



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
**EXTENSION**

## The AG Sounder Newsletter

March 2026

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

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- Register Now! - SWWA Grazing School - April 16th-19th
- Job opportunity: Grazing Association Coordinator
- Agricultural Grassland Resilience Grant Deadline - March 31st
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- SW Washington Grasslands & Grazing Photography Competition
- Celebrate local prairies and grazing lands with the UN International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists. Exhibit visiting Timberland Regional Libraries through 2026
- On-Farm Composting Short Course - March 27th & April 3rd

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**SOUTHWEST  
WASHINGTON  
GRAZING SCHOOL**  
MULTI-DAY INTENSIVE

April 16 - April 19 - Skookumchuck Grange - Tenino, WA - 8:00am-8:00pm

**Southwest Washington Grazing School 2026**  
**Online registration is now open!**

The Southwest Washington Grazing School will be held at the Skookumchuck Grange in Tenino, Washington on April 16th-19th, 2026. Visit the [Grazing School web page](#) for more information.

**Contact Stephen Bramwell if you have questions!**

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**Job opening:** Southwest Washington Grazing Association Coordinator

**Employer:** Washington State University Extension

**Official Station:** 3054 Carpenter Rd SE, Lacey, WA 98503

Washington State University Extension is hiring a coordinator for the Southwest Washington Grazing Association. This is a 12-month, part-time position (0.5 to 0.75 FTE based on funding). The position is grant-funded, and annual position renewal dependent on job performance.

**Compensation:** \$21 to \$28 per hour depending on experience. The position is benefits eligible.

**To Apply:** Interested candidates can send a cover letter and resume to Stephen Bramwell at [bramwell@wsu.edu](mailto:bramwell@wsu.edu). The position is open until filled.

**See the attached [job announcement](#) for the full position description and qualifications.**

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## **Agricultural Grassland Resilience Grant**

**Send your applications in by March 31<sup>st</sup> to be considered for the first round of awards to support grassland resilience!**

WSU Extension Thurston County is advertising an opportunity for landowners and agricultural enterprises to receive direct assistance to build resilience into agricultural grasslands in the South Sound and Chehalis Basin. Proposals for silvopasture, soil health enhancement, and rotational grazing that are received by the end of March will be eligible for the first round of assistance. Applicants will receive notification of approval by the end of April. Fundable projects include:

- Soil testing
- Soil amendment (mineral and biological) purchases
- Amendment application
- Paddock design
- Fence materials
- Fence construction
- Movable fence materials
- Livestock water system design, materials, and installation
- Design and integration of agroforestry plantings into livestock pasture systems including: hedgerows, riparian buffers, wind breaks, silvopasture, and non-timber harvestable woody crops
- Plant material purchases
- Mulching
- Tree protection
- Irrigation design, materials, and installation

- Monitoring of plantings
- Other assistance as needed

**For the application and more information visit the  
[Agricultural Grassland Resilience webpage.](#)**

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## **Sharpen your Stewardship Skills at the 2026 Southwest Washington Forest Owners' Winter School**

Designed to let you attend multiple workshops all on the same day, the Winter School will help you address challenges on your property, restore healthy forest conditions, and achieve your goals. Whether you are a novice to family forestry, or your family has owned land for generations, there is something new for everyone to learn. Doors will open for the day at 8:00 A.M., and classes will run from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. in the library building at WSU Vancouver.

You will be able to attend up to six classes of your choice, out of more than 20 to choose from! In addition, there will be a resource area featuring exhibitors and displays by agencies and organizations that provide services to assist landowners. Winter School is a great chance to network with professionals and fellow landowners.

Pre-registration is required. Registration will not be available on site. The registration deadline is 5:00 p.m. Thursday, March 19, 2026. The registration fee is \$25 per individual or \$40 per couple from the same household/ownership. Youth under 18 are welcome and may attend at no additional cost.

To learn more, register, and get a complete list of workshop topics, visit the [Winter School webpage](#). For questions, contact Elsa Haun at [elsa.haun@wsu.edu](mailto:elsa.haun@wsu.edu) or 828-636-0772.

