Oregon State University’s Outreach and Engagement

100 Years of OSU Extension Service
Celebrating our past and looking to the future
Now and then, we get the opportunity to celebrate our past as we move toward a new future. This is the moment for Oregon State University.

In 2011, the OSU Extension Service celebrates 100 years of educational outreach and opens a new century of engagement with the people of Oregon.

For 100 years, the OSU Extension Service has helped communities envision a better future and given them the tools to create it. Your great-grandparents might remember the demonstration trains that traveled throughout the state with train cars outfitted to demonstrate food safety and efficient farm management. Your grandparents might remember Extension’s leadership in organizing community relief programs during World War II, such as Victory Gardens, materials recycling, and the Emergency Farm Labor Program.

Today, OSU Extension reaches people with on-site workshops and online access to address issues such as community well-being, secure food systems, youth development, and sustainable businesses. A corps of several thousand Extension-trained, master-level volunteers reaches even farther, providing community service as Master Gardeners, Master Woodland Managers, Master Food Educators, and more.

The future of Extension will see even greater outreach and engagement with Oregon communities as OSU Extension joins OSU Extended Campus in leading OSU’s Division of Outreach and Engagement. OSU’s century of collaboration with communities beyond the borders of its campuses has been recognized by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching with its “Community Engagement” designation.

In this inaugural issue of O&E magazine, we celebrate the centennial of OSU Extension and look forward to the next 100 years of outreach and engagement with the people of Oregon.
It seems like half the town is crowded around the railway station, each person jostling for a good spot to view the train when it arrives. But the train they are expecting is not delivering the usual supply of goods and people. It’s a demonstration train, and it’s delivering education.

By Peg Herring

One Hundred Years and One Mission

Oregon Agricultural College horticulturist C.I. Lewis speaks from the college’s Farming Demonstration Train at Hermiston in 1908. Early in the century, educators used the railroads to reach people far from campus. Today, almost one million Oregonians are engaged in Extension activities across the state.

HC1547_Lewis, courtesy OSU Archives
The steam engine chugs to a stop, the doors of a freight car open, and a fully equipped laboratory is revealed to demonstrate the latest advances of modern farm industry and home life.

In the early 1900s, when railroads were just beginning to reach communities beyond the Willamette Valley, educators at Oregon Agricultural College (OAC) saw the opportunity to reach people far from the Corvallis campus. Professors used demonstration trains to deliver useful information that would improve lives and livelihoods across Oregon. From the beginning, OAC educators extended research-based knowledge to people and communities in all parts of the state, a mission and a service that became known as Extension.

In the early 20th century, Extension was becoming part of the fabric of rural Oregon. Generations of Oregon kids would grow up in 4-H, while their mothers led home study groups and their fathers tuned in to Extension’s radio farm reports. As people moved from farming communities to cities and suburban neighborhoods, Extension was there with programs for civic engagement and leadership. Today, 4-H continues with projects focused on technology training and youth leadership. Thousands of trained Extension volunteers give their time to their communities to create public gardens, advise woodland managers, and clean up neighborhood streams. Extension faculty across the state offer research-based expertise in important issues such as health and nutrition, children and families, forestry, agriculture, marine science, and community development.

The story of OSU Extension mirrors the story of Oregon. From the beginning, the focus of Extension was more than agriculture. It was service to the whole family, in the whole community, across the whole state.

How did it begin?

At the close of the 19th century, most Oregonians were newcomers living on newly established farms. They approached their work much the same way their fathers and grandfathers had, clinging to methods that had worked well enough back in Minnesota or Germany. It was the mission of Oregon’s land-grant college to help them move from farming communities to cities beyond the Willamette Valley, educators at Oregon Agricultural College (OAC) saw the need to establish a recognized division within the college that would be dedicated solely to the educational service of communities beyond campus.

On July 24, 1911, the Board of Regents established the Extension Service at OAC.

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Education as national security

Since the beginning of our nation’s history, leaders have acknowledged the importance of public education to economic development and national security. For Abraham Lincoln, education was “the most important subject which we as a people can be engaged in.” At the height of the Civil War, Lincoln proved his commitment by signing legislation that created the nation’s land-grant universities. It was more than an agenda for education; it was an agenda for democracy.
It is federally mandated, it reaches hundreds of agricultural experiment stations, and the Hatch Act of 1887, which established a national network of land-grant institutions, was the culminating point of this national focus. The Morrill Act continued with the Hatch Act of 1887, which included one significant addition for a nation at war: military arts were added to the curriculum of agriculture and mechanical arts. President Lincoln signed the bill into law on July 2, 1862.

The vision that began with the Morrill Act continued with the Hatch Act of 1887, which established a national network of agricultural experiment stations, and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, which created an extension service at each land-grant university. Together, the three laws established the three cornerstones of the land-grant mission: education, research, and extension.

**A model for the nation**

The Extension Service established at OAC preceded the Smith-Lever Act by three years. Developing partnerships with county governments was of primary importance to Extension’s first director, Ralph D. Hetzel, a lawyer and professor of political science at OAC. Faculty Extension agents were soon stationed in counties and began developing programs tailored to local needs. In Coos County, for example, agent J.L. Smith developed programs to improve dairy production and pasture quality, delivering his demonstrations by boat instead of by buggy across the roadless coastal county.

During the 1920s, Extension director Paul V. Mairs organized the first of a series of statewide economic conferences, followed by county-based conferences to define the direction of Extension education. The Extension Service continued to sponsor economic conferences periodically throughout the 20th century to identify community needs. This became the model for Extension programming across the nation. Among the first needs identified were instructions in home economics.

