



November 12, 2020

Hello, Snohomish County 4-H community,

I want to first thank you for your patience as we work as a statewide team to put a comprehensive plan in place to resume in-person 4-H activities. We understand that many of our 4-H youth have serious barriers to virtual participation, and we want to entertain safe and effective methods of in-person participation that continue to support youth during this unprecedented crisis.

To that end, I have an update to share with you from Mike Gaffney, Assistant Director, WSU Extension:

WSU Extension understands the concerns of personnel, participants and volunteers about resuming in-person activities, and values the feedback we are receiving about both program needs and the willingness to help achieve the levels of safety necessary to resume such limited in-person activities.

Safety remains our paramount concern. Safety for those we serve, for our volunteers, for our personnel, and for the public at large. We all are being asked to make sacrifices and restrict our contacts in order to limit the community transmission of COVID-19. Where these restrictions are practiced, transmission can be reduced.

However, to the extent it is possible to resume limited in-person activities while both maintaining safety and following all applicable guidelines and protocol requirements, we are willing to consider such limited resumption of in-person activities, consistent with WSU requirements and in compliance with the Governor's Safe Start (County Phase) guidelines.

WSU Extension leadership has worked with college and university leadership and WSU Incident Command to develop a set of requirements for resumption of (limited) in-person activities. These requirements are also incorporated into draft planning documents. These requirements and forms will be finalized by November 15th.

The mechanisms developed by Extension for local use in demonstrating HOW limited in-person activities might be conducted will be dependent upon the type of activity, the participants, and the location. However, these are only part of the equation for approval of the resumption of in-person activities. In addition, determination WHETHER such activities should be undertaken must be made at the county level, and should reflect that the benefits of such resumption of activities are not outweighed by the risks to health and safety.

Should resumption of limited in-person activities be sought in any county, the forms established by Extension (as referenced above) must be completed. Those draft forms will then be submitted to the WSU Extension County Director for input on local risks and trends (reference to the County Health Officer is recommended for input) and a recommendation, before submission to the state program lead (e.g. 4-H or Master Gardener) and then final review by Extension leadership.

Snohomish County Extension will consider in-person proposals; however, we want to emphasize the details that Mr. Gaffney stated above. This decision, while starting with the 4-H faculty (Ashley) is not one that is made by 4-H faculty alone, but instead will be sent to our County Director who will take COVID-19

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cases into consideration and will consult with any applicable local health officials before forwarding the plan up the WSU chain for final approval. In addition, only those activities that meet current health requirements and those that cannot be done virtually will be considered. Finally, and most importantly, given the current trends and caseload statistics for Snohomish County, we want to remind our community that **it is unlikely any activities that involve individuals in close proximity to each other will be approved.**

When considering drafting a proposal for an in-person event or activity, we want you to consider this quote from Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive, that appeared in the [Seattle Times](#) on November 10th: “If we had a dashboard, every light would be blinking red and every warning buzzer would be going off.” He further said the county was headed “into uncharted territory” and that the third wave appeared to be “the largest yet.” With this information in mind, please consider virtual or hybrid methods (live virtual with the inclusion of take-home kits delivered via porch pickups) of participation before you attempt to draft an in-person plan. If you do have an idea for an in-person activity that has little or no close contact (a drive up event, an opportunity for families to participate independently, such as if equipment were set up ahead of time, etc.) we feel that these are the most likely to get approved at the local and state level.

It is important that our entire community continue to be vigilant as we all work to slow the spread of COVID-19. Keep an eye out for a link to our state page that will contain all of the forms and information you will need to draft your proposals. We will include a link to the state page in the [CloverGram](#) and on our [Stay Home, Stay Healthy](#) page, once they are available.

As always, we will be happy to assist your club or project with virtual and hybrid options, including help learning how to use virtual tools, help promoting events, and help scheduling Zoom meetings. Please contact any one of us at the email addresses below and we will do all we can to help you reach out to your 4-H youth!

Keep an eye out on our Stay Home, Stay Healthy website for county-wide events, including the Technology Program’s [Mars Base Camp STEM challenge](#), the [On Target Tuesdays](#) events, and more as they become available! You can find out more about these events by emailing any of us, by checking out our [Facebook Page](#), by subscribing to the CloverGram (email Beth!), or by keeping an eye out on our [COVID-19 News from Extension webpage](#).

As always, stay safe, stay healthy, and we appreciate all that you do.

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