



THE DIRT

AGFORESTRY ON THE ROAD

For two weeks this summer, AgForestry hit the road around the state as part of a three-year grant from the State Department of Ag to evaluate the leadership curriculum and ensure future needs of employers are met. Stakeholder meetings were held in Centralia, Mount Vernon, Chelan, Colville, Yakima, Pasco, and Walla Walla to gather input for University of Florida's Laura Greenhaw Ph.D. who is conducting the research for the evaluation. Dozens of stakeholders were invited representing 30 AgForestry classes to ensure a mix of natural resource demographics including sector, age, location and perspective. Findings from the meetings will be shared as part of this year's Annual Meeting on September 27. The stakeholder meetings were so popular, meetings have been set for May and June of 2024 already.

FOUNDATION BOARD ELECTION

Ballots have been sent so please contact us if you haven't received yours. Ballots are due by Friday, September 22 at 5 pm. Below is the slate of candidates who hope to be joining the Agriculture and Forestry Education Foundation Board of Directors:

- Bonnie Fassler** - Credit Officer / AVP - AgWest Farm Credit - Pasco
- Bill Taylor** - Owner - Taylor Shellfish - Shelton
- Adrian Miller** - Senior Director of Environmental Affairs - Weyerhaeuser - Poulsbo
- Jennifer Witherbee** - Community/Business Growth Director - Larson Gross - Wenatchee
- Mikala Staples Hughes** - Director of Quality and Technical Services - Sakuma Brothers Farms and Processing - Burlington



Bonnie Fassler



Bill Taylor



Adrian Miller



Jennifer Witherbee



Mikala Staples Hughes

FOUNDATION ANNUAL MEETING SET

The annual meeting of the Agriculture and Forestry Education Foundation is set for Wednesday, September 27, from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. The Annual Meeting agenda includes:
-Findings from stakeholder meetings held - Centralia, Mount Vernon, Chelan, Colville, Yakima, Pasco, and Walla Walla

-Training on "Tackling Tough Topics" presented by Elise Cruce, Managing Director of the American Farm Bureau Federation
-Results of board election
-Thanks to outgoing board members

[Register Here](#)

CLASS 44 POLICY PROJECTS, CONTINUED

In the [June edition of The Dirt](#), two of Class 44's Public Policy Projects were shared. Below are summaries of the other two projects:

Awareness Campaign About Careers in Agriculture and Natural Resources

Ryan Baye, Tammy Edmonds, Tiff Pitra, Megan Schultz, Justin Stang

A major problem facing Washington State is a lack of skilled labor in the agricultural, forestry and natural resource fields. These industries continue to expand beyond traditional practices with the use of many new and exciting technologies. One specific factor we have identified is a lack of awareness of dependable, reliable, and attainable careers in agriculture, forestry, and natural resources among the youth of Washington.

To overcome this, our group has decided to embark upon an awareness campaign, focusing on educational outreach for careers and resources in the agriculture, forestry, and natural resource fields. We will be developing an educational toolbox to share in person, at schools and/or organizations across the state. Our group's intent is to raise awareness and change the perception among high school students by calling attention to some of the unique opportunities in these fields. We will do this by sharing our own stories and highlighting the broadness and variety of paths that are available.

Awareness Campaign, Continued

In addition to this presentation, we will also put together a resource packet for students, parents, and teachers. This packet is intended to inform and direct people how to find internships, apprenticeships, and career opportunities in many different agriculture, forestry, and natural resource fields, and to showcase the diversity of fields that exist.

Beginning this summer, we are reaching out to multiple schools and organizations in our areas to determine interest and to schedule time to present to students. We have also begun compiling data for our resource packet. This work includes reaching out to agencies and companies in Washington to find out what opportunities exist and consolidating the information into one document to distribute. We plan to present to at least three audiences this fall and hope to illuminate how cool careers in agriculture, forestry and natural resources can be!

Addressing Barriers to Access

Colin Towne, Madi Roy, Carrie Nelson, Carolyn Groom

Group three is continuing our work on the persistent issue of barriers of entry for young, beginning, and underserved producers in regards to farming and farming assistance knowledge. This problem is not new, and many individuals and organizations exist to address this in different ways. Our goal is, through stakeholder interviews, to take a 2023 snapshot and specifically define what these barriers are today and how to best address them. Depending on what we find, we will then take that informed information and inform or propose future legislation alongside strategic partners.

