



## **THE BENEFITS OF AGFORESTRY LEADERSHIP**

### **WHAT IS AGFORESTRY LEADERSHIP?**

AgForestry is recognized as the premier leadership development program in Washington State that cultivates effective, informed leaders in agriculture, forestry, fishing and related industries. The program offers hands-on learning experiences to teach the skills needed to increase awareness and demand for agricultural commodities, drive natural resource industry growth and economic vitality. Over 18 months, 12 leadership seminars are presented throughout Washington on topics including: Communication, Group Dynamics & Public Speaking, Working with Media, Social Services, State Government, Forestry, Agriculture, the Columbia River System, Crime & Corrections, and Transportation. The program also includes one week in Washington D.C. learning about National Government and two weeks of International Study on Trade, Culture and Government.

### **WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**

Few things touch our lives more in Washington State than our natural resource industries. They provide successful livelihoods, quality of life for millions of people and are the largest economic driver in the state. Strong leadership is needed now more than ever in natural resources with evolving technology, challenges in the global economy, and regulatory changes in government.

### **THE PROGRAM**

Over the course of 18 months, AgForestry presents 12 leadership development seminars across the state at public and private institutions of higher education and leading businesses on various topics including government, economics, international trade, communication, water issues, media relations, the criminal justice system, and the environment. Additionally, the program includes a seven-day seminar in Washington, D.C., and a two-week seminar in a selected foreign country. For each leadership class, the AgForestry Leadership Program awards 24 fellowship seats from a group of state-wide applicants that encompass a range of professions and industries. These include those directly involved with agriculture, forestry, and fishing (producers, processors, shippers, marketing and sales) as well as related fields such as education, law, finance, government, human resources and labor, media, and public relations. The selection process is highly competitive.

### **LEADERSHIP IS BEST DEVELOPED WITH OTHER LEADERS**

The AgForestry Leadership Program brings together a variety of top-quality leaders from all areas of the natural resources community. This reinforces that we are all connected through government policy, industry practices, and community relationships. What happens on the west side of the state can have a direct impact on Eastern Washington and vice versa; what occurs in Seattle or Olympia can have an impact in Colville or Kennewick. The AgForestry Leadership Program prepares its participants and members to apply this knowledge.

### **NETWORKING**

The AgForestry network includes over 1,000 program alumni and numerous industry partners. The network is valuable; for example, if someone is faced with a question involving regulations or new legislation for either the natural resource industry as a whole, or a specific commodity, the AgForestry network allows you to connect with and learn from others who may be in your specific area or industry. The network also facilitates relationship building with people you may not otherwise have contact with, such as environmental communities, regulators and legislators - locally, statewide, nationally and globally.

### **AgForestry graduates are leaders who:**

- Have acquired the skills needed to effectively communicate in their organizations and communities.
- Have broadened their knowledge on issues that are important to natural resource industries.
- Have obtained insight into how communities work together successfully. They have learned about issues which affect our state's budget. They realize that leadership is needed in every part of society. AgForestry graduates are providing leadership from the grassroots up, serving in local, state and federal government and NGO's. Others are taking the lead as creative entrepreneurs, creating new systems of marketing and producing, adding economic value and developing new markets domestically and overseas.
- Meet and build relationships with a wide range of individuals who are leaders from other communities, regulators, and commodity groups. They become articulate advocates for natural resources.
- Are action-oriented, critical thinkers and solution seekers who serve as a voice for natural resource industries.

Employers and individuals who make the investment and support participation in the program can be assured that leadership class members are experiencing unique opportunities, and learning and acquiring leadership skills that will be incorporated into their jobs and communities.

### **They will:**

- Be prepared to make key leadership decisions based on being able to see the "bigger picture" of issues and challenges.
- Become more action-oriented, critical thinkers and solution seekers.
- Play a key role in providing leadership from the grassroots level up, which is critical to communities across our state and nation. AgForestry graduates are serving as county commissioners, local, state and national legislators, school board members, and on numerous decision-making and economic development committees and commissions.

### **FUNDING**

The AgForestry Leadership Program is funded almost entirely by giving partners in the private sector, individuals, businesses, and private foundations. The actual value of the leadership development program is more than \$21,000. AgForestry contributors provide \$15,000+ towards the cost. The participant or their employer is responsible for \$6,000 (\$3,000 per year) with payment plans available.

*"Going through the AgForestry leadership program means one 'a-ha!' moment after another, as you learn to identify and understand the forces that are at work throughout our communities. For me it was like riding an elevator from the ground floor up to the top of a very tall building – you step out to the edge and see, in a whole new way, how things connect and interact. I was in my early 30s when I became a member of Class 2; while fitting the program in was a challenge, the return on that investment has lasted for decades. I came away not only with an even stronger love of learning but with a much broader perspective that changed my life and equipped me to make a positive difference where I live." - Senator Linda Evans Parlette, 12th Legislative District*