

Needs Assessment 2016



Oregon State University

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*"If I can't answer my clients' questions, I send them to SOREC."
Clint Nichols, Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District.*

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Executive Summary

Introduction

For more than 100 years Jackson County residents have turned to the OSU Extension Service and the Southern Oregon Agricultural Research Station for practical, real-world education and information. Their combined efforts reached farmers and ranchers, woodland owners, orchard and vineyard operators. Its 4-H program gave young people opportunities to grow through hands-on learning activities, and its Family and Community Health program (the modern Home Ec.) provided food preservation and safety and a host of other consumer science opportunities. These programs, while always working collaboratively, officially joined forces as the Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center (SOREC) in 1995. In 2014, a measure proposing stable and permanent service-district funding for SOREC was passed with a 75% voter approval rating.

SOREC is dedicated to carrying out its educational and research missions as efficiently and effectively as possible. To ensure its understanding of local needs were accurately understood, SOREC embarked upon a detailed assessment in the summer of 2015, completing it in early 2016. The assessment was led by a consultant and every attempt was made to ensure broad and unbiased input. The project was funded by the Friends of Research and Extension (FORE).

The needs assessment consisted of several phases. First, input was gathered from SOREC staff on their programs, including challenges and opportunities. Then community and industry leaders were interviewed to better understand the research and educational interests of Jackson County. Based on this input an online survey was developed and distributed to a wide range of individuals and organizations. Finally, service area-based focus groups were convened for in-depth discussion of programmatic and staffing needs. In total, nearly 400 individuals and approximately 75 organizations participated in the needs assessment.

Findings

SOREC-wide summary

Program delivery methods: While face-to-face learning is most valued, there is a strong recognition of the importance of making information available and easily accessible electronically, both to meet varied learning styles and to reach those who cannot attend site-based classes whether because of distance or work schedules.

Delivery locations: To reach a broader audience SOREC must overcome the barriers of location, transportation limitations, cultural norms and full-plate lifestyles by moving programming out into the community to reach people closer to where they live and work.

Branding: Despite passage of the Service District measure, the SOREC brand is still not well known. There is a need to better spread the word about SOREC and the services offered by the Extension Service and the Experiment Station.

Marketing: Available programming can be better marketed both out to the community and across internal programs.

Underserved audiences: Those who lack transportation to the SOREC campus, are too busy to participate in intensive programming, or live in poverty, as well as the growing Latino population, were all identified as groups that could be better served through shifts in delivery models and programming.

Cross-program topics: Water, climate change adaptation, impacts of the cannabis industry, and fire resiliency are key topics that could be addressed collaboratively by multiple SOREC programs.

Agriculture

There is a critical need for a general agriculture Extension position to address a variety of issues and audiences that are currently underserved by SOREC's agriculture programs, such as forage and row

crops and livestock production. In addition, farmers and new agricultural-based businesses need help in understanding and navigating land use and permitting requirements. Labor issues are important, particularly securing skilled laborers when needed and having access to training in Spanish. Opportunities exist for more consistent delivery of products to local markets as well as external market development. Urban encroachment on agriculture, and the resulting conflict in the urban-agriculture interface are a concern. There is a desire for research in sustainable, organic seed production, and emerging markets based on the GMO-free county status. Cannabis production is impacting the valley agriculture community in countless ways and assistance in addressing this is desired. Priority research and education topics include water use/conservation (including irrigation), soils, plant diseases, and management of insect pests (including invasive species).

Natural Resources and Forestry

While field-based programming and in-person contact are program strengths, online delivery of programs and materials should also be emphasized to reach the greatest number of interested residents. Water issues, riparian management, forest health, and climate change adaptation were key topics of educational interest. Programming should be geared to landowners at varied experience levels, while creating opportunities for engagement with professionals.

Master Gardeners

Availability of staff and volunteer-hours, as well as teaching facilities, limit this highly regarded program. The intensity of the core training is prohibitive to many prospective participants and an alternative design might draw a wider audience. Reaching underserved audiences, through more Seed to Supper events, Spanish Seed to Supper, and community garden and school garden programs, was proposed.

4-H Youth Development

The club model, focusing on character and leadership development, should be maintained while expanding to meet both the interests of urban youth and the evolving interests of youth in general. After-school programs offer opportunities to expand, as does reaching out to underserved audiences such as at-risk youth and the Latino population. There are numerous opportunities for partnering and collaboration, both with organizations that currently serve children and businesses interested in supporting youth.

Family and Community Health

Programs and materials are highly valued by partners. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed program) could be expanded to more locations with additional staffing or modifications to delivery models. Participants recommended focusing efforts on training teachers who would then be able to reach more students and families. The Master Food Preserver and Strong Women programs are limited by facilities. Both programs are encouraged to reach out to the community for additional delivery locations, to expand space and time options as well as to reach participants in their neighborhoods.

Conclusions

Overall, SOREC clientele greatly value its educational and research services and numerous community partnerships. SOREC is viewed as a neutral community hub for dissemination of information and creation of collaborations. However, opportunities abound for increased collaboration both internally across programs and externally with current and prospective partners.

The findings of this needs assessment provide clarity about opportunities for growth, both throughout the organization as a whole and within particular programs. This needs assessment will be used in the development of strategic and staffing plans, enabling SOREC to take thoughtful steps to best serve the residents of Jackson County.

Introduction

Background

The Oregon State University Research & Extension Center (SOREC) is celebrating its 105th year of service to the citizens of Jackson County. The Oregon State University (OSU) Extension was established in 1911. Since its inception, OSU Extension's mission has been to convey research-based knowledge in a way that is useful for people to improve their lives, their homes, and their communities. OSU Extension faculty work with business people, farmers, foresters, youth, teachers, and community leaders. Currently, the Jackson County Extension office has programs in Home Horticulture (Master Gardeners), 4-H Youth Development, Land Stewards, Family and Community Health, Food and Nutrition, Forestry and Natural Resources, and Small Farms.

The Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station is the principal agricultural research agency in the state. Its mission is to conduct research in the agricultural, biological, social, and environmental sciences for the economic, social and environmental benefit of Oregon. The research activities of the Southern Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station traditionally focused on supporting the pear industry. Programs in agronomy and specialty crops have been developed and a viticulture program has been created to assist that rapidly expanding industry.

Together, the Jackson County Extension office and the Southern Oregon Experiment Station make up the Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center, located in Central Point and serving the citizens, communities, and businesses of Jackson County. [100 Years of Service to Jackson County](#) details the purposes, sources of funds, and allocation of funding that guide the center and provides snapshots of activities and accomplishments in each program area.

SOREC supports programs of practical and relevant interest to citizens in both rural and urban environments in Jackson County. Programs and staff are highly valued and trusted because of their responsiveness to the issues that strongly resonate within the community. SOREC makes the research and knowledge base of OSU available to communities and citizens throughout the county.

SOREC's resources and programs center on building and strengthening sustainable communities and economies, sustaining natural resources and agriculture, and enhancing the health of youth, families, and older adults. Information is disseminated via workshops, classes, tours, demonstrations, practical publications, website content and social media. This high-quality, research-based information addresses the community's demand for reliable, easy-to-access education and provides lifelong educational opportunities.

The SOREC professional staff works cooperatively with over seventy community partners. SOREC's staff develops and trains a network of volunteers trained as 4-H Leaders, Master Gardeners, Master Woodland Managers, Land Stewards, and Master Food Preservers, thereby expanding the reach of services to all corners of the county.

Competition is stiff for the state and federal funds that support most faculty positions. The May 2014 passage of a service district (by a vote of 75% in favor) offers stable funding for local operating costs, but access to these funds cannot be taken for granted. Grants and contracts support much of the research conducted by the Center. Each of these funding sources requires ongoing evidence of program impact and careful justification of requests for enhanced funding.



Purpose

The purpose of this needs assessment is to better understand the educational needs of Jackson County residents and potential gaps in services as they relate to SOREC's five service areas. These include: Family Community Health (including food and nutrition program), 4-H Youth Development, Natural Resources and Forestry (including the Land Stewards and Forestry programs), Urban Horticulture/Master Gardeners and Agriculture (agriculture encompassing current SOREC programs in tree fruits and vineyards, small farms, and livestock/forage, as well as other agricultural enterprises and crops that are not currently supported by SOREC programs). These five broad service areas are used to organize the needs assessment, with the understanding that some SOREC programs involve collaborations or target audiences that cut across service areas. The needs assessment identifies 1) educational and research needs related to SOREC's current and potential service areas, listed above; 2) opportunities for collaborative programming and partnerships; and 3) specific ideas for programs. The needs assessment also identifies a few high priority staffing needs but does not provide a comprehensive staffing assessment.

Methods

The following steps, based on previously successful, similar projects, were used to complete the needs assessment: faculty framing discussions, key informant interviews, an online survey, service area focus groups and advisory council review (each described below). Each step informed the subsequent activity. The contractor worked in close collaboration with the project lead to ensure the process was resulting in the desired outcomes. A specific effort was made to reach beyond existing clientele to ensure that a more complete assessment was obtained. Findings are based on input from a broad range of individuals and community organizations. In all, of the nearly 400 needs assessment participants representing 77 businesses and organizations, 79 of those individuals were reached in-person, representing 46 organizations.



Staff framing discussions

The consultant interviewed SOREC leadership, faculty and staff to gain familiarity with the programs and the center. SOREC leadership provided information about local Extension and branch Experiment Station relationships with Oregon State University as well as input on SOREC program strengths, unmet needs, and opportunities. Twelve faculty and staff provided information about their program foci, target audiences, impacts, and perceptions of opportunities and unmet needs. Faculty and staff identified potential key informants (discussed below).

Key informant interviews

The key informant interview stage of the needs assessment was designed to gather input from industry and community leaders about the issues to be explored, and to help inform the questions that would be asked of the wider community when collecting data through the online survey (discussed below). Key informants included representatives from a total of 22 local and state agencies, non-profit organizations, and others who work with SOREC faculty/staff and or work in the same service area (e.g. community nutrition or forestry). These 24 individuals are influential, knowledgeable about community needs, and able to reflect on the Center's role in the context of multiple organizations working with a particular target audience or sector. The consultant interviewed key informants by phone to establish an understanding of Jackson County residents' educational, research and related needs. Key informant interview questions were developed in

consultation with SOREC leadership and faculty. Specific program recommendations were also garnered from the key informants and can be found in Appendix B.

Online survey

The purpose of the survey was to gather input from a wide range of individuals and key organizations. Both key informants and SOREC faculty distributed the survey to both individual contacts and organizations that either partner with SOREC or serve a similar clientele. Organizations were encouraged to distribute the survey link to staff, board members, and those who had a good understanding of the needs of Jackson County residents. Of the 298 individuals who responded, 27% answered as a representative of one of the 31 different organizations or businesses listed and 71% answered as an individual.

The online survey was administered through the OSU Qualtrics platform. The full Qualtrics online survey report can be found in Appendix D.

Focus groups

Focus groups, comprised of key clientele and industry and community leaders who use SOREC services, partner with SOREC, serve SOREC audiences, or have the potential to do so, were convened to gather more in-depth input, including identifying specific programming and staffing needs. One or two focus groups, consisting of five to nine participants, were convened for each of the five SOREC service areas, thereby gathering input from 57 individuals representing over 20 organizations. Participants were selected from among key informants and other key stakeholders identified by SOREC faculty and staff. Data collected from the key informant interviews and survey results informed the focus group questions. Specific questions were developed in collaboration with the project lead. Participants responded to the results of the online survey, and provided suggestions for programming, collaborations, service delivery and staffing. Specific programmatic suggestions from focus group participants can be found in Appendix B. Proposed collaborations can be found in Appendix A. Participating organizations can be found in Appendix C.

“Help people understand the value of what they are getting for their money. Be more visible.” ~Key informant interview participant

Key Terms

Service area	Broad topic areas covered and the audiences potentially served by them.
Program area	Specific activities centered on a narrow area of educational topics.
Agriculture	The service area covering the Integrated Pest Management, Viticulture and Small Farms programs
Natural Resources and Forestry	The service area covering the Land Steward and Forestry and Natural Resources programs
SOREC	Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center
AG	Agriculture including, Small Farms, Viticulture and Integrated Pest management
FCH	Family and Community Health program, including SNAP-Ed, Strong Women and Master Food Preservers programs
FNR	Forestry and Natural Resources program
LS	Land Stewards program
MFP	Master Food Preservers program
MG	Master Gardener program
SF	Small Farms program
4-H	4-H / Youth Development program

Service Area and Program Summaries

The following sections highlight input and key findings from each phase of the needs assessment. The first section addresses SOREC-wide findings, and subsequent sections provide results for each of the five service areas.

SOREC-wide Summary

There were several overarching themes that surfaced repeatedly throughout the needs assessment process ranging from opportunities to improve services to recognition and appreciation of the valuable contribution SOREC staff provide. They are summarized, as bullet points, below:

“The research information made available by OSU Extension is critical and second to none.” ~Michele Pryse, Food skills educator, ACCESS

Program delivery

- Broaden the presentation formats to meet the different learning styles and access abilities of a diverse audience.
- Online resources are needed and important. SOREC needs to do more to make information accessible. Everything that is available digitally should be online. Facilitate the ease of digital access.
- At the same time, face-to-face contact and personal relationships are highly valued, and field or practicum-based settings are where the best learning takes place. The relationships built in the

personal contacts are the strength of SOREC programing. Maintain face-to-face and personal contact.

- There is a need to find the best ways to reach those who are unable to get to the Center whether it be online delivery, developing more hybrid classes (online *and* field-based combined) or by taking programing to outside locations.
- The online survey indicates there is no single day or time that is best to offer programs. For individuals, the majority of respondents (56%) preferred weekday evening classes, followed closely by Saturday classes and weekday daytime, (48%, 46% respectively). When responding for members of an organization, or client-participants, weekday daytime classes were preferred by 63%, followed by weekday evenings (58%) and Saturdays (46%). In both cases there was little interest in Sunday classes. (Note: Two responses could be checked.) For more information see the full online survey report in Appendix D.
- The opportunity to attend an indoor class or workshop was the most desired learning format, followed very closely by attending a field class or tour for individuals. For members of organizations and their clients, attending a class/workshop at the organization's site was the highest priority, followed by attending a field class or tour. For more information see the full online survey report in Appendix D.
- In terms of developing future educational programs, more field and farm tours were the most desired, followed by offering classes at other locations in the community. For more information see the full online survey report in Appendix D.
- There is a need to bring more programs out *into* the community, at diverse locations such as schools, community centers, community gardens, senior centers, etc. Go to where people are, instead of, or in addition to, asking them to come to the SOREC campus.

*“People want to receive educational short bites right where they are.”
~Focus group participant*

Strengthen SOREC brand

- The SOREC brand is not strong. A lot of people still do not know about SOREC. Marketing is an ongoing issue. There is a need to get the word out about both individual programs, and the organization as a whole.

Improve marketing of programs

- SOREC needs to better market programs, and market them *across* program areas. Those who drive by the center everyday see the programing offered on the sign, many others indicated they do not know all that is available through SOREC
- According to the online survey the best ways to reach individuals are: an emailed announcement/flyer (89%), a mailed newsletter or class catalog (46%), and a mailed flyer/brochure (34%). The best ways to reach organizations' clients are: an emailed announcement/flyer (76%), social media (52%), and a mailed flyer/brochure (29%), SOREC website (28%), and word of mouth (25%). (Note: respondents could check up to three answers.) For more information see the full online survey report in Appendix D.

Underserved populations

- Create programs to meet the needs of diverse audiences; the current clientele base is passionate and committed, but narrow.
- There is a need to create programming for those who cannot access intensive, onsite daytime programs (Master Gardeners being just one example). This includes community-based programs,

online or hybrid, and other ways of delivering information. Make it more accessible to working adults and other audiences.

- The SOREC clientele base is not diverse; it is heavily represented by those who are retired, white, and able to drive to SOREC. There is a need to reach out more to underserved audiences by identifying who they are, where they are, and what their needs are.
- To better serve the Hispanic population, engage with community leadership and learn what is needed and how to best reach them. Spanish language programming would be helpful.
- The size of the Latino population grew two and one half times between 1990 and 2010, from 3.7% to 9.4%, and represents the largest population of color in the county. For more information see the full Regional Profile report in Appendix E.
- Unemployed persons are a potential audience. The region has had consistently higher unemployment than the state since 1990 (by one to two percentage points). Unemployment has increased significantly since 1990 – from about 8% to about 13% in 2008-12, but at a pace roughly on par with the state. For more information see the full Regional Profile report in Appendix E.
- Individuals and families living in poverty are another potential audience. Striking statistics, where the county stands out from the state, include higher than average poverty both in general and for children, lower than average wages and lower than average median household income. For more information see the full Regional Profile report in Appendix E.

Cross-program topics

- Water was discussed both in the online survey and focus groups for Agriculture, Land Stewards/Forestry and Natural Resources, and Master Gardeners. Interests ranged from water conservation, water use efficiency, and irrigation, to watershed and riparian management and streamside gardening.
- There is growing concern about climate change adaptation and effects on the region.
- Impacts of cannabis are significant and should be addressed. Cannabis in the Valley effects land values, labor force issues, pesticide and herbicide use, and water use and quality, among other things.
- Fire is another cross-program theme impacting Forestry and Natural Resources, Land Stewards, and Master Gardeners.

Factors preventing participation

- Factors that prevent or limit individual participation in programs, according to the online survey: “Days and times of programs are not convenient” (46%), “Not aware of what programs are available” (32%), “I live/work too far from SOREC to attend programs” (30%), “Too busy/don’t have time to attend” (30%). (Note: participants could check all that applied.) For more information see the full online survey report in Appendix D.
- The same top four factors prevent organization and client participation in a different order of importance: “Too busy/don’t have time to attend” (52%), “Not aware of what programs are available” (42%), “I live/work too far from SOREC to attend programs” (38%), “Days and times of programs are not convenient” (32%), with the addition of “Clientele lack transportation to get to SOREC facility” (28%). (Note: Respondents could check all that applied.) For more information see the full online survey report in Appendix D.

Recognized Strengths

“SOREC has created neutral ground where conversations between groups with different objectives can occur.”

~Elise Higley, Director, Our Family Farms Coalition

- SOREC is generally highly regarded by the clientele. The quality of the faculty, staff, programs and research is excellent and valued.
- SOREC as a source of science-based information across programs was mentioned repeatedly as a resource not available elsewhere in the community.
- SOREC engages with a remarkably broad range of community partners for an organization of this size. For a list of community partners see Appendix C.
- SOREC is, and can be even more, an important locus or contact point where community members, such as rural landowners, are able to access the knowledge and services of other agencies and organizations.
- SOREC is viewed as a convener or a hub, and a neutral place where community members can come to both learn and share information.

