



AgForestry

LEADERSHIP

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... and more!



THE DIRT

APRIL 2024

BOARD CONTINUES FULL COURT PRESS

April saw continuation of monthly meetings for the Board of Directors to focus on the business of the Foundation. The financial report showed fundraising to date reached \$514,004 of the \$600,000 target. While this enables the 2023/2024 fiscal year to end with cash reserves to complete the Class 45 cohort scheduled to graduate in April 2025, the remaining funds are needed for sustainability. Other board action included:

- Approval of the updated Finance Committee Charter naming Board treasurer Bonnie Fassler of AgWest as Chair. Members are now being sought to populate the committee.
- Approval of a Tuition Policy which bases participant cost on approximately 25% of programming expense starting with Class 46.
- Approval of updated Board Member Agreement and Conflict-of-Interest Policy to be signed at the beginning of each year by all board members. Approval of Board member Patti Case as Board Nominating Committee Chair. The Committee will seek a member representing each of the six AgForestry regions with the final slate of candidates presented at the July board meeting and sent to members in August. Election results are announced at the annual meeting of members on September 18.
- There are four seats to fill on the Board of Directors: a vacant seat and three seats that are expiring. Two board members are running again and two are not.
- Approval of Holly Henning as Curriculum Committee Chair.

Discussions included:

- Curriculum options to address expense (overall and to participant), industry needs for a shorter program, seminar cadence (when they're held), and leadership skill impact. One option would span two years but eliminate two seminars and the international trip. Other options were variations of a one-year program. Staff will present the next iteration at the May board meeting.
- Development Committee new Sponsorship Menu and lapsed donors.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, who previously presented a policy implementation plan, shared a draft work plan developed by staff for input.
- ED Search Committee and that four interviews were scheduled.
- Finalizing a Board Matrix that would allow the Nominating Committee to determine skills, experience, or sectors needed on the board as members rotate off.
- Final report and recommendations from Dr. Laura Greenhaw as part of the WSDA Curriculum Evaluation grant would be ready for the May board meeting.

44TH COHORT GRADUATES FROM AGFORESTRY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

AgForestry Leadership Class 44 began their journey October 2022. Over the past 18 months, that journey included a curriculum with three Modules consisting of 11 in-state three-day seminars, a seminar week in Washington DC, and a two-week international seminar to Panama and Costa Rica. Additionally, they developed and completed two Capstone Projects: a personal leadership philosophy and a public policy project. [Click here to read a summary of both.](#)

Class 44 graduated on Friday, April 12, 2024 at the Hotel Indigo in Everett with an AgForestry welcome by Executive Director Vicky Scharlau, Executive Director and Chairman of the Board, Justin Hall. The class presented the recipients of the Stu Bledsoe Award, the Jack Felgenhauer “Making a Difference” Community Service Award, the Karl and Lexie Kupers Leading Edge Leadership Award and the Carol Mercer Inspiration Award. [Click here to see a video overview of the ceremony and speeches.](#)

[Click here to view the Class 44 Graduation Recap](#)

WSU’S HOLLY HENNING NAMED AGFORESTRY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE CHAIR

Holly Henning is the Swantz Distinguished Professor of Teaching and Learning and a Teaching Associate Professor in WSU’s College of Agriculture, Human and Natural Resource Sciences-Crop and Soil Science Department. She brings over 30 years of experience in the governmental, business, and non-profit sectors and since 2020 has served as Curriculum Advisor for the AgForestry Leadership Program.

The Curriculum Committee serves in an advisory capacity for the AgForestry Leadership Program providing recommendations on best practices in adult education and leadership development as well as in the development of goals and objectives. The Committee will meet annually to review evaluation data and provide formal recommendations to the Board of Directors and staff on effectiveness of the existing curriculum, improvements to the curriculum based on data, emerging trends in leadership development, and ensure curriculum impact.



