Mission Statement

Washington State University Extension Lewis County helps people put research-based knowledge to work improving their lives, communities, and the environment.

To realize this mission, faculty and staff plan, conduct and evaluate research and experience-based educational programs to improve the lives of Lewis County residents.

WSU Extension Lewis County also employs the assistance of hundreds of volunteers and community partners and provides access to the resources available at Washington State University and the National Land Grant University Extension System.

Local Programs Include:
- 4-H Youth Development
- Master Gardener/Master Recycler
- Food Safety & Preservation
- SNAP-Ed Program
- Small Farm/Agritourism
- Stewardship Forestry
- Noxious Weed Education and Control
- Pesticide License testing

Extending Knowledge and Changing the Lives of Lewis County Residents

April-June 2021

Program Outcomes and Impacts

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WSU Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local WSU Extension office. Washington State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Lewis County cooperating agencies.
SNAP-Ed Program

Situation & Issue
This project targets adults and children with messages that are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines and teaches the skills to select and prepare the lowest-cost, most nutritious (and tasty) foods. Educators emphasize increased consumption of fruits, vegetables, low fat milk, and decreased consumption of high fat and high sugar foods. Additional messages emphasize portion size and the importance of physical activity.

Outcomes and Results for 2021
This quarter SNAP-Ed Lewis County has focused work on their Farm to Community initiative, partnering with area farmers markets and the Lewis County Food Bank Coalition (LCFBC). The Farmers Markets in Lewis County are in full swing and experiencing a ton of support. Community members are out in the sun enjoying the fresh and local goods Lewis County producers have to offer. SNAP-Ed has been supporting the Chehalis, Centralia, Morton and Toledo markets. Each week we drop off nutritional information sheets, recipes, and seed starting kits for the market managers to pass out to SNAP eligible folks. We have received feedback that the kids are loving the seed starting kits and requesting more of them. We will plan to table at some of the markets in July and August and to assist with their kids club.
SNAP-Ed is playing a supportive role, partnering with LCFBC in the implementation of the newly awarded Farm to Food Pantry grant. The grant is a statewide program through Harvest for Hunger, providing funds for area food banks and pantries to purchase produce directly from local farmers, strengthening relationships between food banks and farmers. We look forward to seeing fresh local produce at neighborhood food pantries throughout the county this summer.
2021 4-H
BY THE NUMBERS

- Over 813 reached through 4-H enrichment programs including
- 344 Youth traditionally enrolled in 4-H Clubs
- 106 Certified and Enrolled Adult Volunteers
- 25 teens in County Wide Teen Leadership Club

Lewis County 4-H Youth Program, April-June, 2021 (COVID-19)

Pam Watson, M.Ed., WSU Lewis County Extension, 4-H Faculty-WSU Assistant Professor

County 4-H volunteers work with youth in the framework of the “four Essential Elements” of positive youth development which are Belonging/Bonding, Mastery, Independence/Leadership, and Generosity. The 4-H membership year runs from Oct. 1 – Sept. 30 of each year. Youth and volunteers have from Oct. 1-April 1 (May 14, 2020-2021 year) to enroll/re-enroll each year.

Impacts to youth were:

- A total of 1,370 youth in all WSU Extension programs reaching K-12th grade youth in Lewis and surrounding counties (rolling yearlong total)
- 106 4-H volunteers in 4-H Volunteer Club Program with 36 of those as middle managers and/or in officer positions
- 344 youth are in the year-long 4-H volunteer led club program, including 25 youth enrolled as youth volunteer leaders (Junior Leaders)
- “Outreach 4-H Programs” ranging from after school 4-H clubs to day camps to school enrichment (heavily modified for this year of course), Virtual Know Your Government (Feb.), and Experience 4-H Online workshops and clinics (NEW) had approximately 1,026 (rolling yearlong total). In spite of Covid-19 we reached several youth through virtual 4-H club meetings, packets passed out through local elementary schools with lunches on snacks and nutrition, and several 4-H outreach project related programs provided via zoom in a multi-county effort we are calling Experience/Explore 4-H.