Collaboration Opportunities

- SOREC programs are still working in silos to some degree. Some potentially under-collaborating programs mentioned include Small Farms and other Agriculture sectors, Master Gardeners, Family and Community Health and 4-H. There are important collaborative opportunities that are perceived as being missed.
- More collaboration is needed with existing community organizations, as well. See Appendix A for a list of over 50 proposed partners and potential collaborations.

“Don’t go it alone to create new programs without first looking to create partnerships.” ~Focus group participant



Agriculture Summary

Program Overview

Commercial Viticulture (1.0 FTE OSU-funded, covers Jackson, Josephine & Douglas Counties), Integrated Pest Management (1.0 FTE OSU-funded, covers Jackson and Josephine Counties) and Plant Pathology (1.0 FTE OSU-funded, covers Jackson & Josephine Counties) Jackson County relies on a healthy commercial agriculture industry that provides thousands of jobs in the community, draws vacationers and contributes to the beauty of our valley and its livability. SOREC's commercial agriculture programs assist producers with the latest research-based knowledge and innovation for effective management of pests, diseases, reduction of pesticide use, water conservation, and production problems that can have a major impact on this \$64 million dollar industry in Jackson County.

Small Farms (0.5 FTE OSU-funded, 0.5 FTE grant funded, covers Jackson and Josephine Counties)

The Small Farm Program helps small commercial producers of niche products, beginning farmers and small-acreage landowners in Jackson County. The program conducts classes and workshops annually resulting in increased production and market opportunities for small farmers.

Assessment Summary

Key informant interview responses indicated a need for additional focus on (list is not prioritized):

- Soils
- Water
- Plant pathology
- Invasive pest management
- Climate change
- Cannabis and impacts
- Methods of communication coming from SOREC
- Availability of needed labor
- Training for laborers



“Bear Creek’s involvement with SOREC goes back nearly 100 years. Much of what we have learned has come from working “hand in hand” with the researchers at SOREC. When we were developing a fifty-acre organic orchard, we came to SOREC to search for what would be required, and what challenges we would face with our variety of pears.” ~Matt Borman, Bear Creek Orchards

Online Survey Results

Results are presented in order of prioritization. (Lowest mean indicates highest priority.) Highest priority responses are common to all agriculture, those that fell lower in priority are somewhat more specific-interest related.

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS/ TOPICS that SOREC's agriculture programs could address rated by the importance of each topic.

Question	Very important	Important	Slightly important	Not important	Total Responses	Mean
Water use/conservation	74	19	3	0	96	1.26
Soils (suitability for diff't crops, fertility, soil health, etc.)	72	24	1	0	97	1.27
Irrigation	66	27	2	0	95	1.33
Plant pathology/diseases	58	34	1	0	93	1.39
Insect pest management	60	31	3	0	94	1.39
Invasive pests	56	34	3	0	93	1.43
Weed control	57	32	6	0	95	1.46
Organic methods	52	33	9	1	95	1.57
Tree fruits	41	41	10	3	95	1.74
Pasture/forage management	43	35	12	4	94	1.76
Adapting to climate change	41	37	14	3	95	1.78
Understanding & navigating permitting requirements for ag businesses	33	45	11	2	91	1.80
Livestock	41	32	15	5	93	1.83
Marketing strategies for ag producers	33	44	15	1	93	1.83
Field and row crops (vegetables, grains)	36	42	10	6	94	1.85
Market & product development	30	41	18	4	93	1.96
Financial management (bookkeeping, financing, etc.)	30	41	19	5	95	1.99
Equipment (choosing, repairing)	27	42	19	4	92	2.00
Viticulture	28	42	18	7	95	2.04
Alternative crops (e.g., industrial hemp, other crops not grown here)	31	32	22	7	92	2.05
Programs for Spanish speakers	26	34	18	6	84	2.05

RESEARCH NEEDS/TOPICS that SOREC's agriculture programs could address rated by the importance of each topic.

Question	Very important	Important	Slightly important	Not important	Total Responses	Mean
Water use/conservation	69	12	5	0	86	1.26
Soils (suitability for diff't crops, fertility, soil health, etc.)	63	21	2	0	86	1.29
Plant pathology/diseases	56	23	4	0	83	1.37
Insect pest management	50	31	2	0	83	1.42
Invasive pests	50	28	4	0	82	1.44
Irrigation	52	30	5	0	87	1.46
Weed control	47	34	3	0	84	1.48
Organic methods	54	23	10	0	87	1.49
Pasture/forage management	38	31	14	0	83	1.71
Adapting to climate change	40	27	12	3	82	1.73
Field and row crops (vegetables, grains)	35	39	10	1	85	1.73
Tree fruits	33	33	13	2	81	1.80
Livestock	30	36	16	1	83	1.86
Viticulture	32	31	14	7	84	1.95
Alternative crops (e.g., industrial hemp, other crops not grown here)	31	28	22	4	85	1.99

Focus Group Input

The Agriculture and Small Farms focus groups consisted of 12 participants representing 10 organizations. Appendices A and B include specific recommendations from participants.

General agriculture extension needs

There is a critical need for a general agriculture extension position to address a variety of issues and audiences that are currently underserved by SOREC's agriculture programs due to lack of staffing, such as forage and row crops, and livestock production. In addition, farmers and new agricultural-based businesses need help in understanding and navigating land use and permitting requirements. Development of such a position would free up researcher time currently devoted to answering general agriculture questions. The current viticulture position is in research and that area needs Extension support as well. Participants expressed a desire for more land visits, which could be provided by a general agriculture position. Extension programs to this sector are limited, as SOREC does not currently have an Extension Agriculture agent.

Labor

The issues around labor needs include both the securing of labor when needed, and the ability to train laborers. Seasonality of the work presents a labor challenge. While many farms need labor at the same time, development of a labor co-op or use of SOREC as a hub to post labor needs, might be helpful. Training for laborers in their native language, Spanish, was highly desired.

“The number of English speaking in viticulture is dwarfed by Spanish speaking, compared to the services provide. Have field hands educated, because they are the ones who will catch anything that's going on. The manager might walk 1/10th of the rows during the season, compared with what his guys will walk. They cover every single row.” ~Key informant interview participant

Production and Markets

Focus group participants had differing perspectives and experience on whether specialty crops exceed potential local demand or were unable to meet that demand. It was clear however that there is room for both increased ability to consistently meet the local demand, and external market development. A lack of production infrastructure impairs profitability. There are not enough production facilities for some crops, and cooperative packing and distribution facilities would be helpful. Collaborative purchasing would also benefit smaller farms. The need for research in the storage of pears and grapes is of interest to producers.

“We see a huge demand for locally grown specialty crops, and not enough production to satisfy that demand. As part of our wholesale market development program, we rely on the Small Farms Program at SOREC to provide technical support to our participating farmers.” ~Wendy Siporen, Executive Director, THRIVE

Urban-Agriculture interface

Concern was expressed over urban encroachment on agriculture, and conflict in the urban-ag interface. Keeping “Ag in the public eye” and education of the public was recommended, including education on agriculture, its history, its value and role in the Rogue Valley. Accessing the Cattlewomen’s history of agriculture was recommended.

Sustainability and opportunities

Opportunities for seed crop production have resulted from the GMO-free location. Research is requested on sustainable, organic, seed production, and emerging markets in an effort to transition to more sustainable, diverse, robust agriculture.

Cannabis

Cannabis is impacting land prices, economics, CO2 availability, mulch compost needs, irrigation, and may taint wine grapes. Land less than fully utilized, leads to invasive weeds, pest and rodent problems. It was suggested to work with partners who can address cannabis issues including water rights, water quality, and natural resources issues was suggested.

Note: OSU cannot currently conduct research or provide education on cannabis, due to federal restrictions on universities.

“Cannabis production is likely to overtake winegrapes as the most rapidly growing agri-business in Southern Oregon. This is a logical extension of our climate, soils, and potential, combined with basic economics, and is solely my opinion. Many other scientists and those in competing industries (ag mostly) say the same thing.”

~Greg V. Jones, PhD., Director: Division of Business, Communication and the Environment, Professor: Environmental Science and Policy, Southern Oregon University

Collaboration

Agriculture and Small Farms focus group participants found they had many issues in common, and shared resources and contact information. They requested there be a forum in which they could meet again.

Faculty Interpretation of Results

SOREC's agricultural programs serve several key audiences. The extent to which educational and research needs are met vary among those audiences.

The Small Farms program serves beginning farmers (prospective farmers and those with up to 10 years of production experience) with classes focused on soil management, irrigation, equipment selection, bookkeeping, business planning, permaculture, seed production, and the production and management of chickens, goats, forage and pastures. Established niche farmers (those selling commercially, usually through direct marketing channels, and having 10 years or more experience) can take advantage of more advanced classes in marketing, grants and funding, and business planning, as well as the topics noted above. For both of these groups, SOREC currently lacks the capacity to fully address needs in hiring, managing and retaining employees, plant pathology, and Spanish language offerings. A final category of small acreage land owners (those owning at least five acres of agricultural land but not selling products commercially) are welcome to participate in Small Farms programs and are further served by the Land Stewards Program.