The legislation, drafted by Vermont representative Justin Morrill, was the culmination of national ideals that educated citizens were necessary for a successful democracy. In 1859, three months into his first term in Congress, Morrill entered a resolution to establish national agricultural colleges in each state of the union. The resolution was rejected. He tried again, facing fierce opposition from southern and western states who felt the bill impinged on states’ rights. Morrill pressed on. When the bill finally passed both houses, it was vetoed by President James Buchanan.

When Morrill again submitted his bill in 1862, many of the dissenting states had withdrawn from the union. The new bill included one significant addition for a nation at war: military arts were added to the curriculum of agriculture and mechanical arts. President Lincoln signed the bill into law on July 2, 1862.

**Education across the airwaves**

Eventually, Oregon’s Agricultural College became Oregon State University. But the letters OAC remained etched in the college radio station, KODAC. Similar to the Internet in the late the 20th century, radio in the early 20th century was adapted from technology originally designed for military
Extension’s director of information, Ballard, saw the potential for radio to deliver Extension education, and he championed the construction of a broadcast radio station powerful enough to cover the entire state. In 1925, the university celebrated the opening of the 500-watt KOAC with Kadderly serving as program director and announcer. “Radio erases city limits and state lines, and causes to disappear the boundaries of nations, creeds, and parishes,” Kadderly said. The slogan of KOAC was “Science for Service,” and its purpose was “to make the resources of this institution more fully available to the state.” The programming, that went over the airwaves revolutionized Extension’s educational outreach. In KOAC’s first year of operation, the Extension Service broadcast 313 lectures, “selected because of their practical application in the home, on the farm, or in business,” according to Kadderly.

In any given week KOAC, may have had Smith on camera reporting news of Oregon’s agriculture and innovations. The slogan of KOAC was “Science for Service,” which chronicled the people and industry. As his agricultural counterpart had witnessed a generation earlier, Jacobson was greeted with skepticism from the community he was to serve. “I spent the first six months identifying immediate needs in the coastal communities,” said the former OSU basketball star. What he saw was a complete lack of communication between fishermen and the agencies that regulated their industry. Jacobson convened a series of town hall meetings to bring communities and regulators together to plan for a shared future. Later, Jacobson helped to establish Oregon’s first watershed councils, which pioneered community-based management of shared water resources.

The 1960s and 70s were boom times for Oregon’s forest industry and research within OSU’s College of Forestry. Until then, forestry had been a secondary assignment for a handful of agricultural agents. Extension expanded its forestry faculty to deliver training in woodland management and to extend research to the new industry of Christmas tree production. Under the guidance of Extension foresters, Christmas tree production was transformed into a science and Oregon became a leader in the industry. To reach more people with research-based information, Extension developed master-level educational programs for community volunteers, who in turn provided community education as Master Gardeners, Master Woodland Managers, Master Water-shed Stewards, Master Food Educators, and more. Each year, Extension volunteers contribute weeks, sometimes months, leading service programs in their communities.

During the 1980s, natural resource industries saw a sharp decline. Farms were in default; mills were shutting down; commercial fishing began to see the first of many closures. Alice Morrow, an Extension family resource management specialist, was one among many Extension faculty who developed programs to help families hurt by this decline and to transition workers to new careers. OSU Extension helped people understand the complexity of a series of critical issues such as poverty, salmon, and sustainability, in tabloids distributed as inserts in all major newspapers across the state. Beginning with property tax-limiting measures in the early 1990s, state funding for higher education in Oregon dwindled. Extension programs established new partnerships with community colleges, the Oregon Food Bank, school districts, and community groups. In 2007, OSU placed Extension within the Division of Outreach and Engagement. Today, county-based Extension faculty continue to serve as leaders in their communities as Extension reaches new audiences online and through dispersed Open Campuses developed in collaboration with local leadership.

Extension continues to deliver education in new ways. Many of the techniques that radio pioneered continue today through the Internet. Opportunities for learning are not limited by zip codes; lifelong learning reaches across the state with Extension education onsite and online. The purpose of this education remains unchanged: a well-educated citizenry is essential for economic and community development. One hundred years, one mission. Oregon.
If you grow plants or raise animals, in a Portland garden or on a ranch in Burns, chances are good you’ve worked with OSU Extension. With faculty across the state, the OSU Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resource Extension program helps people grow. With education programs such as Master Gardeners, Growing Farms, pest management workshops, and new crop trials, OSU Extension engages with people in all parts of Oregon agriculture. And Oregon agriculture is immense, earning more than $4 billion in gross sales for more than 220 commodities. Oregon farms are family owned and most farms are less than 50 acres, so family farming remains vibrant in Oregon.

Good breeding results in signature Oregon fruits and vegetables

Tasters move from table to table, sampling tidbits of colorful vegetables, recording their impressions as they compare varieties of corn, beans, or broccoli. These vegetables are in a race, of sorts, that began as much as 12 years earlier, when OSU vegetable breeders hand-pollinated promising varieties with the purpose of developing a better bean (or corn, or broccoli) for Oregon.

The work is meticulous. It requires detailed family histories on tens of thousands of cross-bred varieties, tracking characteristics that develop with each generation. The result is vegetables that are tastier, more nutritious, disease-resistant, and bred to thrive in Oregon. Past vegetable winners from OSU breeders include Blue Lake green beans, Oregon Sugar Pod II peas, and Oregon Spring and Legend tomatoes. OSU’s new purple tomato, with its boost of antioxidants, is due on the market in 2011.

