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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WSU 4-H Eco-Stewardship Program Receives National Award

PULLMAN, Wash. – The WSU 4-H Eco-Stewardship Program has won a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Connecting Youth with Nature through Natural Resources Conservation Education Award.

The award recognizes outstanding 4-H program development, implementation, and evaluation in wildlife conservation and environmental education.

“The youth in our program know they are making a significant difference in their community and the local environment,” said Kevin Powers, Director of the WSU 4-H Eco-Stewardship Program. “They work directly with natural resource professionals assisting with the accomplishment of various monitoring activities and service projects that benefit watersheds, fish and wildlife habitat and the community for years to come.”

Now in its eighth year, the 4-H Eco-Stewardship Program has served over 18,000 teens from Chelan and Douglas counties. Youth participating in high school and summer programs assist with Chinook and Coho salmon spawning activities at two federal hatcheries, build interpretive nature trails, and take part in the live capture of mule deer to evaluate the declining species population.

Over thirty local, state, and federal agencies partner with the program providing guidance and direction in projects including restoration and maintenance of wilderness lakes, streams and trail systems. Teens monitor water quality and quantity in regional streams and rivers and work with re-vegetation efforts to reduce erosion and improve fish spawning habitat. Recycling programs in their schools reduce the carbon footprint and impacts on landfills.

“The 4-H Eco-Stewardship Program has a unique impact on young people,” said WSU Chelan County Extension Director Ray Faini. “Youth work with forestry and wildlife experts to insure their efforts are accurate, reflect critical thinking skills and implementation. Teens stay in school and move into college or careers and have better chances for meaningful employment.”

The recognition includes a \$10,000 cash award and recognition at the 75th North American Wildlife and Natural Resource Conference, sponsored by the Wildlife Management Institute in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on March 24.

The award is a partnership between 4-H National Headquarters, Cooperative Research, Education and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of the Interior, and the Fish and Wildlife Service.