SOREC's Commercial/Production Agriculture Extension and Research programs serve corporate and large family-owned agriculture businesses. Pear producers benefit from research programs in plant pathology and entomology. Extension programs to this sector limited – as SOREC does not currently have an Extension Agriculture agent. Research staff conduct outreach through pest management forums (including discussions on invasive species management, organic production techniques, and implications of climate change on pests). This audience would benefit from enhanced Extension programming on water use, soils, irrigation, weed control, permits and rules, marketing and integrated pest management (IPM). Additional research on tree and root stock varieties would also be of value.

Winegrape producers have been served through research on plant pathology and entomology, water use, irrigation and soils management. Many of these producers work with private companies to obtain short-term labor to carry out management and harvesting activities, and there exists ample opportunity to seek collaboration between SOREC and these contractors relative to worker training. Jackson County is home to many small-scale winegrape producers, and SOREC's research staff struggle to meet their educational needs. Winegrape producers would benefit from Extension programming on permits and rules, water use and irrigation, soils management, and pest and disease management (IPM).

Large-scale livestock and forage producers are served by a regional specialist, housed in Douglas County. Local programs are offered in conjunction with the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District, and with various producer groups. A local Extension agriculture agent (noted above) could be very helpful in addressing common needs of this audience, such as water use, irrigation, fertilization, dealing with rules and regulations, and IPM.

Jackson County has a small number of large-scale row crop and seed crop producers whose needs SOREC currently addresses only through its Small Farms program. Additional Extension capacity is needed to provide the types of services this audience requires. Our ability to assist these growers would be much improved through addition of a general

agriculture position, as noted above. In addition, the general agriculture position would be able to better address public issues around agriculture/urban interfaces, and to contribute to collaborative SOREC/community efforts around food systems and food security.

SOREC is working diligently to refill two vacant, and essential, research positions focused on plant pathology and viticulture. The hiring processes for both positions are in second rounds, as first attempts to recruit well-qualified candidates were unsuccessful. A new Station Director has been hired, and he brings many years of soils and agronomic research experience to our team. He will be instrumental in helping answer many of the top ranked research questions identified in this assessment. Finally, a proposal has been submitted to the Jackson County 4-H, Master Gardener and Agricultural Extension Service District for one-half of the funding needed for the general agriculture Extension position referenced earlier. OSU has committed to long-term funding for the other half of that position. This position will be essential to SOREC's ability to meet many of the needs identified among agricultural audiences.

*“We need Small Farms forever. The institution, support and knowledge are invaluable. They understand the needs of farmers.”
~Stuart O’Neill, Executive Director, Rogue Farm Corps*

Summary of Key Points

- SOREC is broadly recognized as a source of objective, high-quality, science-based research and information. Participants value SOREC for providing neutral ground for conversations.
- There is a need for a new general agriculture Extension position to address a wide range of issues and grower needs, and to free up researchers' time to provide the more in-depth services that are highly needed.
- Spanish language training, especially for field workers, and training for laborers in general, is desired by some partners.
- Labor pool needs are impacting the agriculture sector, including supply, access to laborers when needed, and ability to keep laborers working year round.
- Staff retention is an on-going issue. Open research positions, that have not been filled, impact community access to services.
- There are ample opportunities for new or expanded collaborations, both external (including Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District, THRIVE, and Rogue Farm Corps) and internal. For a list of proposed community partnerships and collaborative ideas, see Appendix A.

*“It is hard to feel that SOREC is a trusted hub when staff turnover is happening. It takes some time to build trust.”
~Focus group participant*

Natural Resources and Forestry Summary

Program Overview

Forestry & Natural Resources (1.0 FTE OSU-funded, 0.75 FTE grant-funded, covers Jackson & Josephine Counties, some statewide duties)

The goal of the Forestry & Natural Resources program is healthy, productive forests and woodlands; reduced fire risk; and enhanced ecological, economic and social contributions of woodlands. The primary audience is woodland owners and rural landowners, with a focus on new and inexperienced owners. A secondary audience is natural resource professionals. Programs include Tree School, Woodland Stewardship short course, Master Woodland Manager, monthly programs and tours with Jackson Josephine Small Woodlands Association, and others. The program develops publications and curricula in support of the educational programs. The Extension Forester engages in applied research and demonstrations. Recent focal areas include creating fire-resilient forests and improving management of riparian zones. Additional outreach is offered through the Living on your Land conference and continuing education classes.

Land Stewards (0.51 FTE District-funded, covers Jackson County)

The Land Stewards program goal is improved stewardship of private land in the rural/wildland urban interface of Jackson County. The program focuses on serving 25-35 new and experienced landowners per year. The core program includes 11 field-based classes with approximately 45 hours of instruction. An action plan is developed and technical assistance is available through partner agencies. Additional outreach education is made available through the Living on your Land conference and continuing education classes.

“Our initial connection was seeing an announcement for Tree School. Afterwards, ODF came out and visited, Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District, and Max also. We had all of these support systems seeing us. Before we were Land Stewards, we were hosting Land Stewards site visits. The outreach and education, the timeliness, were absolutely important.” ~Maxine Cass, OSU Land Steward and Jackson County Master Gardener, Sams Valley/Gold Hill

Assessment Summary

Key informant interview responses indicated a need for additional focus on (list is not prioritized):

Forestry and Natural Resources

- Irrigation alternatives, solar powered drip, or passive pumping
- Riparian management education
- Awareness of current issues and offering relevant classes
- Cannabis, both industry-specific and impacts on the region
- Maintaining personal contacts

Land Stewards

- Increasing the number of classes
- Conducting more research at the SOREC site
- Water scientist position
- Leadership on climate change impact on agriculture and environment
- Outreach to the community
- Reaching a wider audience
- Alternative program delivery models

Both

- Marketing products
- Fire, the role in the region
- Grazing, pasture and range management

“The natural resources issue is a challenge, but the bigger challenge is the social issue, getting people to take care of their natural resources here.” ~Focus group participant



Online Survey Results

Results are presented in order of prioritization. (Lowest mean indicates highest priority.)

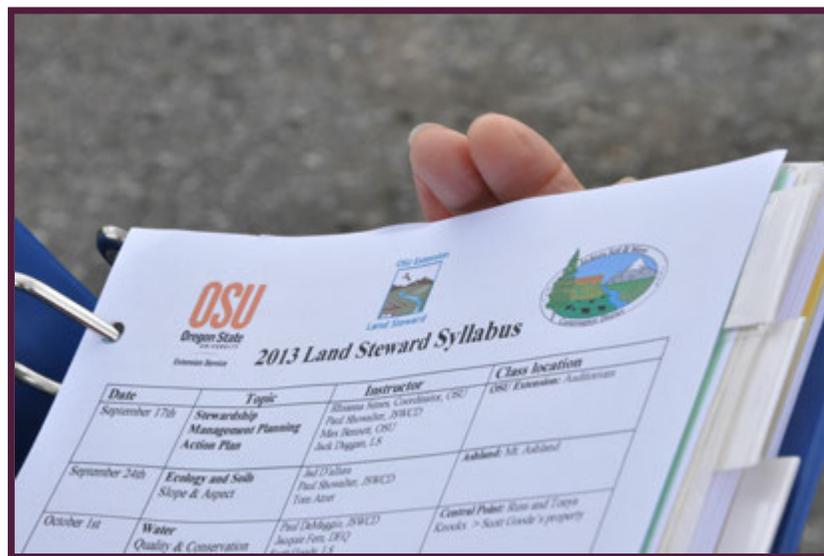
Forestry and Natural Resources

Current and potential EDUCATIONAL NEEDS/TOPICS that SOREC's Forestry and Natural Resources program could address rated by the importance of each topic.

Question	Very important	Important	Slightly important	Not important	Total Responses	Mean
Maintaining forest health, addressing insect & disease issues	85	24	0	0	109	1.22
Wildfire protection/fuels reduction	82	24	2	0	108	1.26
Conservation/enhancement of forests for habitat, water, and other values	75	30	4	0	109	1.35
Sustainable forest management in general	70	34	4	0	108	1.39
Restoration/enhancement of streams & riparian areas	69	28	10	2	109	1.50
Identifying and managing invasive species	58	37	11	1	107	1.58
Collaborative conservation/management of forest lands	51	39	11	5	106	1.72
Improving reforestation success	45	47	13	3	108	1.76
Restoration of public/federal forest lands	52	35	15	6	108	1.77
Managing for climate variability, change	55	27	17	9	108	1.81
Income opportunities on small woodlands/rural properties	27	49	28	3	107	2.07
Small diameter timber markets and utilization	29	42	30	8	109	2.16
Managing forests/woodlands for timber production	24	48	27	10	109	2.21
Biomass and bioenergy development	21	47	31	7	106	2.23
Forest business & tax issues	12	47	40	9	108	2.43
Land transfer/what to do with land after death	18	37	40	13	108	2.44
Markets for hardwoods/non-timber products	13	39	39	15	106	2.53

Current and potential AUDIENCES that SOREC's Forestry and Natural Resources program could work with or develop programs for rated by the importance of each audience for the Forestry and Natural Resources program.

	Very important	Important	Slightly important	Not important	Total Responses	Mean
Woodland owners	86	19	3	0	108	1.23
New and inexperienced landowners	81	21	4	2	108	1.32
Landowners & homeowners in the wildland-urban interface	75	27	3	2	107	1.36
Community leaders/policymakers	56	39	10	3	108	1.63
Watershed councils	53	37	15	3	108	1.70
Youth	48	44	14	2	108	1.72
Forest Collaboratives	41	45	17	4	107	1.85
General public	32	52	21	2	107	1.93
Forestry contractors, forest workers	27	55	24	3	109	2.03
Forestry/timber companies	23	47	27	11	108	2.24



Land Stewards

Current and potential EDUCATIONAL NEEDS/TOPICS that SOREC's Land Stewards program could address rated by the importance of each topic.