Not all beans do equally well in Breakings as in Baker City, so OSU Extension continues to evaluate these and other varieties of vegetables for use in home gardens. Each spring, Extension home horticulture faculty publish their list of recommended varieties for the four main growing regions in Oregon: the coast, western valleys, high elevations, and the Columbia and Snake River valleys. The list, with recommendations from artichokes to watermelons, is available online and from county offices of OSU Extension.

Small farms have big impact in Oregon communities

Small farming is no small thing in Oregon. In the space of a generation, farmers and food advocates in Oregon have changed the menu, the land, and the economies of communities from downtown Portland to the Rogue River.

“Oregon consumers now have greater access to outstanding food,” says Larry Lev, an OSU Extension agricultural economist. “You can see that from the growth of farmers markets and restaurants that are sourcing locally, plus the growth of retailers and institutions also buying locally.”

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Small Farms Conference, has renamed the Small Farms Conference, has grown steadily and in 2011 more than 600 farmers, business and restaurant owners, ranchers and supporters of family farming attended.

OSU’s SWAT team goes after a bad bug

In 2009, OSU researchers found a tiny fly in Oregon’s orchards and vineyards. The spotted wing drosophila rapidly began wreaking havoc in Oregon’s high-value fruit and berries. OSU Extension faculty and researchers from throughout the West acted quickly to learn all they could about this new invader. Within a year, OSU Extension had organized a full-scale monitoring program and educational outreach to help growers and gardeners protect their crops from the spotted wing drosophila.

Tastingapests from public schools

Tim Stock peers into the hidden corners of a school cafeteria, on the trail of a hidden culprit. Stock heads OSU Extension’s Integrated Pest Management program and educational outreach to help growers and gardeners protect their crops from the spotted wing drosophila.

Expelling pests from public schools

OSU Extension dairy processing specialist, Nick Andrews (right) is the Portland metro area specialist for OSU Extension’s Small Farms program. Farm sales from the three metro area counties totaled $740 million in 2008. Lynn Ketchum photo

Learn more about OSU’s Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resource program:
http://extension.oregonstate.edu/programs/ag
Aerospace, engineering, videography, environmental stewardship; the OSU Extension 4-H Program is much more than raising livestock or building skills in home economics. Young people in Oregon can choose from a variety of 4-H clubs and activities, building skills for a lifetime in science and engineering, healthy living, animal husbandry, and citizenship.

A study by Tufts University of youth development programs across the country found that 4-H is the most effective program for building future citizens with skills in community, compassion, responsibility, collaboration, and leadership. OSU’s 4-H programs are backed by university research and delivered by trained volunteer leaders. These programs provide kids with a connection to caring non-parental adults and an opportunity to learn responsibility and community leadership.

A mission to Mars

What kind of spacecraft would get humans to Mars and support a crew for more than a year? Each year, 50 Oregon middle school students use creative teamwork to answer that question and others during the Oregon ExxonMobil Bernard Harris Summer Science Camp, hosted by OSU Extension.

Survive the real world

At the 4-H Survivor Camp, high school students learn what it takes to survive on their own in the real world. Their challenge simulates life after high school, as they learn to apply for a job, pay bills, budget for food and rent, and navigate the responsibilities they will face in their rapidly approaching adult lives.

Plan a mission to Mars

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Walk a mile in someone else’s shoes

Each year, middle school students from Portland head to eastern Oregon where they help brand calves, birth lambs, feed chickens, and learn what it means to be at home on the range. At the same time, rural Oregon students head for the city where they explore mass transit, urban recycling, green rooftops, and maybe take a crash course in riding a bike in city traffic. The swap is part of OSU Extension’s 4-H Urban-Rural Exchange program, where lessons in understanding and sustainability are learned on both sides.

Have a ball in your community

More than 1,000 students—from kindergartener to high school—play on 4-H soccer teams around Oregon, and about 95 percent of them are Latinos. “4-H soccer is more than an exciting game and fun way to exercise,” says OSU’s Mario Magaña, who coordinates 4-H’s outreach efforts to young Latinos. “Students learn teamwork, responsibility, and healthy habits.”

Whiz kids dig into new technologies and opportunities

Eva Zamudio learned to film and edit videos using professional equipment as part of the OSU Extension 4-H Tech Wizards program in Washington County. “We didn’t just sit,” said the high school senior, who first became involved in the program as a freshman. “We actually learned things we could pursue or do—just for the fun of it.”

Students in the program learn to create websites, produce videos and podcasts, make computerized maps, and build robots. They are also required to perform 15 hours of community service each year in tech-related fields, said Octaviano Merecias-Cuebas, the 4-H faculty member in Washington County. Launched in 1998, this bilingual afterschool program teaches hands-on technological skills to low-income students in grades 6 through 12 who are considered at risk of dropping out of school. To date, about 1,000 students have participated in the program, about 95 percent have graduated from high school, and about 70 percent of those have pursued more education in science, technology, engineering or math.

“I didn’t see going to college as a possibility at first, but the more I learned, the more I thought about going,” said Zamudio, who plans to attend college after graduation. “Tech Wizards led me that way, but didn’t push.” The program has received a U.S. Congressional Award for Youth Service and funding from many sources.

Summer camp helps Warm Springs tribal members keep traditions alive

Tucked away amid pines in the shadow of Mount Jefferson, families settle into teepees as the night air rustles the trees and the campfire turns to ash. So ends another day of an unusual 4-H camp focused not so much on sports as on tradition and ancestry.

“Strengthening Families Culture Camp” is a joint venture between the OSU Extension 4-H program and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs in central Oregon. The aim is to help tribal families bond and keep their traditions alive.