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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/iyrp-photography-contest/>

## Southwest Washington Grasslands and Grazing Photography Contest

This contest focuses on grazing lands and prairies in Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, and Thurston Counties, and is timed to generate artistic content for the 2026 United Nations “International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists”. All submissions are eligible for public arts exhibits.

The contest will run from May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 through September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

Visit the **IYRP Photography Contest** webpage to learn more.

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## WHY ARE GLOBAL RANGELANDS THREATENED?

Rangelands and grasslands today are under growing pressure from many directions. Pastoralists, such as herders, shepherds, and ranchers, are finding it harder to sustain their livelihoods, and in many places rural communities are being reshaped by urban migration. Biodiversity is declining, with grassland bird populations rapidly decreasing. Climate change, including prolonged drought, is accelerating large-scale impacts across these landscapes. Invasive and encroaching species are displacing native plants and wildlife. At the same time, perennial grazing lands are being converted to annual row-crop agriculture or fragmented by energy and mining development.

These lands, and the people, livestock, wildlife, and cultures that depend on them, are at a critical moment. But this is not a story of loss alone. It is also a call to care, learn, and act.

### 1 Rangelands Overview

Grasslands and rangelands are rich with wildflowers, wildlife, butterflies, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and more. Yet they are often defined by what they are not—places without trees or wetlands. Visit a grassland near you and you'll see why that framing misses the point. Rangelands are ecosystems in their own right. In fact, they cover roughly half of the planet's ice-free land area. Sadly, they are disappearing rapidly, with up to 80 percent already lost in some countries.

### 2 Land, Mobility, and Water Scarcity

For people who depend on rangelands, access to land, water, and movement is essential. Across North America and around the world, common or collectively used grazing lands sustain livelihoods. Traditional herders, shepherds, and ranchers rely on seasonal movement of herds and flocks, through practices such as transhumance and nomadism. A central goal of the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists is to secure the rights of these communities for grazing lands and water.

Keeping migration routes free of barriers also benefits wildlife. Yet many pastoral communities face land grabbing for mining, large-scale agriculture, and other competing land uses. These practices undermine both livelihoods and long-term ecological health.

### 3 Economics and Livelihood

Grasslands and rangelands provide meat, milk, hides, fiber, and manure. Globally, one in eight people earns a livelihood from rangelands, and in some countries, as many as one in three. In the United States alone, grazing lands support approximately two million jobs. For food security, one in four people worldwide depends on rangelands for their primary protein sources.

Beyond food production, grasslands offer enormous ecological value. In regions too rocky, cold, dry, or high-elevation for crops, pastoralism provides resilient livelihoods. During times of crisis, pastoralists and ranchers draw on deep knowledge of landscapes, seasonal movement, and cooperation with neighbors. In the U.S., ecosystem services such as wildlife habitat and recreation contribute roughly \$4 billion annually, about one-third of total rangeland economic value. Although often undervalued next to industrial agriculture, pastoral systems are ecologically resilient, locally adapted, and remarkably resilient.



## International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists

"Rangelands" or "pastoralists" may not be the first words that come to mind when you think of SW Washington prairies and grazing lands. But these landscapes of ours (and the people who live in, take care of, and work in them) are very much part of the earth's incredible, and threatened, grasslands. The precarious state of these wildlife-rich biomes has been recognized in 2026 with the United Nations International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists. To take advantage of this global 'limelight', a coalition of local partners will be circulating an educational grasslands exhibit through all/most of the Timberland Regional Libraries.

We'll feature local educational resources, some events with local ranchers/livestock producers, emphasize the long legacy of indigenous grassland stewardship, and host farm walks through the SW WA Grazing Association. Big thanks to partners at TRL including the special events team, City of Olympia for opening their doors to a hosted event this summer (July-ish), and the SW WA Ag Park (and Stone City Event Center) in Tenino where we'll host a prairie and grazing lands party this fall with art, food, speakers and more. Reach out with questions and interests in collaborating ([bramwell@wsu.edu](mailto:bramwell@wsu.edu)).