Holly Henning

CLASS 45 CLOSES MODULE 2, KICKS OFF MODULE 3

Class 45 completed Module Two: Leadership in Public Policy, including experiences in Seattle, Olympia, and Washington, DC. Stepping into the heart of the state and nation's capitals was less a visit than an immersion into the essence of governance and policymaking as well as a realization of the potential for participants of Class 45 as future leaders in shaping public policy. The journey ignited passion and drive returning with newfound confidence and determination to dive headfirst into the complexities of policymaking. Kyle Buckmiller shared, "During the Washington D.C. seminar, our class met with leaders from the US Forest Service. Classmates were engaged and asking phenomenal and challenging questions. After one, the speaker stopped to process, looked at me and said "I believe Kyle may be able to answer this question better than I can" which completely surprised me but made me feel proud of the knowledge and experience I possess. It was after this moment that I realized I have the potential to make more of a positive impact than I originally anticipated before beginning my AgForestry journey."

While in DC, each group shared the topic of their public policy project. Over the summer, each group will share progress in this newsletter.

In Olympia, each class member shadowed a lobbyist, legislator, or agency staff for half a day. The hands-on approach provided firsthand insight into daily operations and decision-making dynamics within the legislative arena. This active engagement in the process enhances comprehension of public policy development and highlights the pivotal role of effective leadership in shaping the future of natural resources. As the class shared individual experiences at the end of the day, they created a collective reservoir of newfound knowledge, understanding, and



Kyle Buckmiller and Kari Fagerness in DC

confidence to effect change. Jackie Hancock reflected saying, "Olympia was the most engaging seminar for me. Shadowing was particularly impactful as I was paired with a state representative. This experience created space for me to evaluate my moral compass and identify commonalities that are not always visible at the surface."



Rep. Tom Dent and Jackie Hancock

CLASS 45 CLOSSES MODULE 2, KICKS OFF MODULE 3 cont.

Up Next: Class 45 transitions to Module Three: Leadership and Systems Thinking starting in Shelton where they explore principles of Systems Thinking, examining the complexities of the forestry industry and exploring the Skokomish River Valley as a multifaceted system. The seminar agenda involve local alumni with expertise and enthusiasm instrumental to seminar success. Special appreciation is extended to Green Diamond Resource Co. for ongoing collaboration and assistance in seminar planning. Alumni who generously offered to share insight and experiences on systems thinking and its applications in leadership with Class 45 include:

- John Ison (32), Green Diamond Resource Co.
- Brett (24) and Lisa (28) Bishop, Little Skookum Shellfish
- Justin Stang (44), Hama Hama Oysters
- Lissa James (36), Hama Hama Oysters
- Evan Bauder (40), Mason County Conservation District
- Kelly Lawrence (41), USFS
- Jason Ragan (32), Taylor Shellfish
- Lauren Magalska (42), Green Diamond Resource Co.
- Collin Emmerson (43), Sierra Pacific Industries

Module 3 unfolds with each seminar serving as a stepping stone--building on previous knowledge and fostering a holistic understanding of Systems Thinking. By encouraging and providing space for participants to examine individual professional areas as systems and mapping out components, interactions, and feedback loops, the aim is for Class 45 to become more collaborative leaders--empowering them to be architects of change in an interconnected world.

ALUMNI IN THE NEWS

Tom Westergreen (11) was named Washington State Forester of the Year at the annual meeting of the Washington State Society of American Foresters held earlier this month at Grays Harbor College, Aberdeen, WA.

Don McMoran (26), Washington State University Skagit County Extension Director, was awarded full professorship earlier this month for work on the Western Regional Agricultural Stress Assistance Program which has impacted 13 states and four territories on farm stress and suicide prevention.

UPCOMING EVENTS

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS INVITED TO SHELTON RECEPTION, CLAM BAKE, AND TOUR

Thank you Brett (24) & Lisa (28) Bishop for hosting!

When: Wednesday, May 15, 2024

Time: 5:00 – 6:30 pm

Where: Little Skookum Shellfish, 2262 SE Lynch Road, Shelton, WA 98584

[REGISTER HERE](#)



AG VIABILITY CONFERENCE INCLUDES PUBLIC POLICY PROJECT

Set for May 29 and 30, at Three Rivers Convention Center in Kennewick, the [Ag Viability Conference](#) is for farmers, ranchers, and agribusinesses to discuss challenges, highlight successes, and uncover opportunities with facilitated discussion that will inform WSDA and WSU's Agricultural Competitiveness Study. Farmers, ranchers, business owners, educators, community leaders, and representatives of ag organizations are invited to improve the future of Washington agriculture. Agenda highlights include panels on regulatory burden and cost of production, water and climate, labor, workforce development, and technological adoption; feature Lieutenant Governor Denny Heck as keynote speaker; and a 'Fireside Chat' with state elected officials (invited).