“It was the kids who wanted to learn how their ancestors lived,” said Arlene Boileau, a tribal member and 4-H educator with OSU Extension. “That’s how the culture part of the camp began more than 20 years ago, and it became its own energy.”

Camping together, tribal families explore traditional drumming, dancing, and basketry; they discuss the meaning of tribal ceremonies and prayers. In addition, Extension educators teach diabetes prevention and drug and alcohol awareness. Candy and soda pop are banned at the camp, and daily hikes and physical activity are encouraged.

“When we traveled in the old way, we took our knowledge of where to find food—roots, berries, fish, and clean water,” Boileau told a group of campers. “Now, when we travel, we get in our cars and buy food that is full of salt, fat, and sugar. But with new knowledge, we change to healthier ways.”

Learn more about OSU’s 4-H Youth Development program:

http://extension.oregonstate.edu/programs/4h

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Family and Community Health programs help keep Oregon STRONG and HEALTHY

Feed your kids, budget your finances, prepare for a healthy retirement, be a successful long-distance grandparent. From cradle to rocking chair, the OSU Extension Family and Community Health program is working to improve Oregonians’ lives.

Delivering nutrition education for limited-income Oregonians is a high priority for OSU Extension. Poor diet and lack of physical activity significantly contribute to four of the 10 leading causes of death in the United States—heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes—and complicates disorders such as obesity, hypertension, and osteoporosis. OSU Extension nutrition educators help limited-income Oregonians make healthy food choices, handle food safely, manage their food budgets, and choose active lifestyles.

Lynn Steele is a pillar in her community. For more than 15 years, she has led nutrition classes in the OSU Extension Metro Hispanic Nutrition Office, demonstrating healthy cooking in a kitchen-classroom bustling with the chatter of parents and children. Food is the center of celebration in Latin American family traditions. Steele said, “But Latinas and Latinos want warmly as young people get hooked on sugar and high-carbohydrate diets.

She develops recipes that retain the traditional diets of Mexico and South America, but improve them to include vitamins, minerals and calcium. Her recipes, written in English and Spanish with easy-to-follow pictorial directions, combine familiar flavors with nutritious ingredients for low-cost make-at-home meals. The nutrition education classes center on the participants, who often bring their youngest children with them. Babies and toddlers bounce from lap to lap as their parents sit relaxed around a table. “Everyone participates and we all learn from each other,” Steele said. “Relationships are important in an atmosphere of change.”

The conversations, all in Spanish, start with food and nutrition, but soon open to discuss other learning opportunities for this low-income community. “In many cases, this means helping families work through domestic problems before they are able to learn nutrition.”

“Besides teaching them how to cook nutritious meals, I encourage women to be the best they can be. They get that, and you can’t fake it. I try to be a role model and friend in the community.”

Reaching out to older people with newer technology

The newspaper rustles over the breakfast table, covering cups and dishes like a tent. At the top of the page, a picture of Sharon Johnson smiles out at her readers. Johnson, an OSU Extension faculty member, has become a trusted member of the community in which she teaches people of all ages to eat well and live healthy lives.

Share a meal and learn together in Portland’s low-income neighborhoods

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Lynn Steele juggles lessons and babies in her community-based nutrition classes. Steele, an OSU Extension faculty member, has become a trusted member of the community in which she teaches people of all ages to eat well and live healthy lives.

Now Johnson has a national following, with her online course, “Mastery of Aging Well: A program for healthy living.” Developed through OSU Ecampus and in partnership with the AAPF, the course addresses memory difficulties, depression in later life, medication, food, and exercise.

Fight obesity in rural kids

“Rural communities pose unique challenges,” said Deborah John, an OSU Extension public health specialist. “The remoteness of rural towns can make it difficult for children to bike to school and access healthy foods.” Rural children in Clackamas, Columbia, and Klamath counties could have a slimmer future thanks to a nearly $5 million grant that OSU Extension will use to develop an obesity prevention program in their communities.

Detect hidden childhood hunger

Hunger can be surprisingly hidden, even from the people who take care of our health. That’s why OSU Extension nutritionist Anne Hossington teamed up with OSU’s Ecampus to create an online course for nurses, physicians, and other healthcare practitioners on how to identify children who don’t have access to enough nutritious food. The free, five-module course is called “Childhood Food Insecurity: Health Impacts, Screening and Intervention.”

For more information about OSU Extension programs, visit http://extension.oregonstate.edu/programs/fch.
About 48 percent of Oregon’s land is forest, and about one third of that forestland is managed as reserves for environmental habitat or scenic value. OSU’s Forestry and Natural Resources program helps people manage that land, providing educational programs to woodland owners, natural resource managers, Christmas tree growers, and forest industries.

Forest owners pass their land to the next generation

Let’s say you and your husband own 80 acres of woodland. You’ve worked hard to build a tidy tree farm, and your fondest wish is to leave the land as a legacy for your children.

But wait. Your eldest lives in a big city 500 miles away. Your second is a single dad with two kids and a busy career. No. 3 — let’s face it — has never shown the slightest interest in the family property. And the youngest? Well, with a little training she might have the skills to take care of the land. But is that what she wants? And then, how will you be fair to the others?

Such scenarios are common among the family landowners who attend Ties to the Land, a workshop developed by OSU Extension faculty and others to help families negotiate the emotional and financial pitfalls of succession planning.

“My parents were forest owners,” says Mary Sisock, “and I’m not. That tells you that my parents didn’t do the planning they needed to do.” Sisock directs the Ties to the Land workshop. This man rated his attachment at about 11 on the Heirloom Scale. He wasn’t a garrulous guy, and he’d never talked to his son about this. The son said, “I had no idea my dad had this love of the land.” Both of them were tearing up at the end, and it completely changed the son’s idea of what should happen to the land.”