# On-Farm Composting Short Course



**REGISTRATION REQUIRED**

<https://tinyurl.com/5ara9v4f>



## **Two-day composting short course held on: March 27 & April 3, 2026**

Find out how to make great compost on your farm and use it effectively in your production!

This two-day short course for farmers and landowners with livestock will focus on increasing your knowledge and skills around on-farm composting. The course will include hands-on exercises in compost recipe formulation, feedstock assessment, and construction of aerobic and properly wetted compost piles, including offal composting. End use of compost products to improve production and soil health on-farm, best practices to protect water quality, and regulations and certification considerations will also be covered. Refreshments and a tasty lunch will be provided on both days! Register today!

**Dates:** March 27 & April 3, 2026

9:00 AM - 4:30 PM both days

**Location:** **WSU Puyallup Research and Extension Center**

**Register here:** <https://tinyurl.com/5ara9v4f>

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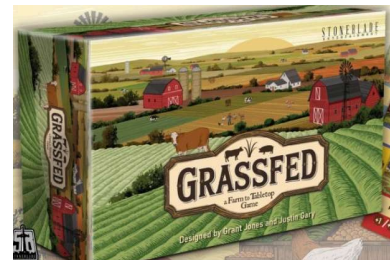
## More local opportunities!

*WSU Extension supports local farms and farmers and is happy to help announce opportunities to the community. If you have an announcement for the Ag Sounder please submit to ([sierra.smith1@wsu.edu](mailto:sierra.smith1@wsu.edu)). The following announcements have been submitted by local farmers this month. These opportunities have not been vetted nor endorsed by WSU.*

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Local regenerative farmer, Grant Jones, is preparing to launch a new board game about sustainable/diversified farming called *Grassfed*.

You can learn more about this game and follow the launch progress at the [Game Found website](#)



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### Washington State Sheep Producers - Youth Scholarship Opportunity April 1st Application Deadline

Eligibility Requirements:

- Submit your completed application along with your high school transcript or proof of GED completion.
- Demonstrate leadership abilities and academic potential.
- Applicant must be from a family that is a member of WSSP (or join as a junior member).
- Two character evaluations are required (from a high school counselor, teacher, principal, or former employer).
- Scholarship funds may only be received from WSSP a maximum of two times.

Download the attached [Scholarship Application Form](#) for more information.

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Sundance Farm is offering a season-long position for a Farm Helper. This is a work trade position in exchange for room and board in Independence Valley along the Chehalis River. Looking for someone able bodied, interested in farming, experience preferred but not required. Text Willow 360-528-9923 for more information. Available now- October minimum.

## Grow Your Own Produce: The Workshop Series

February 4th - November 4th 2026: 1st Wednesday of the month

\$250 for all 10 classes, \$130 for a 5 class series, or \$30 per class

Grow Your Own Produce is a 10 class monthly series taught by permaculture expert Marisha Auerbach designed to help you grow a climate resilient garden that provides food from your landscape all year. Each two hour class features seasonally-relevant information about planning, growing, maintaining, and harvesting food from your own vegetable garden. Our class will help you develop adaptable low-input systems in your garden based on local resources that thrive, even with extreme weather. 2026 will be the 13th year of the workshop series!

Each month's class is designed to help you maximize your efforts, and subsequent yields in the garden by providing an overview of key activities to engage in at the right time each month. We meet from February through November, on the first Wednesday of each month, on Zoom. Before the class meeting, participants will receive a collection of handouts supporting the key topics for the month, including a garden checklist for the month ahead. We will discuss different subjects pertinent to the garden that month, using slides and the month's handouts as reference. There will be ample time during the class for questions. A few days after each session, participants will receive the recording of the class and PDF of the slides. Students are invited to submit photographs and questions from their gardens, to be addressed at the next class.

Marisha Auerbach has spent many years observing and interacting with her gardens, and in the gardens of the greater Pacific Northwest bioregion. She has been growing most of her own produce year 'round for over the past decade. To learn more about Marisha, please visit [her bio page](#).



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