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2023

## Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Sustainable Farm Education Intern

Sean Anderson

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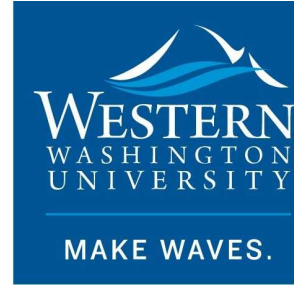
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# COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT



**Internship Title:** Sustainable Farm Education Intern

**Organization Worked For:** Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group

**Student Name:** Sean Anderson

**Internship Dates:** 6/27/23 to 8/16/23

**Faculty Advisor Name** Ed Weber

**Department** ESCI

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**STUDENT SIGNATURE** \_\_\_\_\_

Sean Anderson

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

8/24/2023

# **Sustainable Farming at the Hood Canal Enhancement Group**

## **Salmon Center**

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## **Introduction**

Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group (HCSEG) is a nonprofit organization that seeks to ensure the healthy recovery of salmon in the Hood Canal watershed, and through restoration, education, and research they aim to achieve this goal. Based at the Salmon Center in Belfair, I interned on the farm there aptly named Farm at Water's Edge. They're a certified organic farm meaning they don't use any herbicides, pesticides, or chemical fertilizer where runoff can be avoided to not affect the salmon, it's a fantastic demonstration of sustainable farming practices. There's a community p-patch garden or private patch where people can rent garden space for themselves and the U-pick garden where people can pick their own produce that we tend to. There are also goats, alpacas, llamas, bunnies, and chickens on the farm primarily for the education of youth during the summer camps on site, though the chickens do provide eggs. The Salmon Center is able to demonstrate sustainable farming practices and educates the community and future generations about such clean practices as well, and alongside restoration of the surrounding estuary has been a large focus. My goal with this internship was to learn all about these sustainable practices through genuine experience not just through ideals and books and to gain the knowledge and communitive persuasiveness necessary to be a truly effective environmental scientist.

## **Internship Activities**

Weeding the gardens was the task that took a large portion of my time as the plants need to be cared for and with organic farming, there are no herbicides so much labor is required for healthy crops. The two main gardens I worked in were the front U-pick garden with around 23

rows of crops and a greenhouse in the back which was sparsely used while I was there due to high summer heat. And then there was the high tunnel U-pick garden at the back which is a half-cylinder covered area for plants that require warmer temperatures. Occasionally I had to water certain crop plots as well since for most of the farm we have drip tape covering the row which is much more efficient in water usage but in some areas, it didn't reach so a hose was used for most of the raised beds outside of the rows. Additionally, there was the food forest with fruit-bearing trees were being grown orchard style for future U-pick style harvesting, and they had to be watered, though the hoses didn't reach that far out so a wheelbarrow and buckets had to be used to transport water to each sapling. On occasion, I was also able to plant crops either from seeds or sprouts that had to be transplanted from plastic soil containers such as kale, broccoli, and green onions. Every Wednesday we harvested crops such as edible flowers, herbs, kale, collards, squash, and snap beans for the CSA which stands for Community supported agriculture. This is basically a subscription service for people to have seasonal produce collected for them and they can pick it up which was great for those who have difficulty harvesting themselves and was in fact most likely cheaper than other groceries from sustainable sources. Also, upon collection of this produce, we had to weigh each allotment of crops for each person for farm records, which is also done for U-pick with a scale and paper record at the kiosk for people to use. Every Friday we had to clean the animal pens and water troughs usually with a rake, hoe, shovel, and wheelbarrow, and that waste was placed in a compost pile to fertilize the crops later naturally. On rare occasions, I helped with the summer camp mainly as an extra hand, where they showed the kids around the farm and trails near the estuary in which they were taught about the farm practices, animals, and salmon lifecycle among many other things. On especially hot days there were tasks for me inside to do such as input the U-Pick records into the company Excel file

where we put the produce type, weights, and optional donation amount into the records that the WSDA looks over, also there was the U-Pick harvest guide that I worked on where we describe the vegetables we grow, how to pick, and cook which each of them.

### **Results**

As for the results of my work, it really manifested through the plants I was taking care of. The transplants I put in have greatly grown in size and the number of weeds has gone down to a more manageable level, plants I've watered are continuing to grow healthy and donations were placed into the record. Honestly, there isn't much else to say here, just that the fruit of my efforts improved in the general maintenance, aesthetic, and perhaps even in the yield of the crops I planted.

### **Assessment**

Overall, I genuinely believe this organization has achieved many of the goals its sought to accomplish. The farm seems to be flourishing, the local estuary from what I've heard has greatly improved through the restoration they've done, and it will continue to thrive with the minimal impacts from runoff due to the organic and sustainable nature of the nearby farm. As for the community and education efforts, they also were greatly effective in my eyes, the summer camp kids always seemed to be interested in the learning activities and the community members were always curious to learn more and the staff there were always able to answer them. For my work and learning, I feel I have accomplished a fair amount and gained much experience through my time here, I can say what sustainable farming means and how much effort via my labor it takes to put this cleaner route to a better future into practice. Through my tasks and time at this organization I felt I've gained more interpersonal and problem-solving skills with having to talk

to the public or working with my co-workers and figuring out ways around the issues that are bound to arrive with farming. With these tangible experiences and sustainable skills, I've gained, I can confidently move forward as an effective environmental scientist with my background knowledge from my coursework I really understand the negative effects of our impact, and through this internship I learned real ways to create an environment where we don't wreak the havoc of these effects upon everything we touch to truly benefit both humans and nature alike.

## **Appendix**

In attached files

1: Internship Log:

2: Letter of Completion from Supervisor: