

Washington State University Snohomish County Extension

AGRICULTURE-NATURAL RESOURCES-NUTRITION EDUCATION
HORTICULTURE EDUCATION-YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



SNOHOMISH COUNTY QUICK FACTS

- *Named derived from Snohomish Indian Tribe*
- *County seat: Everett*
- *Land area, in square miles: 2,090 (state rank: 13)*
- *Median household income (2007): \$65,394*
- *Population (2007): 696,600 (state rank: 3)*

CONTACT

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Washington State University Snohomish County Extension is part of the world-class outreach and engagement enterprise of the university. We partner with farmers, the community, and volunteers to drive technology transfer, youth development, innovation, and economic sustainability. We specifically focus on expanding the problem-solving capacity of communities within the county, enhancing natural resources and the environment, enhancing economic opportunities for agriculture, improving health and wellness, and empowering youth and families with knowledge and skills.

We leverage every dollar we receive from Snohomish County with funding from state, federal, grant, and private sources to maximize our reach and effectiveness. In fact, for every \$1 invested by Snohomish County, WSU Extension provides \$1.54 in state and federal resources for a 135 percent annual return on investment. In addition, volunteers give over 165,000 hours annually in direct support of Extension's mission, a value of \$3,279,835.

Impacts

Economic Development

WSU Snohomish County Extension provides educational opportunities and technical expertise to local agri-businesses, farmers and community volunteers. These educational opportunities have assisted participants in maintaining their businesses, increasing workforce readiness, and building applicable labor skills.

Agri-business participants have been able to stay at the forefront of an expanding industry that brings over \$126 million in sales to Snohomish County farmers, ranchers, and nursery operators as a result of Extension programming. Partnering with Snohomish County area agriculture orga-



NATURAL RESOURCES

WSU Snohomish County Extension has worked closely with landowners to assist them in creating plans that seek to protect forested, near shore, agricultural and residential lands for future generations.



nizations and farmers, Extension helped facilitate a major economic development plan to help move agriculture into the 21st century. In addition, WSU Snohomish County Extension is helping develop a local biofuels industry while working with small farmers to expand production and sales of local farm products.

WSU Snohomish County Extension volunteers have participated in an average of 80 hours of education to fulfill their roles. Fifteen percent of a sample of 78 volunteers indicated they felt their ability to obtain a job was increased as a result of their participation in Extension Education; also reported were an increase in their ability to obtain a promotion (6%), they had been offered, or asked to apply for, a job (15%), they experienced an increase in their credentials or confidence (39%), and they had benefitted in an unrelated occupational field (16%).

Protecting Natural Resources

WSU Snohomish County Extension works with local landowners to assist them in creating plans that seek to protect forested, near shore, agricultural and residential lands for future generations.

- **Forest Stewardship Coached Planning**

The Forest Stewardship Coached Planning in partnership with the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), has resulted in dozens of landowners who have participated in this shortcourse to realize hundreds of acres treated to improve wildlife habitat, control invasive species, improve forest health, and reduce wildfire risk, miles of forest roads improved to reduce runoff and sediment, and new recreation trails created. It is estimated that this program is helping participants to sequester a minimum of 1 ton of carbon annually for every 2 acres.

- **BeachWatchers/Shore Stewards**

WSU Beach Watchers and Shore Stewards are volunteers and landowners dedicated to protecting Puget Sound through education, research and restoration. Beach Watchers have donated over 6500 hours of their time on projects that have resulted in protection of public shoreline wildlife, removal of over 70 tons of toxic creosote logs from county shorelines, eradication of Spartina, and increased understanding of the value of Puget Sound in meeting our recreational, economic and cultural needs. Shore Stewards are coastal community residents who are managing their own private property with protection of Puget Sound in mind. Shore Stewards gives landowners and residents tools to act as protectors of Puget Sound so that future generations can enjoy the waters, wildlife and landscape as past generations did.