Pam has continued to meet with county committees/boards through phone and zoom meetings when those options have been made available. Lewis County 4-H Council meetings are made up of 4-H volunteers, 4-H Teens, and parents. We have continued to meet each month. Each Council meeting has contained an educational portion for up to one hour prior to the meeting, sometimes focused on volunteers and other times focused on youth education. This quarter’s education included Resuming 4-H In-person application, video, and a discussion on the county fair and what options to pursue. The 4-H Horse Advisory committee has elected to not meet electronically/virtually through spring 2021. Continued participation with community board groups such as Lewis County Thrives, WA Ag in the Classroom, Centralia Coalition, and Morton Up!; these meetings have been educational and supportive for members and to the community too during Covid-19. All of the community groups are planning to move ahead with different community support efforts in the spring and summer with more normal events/activities being planned for fall 2021.
To stay abreast of state-wide information twice-monthly zoom meetings through WSU are participated in based on the program area of Extension and 4-H. In June these were reduced back to once a month as during pre-Covid time. We have had staff meetings once a month to stay in touch with our WSU Lewis County Extension Office partners. Pam has also been a part of several state-wide discussion groups for youth animal science and adolescent leadership development, two of her 4-H focus areas. Pam has provided leadership to several county, state-wide, and national opportunities in the areas of Experience/Explore 4-H, communication & expressive arts, and poultry by hosting/co-hosting/tech support for 48 live broadcast (rolling yearlong totals) zoom sessions.

A few of our submissions and their themes: Girl’s Night Out, Lemon Lunch, and Mermaid

After our Explore 4-H workshop on the 4-H Table Setting Contest (normally one of our fair activities) on April 24th, youth were invited to submit photo entries, including their menus and theme to our Virtual Table Setting Contest. Each entry was judged and all youth received feedback and prizes for participation. The submissions were posted to our Explore 4-H with WSU Extension Facebook page.

Feedback from a parent/4-H volunteer: “Hi! This is Clairese’s mom (and general club leader), thank you so much for hosting this webinar and contest opportunity! It was a great pre-fair fun match sort of experience that really got a lot of her jitters out and grew her confidence and enthusiasm for entering fair... she was truly on the fence before this!”

~Jennifer Snyder

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS ABOUT 4-H

4-H'ers are:

- Nearly 4x more likely to make contributions to their communities
- About 2x more likely to be civically active
- Nearly 2x more likely to participate in science programs during out-of-school time
- 2x more likely (Grade 10) and nearly 3x more likely (Grade 12) to take part in science programs compared to kids in other out-of-school time activities
- Nearly 2x more likely to make healthier choices

The Positive Development of Youth: Comprehensive Findings from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development
Because WSU 4-H programs were allowed to start having club meetings in person in late May, after volunteers went through an application and short training (only 10 clubs out of about 37 went through this process), the effort continues to be made to stay in contact with the 4-H youth of Lewis County by: encouraging 4-H Volunteers to get a free Zoom or other free video chat capable program to have virtual 4-H meetings. These are a time to check-in, have a short learning session about 4-H project work, a social time to interact, and have some fun. Our multi-county regional group consisting of Lewis, Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, Pacific, and Thurston counties continue to put together several project related, multi-county, virtual programs, called Experience/Explore 4-H, with our average decreasing as we wind down for the summer to 4 programs per month. While these meetings do not make up for the time spent together in club meetings they do give the youth and adult volunteers a place to interact and learn about different 4-H project areas. See photos of what the youth have made during the April-June Experience 4-H programs with Pam, above. The most challenging part of keeping 4-H active and engaged has been the lack of high-speed technology and connectivity throughout the county.
Lewis County Master Gardener volunteers reported 2,538 hours from April to June 2021!

Volunteer activities included:

- Maintaining four Demonstration Gardens
  - Borst
  - Providence Place
  - Salkum Library
  - SW Washington Fairgrounds
- Working in our virtual Plant & Insect Clinic
- Advanced training and continuing education
- Supporting the program through public events, MG training, and other outreach

The WSU Master Gardener (MG) Program is a public service program that provides university training to volunteers for the purpose of enabling them to serve their communities by providing horticultural, gardening, landscaping, and environmental stewardship advise, free workshops, and other educational outreach to the public.

In May, MG volunteers were as excited as shoppers were about the return of our annual Spring Plant Sale at the SW Washington Fairgrounds after being canceled in 2020. Leftover vegetable plants were donated to local food banks and the hardy perennials will be sold at our Fall Plant Sale in September.

Through our virtual Plant & Insect Clinic (PIC), MG volunteers have identified and diagnosed dozens of PIC cases and provided helpful materials and advise to residents throughout Lewis County. We are excited for the in-person PIC to resume but we will continue to provide the virtual option for the community.

