



WELCOME CLASS 44



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agforestry.org

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Class 44



Ryan Baye

Director of Leg. & Membership Services
Wash. Assn. of Conservation Districts

I grew up on a family farm in Lincoln County, with five generations of wheat farmers on the same homestead. As I grew older, I came to realize the farm was not for me. I never imagined my agricultural background would come into play. Now I can't believe I missed the obvious connection and the world I now inhabit where public policy and natural resources overlap.

Class 44



Rosa Dekker

Treasurer
East Columbia Basin Irrigation District

I was born in Mexico City, my mom brought me, my brothers and sisters to Moses Lake when I was nine years old. Having worked in the fields and now seeing how the work I do at the irrigation district ties so well with the production of our crops is something that gives me pride. On my drive home I see the canals flowing and the circles going watering the crop and it just fills me with happiness.

Class 44



Eric Dixon

Assistant Manager
South Columbia Basin Irrigation District

I was born and raised in the Tri-Cities. Having grown up in a family of general contractors and home builders, I have a love for construction which led me to pursue a degree in Civil Engineering. I joined the South Columbia Basin Irrigation District in 2013, which brings me a great deal of pride and joy. If not for the water provided by these Districts, much of the agricultural production in this area would not exist.

Class 44



Tammy Edmonds

Field & FARM Manager
Darigold

I grew up the daughter of a Dutch immigrant on a dairy farm in Vermont. I was actively involved in 4-H, FFA & chores on the farm. In my role with Darigold, I get the distinct honor of working with the folks that work from dawn to dusk to be sure that there is food on the nation's table. This is not an easy task, but I am passionate about highlighting the good story agriculture must tell!

Class 44



Maggie Elliot

Science and Communications Director
Washington Hop Commission

I grew up in a community immersed in agriculture, with my family growing vegetables and vineyards in the Horse Heaven Hills of south-central Washington. My childhood experiences inspired me to cultivate an expertise to advance the industries I see as the core of rural communities. As Science and Communications Director for the Washington Hop Commission, I am in a unique role to strengthen the hop industry.

Class 44



Derek Friehe

General Manager
Friehe Farms

I am a 2nd generation, irrigated, row-crop farmer located near Moses Lake, WA. Farming to me, is more than a job it is a lifestyle. Farming is always changing and always challenging but provides a sense of stability and strong sense of place. Agriculture is an incredible industry and I am thankful to be a part of it.

Class 44



Carolyn Groom

VP-Credit
Northwest Farm Credit Services

I grew up in a small farming town in Idaho and was an active 4-H member for 10 years. My grandpa farmed 400 acres of dryland wheat and ran cattle. After attending the U of I, we moved to Pasco where I started my career 11 years ago in ag lending and my husband started as a farm manger for a local grower. The past two years, I have been on the loan approval side with a focus on Northeastern WA while providing support for all regions of Washington State.

Class 44



Amber Itle

Washington State Veterinarian
Wash. State Dept. of Agriculture

Growing up on my family's fourth generation dairy farm instilled a strong work ethic from a young age. Participating in every aspect of the dairy, helped me to learn to value the process and what the consumer cared about. As the Washington State Veterinarian, I have an outward facing role working within diverse farm and veterinary sectors. These interactions provide me insight into contentious issues through multiple lenses. My passion for agriculture defines much of who I am.

Class 44



Carrie Nelson

District Manager, River Districts
Wash. State Dept. of Natural Resources

Coming from a long line of loggers and ranchers in Montana, I understand the bust and boom of logging and the importance of natural resources and agriculture to sustain a family. I believe the best leaders and collaborators are those that continue to learn, grow and adopt new skills.

Class 44



Andy Perleberg

Extension Forester
Washington State University

For nearly 40 years I've had a passion for helping others understand why forests are important. I studied forestry and wildlife as an undergrad and natural resource policy in grad school. I've always sought different experiences in resource management. I'm curious about nature, land management, energy, and products resulting from resource systems. I care deeply about making things better for people.

Class 44



Tiffany Pitra

Sensory Manager
Yakima Chief Hops

The hop industry is a unique and exciting blend of innovation and tradition. We grow a niche crop and can pivot on demand to adopt new technologies while also remembering to honor the stories of resilience of generations past. The mission of Yakima Chief Hops is to connect family hop farms with the world's finest brewers. To be a part of that mission, a part of something bigger than myself and advocate for the hardworking men and women who farm our land is a big source of pride for me.