Question	Very important	Important	Slightly important	Not important	Total Responses	Mean
Water storage/conservation	84	24	1	1	110	1.26
Stream/riparian area management	67	31	8	0	106	1.44
Watershed management/stewardship	65	40	4	1	110	1.46
Protection from wildfire	64	35	6	3	108	1.52
Small farm management	60	40	7	2	109	1.55
Small woodlands management	56	45	4	2	107	1.55
Urban Land Steward program (energy use, intelligent consumption, water conservation, etc.)	58	41	8	2	109	1.58
Wildlife enhancement	58	40	9	2	109	1.59
Weed management	47	51	10	1	109	1.68
Pasture management	49	41	16	1	107	1.71
Climate change adaptation	49	36	15	7	107	1.81
Continuing education classes for professionals	37	48	18	4	107	1.90
Range management	33	52	16	4	105	1.91
Master Naturalist Training (learning about Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion, training for volunteer naturalists)	33	45	27	3	108	2.00
Permaculture certification	26	43	28	9	106	2.19

Current and potential AUDIENCES that SOREC's Land Steward program could work with or develop programs for rated by the importance of each audience for the Land Steward program.

Question	Very important	Important	Slightly important	Not important	Total Responses	Mean
New and inexperienced landowners	84	17	3	1	105	1.25
Rural audiences	74	32	1	0	107	1.32
Community leaders/policy makers	57	44	2	4	107	1.56
Teachers	51	50	5	2	108	1.61
Youth	49	48	5	4	106	1.66
Landscape / land management professionals	34	58	14	2	108	1.85
Urban/suburban audiences	32	60	16	0	108	1.85
General public	31	59	16	1	107	1.88
Working adults	28	62	16	1	107	1.91
Latino / Spanish speakers	16	58	21	11	106	2.25

Focus Group Input

The two Forestry Natural Resources/Land Steward focus groups, combined, consisted of 17 participants representing program volunteers and seven organizations. Appendices A and B include specific recommendations from participants.

The most important things the programs should continue:

Education and outreach including face-to-face contact and field-based programs were highly valued and a priority to continue. The current programming is very much appreciated and should be continued. Community engagement is a strength of the Land Steward program and an outreach avenue.

*“Field trips and hands-on sessions are where the learning really happens. Power Points are great, but getting out there is best.”
~Ed Reilly, retired natural resource professional and landowner living in the Applegate Valley for over 40 years.*

What are the issues and topics Forestry Natural Resources/Land Steward should address?

Climate change is a topic that is both easy to ignore, and participants thought should have been a higher priority than identified in the online survey. Climate change was recognized as a topic that crosses all service areas and could be used as an integrating topic. That, along with other overarching issues, such as fire resiliency and water storage, conservation and irrigation improvements, could be brought in to all education.

Audiences

Balance the programming for both new and experienced landowners. Participants voiced a preference to have programming catered to landowners, but not to exclude professionals. While professionals have other avenues for education, creating a mix in the audience and opportunities for landowners to engage with professionals was valued. Participants also stated that while they wanted programming geared to landowners, with the level of training varied to meet the audience, they did not want it “dumbed down.” Scheduling programming that would accommodate the working landowner is both a challenge and important.

To what extent should the programs focus on developing more online courses and materials, or others ways of delivering information?

The groups stated that the different program delivery methods were beneficial in reaching different audiences. Online offerings are useful in many ways, such as making the information available to those who cannot attend in-person classes because they are working their land, for instance. Face-to-face contact and land visits are strengths of the programs. Still, anything that is available electronically, should be made available online.

“Many types of people have an interest in ecology, all with unique personalities. Some may be more willing to engage in outreach and community events than others. It is necessary to use a variety of educational tools in order to reach a diverse audience and foster an inclusive learning environment.” ~ Dan Esposito, Soil Conservationist, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

Participation in the Southern Oregon Forest Collaborative

Max is valued on the Southern Oregon Forest Collaborative for his pragmatism and ability to bring an academic perspective.

How should the Land Stewards program grow?

The consensus on how to grow the program was to increase the coordinator to full time and maintain the strength of the existing program before reaching out in other directions. Master Land Steward, Urban Land Steward, Youth Land Steward, and Master Naturalist were all mentioned as potential directions to grow. Hybrid program delivery (combining field-based with online learning), and linking volunteer activities to learning were suggested.

Faculty Interpretation of Results

Forestry and Natural Resources

The FNR program current provides classes and other educational services in all of the areas listed in the online survey. Emphasis is on forest health, fire mitigation, management for a broad range of values and resources, and management planning for long-term sustainability (incorporating habitat and water considerations, and invasive species management). These programming activities align well with the priorities revealed through the survey. Programs on riparian restoration have been offered in the past, typically targeting restoration practitioners rather than woodland owners, per se. We periodically offer classes in timber marketing and harvesting, and on other income opportunities.

The primary audiences of the FNR program are woodland owners, with an emphasis on new or inexperienced owners and forestland/urban interface owners. We will investigate opportunities for greater interaction with community leaders and policy makers. We have worked collaboratively with 4-H for many years on youth natural resources programs, but

that capacity depends upon grant funding. Outreach to the general public is offered in collaboration with the Master Gardeners and Land Stewards.

Overall, the program appears to be meeting high ranking educational needs and is targeting high priority audiences.

Land Stewards

Water storage/conservation, stream/riparian management and watershed management were all identified as high priorities. These topics are incorporated within the LS curriculum, but could be addressed to a greater extent through demonstration sites at SOREC or on the property of partners. This could include native tree demonstration sites and streamside gardening sites (in conjunction with Master Gardeners).

Wildfire mitigation was another highly ranked educational need, and is a significant component of the current LS curriculum, and is emphasized in FNR programming. Small woodland management was similarly rated, and is well-covered between the LS and FNR programs.

LS participants have the opportunity to take a wide variety of Small Farms classes. The assessment revealed a need for us to do a better job communicating class offerings to the participants in both of these program areas (Land Stewards need better information on Small Farms, and vice versa).

Urban Land Stewards would be a new program unto itself. While there would be overlap in content with the existing LS program, it would require a new curriculum and additional staffing. Some elements of this topic area could be done through the Living on the Land program.

Wildlife habitat management/enhancement is a central component of LS, and will remain so. LS participants are generally motivated to be good stewards of their property in a holistic sense (not solely profit-motivated). They often consider wildlife to be a valued resource and want to manage in a way that supports healthy wildlife communities.

Weed management is an area in which we are targeting additional classes, both within the LS core curriculum and through community classes offered to the general public.

Pasture management is addressed through Pasture Day, and addresses both irrigated and dry management practices. We collaborate (and have opportunities for greater collaboration) with Small Farms and the Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District. Range management is not directly addressed now, although elements of it are covered in the pasture management offerings.

We address climate through our LS classes, but could make it more prominent. We will investigate options for collaboration on this topic.

OSU has a well-developed Master Naturalist program, and it may be a way to introduce community members to our more advanced programming. This said, it is unlikely we would be able to manage another cadre of volunteers without adding staff.

Permaculture-related concepts are woven into our programs, and there are many opportunities for participation in Small Farms classes that address this topic.

The Land Steward program is a multi-disciplinary educational experience targeting private rural landowners in Jackson County who want to learn how to better utilize and take care of their land.

There is an emphasis on new or inexperienced owners and those at wildland/urban interfaces. We have begun offering LS topics to the general public through evening and weekend community education classes. This has expanded our audience size, and program participation, considerably. We will investigate opportunities for community leader/policy maker programs. There may be ways to adapt our LS curriculum to target these audiences, but it's likely they'll need a more streamlined delivery format. The current LS program consists of a series of in-person classes with significant field follow-up, and the assumption is that participants are landowners. Leaders and policy makers may need the information offered through one-day seminars or via online mechanisms. We see many opportunities for collaboration with 4-H around youth education. We've had grant-funded youth environmental education programs in the past. We do not currently have capacity to do significant programming for landscape professionals or other land management professionals. These are more likely to be served through the Certificate of Horticultural Proficiency program (a non-volunteer version of the Master Gardener training series). They would also benefit from access to an Extension Agriculture position (as proposed elsewhere in this document). As noted above, we'd love to do more with youth audiences, but that will require additional resources. We'll look for collaboration opportunities with 4-H, and keep our eyes open for grants that might support youth programs. We have some great curricula (from programs we've offered in the past) – so we are well positioned to offer these programs if staffing funds or volunteers can be identified.

Our relatively new Community Education classes are doing much to reach general public audiences, and others persons interested in our subject areas who can't commit to the full LS series. These are offered collaboratively with Master Gardeners and Small Farms. This should make our programs more accessible to working adults and professional audiences. We are also looking into possibilities for developing hybrid courses (partially online).

We see opportunity for workforce training on landscape issues that might be well received if offered in Spanish. This is a topic area better served by the proposed General Agriculture position.

