of Pickering Passage and Big Bend area of Hood Canal both recently received a downgrade in water quality from the WA State Department of Health. These areas are now only conditionally approved for commercial shellfish harvest. This means that there are restrictions on harvest related to the amount of precipitation in a 24 hour period. The downgrade is a result of water quality test results related to fecal coliform bacteria. The sources of fecal coliform bacteria can be human or animal waste and may be related to failing septic systems, livestock, wild animals or another source.

The Water Resources Program will participate in each of the Shellfish Protection Districts (SPD) formed as a result of these downgrades. The SPDs bring together community residents, government agencies, shellfish growers, tribes, and other interested parties to identify and correct the sources of pollution. The Water Resources Program can assist through educational efforts on the potential sources of pollution and general best management practices for properties in the affected watersheds.



McLane Cove SPD boundaries in right figure.



Big Bend SPD Boundaries in left figure.

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: The Small Farms Program at WSU Extension Mason County participated in the 2016 Small Farms Team Annual Retreat, held in Skagit County at the Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Building, Mount Vernon. The team discussed the revisioning of the Small Farms Team and decided upon the development of the Farm and Food Systems Team. This revision seeks to more holistically bond the various facets of the team including emphasis on food waste reduction, food access, nutritional planning, on-farm technical assistance, direct marketing, and addressing infrastructural requirements of industrial local food purchasing. The Small Farms Program at WSU Extension Mason County has also been working toward the creation of a single page in the 2016 Cascade Harvest Coalition Farm Guide. As one of the only counties not listed in the Farm Guide (Mason & GHC), WSU staff made a concerted effort to seek farms and farm based businesses in Mason County who are interested investing in making the one page Mason County advertisement a reality. So far, 21 businesses in Mason County are listed including The Farm at Water's Edge, Hunter Farms, Hama Hama Oyster Co., Walter Dacon Winery, Fungi Perfecti and The Harstine Island, Shelton, and Belfair Farmers' Markets.

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.