



WSU EXTENSION
Jefferson County



WATER & NATURAL RESOURCES 2021

BY THE NUMBERS

- **3** - volunteer trainings offered (1 Beach Naturalists, 2 Stream Stewards)
- **8** – public presentations on marine stewardship
- **49** - new volunteers trained: 16 Beach Naturalists and 33 Stream Stewards
- **350+** - service hours reported by volunteers trained through WSU Extension to improve local ecosystems through education, stewardship, and community science – during a pandemic year
- **3** - meetings to foster partnerships among 15 environmental stewardship organizations across the North Olympic Peninsula

ISSUE

Jefferson County is located on the Olympic Peninsula and is bounded by the Pacific Ocean to the west and Hood Canal to the east. Most of the County's population—nearly 96%—resides in East Jefferson County, where WSU Extension is located and serves the community. East Jefferson County has an abundance of natural resources, including 950 stream and river miles, 317 lakes, 45 recreational shellfish beaches, and over 200 miles of shoreline that border the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Admiralty Inlet and Hood Canal. This region is also characterized by its vast forest lands that provide important ecosystem services such as water storage and filtration. Although many waterbodies in this predominantly rural county are relatively undisturbed, impacts from human activities and development are a growing concern. Due to increasing development pressures, an average of 0.75% of forest land in East Jefferson County is lost each year. Freshwater harmful algal blooms are an ongoing problem. Non-point source pollution, generally resulting from stormwater runoff, is the leading cause of water quality problems and fecal bacteria are the primary pollutants. Climate change poses additional water quality concerns, with the Pacific Northwest already experiencing drier summers, reductions in snowpack and glacial mass, higher spring and lower summer river flows, and a more acidic ocean. Addressing threats to water quality and adapting to climate change impacts at the local level hinges upon the broader community becoming well informed of the issues and actively engaged in stewarding our water and natural resources

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Water and Natural Resources program is to cultivate an environmental stewardship ethic in East Jefferson County community members by offering science-based education and engagement opportunities.

RESPONSE

WSU Jefferson County Extension provides volunteer training programs, public events, and educational resources for those interested in stewardship of our streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands, estuaries and marine waters. WSU Jefferson County Extension employs a three-pronged approach to tackling local water

1. We teach people to value and protect our natural resources through public events and two in-depth training programs led by staff and local experts.
2. We train people to be volunteer educators, to share knowledge and inspire a stewardship ethic in others.
3. Through partnerships with local governments and organizations, we connect community volunteers with environmental stewardship opportunities across the North Olympic Peninsula.



PARTNERS

Admiral Audubon Society, Blue Coast Engineering, City of Port Townsend, City of Sequim, Clallam County Conservation District, Clallam County Streamkeepers, Dungeness River Nature Center, Feiro Marine Life Center, Hood Canal Coordinating Council, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, Jefferson County Conservation District, Jeff. Co. Department of Health, Jefferson Land Trust, Local 20/20, North Olympic Land Trust, North Olympic Salmon Coalition, Northwest Straits Initiative, Northwest Watershed Institute, Port Townsend Marine Science Center, Puget Sound Restoration Fund, Salish Sea Guillemot Network, Strait ERN LIO, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Washington SeaGrant, WA Department of Natural Resources, WA Department of Fish and Wildlife, WA Native Plant Society, and more.

QUOTES



[The] Beach Naturalists training is valuable because it provides citizens with important information about human

impacts to the natural world around us and how we can be better stewards of our world. Additionally, people can share this knowledge with others in the community and help spread concern and a sense of responsibility for ecosystems and our water resources."

"This training significantly raised my awareness of our beach habitat - what to watch for and how to protect it. I had no idea of the breadth of the biodiversity outside my back door on Hood Canal."

"This is the most wonderful, enjoyable, informative class. I will be back for more!!"



IMPACTS

In 2021, the Water and Natural Resources Program trained 49 new volunteers across the Stream Stewards and Beach Naturalists training programs. Presentation topics varied based on each training. Examples of these included:

- Stream Stewards- Watershed systems and hydrology, salmon identification and life cycles, stormwater management
- Beach Naturalists- Salish Sea oceanography, intertidal invertebrates, community science opportunities (Crab Team, Sound Toxins, Mussel Watch, etc.)

Volunteers trained through WSU Jefferson County Extension reported more than 350 hours of service to improve local ecosystems through education, stewardship, and community science. In 2021, a few examples of how alumni volunteered to make a difference include:

- Public education: volunteered as a docent at the Port Townsend Marine Science Center, provided education on marine debris at local beach cleanups
- Stewardship: spread clean shell at Discovery Bay to support Olympia oyster habitat enhancement efforts, installed and maintained rain gardens, removed invasive weeds with City of Port Townsend Parks
- Community science: surveyed pigeon guillemots, collected samples for Clallam County Streamkeepers, monitored marine biotoxins at Fort Worden for the WA Department of Health

Jefferson also hosted 3 meetings to foster partnerships among 15 environmental stewardship organizations across the North Olympic Peninsula. These meetings featured presentations and discussions on strategies for recruiting, retaining and engaging community volunteers, and served as a platform to share program updates and support for cultivating a stronger community of environmental stewards.