Summary of key points

- Overarching issues such as climate change adaptation, water, and fire, were identified as top needs in both Forestry and Natural Resources, and Land Stewards
- Forestry and Natural Resources and Land Stewards programs have a high level of credibility. They are broadly recognized as an impartial third party that *“offers a broad swath of cost-effective, educational opportunities that positively change the way people manage their land.” (Focus group participant)*
- The Land Stewards program is adequately staffed for its current objectives, but would need additional staffing to expand to urban, professional or youth audiences.
- While the Forestry and Natural Resource program is staffed more fully, the limitations in that program, too, are based in staffing.
- Rural landowners are the priority audiences for both programs
- Potential internal cross marketing and collaborative programming include Master Gardeners, Small Farms, General Agriculture, 4-H, Forestry and Natural Resources and Land Stewards programs.

- Some potential external collaborations include Fresh Water Trust, Southern Oregon Land Conservancy, SOU Center for Sustainability, Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District, and schools. For a list of proposed community partnerships and collaborative ideas, see Appendix A.

Master Gardeners / Urban Horticulture Summary

Program Overview

Master Gardeners (0.25 FTE OSU-funded, 0.5 FTE District-funded, covers Jackson County)
Jackson County's Master Gardener program is the largest in the state of Oregon. Participants contribute thousands of volunteer hours annually to help residents manage their home landscapes, lawns, ornamental flowers, shrubs and trees, vegetable gardens, fruits and berries. They promote integrated pest management, soil and water conservation, and appropriate selection of plant varieties for gardens and landscapes.

Assessment Summary

Key informant interview responses indicated a need for additional focus on (list is not prioritized):

- Reaching a wider audience, including younger adults, youth and Spanish speakers
- Reaching professional landscapers and landscape gardeners
- Scheduling classes and delivery for working adults
- Water conservation
- Outreach



Online Survey Results

Results are presented in order of prioritization. (Lowest mean indicates highest priority.)

After the focus group indicated the topics, “Growing food for home consumption” (“grocery gardening”) and “Growing ornamental plants” were not listed in question #1, they were added to the survey that was already open. Hence, there are only 82 and 80 respondents, respectively, for those two questions. It is not ideal to change a survey mid-stream, but in this case seemed useful. While the question asks for responses to “potential additional” offerings, the number one ranking of growing food for home consumption makes a strong statement.

Below is a list of potential additional EDUCATIONAL NEEDS, TOPICS, and AUDIENCES for SOREC's Master Gardener/Urban horticulture program. Please rate the importance of each item for the Master Gardener/Urban horticulture program.

Question	Very important	Important	Slightly important	Not important	Total Responses	Mean
Growing food for home consumption ("grocery gardening")	63	17	2	0	82	1.26
Waterwise gardening, water conservation	96	28	5	0	129	1.29
Gardening for beneficial insects, wildlife	78	44	6	0	128	1.44
Firewise landscaping, landscaping with fire-resistant plants	76	41	10	0	127	1.48
Landscaping with native plants	71	45	10	0	126	1.52
Youth programs	66	51	9	0	126	1.55
Programs in schools	68	44	13	0	125	1.56
Development and maintenance of school gardens	65	46	16	0	127	1.61
Programs for working adults not able to attend core Master Gardener training	61	50	16	0	127	1.65
Development and maintenance of community gardens	47	62	19	0	128	1.78
Streamside landscaping/gardening	47	60	17	2	126	1.79
Continuing education for landscape professionals	23	60	34	6	123	2.19
Programs for Spanish speakers	24	62	32	9	127	2.20
Growing ornamental plants	5	36	34	5	80	2.49

Focus Group Input

The Master Gardeners focus groups consisted of 8 participants representing ACCESS and the Jackson County Master Gardeners Association. Appendices A and B include specific recommendations from participants.

Feedback to the survey

Participants agreed with the top four prioritized items on the survey, waterwise gardening, gardening for beneficial insects and wildlife, firewise landscaping, and landscaping with native plants. Participants noted “growing food” and “growing plants” were missing in the list of “potential additional educational needs, topics and audiences.” As a result they were added to the survey for late responders

The intensity of the full Master Gardener program is time-prohibitive for some potential participants. Suggestions included offering a core training that was not as demanding as the

Master Gardeners program, and offering an alternative delivery of the full program that would still enable certification upon completion.

Reaching underserved audiences

Participants want to find ways to bring the Master Gardeners program to a wider audience. Seed to Supper was recognized as a valuable program that could be expanded to reach underserved audiences, including Spanish speakers. Spanish speakers were identified as an underserved audience that could be reached by asking them what they need, and by asking Master Gardener volunteers what languages they speak. Taking programs out in to the community, particularly school and community gardens where teaching plots might be established, was another way to reach the underserved.

“Everyone has to come here. If we went to Phoenix, Talent... Go out and meet the people, and see what their needs are.” -Focus group participant, Jackson County Master Gardeners Association

Growing with additional resources

Participants discussed the importance of increasing the program coordinator to full time and adding a staff outreach position. The program would also benefit from more and better facilities, including a teaching facility with restrooms and greenhouses.

Faculty interpretation of results

Growing food for home consumption is a primary vision of the MG program, and is well covered in the existing curriculum. Waterwise gardening and water conservation are covered to an extent, but could be strengthened. Gardening for beneficial insects and wildlife are of high interest to participants, and are well covered, as is growing ornamental plants.

Landscaping with native plants is covered both by both the MG and Land Stewards programs. Firewise landscaping is addressed by MG, LS and Forestry and Natural Resource programs. Streamside landscaping and gardening are taught in conjunction with water quality classes, through both MG and LS programs.

All of the above are topics we are starting to offer to the general public (rather than just Master Gardener volunteers) through our new community education programs. These are evening classes that are more readily available to working adults. We continue to expand the range of community education offerings, in collaboration with SOREC’s other program areas.

Master Gardeners already provide some programs for youth, but there is ample opportunity for growth. We have both community and volunteer interest in children’s gardens, school gardens and community gardening programs. We see these as means to reach new audiences through volunteer outreach.

Continuing education for landscape professionals is offered through the MG program’s option for the Certificate in Horticultural Proficiency. We note that Rogue Community College also has programs serving this audience, and any expansion of programming would need to be coordinated with them to ensure efficiency. We anticipate topic areas like plant diagnostics and integrated pest management will be covered by the proposed General Agriculture position.

We serve Spanish speaking audiences through the Seed to Supper program, and will provide additional education through school-based programming and community gardens.

Summary of key points

- The research and science that the program is based on is highly valued. Current programming is well regarded.
- Relationships are at the core of the Master Gardeners program and can't be replaced with technology.
- Staffing levels and currently available facilities are the limitations in the program.
- Younger people, working adults, the Latino community, landscapers and landscape gardeners are potential audiences.
- Programming for Spanish speakers was proposed
- Proposed internal collaborations include Land Stewards, Small Farms, 4-H
- Suggested external collaborations include school gardens, community gardens, RCC landscaping program, nurseries, and garden clubs. For a list of proposed community partnerships and collaborative ideas, see Appendix A.

“Many non-profits operate on limited budgets and must prioritize serving people over facilities. Having the help of the Master Gardeners to maintain landscaping would be a valuable resource to preserve needed funding for people and would serve as a crime deterrent.”

~Simone Kaiser, Development Director, Rogue Valley YMCA

4-H Youth Development Summary

Program Overview

4-H Youth Development (1.4 FTE OSU-funded, 1.0 FTE District-funded, covers Jackson County)

4-H provides hands-on learning opportunities for young people ages 5 to 18, through a mix of in-school, after-school and club-based activities. The program's volunteers serve as mentors, helping young people excel beyond their peers to make healthy choices, excel in school, and to contribute to improving their communities. SOREC's 4-H programs are the third largest in the state of Oregon, and feature projects in animal sciences; foods and nutrition; leadership; community service; science; engineering, technology, natural sciences and arts.

Assessment Summary

Key informant interview responses indicated a need for additional focus on (list is not prioritized):

- Communication of programs and activities
- High-risk youth
- Urban youth
- School gardens
- Appeal to the interests of youth today and urban youth

*“The 4-H club environment is a community where youth learn to teach and lead by example and by practice.”
~Focus group participant*



Online Survey Results

Results are presented in order of prioritization. (Lowest mean indicates highest priority.)

Three of the top five prioritized survey responses, Community and Volunteer Service, Leadership and Personal Development, and Health/Healthy Living, are core components of all 4-H programs. Activities of interest to the individual youth are used to teach these life skills.

Below is a list of current and potential EDUCATIONAL NEEDS/TOPICS that the 4-H Youth Development program could address. Using the scale below, please rate the importance of each topic to you or your organization/clients.

