



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

The AG Sounder Newsletter

November 2025

Do you have an event or story you would like featured in
The Ag Sounder? Let us know!



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Help support the Cougs with a donation to WSU College of Agriculture, Human and Natural Resource Sciences

[Make a Gift Today!](#)



AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUSINESS PLANNING

Tuesdays 01/20- 03/ 10 online via Zoom 6-8pm
with in person intensives on Feb 28 or Mar 7

EMPRENDIMIENTO Y PLANIFICACIÓN DEL NEGOCIO AGRÍCOLA

Martes el 01/20 - 03/10 en línea con Zoom 6-8pm
con intensivos en persona el 28 de feb o el 7 de mar



WSU Extension will be offering our **Cultivating Success** course this winter, and we'd like to share this opportunity offered statewide, online and with Spanish interpretation. (*Español abajo*)

Agriculture Entrepreneurship and Business Planning Course

This course will walk you through the steps to create a farm business plan through weekly online classes with guest speaker farmers and resource providers and connections in regional groups.

Tuesdays, January 20- March 1, 2026, 6-8pm with in-person intensives on Feb 28 and March 7

Location: Virtual, statewide with Spanish interpretation

Cost: \$200 Scholarships available to anyone for whom the class fee is a barrier

Visit the **Cultivating Success website** to learn
more and to register



A new public-private partnership for improving how soil health can help with management decisions is being conducted in the United States. The project is called “**Probing Our Country’s Soil Health**”. They are looking for farmers and ranchers to participate.

Participating landowners will receive:

- Compensation for your time (~ 1 hour) for helping
- A personalized soil health report of your fields. The value of this lab work (at no cost to you) is about a thousand dollars per field.
- A copy of a book called “Probing Our Country's Soil Health”. This will be a hard-copy photo book illustrating soil health across the country and the outcomes to this project.

To learn more about this project, click on [Probing Our Country’s Soil Health](#) to see a short video

If interested in participating, you will need to:

- **Sign up** for a one-hour Zoom Meeting where a facilitator will lead you through a management survey for 2 or 3 fields.
 - Grant access to fields for hand-probe soil sampling 2 or 3 sampling sites from each field. Normally this will happen 3-6 months after the survey; you will be notified beforehand.
-

ANNOUNCING: SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON GRASSLANDS & GRAZING

Photography Contest!



Agricultural photography can convey stories about farming, natural resources, and the day-to-day lives of farmers.

No matter your skills, consider participating in this photography contest to showcase your work and tell the story of local, grass-based agriculture.

Farmers have the inside story, so producers themselves are encouraged to join in!



For more information:
<https://extension.wsu.edu/thurston/swwa-grasslands-arts/>

Click [here](#) to learn more.



County Agriculture Director Return from European Grasslands Sabbatical

Our Thurston County Extension Director and agriculture faculty, Stephen Bramwell, returned from a 7 ½ month sabbatical studying the integration of grasslands and habitat conservation in Europe. A bit of information can be found in the link through the WSU Extension Conservation Grazing Toolkit: <https://extension.wsu.edu/conservation-grazing/> (see the button, “lessons from European grasslands”) For questions, reach out to bramwell@wsu.edu. Several posts are also available on our South Sound Ag Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/thurstonextension...> if you scroll down. We plan to hold a Community Ethnoecology seminar in January 2026 for a wider presentation and discussion on conservation grazing in Europe and its connection to prairie grassland conservation in western Washington. By way of a kick off to the 2026 United Nations designated International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists. Stay tuned!

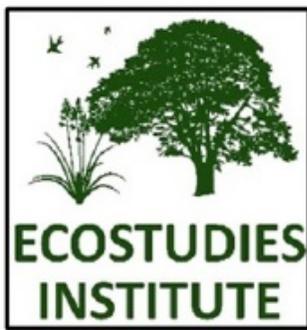


Traditional and Multifunctional Farming Manifesto

Western Washington is characterized by diversified farming systems, smaller and

fragmented farmland holdings, and considerable agrobiodiversity. In many ways, farming in this region is more similar to traditional agricultural landscapes in Eurasia than to conventional agricultural landscapes in the United States. What is also similar is that, operating more diversified and smaller-scale farms, it can be difficult to compete with large-scale, specialized agriculture. In order to better recognize and support these diverse farms globally, a group of “traditional farming advocates” met for the 1st Multifunctional Farming Conference held in Rzeszow, Poland from September 16th-20th, 2025. I had the opportunity to attend and speak at this event. We developed the manifesto with the aim of circulating it globally as a means of building solidarity for locally adapted, diverse, knowledge-intensive, and biologically complex food production systems. The manifesto begins ... “Traditional farming/agriculture refers to long-established, often small-scale agricultural practices that rely on traditional/indigenous/local knowledge, local production, and regeneration potential of land rather than external drivers, such as top-down policies, market trends, supply of artificial fertilizers, and various subsidies. Its key characteristics include a focus on subsistence [though it includes commercial enterprises], diverse crops, crop rotation, manual labour, and sustainability.” Please take a moment to **read the manifesto** and consider adding your name to this global initiative! We can transfer this momentum to work in our local community in south Puget Sound and southwestern Washington.

Stephen Bramwell
County Extension Director and Agriculture Faculty
WSU Ag and Natural Resources



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WASHINGTON STATE
DEPARTMENT OF
**VETERANS
AFFAIRS**

"Serving Those Who Served"

**Join the Veterans Conservation Corps (VCC) – Support
Local Farms and Sustainable Agriculture!**

INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY!

