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■ AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE

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Luckily, there are many in the state who recognize the urgency of these issues. Born from a two-year collaborative effort that brought together groups like the Oregon Farm Bureau, the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts, and others, the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (HB 3249) gained widespread bipartisan support in passing the House and Senate and is now headed to Governor Brown's office for signature in September.

The Oregon Agricultural Heritage program creates a voluntary suite of tools that aims to help mitigate the stress and impact of succession planning while addressing two key issues farmers and ranchers face: the development and fragmentation of farmland and the challenge of passing farmland on to the next generation.

To that end, this program will fund a study of Oregon's estate tax, offer farm succession workshops, and provide grants for three kinds of voluntary conservation programs: conservation management plans, permanent working lands easements, and 20- to 50-year working lands covenants.

Working lands easements and covenants allow landowners to sell or lease their development rights. This preserves the land for agricultural use, gives the farmer cash to help pay for succession planning, and makes the land more affordable to beginning farmers and ranchers by lowering the tax burden.

"We see it as a win-win-win for farmland preservation, farm succession, and access to land," said Nellie McAdams, Farm Preservation Program director at Rogue Farm Corps Farm, an Oregon nonprofit that began in the Applegate Valley that trains and prepares the next generation of Oregon farmers and ranchers.

Rogue Farm Corps' Internship and Apprenticeship programs are looking at the other side of the succession spectrum—how do we train young farmers to begin and take over existing farms and farmland? Now in central Oregon, Eugene, and Portland, as well as southern Oregon, Rogue Farm Corps has been offering hands-on training to the next generation of farmers and ranchers since 2005. Local



Rogue Farm Corps farm interns learn about fruit-tree cultivation at Thompson Creek Organics in the Applegate Valley.



With 18-acres of certified organic produce, flowers, and seeds, Dancing Bear Farm in Williams is host to Rogue Farm Corps farm interns.

host farms include Thompson Creek Organics and Dancing Bear Farm.

With two-thirds of Oregon's 16.3 million acres of agricultural land set to change hands in the next 20 years, we have a long road ahead to answer the question of who the next land stewards will be.

The passing of HB 3249 and Rogue Farm Corps' on-farm learning experiences for this next generation are important first steps down that road.

Nellie McAdams

Program Director, Rogue Farm Corps
nellie@roguefarmcorps.org

Williams School welcomes new teacher

Starting this fall, Ruth Dapkus will teach second- and third-grade students at Williams Elementary, replacing the beloved Joanne Wardle, who retired.

Ruth has an interesting background, including an international teaching experience in Prague, capital of the Czech Republic.

"I'm excited to be part of a community school," Ruth said. "I look forward to building strong school-to-home partnerships!"

Ruth grew up in the Grants Pass area and attended schools in both Three

Rivers School District and Grants Pass School District. She attended the University of Oregon for her bachelor's degree, then Southern Oregon

University to gain her master's degree and teaching license.



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Grants Pass Water Lab

Eric Schaafsma
Technical Director
eric@gpwaterlab.com

541-476-0733
Fax 541-476-8132

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