- **Growing 21st Century Farmers**

In 2008 alone, through cooperative partnerships with regional governments, agencies, and NGOs, WSU Snohomish County Extension helped impact the more than 600 agri-business professionals attending the annual

Focus on Farming conference; along with more than 750 participants in WSU Extension's Country Living Expo, and helped expand economic opportunities for the more than 800 producers attending technical classes, workshops, and farmer-to-farmer networking sessions.

With courses and workshops covering livestock, specialty products, pest management, biofuels, agri-tourism, forest and crop production, WSU Snohomish County Extension's 2008 outcomes measured an impressive 76% of attendees currently implementing new techniques for production and marketing as a result of Extension's educational efforts.

Youth and Families

WSU Snohomish County Extension offers a multi-faceted program for youth and families focusing on youth development and healthy family living. In Snohomish County, 4-H completed the 2008 program year with 2023 youth enrolled in 134 clubs. Participating in over 30 projects in areas such as technology and engineering, expressive arts, and plant and animal sciences, these youth were guided by 550 adult volunteers. Family programming involve over 1200 families in nutrition and healthy living educational opportunities and incorporated partnerships with over 30 agencies. These combined programs benefitted from over 144,000 volunteer hours donated.

- **4-H Youth Development**

The WSU Snohomish County Extension 4-H program involves partnering young people with trained volunteers as they develop life skills through project interest area activities. Youth who participate in 4-H programming have been proven to obtain higher grades in school, enroll in higher education and participate in civic activities within their communities. Conversely, these same youth have shown a decrease in risky behaviors and later onset of sexual activity. Snohomish County 4-H youth gain skills in areas such as decision making, time management and ability to make sound judgements in new environments.

- **Nutrition Education**

Participants in WSU Snohomish County Extension nutrition programming have the opportunity to learn about healthy eating, appropriate levels of fitness and using fresh fruits and vegetables in their meal preparation. Skilled educators facilitate learning activities within classrooms, after school locations, and community centers throughout Snohomish County. Over 1200 families received information on nutrition through this programming and have reported an increase in their ability to make healthy eating choices. One participant indicated these classes helped her manage their food intake and their portion control.

- **Elder Gardening in Apartment Living**

Russian/Ukrainian elder residents participated in workshops to learn skills in planting and maintaining container gardens within their apartment



YOUTH AND FAMILIES

WSU Snohomish County 4-H

*Youth Development programming
partners youth with adult
volunteers as they seek to develop
like skills in areas such as decision
making, responsibility and using
their resources wisely.*



HEALTHY LIVING

Master Gardeners and Family Living faculty worked together to create the Growing Groceries program to teach community members how to grow their own food.

living environments. Participants learned how to maximize container space by gardening in layers: planting seasonal bulbs for flowers at the bottom of the container that require longer growing time, and using the top layer to grow fast growing foods like lettuce and herbs. Residents were able to leave the class with fully planted containers and will be enjoy the results of their harvest later this year.

Environmentally Sound Gardening

The WSU Snohomish County Extension Master Gardener volunteers provide science-based information on horticulture and environmentally sound gardening practices to the community. An average of 350 Master Gardeners give over 22,800 hours of service to local citizens.

This year, over 10,000 home gardeners sought help from Master Gardeners on subjects ranging from insect problems to weed control. Home gardeners also learned about using native and drought tolerant plants, water conservation, proper landscape management and care, fruit and vegetable garden production, and Integrated Pest Management—a strategy to control garden pests effectively and economically with minimum harmful effects on human health and the environment.

• Growing Groceries

The WSU Snohomish County Master Gardener and Family Living Programs are collaborating with community partners to create the Growing Groceries program. Developed to address local food issues, 60 community volunteers are beginning training to serve as mentors for various local garden efforts. Additionally, a Growing Groceries Conference attracted over 200 participants to learn how to grow their own food and provide positive effect on community food systems.

Overview of Funding for WSU Snohomish County Extension Programs

