

however, our understanding of the relationship between these indicators and plant production and environmental outcomes is incomplete. To address these knowledge gaps, better understand linkages, and provide better guidance to stakeholders, the **Washington Soil Health Initiative (SHI)**. This initiative is an ambitious plan that funds research, extension, and demonstration of soil health best management practices through a network of long-term agro-ecological research and extension (LTARE) sites across Washington's diverse agricultural systems.

SHI is a partnership among WSU, the Washington State Department of Agriculture, and the Washington State Conservation Commission. The legislation included specific language requiring WSU to establish the proposed LTARE site at the WSU Mount Vernon Research & Extension Center.

A renewed focus on soil health creates a win-win-win opportunity for farmers, the environment and the general public, and puts the state of Washington in a leadership role nationally. An increased understanding of the linkages between soil health, production, and the environment achieved through the Washington SHI will contribute to several important outcomes:

- A baseline assessment of soil health and the tools to monitor and manage it across the diverse agricultural systems in Washington;
- Better understanding of the opportunities to improve soil health through changes in management practices; and
- Increased adoption of these practices to increase food production and farm profitability and providing important economic and environmental benefits to the state of Washington.

Key industries involved include growers of potatoes, wine and juice grapes, dryland agriculture and tree fruits, such as apples, pears, and cherries, among others. Visit <https://soilhealth.wsu.edu/> for frequent Soil Health Initiative updates.

Stormwater Management and Green Infrastructure

The Washington Stormwater Center at WSU Puyallup continues to be one of the nation's largest research installations in the nation that focuses on green infrastructure and stormwater management. The program is conducted through a living laboratory with full-scale, replicated, Low Impact Development (LID) practices that serve as a center for research and outreach. The Center includes pervious concrete and asphalt surfaces, rain gardens, microcosms, pervious pavers, roofing, and fish tank studies. The center has an extensive outreach program that provides LID certification for engineers, planners and agency personnel. The Center also provides online modules for LID training. Many cities and urban counties have installed pervious concrete streets and sidewalks while local businesses have installed pervious pavement parking lots and rain gardens.

Forest Stewardship

Washington has over 215,000 landowners that control nearly 5.8 million acres of forestland, making this the largest rural land use group in the state. Many landowners manage for multiple objectives, such as timber production, wildlife habitat improvement, and a variety of recreation opportunities. WSU led 58 events attended by 3,372 forest owners and managers, representing over 150,000 acres. Forest Stewardship Coached Planning is a comprehensive landowner education program that covers key aspects of caring for wooded property in a way that maximizes private landowner benefits while also protecting and enhancing public resources. The course is designed around the development of a personal Forest Stewardship Plan, which participants write with "coaching" from forestry professionals. Courses resulted in over 90% of participants implementing better management practices. In partnership with the WA State Department of Natural Resources, future staffing includes a new stewardship forester for Northeast Washington. A Northwest Washington Extension regional forestry health specialist started October 1.