O Christmas Tree

One of Rick Fletcher’s boyhood memories is of hunting Christmas trees on his family’s southern Oregon ranch. “I was eight years old, and I was wading through snow up to my waist, dragging these trees out of the woods. We’d truck them south and sell them at our family’s lot in Los Angeles.”

The trees, of course, were the forest-grown kind: sparse-limbed, flat-sided, bent-stemmed — the only choice in those days. By the time Fletcher grew up and joined the forestry faculty of the OSU Extension Service, things were changing. Plantation-grown trees — straight, sturdy, bushy, and vividly green — have become a huge industry in Oregon, thanks in large part to Fletcher and his Extension colleagues. In 1955, before Fletcher was wading in the snow, Hal Schudel and Paul Goodman — son bought their first Christmas-tree farm near Kings Valley and planted Douglas-fir seedlings. Their enterprise grew to become Holiday Tree Farms, headquartered in Corvallis and the largest grower of Christmas trees in the nation. At first, these pioneering growers relied on information from Extension agronomists as they were developing a new farm crop from scratch. Over time, Extension foresters learned along with the burgeoning industry, and soon their research on stock improvement, fertilization, pest management, and markets became indispensable to regional growers.

Today, Oregon is the nation’s No. 1 producer of Christmas trees, adding more than $10 million to Oregon’s economy.

Fletcher still visits with Hal Schudel and compares notes on the best way to grow a Christmas tree.

Forests are the subject of OSU Extension Tree School

Every year, the campus of Clackamas Community College is transformed into Tree School. The annual weekend, organized by OSU Extension, is a festival of learning for people who love forests. OSU and agency experts teach dozens of workshops covering everything from chainsaw safety to mushroom identification to wood product marketing. With attendance growing to over 600 people, Extension Tree School is now offered in southern Oregon, too.

The Wood Innovation Center helps keep Oregon the nation’s top softwood producer

It’s estimated that Oregon’s forest sector generates several billion dollars in economic benefits each year. To fuel this industry with innovative ideas, OSU Extension and the OSU College of Forestry created the Oregon Wood Innovation Center to assist companies with new product development, testing, and market assessments. OSU research and Extension are helping the industry test new adhesives and composite materials, assess biofuel potential, and develop building materials for the rapidly growing green building industry.

Education helps new landowners see the forest and the trees

More than 50,000 individuals and families in Oregon own forestland, and for many of them, OSU Extension is their primary source of information. With educational programs such as the Basic Forestry short course and the Women Owning Woodlands network, beginning forest managers can learn basic skills in woodland management and stewardship.

Wildfire can reach every community in Oregon, so be prepared

Living close to nature is a benefit that many Oregonians enjoy. But wild lands can carry fire close to homes and neighborhoods. The Extension Wildland Fire Education Program, available online, helps homeowners and others prevent wildfires and protect themselves and their property from the natural occurrence of fire in the forest.

Learn more about OSU’s Extension Forestry and Natural Resources program:

http://extension.oregonstate.edu/programs/forestry
The focus of Oregon Sea Grant Extension is more than the sea. To spread the word about watershed health and coastal issues in Oregon, Extension specialists help Oregonians take care of their watery landscapes. The Extension Watershed Education Team helps people improve their own watersheds, including weekend Water School focused on water and watershed education. The Master Watershed Steward program extends research-based information on watershed health to help watershed council members and others interested in developing community watershed projects.

Time and tides wait for no one when tracking beach contamination

It’s 3 a.m. on the Oregon coast and OSU Extension is here, helping to ensure that Oregon beaches are safe from contamination. For more than a year, Frank Burris, part of OSU Extension’s Watershed Education program, teamed with state and federal agencies to document the timing and extent of bacterial contamination on beaches and to trace the sources of that contamination.

State agencies monitor Oregon’s beaches to protect public health against disease—causing micro-organisms. When monitoring reveals fecal bacteria levels above the federal standard, the beaches are posted with warnings to the public that contact with the ocean water may cause sickness. Contaminated beaches remain posted under advisory until follow-up samples determine that fecal bacteria in the ocean water have fallen below the federally set limit.

By sampling the beaches every day, Burris found that the high bacteria counts generally last for just a day or two, which made it possible to remove the warning advisories much sooner. On the flip side, he found that daily beach sampling recorded more events of elevated bacteria counts than previously documented. “You may not realize that you have a problem until you have data,” Burris said. “But having data helps you solve the problem.” Such intense sampling required a corps of technicians and volunteers, trained by Burris and the research team, to collect data following strict guidelines. Every few weeks and during each significant storm, the researchers sampled the ocean water at waist height at several points near incoming creeks on the south coast. Every few months, they sampled the same area each hour for 24 hours, wading into the surf throughout the night with headlamps. “It gets pretty exciting when it’s dark and all you can see are whitecaps lit by your headlamp,” Burris said.

As coastal development expands to accommodate new residents and increasing numbers of vacationers, beaches in Oregon may experience more fecal bacteria contamination. Through OSU Extension and the South Coast Watershed Council, Burris is developing an educational program to help coastal residents reduce bacteria on the beach and upstream from the beaches.

Education helps stem the tide of invaders

Sam Chan’s shoes are making the rounds. Chan, a watershed health specialist with Oregon Sea Grant Extension, displays his sneakers whenever he needs to make a point about aquatic invasive species. The shoes were submerged for a few months in California’s Lake Mead, and they are now completely encrusted with tiny, bead-like zebra mussels, one of the most invasive freshwater organisms in the world.

