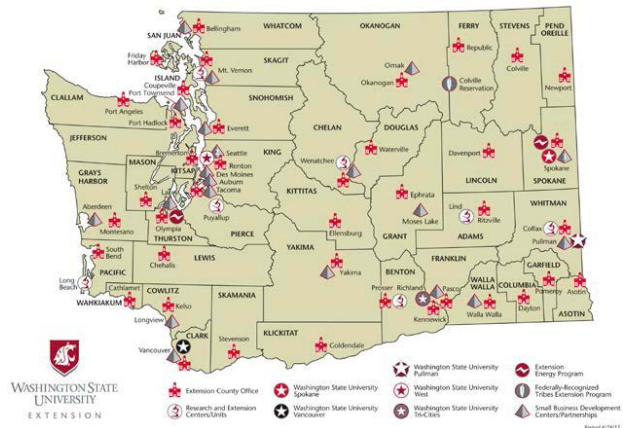


WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

EXTENSION

Extending Knowledge. Changing Lives.

WSU Extension is a unique educational partnership between the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the nation's land-grant universities, and county governments. WSU Extension engages people, organizations and communities through programs that advance knowledge, economic well-being and quality of life. In Washington, the Smith-Lever Act has stimulated innovative research and vital educational programs for youth and adults on a wide range of topics, including agriculture, gardening, economic development, parenting, nutrition, sustainable development, sustainable energy and more. WSU Extension focuses on applied research and outreach to solve high priority problems in the region. As the front door to the University, WSU Extension provides non-credit education and degree opportunities to individuals throughout the state, empowering residents to pursue their interests, develop their talents, support their families, and improve their communities.



Locations and People

WSU Extension has 52 locations across the state, including every county and the Colville Reservation; Research and Extension Centers in Puyallup, Mount Vernon, Wenatchee and Prosser; Research and Extension Units in Lind and Long Beach; and campuses in Pullman, Spokane, Vancouver, Tri Cities and Everett. Extension faculty contribute outreach and content through the WSU Global Campus, including certification, continuing education, and training programs. Over 6,000 volunteers support the Master Gardener, 4-H Youth Development program, and various natural resources stewardship programs. 4-H reaches youth and their families to build life skills through more than 100 different hands-on projects and out-of-school programs. The Master Gardeners help residents improve water quality and quantity, properly diagnose pest issues, reduce pesticide use, and plant adapted plants. Overall, WSU volunteers donated more than 525,000 hours to their communities.

College of Agriculture, Human and Natural Resource Sciences (CAHNRS)

Dr. Andre' Wright has hired new Associate Deans for the Agricultural Research Center, Academic Programs, and Extension. Vicki McCracken assume the Associate Dean and Director for Extension on January 1. Although Extension was approved to hire essential faculty and staff positions that were vacant over the past four years due to fiscal constraints at WSU, COVID-induced budget constraints have delayed hiring for the current fiscal year. Student enrollment remains high even with COVID-19 reducing face-to-face classes. This past year has been interesting as our Extension outreach efforts, including workshops, field days, and other trainings being adapted to online learning.

Soil Health Initiative

Maintaining and improving soil health is key to preventing soil depletion, ensuring long-term agricultural productivity, and protecting the environment in our region, as well as the ongoing health of the rural economy and regional food security. According to the USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), soil health is defined as “the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that

sustains plants, animals, and humans.” A host of indicators are currently available to assess soil health; however, our understanding of the relationship between these indicators and plant production and environmental outcomes is incomplete. To address these knowledge gaps, better understand linkages, and provide better guidance to stakeholders, we are embarking on the Washington **Soil Health Initiative (SHI)**. This initiative is an ambitious plan that funds research, extension, and demonstration of soil health best management practices through a network of long-term agro-ecological research and extension (LTARE) sites across Washington’s diverse agricultural systems.

During the 2019 Legislative Session, the Washington State Legislature appropriated \$250,000 as a *proviso* in both FY20 and FY21 to WSU to initiate the Soil Health Initiative, with specific language requiring WSU to establish the proposed LTARE site at the WSU Mount Vernon Research & Extension Center.

A renewed focus on soil health creates a win-win-win opportunity for farmers, the environment and the general public, and puts the state of Washington in a leadership role nationally. An increased understanding of the linkages between soil health, production, and the environment achieved through the Washington SHI will contribute to several important outcomes:

- A baseline assessment of soil health and the tools to monitor and manage it across the diverse agricultural systems in Washington;
- Better understanding of the opportunities to improve soil health through changes in management practices; and
- Increased adoption of these practices to increase food production and farm profitability and providing important economic and environmental benefits to the state of Washington.

Visit <http://csanr.wsu.edu/program-areas/soil-health-initiative/> for more Soil Health Initiative updates.

Forest Stewardship

Washington has over 215,000 landowners that control nearly 5.8 million acres of forestland, making this the largest rural land use group in the state. Many landowners manage for multiple objectives, such as timber production, wildlife habitat improvement, and a variety of recreation opportunities. WSU led 69 events attended by 3,965 forest owners and managers, representing over 189,217 acres. With a stewardship focus on forest health and wildfire protection, new management practices were implemented by 3,384 landowners with \$28.075 millions of dollars earned, saved or protected. Forest Stewardship Coached Planning is a comprehensive landowner education program that covers key aspects of caring for wooded property in a way that maximizes private landowner benefits while also protecting and enhancing public resources. The course is designed around the development of a personal Forest Stewardship Plan, which participants write with “coaching” from forestry professionals. Courses resulted in over 90% of participants implementing better management practices. In partnership with the WA State Department of Natural Resources, future staffing includes a new stewardship forester for Northeast Washington.

Range Management

The Art of Range podcast provides education through conversation with some of the brightest minds in rangeland management. This project is led by Tip Hudson, WSU Kittitas County Extension specialist. He interviews researchers, ranchers, and resource professionals to bring you extended discussion on topics that are of interest to all. A new episode will be released every two weeks, with several episodes on a general topic area. This project is funded by a grant from the Western Center for Risk Management Education. Additional information and a subscription link can be found at: <https://artofrange.com/>.