Class 44



Madi Roy

Agricultural Economist
Wash. State Dept. of Agriculture

I have always been curious about the natural world, particularly agriculture. I was fortunate to grow up on a farm where I learned the value of hard work, perseverance, leadership and collaboration. I have embodied these values in my lifelong pursuit of promoting and enhancing agriculture and the agrarian lifestyle.

Class 44



Natalie Sahli

Aquaculture Land Manager
Wash. State Dept. of Natural Resources

As a Washington resident and descendent of dairy farmers and fishermen I respect the agriculture and forestry industries as a vital part of Washington's heritage and economy. I have a lifelong love for the coast of Washington and have been an avid fisherwoman, clam digger, and crabber all my life. I had the great fortune of obtaining a degree in Environmental Studies that situated me to pursue my interest in aquaculture professionally.

Class 44



Megan Schultz

Logistics Manager
Weyerhaeuser

One of my grandfathers was a logger, the other was an agricultural extension agent for OSU, and my parents both have a passion for the outdoors. I grew up spending a lot of time hiking and camping, activities I still continue to do. My personal ties, educational background, and professional experiences have instilled in me the importance of perpetuating our forests (and other natural resources), both for recreation and industry.

Class 44



Wioletta Skotnicka-Kowalec

**Associate Manager Grower Data & Contracts
Ste. Michelle Wine Estates**

My adventure in the grape/wine industry started over 15 years ago in Minnesota. I also spent two years working in Oregon's Willamette Valley and for the past 7 years, I call Eastern Washington my home. I work for Ste. Michelle Wine Estates. I'm a part of the Grape Supply team and I make sure our winemakers have enough grapes to fulfill long-term demand plans. I really enjoy working with many of the grape growers and appreciate their hard work.

Class 44



Justin Stang

Wholesale Manager
Hama Hama Co.

Over the course of my life, I have never lived more than five miles from saltwater and most of that time, I have lived within a half mile. The sea and seafood are embedded in my absolute core as a person and are essential fabrics to my being. The regenerative properties that shellfish have on marine ecosystems have allowed me to make a positive impact on the environment for future generations while taking great pride in the products and place that compose my profession.

Class 44



Colin Towne

Forester
Weyerhaeuser

"Walking the walk" is important to me and I believe actions convey meaning. I try to stay involved in the local communities that I am surrounded by, I enjoy challenging myself to improve in all aspects of life such as my personal hobbies of timbersports, weightlifting, and disc golf, as well as my career.

Class 44



Tyler West

Relationship Manager/AVP
Northwest Farm Credit Services

My first job was working on a dairy farm. Later in my life, my interest grew into the business side of agricultural operations. There is a deep history, respect, and understanding of our land, natural resources, and the natural processes that produce so much of the goods and services that our collective communities rely on. It is a thread that resonates with me and drives purpose for my career in service to these industries.

Class 44 Program Schedule

Module ONE:

Personal Leadership

- Pullman - Oct. 12 - 14, 2022
- Spokane - Nov. 2 - 4, 2022
- Wenatchee - Nov. 30 - Dec 2, 2022

Module TWO:

Leadership in Public Policy

- Seattle - Jan. 11 - 13, 2023
- Olympia - Feb. 15 - 17, 2023
- Wash. D.C. - March 11 - 18, 2023

Module THREE:

Leadership and Systems Thinking

- Longview - May 17 - 19, 2023
- Yakima - Sept. 13 - 15, 2023
- Bellingham - Oct. 11 - 13, 2023
- Vancouver - Nov. 8 - 10, 2023
- Walla Walla - Dec. 6 - 8, 2023
- International Trip - Jan. 2024

Applied Leadership and Graduation

- TBD - April 10 - 12, 2024

Come Meet Classes 43 & 44!

Alumni, friends, and prospects are invited to mingle with the current class members and other alumni! Register at a location near you!

Click on the reception date to register.

- **Class 43** - Thurs., Sept. 15 – evening – Varietal Brewery in Sunnyside
- **Class 44** - Thurs., Oct. 13 – evening – Ensminger Pavilion in Pullman
- **Class 44** - Thurs., Nov. 3 – evening – University of Washington in Spokane
- **Class 44** - Thurs., Dec. 1 – evening – location TBD in Wenatchee
- **Class 43** - Thurs., Dec. 8 – evening – Reininger Winery in Walla Walla

More dates to be added soon.