Except for these very dead ones decorating Chan’s sneakers, zebra mussels have not yet sneaked into Oregon. And Chan wants to keep them out. “It’s much more cost-effective to prevent invasive organisms from entering and establishing themselves in Oregon than having to treat an invasion,” he said.

From the Columbia to the Pacific, Extension takes care of Oregon water

Invasive aquatic species choke out native plants, displace native fish, and clog water intake pipes. According to the National Invasive Species Council, the U.S. spends $137 billion a year in an attempt to control and eradicate invasive species. It’s easy for the problem to seem almost too big to bother with, even when you look at it on a local scale, Chan said. In the Columbia River Basin, one new invasive species is discovered every five months. “That could be really overwhelming, because by the time we have a plan in place to deal with one invasive species, there’s another on the horizon.”

People are often inadvertently to blame for introducing these invaders to places that are outside their natural range. A fisherman uses tu chub as live bait and releases the leftovers into a lake; or a teacher and her students “set free” the rusty crayfish that were a class project. Part of Chan’s job is to educate citizens about how invasive species that haven’t yet been found in Oregon—like zebra mussels—are spread.

This doctor helps patients who feel green around the gills

Who takes care of the octopus at OSU’s Hatfield Marine Science Center, or the sharks at the Oregon Coast Aquarium, or the koi in your neighbor’s pond? As the head of OSU’s Ornamental Fish Health Program, Tim Miller-Morgan is an aquatic veterinarian and an OSU Extension educator. He makes these rounds as attending physician, and he also teaches importers, retailers, hobbyists, and vets how to care for underwater pets. His internationally recognized work has resulted in improved practices for the multimillion-dollar ornamental fish industry.

Fishermen help unlock the genetic mysteries of salmon in the ocean

A tiny snippet of tissue from the salmon fin is all it takes to trace where this salmon began life. That’s important information for fishery managers, who must restock fishing grounds. Learn more about the Oregon Sea Grant Extension program:

http://extension.oregonstate.edu/programs/seagrant
A corps of volunteers

Extension volunteers find personal rewards in learning and teaching

By Celene Carillo and Aimee Lyn Brown

The Oregon Coast seems an unlikely place for a garden. The confiers that persist along the sand and wind-beaten cliffs that skirt the Pacific can look less like flora and more like abstract sculpture. And the storms, with all their horizontal rains, would seem to make gardening nearly impossible.

But just north of the Yaquina Bay Bridge in Newport, not far from the historic lighthouse, a group of Master Gardener volunteers trained by the Oregon State University Extension Service has coaxed a verdant garden from the difficult soil. It’s a teaching garden, and with it the Master Gardeners have taught hundreds of school children how to make vegetables grow.

Liz Olson is one of these volunteers. On a wet, blustery day last October, she and several of her colleagues gathered 30 third-graders from Newport’s Sam Case Elementary School for the garden’s final harvest of potatoes, carrots, lettuce, kohlrabi, and squash. The students were involved in the process from the beginning. They planted seeds in the greenhouse, transplanted them to the garden, watered, and weeded. They also tasted their crops, discovering the sweet crunch of a carrot and the bite of arugula.

“It’s a thrill to see students discovering the natural gardening process and healthy eating habits and watch them try new things,” said Olson.

The thrill of learning and teaching what you’ve learned attracts many people to OSU’s master-level volunteer programs. Since launching Master Gardeners in the 1970s, OSU Extension has created several other volunteer training programs to provide Oregon’s residents with the skills they need to improve their lives and their communities.

For example, since 1982, the Master Woodland Managers course has trained more than 400 people who have in turn contributed more than 30,000 hours in volunteer service to help private woodland owners manage their forests and care for their land.

“A lot of our volunteers stay active far beyond their required time,” said Nicole Strong, head of the program. “The course asks that they contribute 80 hours, but most of them continue to volunteer for years.”

Butch Tanzey has been a Master Woodland Manager since 2007. He continues to volunteer countless hours in Wallowa County, where he has lived his whole life.

“I don’t keep track of the hours. It would scare me to death,” he said. In 2009, OSU honored Tanzey for donating more hours than any other volunteer in the program.

“Not a week goes by when I don’t get a call,” he says. “I never say ‘no’ to a request.”

Tanzey, who owns and operates a logging outfit in Wallowa, has seen the surrounding land change hands from loggers to vacationers.

“The main goal I have as a Master Woodland Manager is to help educate people who own a chunk of this real estate,” he said. “They need to understand everything that’s going to affect their land so they make the right choices.”

Tanzey volunteers his time to help preserve eastern Oregon’s legacy for the next generation. He doesn’t know Michele Pryse, an OSU-trained Master Gardener and Family Food Education volunteer in southern Oregon’s Central Point, but they have something in common. Pryse spends about 150 hours a year teaching food preservation and safety skills in part so she can pass traditional knowledge on to people who are seeking it.

“Not everyone has a grandmother or an aunt who can teach them these things anymore,” she said. She goes all out when she teaches, too, like on the 100-degree September day when she appeared on local TV to talk about how to use pears and apples. For her props, Pryse baked a pie and crisps, made applesauce, displayed dehydrated samples, and arranged baskets of apples and pears.

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“I wanted to show people back-to-the-basics things you can do with the humble apple and pear, and how good those things taste,” said Pryse.