The WSU Extension Master Gardener Program has defined 10 critical issues facing Washington residents that we are poised to address. These ten issues are our Program Priorities. In our efforts to focus the education we provide to Lewis County residents, we sent out a survey to the community to get their input on which priorities we should focus on. The following Program Priorities have been ranked by respondents from the most to the least importance (1-10) and we will begin addressing these issues in our workshops and other outreach.

1. Wildfire Preparedness
2. Water Conservation
3. Pollinators
4. Clean Water
5. Nearby Nature
6. Local Food
7. Horticulture Skills
8. Soil Health
9. Plant Biodiversity
10. Climate Change
The WSU Master Recycler Composter (MRC) Program is a partnership between WSU Extension and Lewis County Solid Waste Utility that supports and trains volunteers to provide educational demonstrations, workshops, and other information to the public about reducing, reusing, and recycling solid waste.

Although COVID adversely impacted many of our MRC’s active participation, several volunteers helped the community and Lewis County Solid Waste Utility by monitoring and educating Centralia and Morton transfer station customers during the Recycling Reset about the new recycling policies.

Efforts by MRC volunteers prevented the contamination of the recycling bins by misplaced items deposited by the public saving the County thousands of dollars in excess hauling fees and the unnecessary dumping of recycleable solid waste.

Since August 2020, MRC volunteers delivered 16 Lunchtime Learning workshops to the public. Through this, we have made over 200 public contacts through attendance and recording viewership.

Similar to the Master Gardener program, important solid waste and sustainability-related issues are being identified to develop MRC Program Priorities. When complete, the community will be surveyed to get their input on what the Lewis County MRCs should focus on.

The MRC program’s newest demonstration site, the Floral Park Sustainability Project, will provide residents with a family-friendly “eco-park” experience while learning from numerous static displays, mini-research stations, kiosks, and working compost and worm bins to demonstrate how to reduce, reuse, and recycle solid waste.

Virtual workshops and on-site recycling monitoring have been the primary educational outreach but we hope to conduct in-person workshops and launch an MRC Training Program (similar to the MG program's) beginning in the fall.

This training program will also include a hybrid option and possibly remote trainings in East Lewis County to equip new volunteers to assist their communities and the Morton Transfer Station with a variety of solid waste issues.
WSU Extension Forestry serves communities throughout the state by providing opportunities to learn about forest management through research-backed information and experts from around the Pacific Northwest. These efforts engage landowners in forest stewardship and help them actively manage their forests towards a variety of goals and objectives, including forest health and restoration, timber production, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, and other ecosystem services. The Extension Forestry program for southwest Washington is based in the Lewis County office and serves nine counties in the region.

Programming
Extension Forestry is best-known for offering immersive, hands-on learning opportunities to landowners who value forest stewardship. In the spring of 2021, the following programs were offered to landowners in Lewis County:

- **Forestry Lunch Breaks: Technology for Forest Owners** – five lunch-hour sessions offered online to forest owners covering tools and technology for mapping, planning, harvesting, determining soil types, and identifying forest health concerns.

- **Master Gardener Training: Backyard Forest Stewardship** - training session for prospective Master Gardeners learning how to properly identify a variety of forest health issues and navigate management decisions for small acreage forests.

**Programming Summary:**

- Six hours of forestry programming delivered
- Production of five class recordings available on Youtube for ongoing viewing
- 38 families in Lewis County have attended one or more of the above educational events representing 1,106 forested acres
- Additional individual assistance provided to 50 forest owners in Lewis County

**IN THEIR WORDS**
Messages from program attendees during COVID-19

“During everything that has been going on, retreating into the forest and applying what we have learned from the Coached Planning class has been a fantastic way to spend the time.”

“WSU-Extension educational programs have contributed not only to my understanding of forestry principles, but also immeasurably to maintaining my sanity during the past many months of pandemic isolation. Thank you!”

“Though it would be difficult to replace hands on experience with on-line, this was a very good substitute. I, also, think it is a valuable education approach to reach more people who have small forests or who are thinking of buying forest property. Even without COVID, it is unlikely that we would have attended this workshop in person, so this was a wonderful opportunity for us.”

