



**Kitsap
County**

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION



WATER STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

2015

BY THE NUMBERS

In 2015, over 2837 adults and 1,864 children were reached through over 100 workshops, demonstrations, field days, and conferences focused on stewardship of natural resources and environmental protection.

- Trained 27 Beach Naturalists, 32 Stream Stewards, & 18 Shore Friendly Volunteers
- 8 Volunteers worked with shoreline homeowners to help motivate them to remove old bulkheads where they are not needed. Now 8 people are in the process of removing their bulkheads using incentives from the EPA
- Volunteers and staff participated in 33 restoration events to remove weeds and re-vegetate with native plants
- Streamside salmon docents staffed 45 shifts at the popular salmon tours event
- Over 700 citizens learned about salmon habitat, and water resources at salmon tours
- 138 residents attended one of three septic workshops where they learned proper care of their systems and green cleaning techniques

ISSUE

Kitsap County's natural beauty is spectacular, with 230 miles of fresh and saltwater shorelines that support diverse fish and wildlife, recreation, and a good economy. It's no surprise that we are Washington State's third most densely populated county, with about 586 people per square mile. But the natural and water resources that make this a great place to live and work are threatened by population growth and our individual and collective actions.

RESPONSE

Washington State has set an ambitious goal to rehabilitate the Puget Sound by 2020 to protect our shared waters and natural resources, and education is an essential part of the strategy to protect, preserve, and recover our region for future generations. WSU Kitsap Extension employs a three-pronged approach to tackling water and natural resource issues:

1. We teach people to appreciate and protect our natural resources through in-depth training by staff and local professionals.
2. We train people to be volunteer educators, who share their knowledge all around the community.
3. Through partnership with local agencies and governments, we involve people in local restoration, enhancement, and monitoring projects. Strong partnerships with local agencies, governments, and tribes help expand our reach into the community, providing a channel for citizens to communicate with professionals. Our reputation as a leader in higher education makes us a trusted partner, uniquely positioned to engage people, organizations and communities to advance knowledge, economic well-being and quality of life by fostering inquiry, learning and the application of research.



QUOTES

"I have expanded my knowledge of why protecting our streams and water sheds is so important."

"The total experience, I learned so much, about streams and the connection with the whole web of life."

"I enjoyed learning about opportunities to work in the community."

"I enjoyed meeting the participants of the class and the instructors, and learning who to talk to and where to go to obtain information."

"I hope to use this knowledge at work for both new projects and existing properties with the school district."

"I learned some new things I had never thought about."

"I have a better understanding of the whole system, rather than the parts."



IMPACTS

Research shows that outdoor volunteering positively impacts people's attitudes and behaviors toward the environment, both in lifestyle choices like reducing consumption and waste, and in civic engagement like environmental stewardship and participation in community events and local decision-making.

Studies indicate that community resilience is also enhanced by: becoming active and working together; gaining new skills and knowledge; making social connections; and organizing a team to complete the work. This is especially important when dealing with environmental challenges such as extreme weather, ocean acidification, sea level rise and the loss of important species like salmon and native plant communities.

This community action and resiliency is demonstrated by teams of volunteers who band together to: monitor dying sea stars in cooperation with local researchers; develop streamside planting plans to reduce storm water effects and provide much needed food for wildlife that are pushed to public spaces because of residential land development, and encourage peers to consider the impacts of bulheads on habitat that is essential habitat for endangered salmon species.

WORKS CITED

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