It’s not the only time Pryse has appeared on local television. She’s appeared in several programs on gardening demonstrating how to store fresh produce and stretch a food budget. On television and in the classroom, Pryse teaches harvesting, canning, and how to make jams, pickles, and soups from the fresh local ingredients. To demonstrate cost savings, Pryse labels her canned goods with her cost, and the price she’d pay if she...
The dairy is like an ark... It’s a little farm in the middle of the city where kids can come and reconnect with the past. They can see where their food comes from and be part of real work.

By the Numbers

Tracking the impact of OSU Extension Service volunteers

18,000
Active volunteers in Oregon trained by OSU Extension Service

200,000
Hours contributed by Master Gardener volunteers in 2009

4,000,000
Dollar value of services contributed by those Master Gardeners

23,100
Hours contributed to the public by Family Food Educator volunteers sharing information about food preservation and safe handling in 2009

5,500
Calls received by the OSU Extension statewide food safety hotline in 2009

1 in 5
Students in K-12 who participate each year in 4-H youth development programming

80
Percentage of Master Woodland Managers who volunteer beyond their required time

2,000,000
Oregonians who receive information and educational programs from OSU Extension volunteers each year

Extension about the possibilities of starting a 4-H club and becoming a club leader.

“4-H Farm Discovery club is much more than a petting zoo,” said Ian Mayer, the OSU 4-H Extension Agent who helped Battan start the club and provides curriculum and programming for club members. “All the youth take on service learning projects and help with barn chores. They learn compassion and empathy, in addition to animal science and biology.”

Every year, 4-H club leaders help thousands of Oregon children learn the skills they need to better understand their state and their role in its health. Club leaders come from all walks of life and have backdrops ranging from engineers in the high-tech industry to cattle ranchers and small farmers.

“I grew up in southern California in the Hollywood entertainment industry,” said Battan. “But that wasn’t who I was. 4-H is allowing me to pursue my passions without having to be an expert, and I get to share all that I learn with urban youth. I want to tell them all that they don’t have to take what’s served to them in the city. There’s more.”

Other opportunities to volunteer as part of OSU Extension in urban (and rural) areas include: 4-H Wildlife Stewards, a program to promote science and environmental stewardship in Oregon’s schools; Climate Masters, a program that teaches volunteers to help Oregonians reduce their personal energy costs and carbon footprints; and Master Composters or Recyclers, which puts volunteers through an eight-week program to help Oregonians reduce their personal waste stream of their community, the intent being to create a task force of volunteers who will help maintain the project’s improvements.

“These are people who really respect the idea of being lifelong learners,” said Megan Klebacher, who heads OSU Extension’s Master Watershed Steward program. “They incorporate that desire into their lifestyle, and regardless of their area. Extension volunteers learn so they can teach others.”

OSU Master Gardener Liz Olson introduces Newport third graders to the wonders of growing— and eating— fresh vegetables. The students grew the vegetables from seed and nurtured them to harvest time with help from the Master Gardeners.

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Learning outside the box

Because learning doesn’t stop after graduation, OSU offers noncredit online classes for everyone from doctors to gardeners.

By Jeff Hino

Our schools conditioned most of us like Pavlov’s dogs. Bells told us when it was time to learn and when it was time to stop. Learning happened in 50-minute blocks and the teacher (the sage on the stage) controlled when, where, and what we learned until graduation. Learning happened inside a box.

Sharon Johnson knows that. She’s a professor in OSU Extension’s Family and Community Health Program. She’s also an expert on healthy lifestyles for older adults, and has earned a certificate of gerontology online, she understands the value of a virtual classroom. Working closely with OSU and AARP,

So what’s it like to learn online? The uninitiated tell you it’s impersonal and awkward. Yes, it could be. But if designed well using new online tools, it’s engaging and downright fun. You might find yourself discussing issues with fellow students on discussion boards and blogs. Or, you might explore a website rich with illustrations, narrations, and interactive games. And how about viewing videos or listening to podcasts to get the information you want, when you want it?

The OSU Extension Service has been offering informal education as an alternative to classroom learning for more than 100 years.

Can you learn how to garden on your computer? You bet. Each year, hundreds of people learn in-depth gardening through OSU’s Lifelong Learning Master Gardener Online. And there are courses that help improve your community, such as the Childhood Food Insecurity course that trains health professionals to recognize patients who may not be getting sufficient nutritious food.

You might want to add a new job skill, or earn certification for advancing your career, or you might just want to learn something new for the pure joy of it. OSU Lifelong Learning is there to help. It’s the new normal in how our world works and learns. 

About Extended Campus (“Ecampus”)

Oregon State University Extended Campus delivers quality learning opportunities to learners throughout the world. Extended Campus expands access to OSU’s academic excellence through OSU Degrees Online (“Ecampus”), non-credit courses, and programs offered through Lifelong Learning and OSU Summer Session.

- OSU Ecampus now offers more than 20 undergraduate and graduate degrees online.
- The newest online degree offerings include a Master of Natural Resources and bachelor’s degrees in Human Development & Family Sciences and in Environmental Economics & Policy.
- In 2011, OSU was ranked in the top 25 online schools by TheBestColleges.com. More than 4,900 students registered for one or more OSU online courses in spring term 2011.
- Over 65% of OSU distance degree-seeking students reside out-of-state, most are 30- to 40-year-olds who are juggling school with career and family obligations.
- Did you know that you can take OSU Extension Master Gardener training course online? Convenient for people who are not able to participate in the traditional site-based training, more than 730 students have registered to receive this expert training online.
- Did you know that you can take a full year of chemistry or a foreign language in one summer? During OSU Summer Session, students have the chance to catch up or jump ahead in their degree programs. Multiple sessions are offered each summer, many of which are accelerated.

