



Mason County

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Accomplishments, October 2014

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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

4-H Youth Development Program

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

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

Updates: STEM is the wave of the future. Experts credit technological innovation with almost half of U.S. economic growth over the past 50 years, and nearly all of the 30 fastest-growing occupations in the next decade will require at least some background in STEM. On October 8, 4-H Programs across the United States celebrated 4-H National Youth Science Day. As part of this national science celebration Mason County 4-H hosted an hour long science experiment event at the Shelton Timberland Library. In this experiment 15 youth from the community, with help from 6 adult volunteers made Oobleck, a unique substance that is both a liquid and a solid. An Afterschool science program partnership with Pioneer Elementary School has reached over 70 youth in the past month. The number of youth participants and adult volunteers served is slightly higher than projected.



Oobleck – STEM Science Experiment

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. October 4th & 5th displayed program resources and promoted online class "Preserve the Taste of Summer" at Oysterfest 2014.

Food \$ense Nutrition

- Staff:** R. Jeanne Rehwaldt, Program Coordinator
Pamela Lyons, Karen King and Joshua Munro, Educators
Danielle Thompson, AmeriCorps Member
- 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:** A Team Nutrition grant was awarded to Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction in partnership with WSU Extension. Mason County WSU Extension nutrition educators will be participating to form "Smarter Lunchroom Teams" and implement smarter lunchroom techniques over the school year. Local school districts who have agreed to participate are: Pioneer SD, Shelton SD, and Mary M. Knight SD.

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:** During the month of October, the final septic system workshop of 2014 was presented to homeowners in Mason County. In partnership with Mason County Public Health, four workshops were presented in 2014 with 47 residents attending. The workshops help to protect water quality and human health in Mason County as a poorly-maintained system can fail and leak sewage. Attendees learn about the components of septic systems, how to recognize a problem, inspection, and maintenance of their system.
- Significant current partnerships include: Mason Conservation District, Mason County Public Health, Taylor Shellfish, Mason ECO Net, Puget Sound Partnership, and Native Plant Salvage.

Master Gardener Program

Staff: **R. Jeanne Rehwaldt**, Program Coordinator
Danielle Thompson, AmeriCorps Member

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

Updates: 35 volunteers, consisting of Master Gardeners, Community Gardeners, and community members gathered at Catalyst Park Garden on a rainy Saturday in October to clean beds, lay a mulch of straw on all the beds, and to celebrate the success of the growing season in 2014.



Food Bank Donation

Nearly 4,000 pounds of locally grown fresh produce was donated from this site to Saint's Pantry food bank in Shelton. This is an increase of 50% over 2013 harvest.



Master Gardener Volunteers at Catalyst Park Garden Oct. 2014



Catalyst Park Garden Oct. 2014

Small Farms Program

Staff: **Erik Hagan**, Program Coordinator

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

Updates: Developing a framework to bridge the gap between agricultural landowners and environmental regulators on water quality issues surrounding the Puget Sound. This project presents an opportunity for new niche markets and agricultural production systems that focus on tree crops along riparian ecosystems. This has a tremendous potential to positively impact agricultural and economic development within Mason County while supporting stakeholder objectives towards protecting our sensitive aquatic natural resources.

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.

Noxious Weed Program

Staff: Patricia Grover, Coordinator
Connor Cordray, Assistant

Updates: As in years past, the field season for the Mason County Noxious Weed Control program culminated with Oysterfest 2014. Information was provided to hundreds of Mason County residents and visitors who had an opportunity to ask questions and learn about the impacts of noxious weeds.



Professional Development

Committee: Lisa DeWall, Erica Bates, Kathy Fuller, Jeanne Rehwalt & Patricia Grover.

On Friday, October 10th 43 individuals took part in the professional development workshop “Designing, Implementing and Evaluating Educational Programs” held at Mason County Public Works. The workshop was coordinated by WSU Mason County Extension with funding provided by WSU Extension Community and Economic Development. Guest Speaker was Dr. Kay Sagmiller, Director, OSU Center for Teaching and Learning. Of the 43 in attendance, 31 were staff from surrounding WSU Extension offices and 12 were Mason County partners and volunteers.

Dr. Sagmiller demonstrated how to effectively move an educational program through the planning, implementation and evaluation process. Participants then collaboratively designed and analyzed projects from their own work to ensure alignment between the project goals and the evaluation data. Post surveys showed marked improvement in knowledge.

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.