Question	Very important	Important	Slightly important	Not important	Total Responses	Mean
Community and Volunteer Service	28	15	4	0	47	1.49
Environmental Education (forestry, geocaching, geology, native plants, water quality/watersheds...)	29	15	5	0	49	1.51
Leadership and Personal Development (career exploration, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, public speaking, interstate/international exchange...)	25	15	8	0	48	1.65
Horticulture (container gardening, flower and ornamental gardening, fruit and vegetable gardening, Jr. Master Gardener ...)	24	17	7	0	48	1.65
Health/Healthy Living (focused on individual choices and behaviors)	23	16	9	1	49	1.76
Foods & Nutrition (cooking, baking, food preservation, meal planning)	21	21	5	2	49	1.76
Entomology (particularly honeybees and butterflies)	23	16	8	2	49	1.78
Animal Science (dogs, livestock, horses)	22	15	7	3	47	1.81
Technology and Engineering (GPS/GIS, podcasting, robots, rockets, small engines, woodworking...)	16	22	8	1	47	1.87
Consumer and Family Science (child care and development, clothing and textiles, consumer education, home environment...)	14	22	10	1	47	1.96
Outdoor Recreation Education (hiking, shooting sports, fishing)	12	23	12	0	47	2.00
Expressive Arts (drawing, painting, ceramics, needlecraft, digital photography, leather craft)	11	20	13	3	47	2.17
Performing Arts (drama, dance, music, videography)	11	14	17	6	48	2.38

Below is a list of AUDIENCES that SOREC's 4-H Youth Development program could work with or develop programs for. Please rate the importance of each audience for the Youth

Question	Very important	Important	Slightly important	Not important	Total Responses	Mean
At risk youth	40	6	1	0	47	1.17
Middle School Youth	35	13	0	0	48	1.27
High School Youth	33	14	1	0	48	1.33
Latino youth	31	14	1	0	46	1.35
Home School Youth	30	13	2	1	46	1.43
Grade School Youth	29	14	3	0	46	1.43
Development program.						

Focus Group Input

The 4-H / Youth Development focus group consisted of eight participants representing program volunteers and four organizations. Appendices A and B include specific recommendations from participants.

General Input

The club model, which focuses on character development through interaction with adult volunteers, and leadership and community service, is highly valued and should be maintained.

“Leadership & personal development are interwoven into ALL aspects of 4-H.” ~Focus group participant

Underserved populations

Reaching out to the underserved populations including at-risk and Latino youth continued to be a priority to focus groups members as it was throughout the needs assessment process. Reaching Latino families would best be done by understanding and working within their cultural norms. Reach out to community gatekeepers. Schools are trusted, so work through them. Communicate with and include families to build trust and a sense of safety.

Financial support

Businesses are seen as a potential source of mentorship and financial support. Key to garnering that support is a clear proposal of what is requested, with expected outcomes.

Faculty Interpretation of Results

Community and volunteer service, rated as the most important educational priority by survey respondents, is a core element of the 4-H positive youth development model. It allows youth to be engaged productively in their communities, to develop empathy for and a deeper understand of community issues, and to demonstrate the value of 4-H to community members and leaders. This said, Jackson County’s many 4-H clubs vary in the extent to which they emphasize community service and volunteerism. We will make a renewed effort to emphasize the importance of this topic during our new leader training and current leader continuing education activities. We are pleased to see it so clearly prioritized by respondents.

We were somewhat surprised to see Environmental Education rank so highly (it was nearly tied with Community and Volunteer Service). This type of programming has been offered in collaboration with the Forestry and Natural Resources program for the past several years, but

its grant funding runs out in June. A number of other community organizations offer this type of programming, offering opportunities for collaboration. This is a topic area that could be addressed through Explorer clubs – a concept initiated here and used now in other counties.

Leadership and Personal Development is another core element of 4-H, and is particularly targeted at older youth. Example offerings include Interstate and International Exchange, club leadership, Junior Leader and Ambassador programs, and 4-H camp counselor service. We encourage public speaking, but could make that a stronger emphasis (some counties require it as part of the fair exhibitor process). We have great opportunities to expand our relationship with FFA, including better promotion of dual enrollment and encouraging teens in FFA to serve as 4-H Junior Leaders or in other leadership capacities. One approach to this would be to develop 4-H “community” clubs affiliated with schools, operated in conjunction with FFA.

Horticulture is currently offered through our 4-H program primarily as a self-study activity – there are no clubs specializing in this project area. Opportunities exist to make connections with school gardens, and to draw upon the expertise of Master Gardeners and Master Food Preservers to enhance educational opportunities. This could also be done as a summer activity, perhaps in collaboration with summer school programs.

Health and Healthy Living is another core 4-H value, embedded in all of our programs. We will reemphasize it in our volunteer training activities. We also collaborate with the SNAP-Ed program to provide health education in schools, and have opportunities for greater collaboration through Youth Advocates for 4-H (YA4-H), and the Teens as Teachers program.

Two Jackson County 4-H clubs identify Foods and Nutrition as their primary focus, and several others offer it as a secondary project. We just completed a well-received food preparation contest, and are coordinating with Master Food Preservers to host a food preservation workshop for youth county-wide.

Entomology is a project area in which we currently have very little depth, and limited involvement from youth. We may be able to offer clinics or workshops, available broadly, in collaboration with the local beekeepers association.

Animal Science is our most active project area, and we have numerous clubs offering educational opportunities in market livestock, livestock breeding, horse care and horsemanship, dog handling and care, etc. We benefit from a dedicated cadre of volunteers who lend their skills, and our youth in market projects receive tremendous community support during the annual livestock auction.

In the topic area of Technology and Engineering, we have four active robotics clubs, but two key leaders intend to retire next year. We have significant interest in this subject, and will be working actively to recruit new leaders. A community partner has offered 4-H access to their small engine repair and woodworking shop, making it possible for us to offer vocational education in these topics. We will need to find qualified and committed volunteers to provide project leadership.

Our Community and Family Science program is primarily focused on sewing, with three active clubs. Volunteers have stepped forward to organize and revitalize our Fashion Review event. We envision a possible new collaboration with Family and Community Health in the area of child care/babysitting.

Outdoor Recreation, in Jackson County, is currently focused on shooting sports, particularly archery and shotgun. We need more archery leaders, and sites for archery training. We are working with the Expo to make arrangements for access to one of their large arenas for monthly archery activities. We note that while, from the state 4-H perspective, hiking and fishing are considered part of Outdoor Recreation we would most likely integrate those project areas into Environmental Education projects. They would fit nicely within Explorer clubs.

Expressive Arts, while rated between “important” and “slightly important” includes a number of project areas very popular with 4-H youth. We have two clubs specifically focused on these topics, and youth from many other clubs pursue them through self-study. We could better support this through development of resource leaders (not affiliated with any one club) and through county-wide clinics and workshops.

The Performing Arts topic area was added because, during our recent Back to School Night outreach activities, many young people asked if it was a 4-H offering. We think it may hold more interest for youth than what this survey revealed, and will continue to investigate opportunities.

Jackson County’s 4-H model make extensive use of project clubs – groups assembled around common interest in one, or a small number, of project areas. This is a model we value and will continue to support. We will also promote opportunities for development of community clubs where feasible. Community clubs are based in a geographic area (community) and utilize teams of volunteers to offer broader ranges of projects. They tend to have larger membership than project clubs, and more specific emphasis on community service and volunteerism, youth leadership and personal development, and healthy living. Where it makes sense, we will encourage existing clubs to consider evolving toward this model.

Our 4-H Program has a commitment to providing quality educational opportunities for youth in grades K through 12. We note, from the survey results, that respondents felt that all youth audiences are very important, and we agree with that sentiment. This said, our services to youth at risk and Latino youth are not as well developed as we would like. We believe the key to both of these audiences lies in afterschool programs. Both groups are already connected with their school. They have access to that location, and the school is trusted as a location for educational activities. We lack the resources to directly staff afterschool programs throughout the county, but we have excellent curricula and the ability to train trainers. We will seek out opportunities for greater collaboration with other afterschool program providers, and investigate development of internships that could draw upon community college and SOU students as program deliverers.

Summary of key points

- Key program capacity gaps exist in Environmental Education, Entomology and Technology/Engineering
- All youth audiences were identified as very important, and SOREC has significant growth potential with Latino and at-risk youth audiences
- There are stated needs for programs in topics that would benefit from expanded collaborations
- Potential internal collaborations include Family and Community Health/Nutrition, Master Gardeners, Land Stewards, Forestry and Natural Resources, Agriculture

- Prospective external collaborations include YMCA, particularly Youth Center Kids; schools, including two-way immersion programs; Rogue Valley Youth for Christ and other youth organizations; adult mentor programs; Kids Unlimited; city Parks and Recreation departments; Jackson County Library System. For a list of proposed community partnerships and collaborative ideas, see Appendix A.

*“Youth learn to be responsible for their own behavior and outcomes”
~Focus group participant*

Family and Community Health Summary

Program Overview

Family & Community Health (2.0 FTE OSU-funded, plus grant-funded FTE, covers Jackson and Josephine Counties)

This multi-faceted effort promotes healthy communities, families and individuals. Through a federal *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education* (SNAP-Ed) grant, SOREC partners with schools, adult centers, youth programs, community food pantries, ACCESS, Boys and Girl Clubs, Head Start Centers and others to help low-income Jackson County residents (both youth and adults) achieve healthy life styles. The Master Food Preserver volunteer program helps people learn how to safely preserve food for their families, and the Strong Women program helps seniors develop and maintain balance, muscle strength and bone density. In 2015, SOREC was the fortunate recipient of a new state-funded Regional Health Educator position. That position has been filled, and will expand capacity to work with area partners to address community health infrastructure, injury prevention, food systems security, and lifelong wellness among persons of all ages.

“Communication is good. The classes are excellent. The materials are appealing and people like them. The website is very user-friendly.” ~Dr. Michelle Homer-Anderson, Health Services Director, Southern Oregon Head Start

Assessment Summary

Key informant interview responses indicated a need for additional focus on (list is not prioritized):

- Needs of Seniors
- Food security among Seniors
- Expanding the SNAP-Ed nutrition program
- Get Master Food Preservers into more schools
- Take programs out into the community. Meet people where they are.

*“People who are doing SNAP-Ed trainings are doing great. Do more trainings so there is more time for staff to work their magic.”
~Key informant interview participant*

Online Survey Results

Results are presented in order of prioritization. (Lowest mean indicates highest priority.)