Beginning Farmers Invited

A product of Class 44's Public Policy Project, the first day offers beginning farmers and resource providers the opportunity to discuss farm viability. Those interested, including policymakers, are encouraged to attend to better understand challenges, highlighting opportunities and successes to overcome them, and create a space for connections between people in the industry.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

AGFORESTRY GRADS HOST WILDFIRE WORKSHOP

Roots of Resilience along with Lazy R Ranch are holding a comprehensive workshop, "Tame the Flames," to educate and demonstrate effective wildfire management strategies with grazing and forestry practices. Scheduled June 22 - 23 near Spokane, experts and stakeholders will gather to share insights, strategies, and practical demonstrations on wildfire management.

Speakers include a few AgForestry alumni and friends:

- Guy Gifford (25), Department of Natural Resources, on fuel reduction programs
- Craig Madsen, Healing Hooves, on vegetation management with goats - Partner Sue Lani Madsen (29)
- Beth Robinette and Maurice Robinette (17), Lazy R Ranch, on fire impacts and regeneration

Plus many more...

[REGISTER HERE](#)

LEADERS OF THE FUTURE



Claire Sheehan

Claire Sheehan, daughter of Jason and Karen Sheehan (43), competed and earned a trip to the 2024 Genius Olympiad to present her scientific studies on "Which Form of Biodegradable Hydrogels Will Help Conserve Irrigation Water in the Farming Industry?". A junior at Sunnyside High School, Claire competes at the international level at the Rochester Institute of Technology in June amongst participants from around the world and share her learnings on sustainable methods for conserving irrigation water in agriculture.

During the event, the students from around the world will network and exchange lapel pins or buttons representative of industries from their state or county. If your organization has pins or buttons to share with Claire, contact leaders@agforestry.org and we will put you in contact.

NETWORK UPDATES

Join the Agriculture and Forestry Education Foundation Board of Directors for a monthly network update to learn about:

- Fund drive and fundraising plan
- AgForestry Leadership Program update
- Executive Director search
- Q&A: Bring your questions, we want to hear from you!

Upcoming Zoom network updates (click date to register)

- [Tuesday, May 14: 12 – 12:45 pm](#)
- [Tuesday, June 25: 4 – 4:45 pm](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS INVITED TO SHELTON RECEPTION, CLAM BAKE, AND TOUR

- *When:* Wednesday, May 15 from 5 - 6pm
- *Where:* Little Skookum Shellfish, 2262 SE Lynch Road, Shelton, WA 98584

[REGISTER HERE](#)

AG VIABILITY CONFERENCE

- *When:* Wednesday, May 29 and Thursday, May 30
- *Where:* Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick, WA

[REGISTER HERE](#)

AGFORESTRY GRADS HOST WILDFIRE WORKSHOP

- *When:* June 22-23
- *Where:* Spokane, WA

[REGISTER HERE](#)



The poster features a blue background with a central image of a rural landscape. A blue starburst graphic in the top left corner contains the text 'SAVE THE DATE!'. Logos for WSDA (Washington State Department of Agriculture) and WSU CAHNRS (Washington State University Center for Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences) are in the top right. The main title 'WASHINGTON AGRICULTURE VIABILITY CONFERENCE' is centered below the image, with three yellow dots underneath. A paragraph of text describes the event as an interactive two-day event for industry leaders. A white box at the bottom left provides the date (May 29-30, 2024) and location (Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick, WA). The AgForestry Leadership logo is in the bottom right corner.

SAVE THE DATE!

WASHINGTON AGRICULTURE VIABILITY CONFERENCE

Join WSDA and WSU CAHNRS for an interactive two-day event as industry leaders share insight into the state of the industry and we discuss how to collectively invest in agriculture. The conference will include opportunities for active participation and feedback as well as an update about the Agricultural Competitiveness Study.

Date: May 29-30, 2024
Location: Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick, WA



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING AGFORESTRY!

[Click here to view our full list of donors.](#)

We have raised \$514,004 toward our goal of \$600,000 by June 30.....so we have \$86,000 left to go!

Mission

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

Vision

To positively impact and enrich lives and communities in Washington State to meet challenges faced by agriculture, forestry, and natural resources.

Agriculture and Forestry Education Foundation

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