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Remembering Curt Moulton: Quiet leader helped slide-shattered communities recover

Posted by Seth Truscott | May 22, 2018



Curt Moulton

Four years ago this month, the late Curt Moulton began helping western Washington communities recover from the deadly Oso mudslide.

Residents of the Stillaguamish Valley still remember the assistance that Moulton, the longtime [Snohomish County Extension Director](#), brought to bear, making a difference that continues today, months after his death last December at age 64.

The March 22, 2014, Oso landslide engulfed a rural neighborhood near Oso, Washington, killing more than 40 people. On April 30 of that year, Washington State University announced its [commitment of land-grant resources](#), with then-WSU President Elson Floyd naming Moulton to lead the [WSU outreach effort](#).

Moulton rose to the task, working quietly behind the scenes to link WSU students and faculty, volunteers, 4-H youth, and other partners and programs to rebuild devastated communities. The economic development plan that he helped set in motion continues to change lives and lift up the Stillaguamish Valley.

“Without Curt’s connections, his history in the area, and, most importantly, Curt himself, none of that would have been possible,” said Mike Gaffney, acting WSU Extension director, and co-leader with Moulton of the WSU 530 Slide Recovery Team.

“Curt is the quiet giant that will forever be part of the mountains, rivers, and this community,” added Dan Rankin, mayor of Darrington, Wash.



Extension agent Curt Moulton tours a Northwest tree farm, circa 1988.

A quiet leader

Moulton, who served Washington residents through WSU for his entire 39-year career, directed Snohomish County Extension for 20 years.



Curt Moulton, a longtime WSU Extension director who helped western Washington communities rebuild after the

With King, Pierce, and Snohomish County Extension, Moulton developed farmers markets, shared improved post-harvest techniques, helped the Hmong and Mien communities find their marketing niche, and worked with Native American tribes, including the Tulalip Tribe, to use Extension programs to improve nutrition.

At his retirement party last fall, Moulton beamed at the many stories shared by his WSU Extension colleagues. His co-workers recalled that, no matter how busy he was, he was always a steady, calm, and inspiring leader, ready to lend a helping hand. Always ready to give others credit for accomplishments, Moulton was constantly watching to catch teammates at their best.

deadly Oso landslide, speaks
to interns. Moulton passed
away last winter.

Moulton died Dec. 12, 2017, in Cannon Beach, Ore.

“Curt made it possible for WSU Extension to bring
resources to bear and make a difference in the

Stillaguamish Valley, in King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties, and across the state,”
Gaffney said. “Along the way, he helped change the lives of dozens of WSU student
interns, WSU and Extension faculty and staff, and thousands of Washington
residents. Curt will be greatly missed.”

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