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS/TOPICS that SOREC's Family Community Health program could address rated by the importance of each topic.

Question	Very important	Important	Slightly important	Not important	Total Responses	Mean
Communicating up-to-date information and resources	51	26	3	0	80	1.40
Food safety, nutrition in schools, food pantries	48	30	8	1	87	1.56
Food safety – selection and storage of food	46	34	8	0	88	1.57
Food safety & nutrition in school and community gardens	49	25	11	1	86	1.58
Community work to improve access to healthy food, physical activity and health care for people at all income and demographic levels.	49	24	13	1	87	1.61
Food preservation classes	47	30	11	1	89	1.62
Menu planning, shopping and cooking skills to reduce food insecurity	38	43	6	0	87	1.63
Nutrition & physical activity programs for older adults	44	33	8	2	87	1.63
Summer nutrition & physical opportunities for youth	43	34	10	1	88	1.65
Provide technical assistance and resources to individuals interested in producing local value-added food products	44	28	11	3	86	1.69
Support & education for caregivers of older adults or those with disabilities	33	44	8	2	87	1.76
Support & education for caregivers of children	32	43	10	1	86	1.77
Train agency staff in food preservation & recovery to prevent waste	35	38	13	2	88	1.80
Information about food preservation & safety at farmers markets and other sites	27	45	14	2	88	1.90
Work with local health departments, and other agencies toward improved access to recreational and physical activity sites/facilities	20	39	22	5	86	2.14
Safety programs/education to reduce injury from distracted driving, bicycling, drowning, and occupational injuries	20	35	25	6	86	2.20

Rating of the importance of each of the following FOCAL AREAS (individual, family, or community) for the SOREC Family Community Health program.

Question	Very important	Important	Slightly important	Not important	Total Responses	Mean
Promote healthy lifestyles (Individual level)	47	35	6	0	88	1.53
Foster healthy communities (help to create policies, systems and environmental features which support healthy choices)	46	36	6	0	88	1.55
Cultivate strong families and support systems (family level)	42	31	10	3	86	1.70

Focus Group Input

The Family Community Health focus groups consisted of six participants representing program volunteers and five organizations. Appendices A and B include specific recommendations from participants.

Reach underserved populations

Recruit and retain bilingual staff and volunteers. Many organizations are focusing on underserved populations. Collaborate to identify populations that are not being served and work together to serve them holistically.

How should the Family Community Health program grow?

With the facility, space and location limitations at SOREC, expand programing out to community locations. Identify opportunities to offer educational information where people are. Tie into the network of community resources, so there is a hub of resources where communication, connection and finding information takes place. Share that information with those who are tied in to the unreached communities.



General suggestions

- Have a pool of experts available to teach across the Master Food Preservers, SNAP-Ed, and nutrition programs, like Master Gardeners do.
- Put program resources where they will have the greatest impact. Train the trainers to reach more families through SNAP-Ed.

- Physical activity is mentioned at least six times in the survey. Look at ways Family and Community Health can support physical activity through the Strong Women program, active transportation, and taking a lead in school wellness policies.

“When we are working with parents we are impacting an entire family. It’s more than ‘trickle up,’ it’s direct contact and trickle down.” ~Focus group participant

Community Health Assessment

The Jackson County Community Health Improvement Plan, based on the Community Health Assessment is a valuable resource that can inform the program of the highest priority community health needs.

A complete [Community Health Assessment](#) (CHA) for Jackson County was completed in 2013. The results of that assessment can be found at the Jackson Care Connect website.

<http://www.jacksoncareconnect.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/jojackfinal.pdf>

The follow up, [Jackson County Community Health Improvement Plan](#) (CHIP), 2014, can be found on the Oregon.gov website.

<http://www.oregon.gov/oha/OHPB/CCOCHIP/Jackson%20Care%20Connect%20-%20CHIP.pdf>

Community Food Assessment

[Jackson County Community Food Assessment 2013](#) in another respected resource.

<http://rvfoodsystem.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Jackson-County-Community-Food-Assessment-2013.pdf>

Faculty Interpretation of Results

The Family and Community Health (FCH) program currently focuses on food safety, food preservation, physical activity for older adults, and healthy eating for a variety of audiences with limited income. A new faculty position has just been added, which will allow us to provide a wider range of health-related programs and services. The FCH needs assessment survey included a combination of educational topic areas, some service delivery options, and potential audiences. When asked to rate three focal areas (healthy lifestyles, healthy communities, strong families), all were identified as important. FCH believes that an integrated approach involving all three areas is essential to health at any level – so the ratings are encouraging.

In Jackson County, our Master Food Preserver program serves primarily adult audiences, but supports youth activities through 4-H collaborations. It focuses on food safety and effective preservations techniques (canning, freezing, drying, pickling, fermentation, etc.) of food products for home use. MFP volunteers teach community classes and test pressure canner gauges. They offer some classes on cooking skills. They also reach the public through two farmers’ markets and there may be opportunities for additional outreach through similar venues.

Our federally-funded SNAP-Ed program delivers proven educational programs on nutrition and wellness in schools. It is targeted to persons with limited income (schools must meet eligibility requirements to qualify for the programs). The grant is not large enough to allow programs to be offered in all eligible schools, but recent federal guidance changes are allowing

us to reach out more broadly by moving away from direct delivery to students and instead using a train-the-trainer model with school staff. We provide educational materials to schools and the general public through the Food Hero program, which provided low-cost, healthy meal recipes and other advice through its website. We envision greater collaboration with MGs around community and school gardens, and see broad opportunities to work with coordinated care organizations (CCOs). We have a SNAP-Outreach program that helps eligible person sign up for food assistance, and are working with farmers' markets so SNAP recipients can use their benefits to purchase locally grown foods. We conduct meal planning, shopping and cooking classes in-school, and through collaborations with La Clinica and senior groups. We are about to move an EFNEP (another federally funded program) position to Jackson County, and a part of its focus will be to expand program options for Spanish-speaking audiences.

We currently provide limited direct educational programming and SNAP-outreach in area food pantries, and collaborate with ACCESS regional food bank. That organization has drawn upon Extension, and other, information providers to develop effective cooking skills programming of its own. We provide train-the-trainer classes for ACCESS, and several MFPs also volunteer for ACCESS. We will work with the Access coordinator to determine if there are ways we can expand or improve our support of this important collaboration.

Technical assistance to persons interested in value-added food products is provided through a number of our programs. Initial contact often comes through our MFP program, and those with commercial interests are then connected with OSU's Food Innovation Center. The Center can assist them with product development and testing, permitting, and other business considerations. We offer the Recipe to Market class series to help potential producers identify opportunities and connect to the right services and resources. We also collaborate with Small Farms on food safety and food preservation topics.

We have several active groups of Strong Women. We train volunteer group leaders, and then help them establish community sites where senior women gather regularly to engage in low-impact strength and balance improving exercise. Despite the name, the groups are not strictly limited to women. The assessment noted that this program is limited by "space availability, teachers and equipment." We can organize additional train-the-trainer opportunities and assist with grant writing for them to obtain equipment. We believe there are many community organizations that would be delighted to host Strong Women groups, and we may be able to help group leaders make those connections.

One of the items noted in the survey was summer nutrition and physical activity opportunities for youth. We are starting to do more of this through SNAP-Ed, and collaborate with Kids Unlimited and the Medford School District.

We do not currently have significant capacity in caregiver education (for adults or youth), work with health departments and other agencies for access to recreational or physical activity sites. These are areas that will be investigated by the new FCH faculty member as potential areas of focus.

Overall, we see many opportunities for program growth. Our new FCH position provides capacity. We are excited about opportunities to collaborate with MGs on school gardens, with ACCESS on food pantry programs, with Rogue Valley Council of Governments on senior programs, and with Small Farms on new farmer food safety and preservation. Food safety is one of Extension's key niches, and we'll continue to integrate those important concepts through all of our programs.

Summary of key points

- Family and Community Health program is recognized as providing high-quality, research-based information.
- The program does not currently have the capacity to meet the demand for SNAP-Ed delivery requests, but changes in its delivery options and work with key partners to impact policy, systems and built environments may create positive health impact in the community.
- The Strong Women program is limited by space availability, teachers and equipment.
- The Master Food Preservers would benefit from improved kitchen facilities.
- Seniors, the Latino community, and families reached through schools are priority audiences.
- Internal collaborations: Master Gardeners, Seeds to Supper, School gardens, 4-H, Strong Women, Small Farms
- External collaborations: Rogue Valley Farm to School, Schools, Headstart, YMCA, WIC, Rogue Valley Council of Governments, ACCESS, La Clinica, Housing Authority of Jackson County. For a list of proposed community partnerships and collaborative ideas, see Appendix A.

“SOREC came to one of our centers and provided training at a parent meeting which was great but there was limited attendance at the meeting due to parent schedules.

Head Start staff and SOREC staff changed it up and held a tasting event mid-day; during the morning pick-up and afternoon drop-off time. It was held outside, the day was beautiful and it was very interactive with children and parents tasting new foods and voting on their favorites. The parents picking up morning kids and those dropping off afternoon kids, could cross-pollinate, and everyone got to participate. By thinking outside the box SOREC was able to create a non-traditional event to fit the circumstances of the parents and children.”

*~Dr. Michelle Homer-Anderson,
Health Services Director, Southern Oregon Head Start*