Veterans Conservation
Corps Crew Internship at the
Southwest Washington Food
Hub and Early Blue
Conservation Site

Location: Tenino and Centralia, WA

Compensation: \$1,600/month for a
part-time internship (20 hours/week)

Work Hours: Flexible Schedule

Duration: Up to 2 years

Start Date: October, 2025.

Position will remain open until filled

Veterans Conservation Corps Internship Opportunity!

Position Description:

We are seeking a Veterans Conservation Corps (VCC) member to work with the Southwest Washington Food Hub and the 35 farms and value-added businesses it represents. This is a great opportunity for someone interested in the field of agriculture. You'll spend one day per week of work at Early Blue - a Thurston County Conservation Site

To Apply:

Email a copy of your DD214 or service discharge certificate, a copy of your driver's license, a resume, and a cover letter explaining your interest in this internship to Kim Pham, Veterans Conservation Corps Program Manager: kim@dva.wa.gov



A 10 week
customizable
CSA-style box
delivered to a
convenient
neighborhood site

**Southwest Washington
Food Hub's Fall**

Harvest Box



Support over 30
local farms, receive weekly
fresh produce from
October 2nd to December
11th, with no deliver on
November 27th



**Southwest Washington Food Hub
Fall Harvest Boxes**

Support over 30 local farms, received weekly fresh produce from October 2nd to December 11th, with no delivery on November 27th.

Click [here](#) to learn more and subscribe.



Reflection: “Weaving Together Our Stories” County Employee Training – by Taylore Straight

In October I attended a training for county employees entitled “Weaving Together Our Stories.” The presentation was provided by Billy Frank Jr’s son and former Nisqually Tribal Council Chairman William Frank III and Professor Corey Larson. It was incredibly thorough, and I learned a lot about Nisqually tribal history, the fight for fishing rights, and about the hard-won battles that have ultimately led to collaborations between the Nisqually tribe, conservation organizations, and local government to protect our local ecology.

The road to tribal and government agency co-management of salmon in our region, was incredibly fraught. The collaborations taking place in our region now are a reminder to recognize and defend tribal sovereignty and treaty rights across the country. Because some of the foundation for ongoing partnership has been laid in the Puget Sound after prolonged periods of injustice, the importance of continual relationship building efforts should be emphasized in local conservation and land management efforts.

The traditional ecological knowledge and land tending practices cultivated for thousands of years by the first peoples of this region cannot be ignored if we are to have a sustainable future here. The deep history and long-term presence of Nisqually people, and all of the tribes of the region, is evident throughout the landscape. Though it is often overlooked by those of us who are newcomers to the region. One example many of us are already familiar with are the perennial food gardens we call Camas prairies. Another example discussed in the presentation, are the culturally modified trees that endure throughout the region often going unnoticed. What look like peculiar growth habits are often actually telling a story about long term relationship with place.

This training provided a strong reminder of the importance of holding a broad historical context as we pursue collaborative conservation endeavors with tribal partners. The establishment, continued monitoring, and tending of Camas plantings on the pasture at The Meyer's Point Environmental Field Station provides the opportunity to demonstrate the compatible use of agricultural grasslands for hay production and conservation of native prairie species while maintaining respect for this greater ecocultural story of the region. Through ongoing consultation and collaboration with tribal partners, this endeavor can serve as a model for land managers working at the intersection of agriculture and ecology in south Puget sound; while at the same time reestablishing access to sites appropriate for first foods tending activities that are critical to the cultural survival of First Nations peoples.

Taylor Straight
Agricultural Educator
WSU Agriculture & Natural Resources Program

LAMB HARVEST AND BUTCHER COURSE

Learn the ancient craft of harvesting and butchering a lamb. Two different two-day courses are available.

Course 1:
November 8th - 9th

Course 2:
January 17th - 18th

Leave with half a lamb you processed yourself!

In this two day course, each participant will learn how to humanely dispatch, skin, gut, and butcher a grass-fed lamb raised on the pastures of Withywindle Valley Farm.

This course is great for hunters, farmers, and anyone wanting to experience processing their own meat.

Meals of lamb will be provided each day in the cozy barn.

Learn in a safe and supportive environment from farmer Carissa and butcher Brett.

Class fee per person: \$675
Sign up with a friend and receive \$100 off.

More information at:
withywindlevalleyfarm.com



Withywindle
Valley Farm

Withywindle Valley Farm
Lamb Harvest and Butcher Course

Learn the ancient craft of harvesting and butchering a lamb. Two different courses are available: November 8th-9th and January 17th-18th.

Click [here](#) to learn more and sign up.

REIMAGINE WOOL

DIGITAL POSTER CONTEST

Wool is the Miracle Fiber!
Right now, there is untapped potential with millions of pounds of American wool being underutilized.

Submit your innovative idea for >25 micron wool that showcases a new use, twist on a current product, or a new method of processing and you could

WIN BIG!



Win
\$1,000
+ Networking Opportunities



Entries due January 1, 2026

www.sheepusa.org/reimagine-wool-digital-poster-contest



Reimagine Wool Digital Poster Contest

The new Reimagine Wool Digital Poster Contest is now live, inviting producers, designers, students, and agricultural advocates nationwide to reimagine the potential of underutilized

U.S. wool. This initiative is part of our broader effort to elevate domestic wool as a valuable resource—one that deserves fresh attention, creative solutions, and practical applications.

Click [here](#) to learn more.



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