Survey from Forestry Lunch Break Series
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: FORESTRY LUNCH BREAKS - TECH SERIES

The program featured five lunch-hour sessions led by WSU Extension and WA DNR professionals. Each session covered a different technology available to forest owners and included tutorials of Google Earth for producing maps, the NRCS Web Soil Survey, DNR Forest Practices mapping tools, forest inventory technology, and an iNaturalist forest health mapping tool.

These sessions were viewed by 293 forest owning families throughout the state, representing nearly 7,861 acres of privately owned forestland in Washington. **In Lewis County, 23 families attended the event representing 1,106 acres of forest.** Of the attendees of the Forestry Lunch Break series:

- **100%** reported learning something new about forest management technology
- **91%** reported an intent to implement new practices based on what they learned at the event
- **73%** said the short-session format made the information easier to retain and use

Research and Demonstration Highlight:

This spring marks the second year of harvesting from a WSU Extension research project on log-grown specialty mushrooms. Data collected from this project will explore optimum substrate, mushroom species and strain, and management methods for mitigating moisture loss in dry PNW summers.

This project is led by WSU Extension agriculture and forestry specialists and funding was provided by the WSU BioAG program. The aim is to determine the viability of these production systems as supplemental or primary income for farm and forest owners while taking advantage of existing wild-forage mushroom markets in the region, but it will also provide valuable information to mycology hobbyists.
It is the mission of the Lewis County Noxious Weed Board to serve as responsible stewards of Lewis County, working to protect and preserve the land and resources from the damaging effects of noxious weeds. We work to develop programs that reflect local priorities, meets the needs of county landowners and carries out the mandate of the Washington State noxious weed law. The Weed Control Program provides weed prevention strategies, education programs, technical assistance and compliance actions to control or eradicate noxious weeds in our county.

Programming Summary
12 hours of training was provided to an estimated 220 individuals. Training topics included Noxious Weed Identification & Control, Pesticide Use & Safety, and PNW Invasive Species Training. 4 WSDA Pesticide re-Certification credits, 4 Certified Crop Advisor re-Certification credits, and 3 Forester Continuing Ed credits were made available to 35 licensed applicators and agricultural/forestry advisors thru our online training. 26 Lewis County landowner contacts were made thru the Stewardship Incentive Program. Additional assistance was provided to 45 Lewis County residents. In cooperation with WSDA, Lewis County Noxious Weed Control inspected ~75 acres of hay and forage products for the Weed Free Forage- Washington Wilderness Hay & Mulch Management (WWHAM) Program. These inspections are conducted free of charge to Lewis County producers. $90,000 in Department of Ecology grant funds were awarded to Lewis County Noxious Weed Control Board for the treatment of Eurasian Watermilfoil in Mineral Lake. After 30+ years of dedicated service, Bill Wamsley retired as the Lewis County Noxious Weed Control Program Coordinator. Charles Edmonson was hired in April as the new Program Coordinator.

Program Highlights
On June 1, 2021, Bill Wamsley retired as the Program Coordinator for Lewis County Noxious Weed Control Board. Bill served Lewis County for over 30 years and accomplished a great deal on behalf of the Weed Board. Most notably, Bill was instrumental in getting the Noxious Weed Tax Assessment approved by Lewis County Landowners and passed by County Commissioners, thereby providing the Weed Control Program with the financial support needed to adequately administer the State Noxious Weed Law in Lewis County and provide additional outreach and training to Lewis County landowners. Bill was held in high regard not only by the Board, but also Lewis County landowners, land managers, farmers, and many others in our community.
Charles Edmonson was hired in April 2021 as the new Program Coordinator. Charles brings with him several years of experience in noxious and invasive weed control.

In the fall of 2020, Eurasian watermilfoil, a class B noxious weed, was observed at the boat launch in Mineral Lake, Mineral, WA. Subsequent survey work conducted by Department of Ecology confirmed the presence of milfoil at several locations along the perimeter of the lake. Due to the significant threat posed by this invasive species, both to the aquatic ecosystem and to the economic base of the community, it is the intent of the Lewis County Noxious Weed Control Board to treat Mineral Lake with an EPA approved aquatic herbicide in the summer of 2021. Funding for this work will be provided for by a grant from Washington Department of Ecology, awarded on July 1, 2021. Public outreach for this project, thus far, has included an in-person public meeting held in Mineral, WA on April 17, 2021, that was attended by 20+ residents and lake visitors. Public notices published in The Chronicle and the Highway Shopper, numerous postings around the community, and 110 mailers sent to adjacent property owners within 150 feet of Mineral Lake.