



Mason County

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

May Accomplishments, 2016

Justin G. Smith, PhD., County Director, justingriffis@wsu.edu, 360-427-9670 ext. 690
Lisa DeWall, Office Manager, LisaD@co.mason.wa.us, 360-427-9670 ext. 680

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: May was an exciting month for the CED. We launched our first series of workshops on the use of drones for remote sensing and data analytics. Squaxin Tribe Department of Natural Resources hosted the first session, and members from Squaxin, and Skokomish tribes were present along with other professionals in natural resource management from around Mason County. We discussed use cases and methods for data collection for business development, natural resource monitoring and modeling, as well as for food and agricultural production. The level of interest and demand for advanced data services is significant in our county, and the CED will expand training and data services.



In July and August, we will be hosting a series of workshops dedicated to hands on data collection with drones and balloons for capturing remote sensing data. We will be working specifically on measuring and monitoring shellfish production. The CED also continues to expand upon its data analytics in the realm of social media monitoring for small business and food systems assessment.

Noxious Weed Program

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

Updates: The Mason County Noxious Weed Control Board participated in 3 events this month. Live samples of many of Mason County's most notorious noxious weeds could be found on display at the Mason County Master Gardener Plant Sale, the Matlock Old Timers' Fair and opening day of the outdoor Harstine Island Farmer's Market. Over 300 residents and visitors received information about noxious weeds during these events.

Again, this year, the Bee-U-tify seed packets provided by the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board were a popular item at all events. The emphasis on pollinators supports the National Strategy to promote Pollinator Health.



The program welcomes Kendall Carmen to the field staff and looks forward to her contributions to the program goals.

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: The summer learning season is approaching fast! Working alongside several community partners Mason County 4-H is excited to provide the following summer programs which will allow all Mason County youth to explore the science in their everyday lives, grow leadership and citizenship skills, explore future career opportunities, and make healthier decisions:

- Summer Educational Day Camps – themed learning sessions where creativity and activity take place helping to bridge the summer learning gap
- Career Exploration Program – summer field program where teens are introduced to a wider world of career possibilities
- Forestry Leadership – teens learn leadership and natural resource management alongside natural resource professionals
- Overnight Educational Camps – a personal growth experience where community building, environmental awareness and skill building happen

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: Spring and May always inspires gardeners to get planting! This spring has inspired many organizations to hold plant sales as fundraisers. The weekend of Mother's Day was chosen by the WSU Master Gardeners in Mason County to hold their annually plant sale. This weekend was chosen because it comes at a time when its best for planting dahlia tubers, tomato starts, perennials, and cool season vegetables. It was also chosen because it didn't compete with other festivals and plant sales. The final reason for that date was the annual 4-H poker ride and American Rhododendron Society's show at the Mason County Fairground. That was back in 1999.



A workshop by Mary Dessel about Native Ferns of Mason County.

Fast forward to 2016. Times have changed and the fairgrounds is gone, the poker ride is no longer held, other plant sales have sprung up, and Matlock's Old Timers Festival happened to be that same weekend. In spite of all the competition, the reputation the Master Gardener's have built produced a huge crowd of eager gardeners on Friday to purchase \$10,000 worth of plants. Saturday the sales were down to just 20% of the first day. The weather was beautiful, the plants were presented in a professional manner, and MGs were on hand to answer questions and guide our customers in choosing the right plant for the right place. Our trainees also provided short workshops on varied topics to extend their learning. Well done WSU Master Gardeners team, don't forget to mark your calendars for next year!

Food \$ense Nutrition

Staff: **Christine Ciacetta**, Acting Program Coordinator
Pamela Lyons 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: Christine Ciacetta moved to the role of Acting Coordinator for the Food \$ense program. Christine spent nearly a year as a Nutrition Educator and brings with her a diverse background in program administration from 16 years of experience at The Evergreen State College. Christine is an active member in the South Sound local food movement and owned her own food production business for three years prior to joining the Mason Food \$ense program in June, 2015. Despite a change in leadership, the goals of the program remain constant: to reduce childhood obesity and increase physical activity for youth and adults.

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.

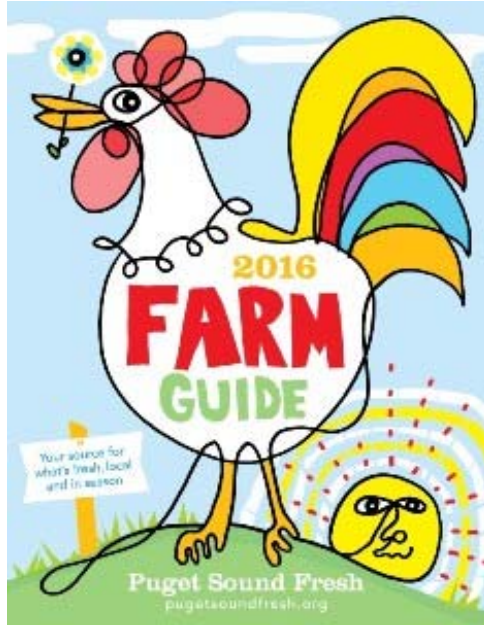
Updates: The Water Resources Program continued implementation of the Hood Canal Pollution Identification and Correction Outreach and Education program. This month the work focused on contacting and interviewing property owners that participated in a similar project in 2015. These property owners in the Hoodsport and Union areas participated in a site visit to their property with clean water advisors from WSU Extension and the Mason Conservation District. The interviews were conducted this month to evaluate whether the property owners implemented any of the recommended best management practices on their property and determine the strengths and weaknesses of the site visit process to inform the work that will occur this summer. Thirty-five properties with thirty-two unique owners received site visits in 2015 and sixteen completed this survey. Fourteen (88%) of the respondents implemented some or all of the recommendations, suggesting that these site visits are an effective way to encourage property owners to make changes that can benefit water quality.

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 has completed the creation of a single page in the 2016 Cascade Harvest Coalition Farm Guide. It is now available in businesses throughout the county and at <http://www.pugetsoundfresh.org>.

There are 19 businesses in Mason County listed including The Farm at Water's Edge, Hunter Farms, Hama Hama Oyster Co., Walter Dacon Winery, Fungi Perfecti and The Harstine Island, Shelton, Union City 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.