Virtual Classrooms

OSU’s Extended Campus makes education accessible

By Amanda Sapp

After surviving a near-fatal accident in 2005, William Bradford endured 32 surgeries and years of painful recovery. While clinging to life, Bradford also hung onto his dreams of earning a graduate degree in divinity studies. But first he needed to complete his bachelor’s degree, which he had started more than 20 years earlier.

Bradford, who lives in Cambridge, Mass., learned about Oregon State University’s online degree programs, offered through OSU Extended Campus (or Ecampus), and enrolled as an online student majoring in liberal studies.

Bradford, 46, joined an increasing number of nontraditional students, most ranging from 30 to 40 years old, who choose to earn degrees outside a bricks-and-mortar classroom. According to the 2010 Sloan Survey of Online Learning, online enrollment increased 21 percent nationwide, far exceeding the 2 percent growth of the on-campus higher education student population.

OSU Ecampus enrollment mirrors the national trend; more than 4,900 students enrolled for spring term 2011.

“Ecampus is a great way to gain access to an education that may be physically and geographically impossible,” Bradford said. “In addition, the psychological benefit of taking classes was enormous. It allowed me to focus on something other than my own pain and recovery.”

At OSU, students can choose from more than 20 online degrees and 750 courses, including bachelor’s degrees in anthropology, environmental sciences, fisheries and wildlife, agriculture, horticulture, natural resources, political science and women’s studies. Ecampus also offers graduate degrees and noncredit professional development courses online, such as the popular Master Gardener training course.

All of the Ecampus courses are taught by OSU faculty, with the same requirements and curricula as on-campus courses, and the diplomas are the same.

Although not required, many Ecampus students make their first trip to Corvallis to participate in commencement, from places as far away as England.

Bradford was one of them. In the spring of 2010, he traveled from Cambridge to Corvallis to receive his diploma in liberal studies alongside some 4,500 students. Last fall, he began classes at Harvard, where he is pursuing a Master of Divinity. Bradford credits OSU Ecampus for being the stepping stone that enabled him to pursue his dream.

“I would not have gotten into Harvard without Ecampus,” he said.

Learn more about Oregon State University Extended Campus:

http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/
Outreach and Engagement is how Extension works

Every day, across Oregon, people are engaged in Extension education.

Above: OSU Extension 4-H youth development volunteer Lisa Battan has helped pave the way for 4-H club members in the Portland metropolitan region to learn hands-on animal husbandry at the Alpenrose Dairy in southwest Portland. “The dairy provides a great opportunity for urban kids to get away from computer and television screens. Participating in 4-H helps them recognize that part of living sustainably is accepting and knowing where their food is coming from.”

Above: OSU Extension Master Woodland Manager volunteers Dave Hill and Vesa Watson extract tree core samples. MWM volunteers receive about 85 hours of instruction from OSU experts in topics that cover forest management, ecology, and forest inventory methods. Volunteers in turn share their knowledge with neighbors and communities to help create healthier woodlands.

Above: Families, along with their young children, gather at the Baltazar Ortiz Center in Portland for health and nutrition classes developed and taught by OSU Extension Metro Hispanic Nutrition program educators.

Left: Oscar Lopez-Rubio manages crop production and oversees seasonal workers on Gray Farms near Albany. Lopez-Rubio took part in OSU Extension’s Family and Community Leadership training, where he developed his skills as a farm supervisor.
Ongoing lifelong learning will be required for anyone who wants to remain viable in the workforce. To be successful at work or life, people will have to access new knowledge immediately and use it effectively. And where will this knowledge be refined and made available in ways that can be accessed quickly? Through land-grant universities.

The gauntlet has been thrown down. We now are left to make this vision a reality for Outreach and Engagement within a 21st century land-grant university—one that respects the goals of Justin Morrill but moves aggressively to the next level of engagement with our learners.

When Justin Morrill helped craft the groundbreaking legislation that created the land-grant university system in 1862, he hoped that it would change the face of society. During the next 150 years, Morrill’s vision became the land-grant universities’ competitive advantage in the marketplace of knowledge: university-based knowledge could be extended to people beyond the university to help solve problems and improve lives. To stay competitive, the land-grant universities addressed questions such as: Do we provide access to information that makes a difference? And are we maintaining our role as a respected source of relevant, objective, science-based information?

In the future, however, there will be new questions: Do we provide opportunities for people to learn from each other and not only from us? Do we listen to the needs expressed by our learners, students, decision-makers, and partners? Likewise, do we learn from learners and partners to improve our efforts to provide access to knowledge?

To address these new questions, in 2007 Oregon State University created the Division of Outreach and Engagement to underscore the mission of outreach and engagement that permeates all the teaching, research, and extension offered by the university.

Our vision of how and whom our universities serve is changing as the traditional view of who students are changes. It’s been reported that nationwide only 16 percent of students in higher education fit the traditional image of an 18- to 24-year-old campus resident. Seventy percent of higher education learners are part-time students, full-time workers, or caretakers for a dependent. If access to knowledge is the fundamental goal of OSU Outreach and Engagement, then it starts at any time people need to learn.

In the next 100 years, the life of a learner will blend on-the-job and on-campus experiences. College seniors will be on the job already, finishing traditional coursework online while establishing a professional foundation. And workers already in a profession won’t “go back to school” because they’ll have been continually learning. They will have graduated, but will never really “finish college.”

Future Engagement
OSU Outreach and Engagement will listen and learn, as well as talk and teach, in the 21st century

By Dave King
OSU Extension has faculty working in every part of the state.