We are currently in the first steps of this plan which entails doing in-depth interviews with people across the agriculture industry, recording those interactions, and then synthesizing our findings. In the past few months since our last seminar in Longview we have developed our standardized question set to help lead our interview discussions. We have coordinated our initial interviewee outreach efforts to ensure a smooth relationship from the onset. Currently we have begun the exciting step of reaching out and scheduling our first interviews. We plan to have all our formal interview completed by August so we can have time to prepare for an excellent update to our classmates during the September seminar in Yakima.

CLASS 45 KICKS OFF IN OCTOBER

AgForestry Class 45 starts in October with their first seminar in Pullman, Onboarding calls have already taken place and a "Welcome" box will be shipped next week with homework assignments and their textbook: The Leadership Challenge by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. The Class will be formally announced to the Alumni Network in coming weeks.

ALUMNI NETWORK OPPORTUNITIES

Join AgForestry Class 44 and 45 at one their seminars in coming months plus have the chance to see colleagues, peers, and friends.

All Networking Receptions are from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm

→ Prosser: Thursday, September 14 Class 44

4:30 – 6 pm: Tour at Four Feathers Wine Estates with the class (tour space is limited)
Networking Reception at 14 Hands Winery

Thank you to PayneWest for sponsoring, Ste. Michelle and Four Feathers for hosting

→ Pullman: Thursday, October 5 Class 45

Networking Reception

→ Lynden: Thursday, October 12 Class 44

Tour details will be announced soon!

Networking Reception with Guest Speaker Director of Ag Derek Sandison

Thank you Larson Gross CPA's for sponsoring

→ Spokane: Thursday, November 2 Class 45

Networking Reception

Thank you UW Spokane Center for hosting

→ Vancouver: Wednesday, November 8 Class 44

Networking Reception

→ Ellensburg: Thursday, November 30 Class 45

Networking Reception

→ Walla Walla: Thursday, December 7 Class 44

Networking Reception at Reiningier Winery. Thanks to them for hosting and thanks to Kelly Tucker (19), Sarah McClure (31) and Sharla Wagoner for sponsoring

Click here to register

Would you like to help sponsor a Networking Reception? Contact Julie at julie@agforestry.org

Mission:

We cultivate leaders in agriculture, forestry, and natural resources who communicate, collaborate, inspire, and serve.

Thank You to our Supporters!

Has your name slipped off this list? No worries! With the click of a few buttons, you can regain your position on the list of those that believe in leadership development in Washington's natural resource sectors! Click here to contribute to the Foundation today!

AgWest Farm Credit	Ken (27) & Carie McNamee
Andrea Howell (23)	Kevin (22) & LaNece Arneson
Andrea Mann (15)	Kevin (40) & Mary Corliss
Ann (6) & Steve George	Klaustermeyer Farms Inc
Balcom & Moe Inc	Leffel, Otis & Warwick, P.S.
Bill (19) & Joyce Dewey	Lewis County Farm Bureau
Bob (4) & Jill Zagelow	Michael (37) & Cara Broeckel
Boise Cascade Wood Products	Middleton Six Sons Farms
Bruce (16) & Sandra Le Page	Nisqually River Foundation
Debbie Young (25) & Bruce Dunlop (25)	Phil (7) & Sharon Clouse
Dennis (15) & Susan McDonald	Port Blakely
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Fritz (14) & Colleen Coon	Ron (22) & Jan Wesen
Glen Goodman (14)	Skip (19) & Tracey Yotsuuye
Green Diamond Resource Company	South Yakima Conservation District
Jack & Connie Bloxom	Stu (13) & Sheree Trefry
Jim Walesby (4)	Washington Pulse Crops Commission

In Memory of Albert Roberts (20)

Barry (20) & Teri Armstrong
Cathy (20) & Covington
Carey Hunter (25)
Jeff (20) & Diane Jones
Jim (25) & Neta Cahill
Kim (20) & Andrea Patten
Steve (20) & Bonnie Pedersen
Steve (25) & Chris Carlson

Grant

BNSF Railway Foundation

Agriculture and Forestry Education Foundation

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