



In This Month's Newsletter:

News and Events

Learn Something New

Partner Spotlight: Greg Holmes, 1000 Friends of Oregon

Local Food Jobs

Find Your Farmers' Market

Links from Around the Web

COVID-19 Resources

Resources for Farmers & Ranchers

The Rogue Valley Food System Network is a nonprofit collaborative that brings together businesses, nonprofit organizations, government entities, farmers, and passionate community members to improve the food environment in our region. In 2018, RVFSN merged with THRIVE and continues to produce the annual **Rogue Flavor Guide**, now entering its 17th year of publication.

Love this email? Please forward it on to a friend!

SUPPORT RVFSN

RVFSN ELSEWHERE

Your donation supports us in building a robust food system for all in and around the Rogue & Illinois Valleys



Donate Now!



Community News & Upcoming Events

Stay tuned in to the Rogue Valley Food System Network Instagram and Facebook pages for more upcoming events.

Farmers Union Virtual Women's Conference

January 17-18, 2021

Connect with farming women and learn more about strengthening your farm business in a genuine, uplifting environment at the National Farmers Union's annual Women's Conference, January 17-18. You won't want to miss these speakers and this chance to build community. Register online at NFU.org/womensconference.

ReFED's Roadmap to 2030: Reducing U.S. Food Waste

Tuesday, February 2, 10:00-10:30am PT

ReFED's Roadmap to 2030: Reducing U.S. Food Waste by 50% looks at the entire food supply chain and identifies seven key action areas for the food system to focus its food waste reduction efforts. It also includes a detailed financial analysis to help direct the private, public, and philanthropic capital investments needed to fund them. Join us at our February launch event to jumpstart your food waste reduction efforts – and help achieve our 2030 reduction goal.

inFARMed Spring Series: Land & Capital Access

February 23, March 30, April 27, and May 25th from 6:30pm-8pm

Are you a farmer that needs land to farm or a tractor to plow the fields? Are you a local food enthusiast looking for ways to get involved to preserve our farmland or help small farms thrive? In collaboration with Steward, the world's first crowd-farming platform, we will talk about conventional and non-conventional ways to access land and capital in Oregon. This will be a virtual event, and as always, free to the public and everyone is welcome! Stay tuned for more details.



Local and Virtual Learning Opportunities

Rogue Farm Corps Training and Apprenticeship Programs

Applications are now open for ROGUE FARM CORPS' **beginning & advanced farmer training programs** in Oregon for the 2021 farm season! Rogue Farm Corps seeks to train an inclusive next generation of farmers and encourages applicants of all backgrounds and identities to apply. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis until March 1.

Community Food Systems Mentorship Program Applications are open

Spring 2020

Mentorship can play a critical role in the ongoing growth and development of food systems leaders. By providing professional guidance and support, serving as a sounding board, or building connections in the food movement, the exchange of ideas and experience with a mentor can influence us on profound levels and stay with us for years.

The Community Food Systems Mentorship Program provides food systems leaders with the opportunity to closely engage with proven leaders and experts as thought partners and coaches. The goals of this program are to:

- Build relationships of solidarity and support across the food movement,
- Create a space for leaders with significant experience in community food systems to share their wisdom, knowledge, and expertise with others, and to
- Strengthen the leadership capacity of food systems leaders

Registration is now open for the Teaching in Nature's Classroom Online Course!

January 25 - May 10 (15 weeks)

This spring, **Rooted, Life Lab**, and the Wisconsin School Garden Network present Teaching in Nature's Classroom, a free online course for educators. The course, developed as a companion to the book *Teaching in Nature's Classroom: Principles of Garden-Based Education*, is an opportunity for educators new to outdoor and garden-based learning, as well as educators who are experienced in the field, to consider best practices and reflect on their own teaching practice in outdoor learning environments, with a focus on school and community youth gardens.

This is a self-directed, 30-hour course, so you can choose to work at a faster pace and finish the course earlier than May 10th.



Partner Spotlight: Greg Holmes of 1000 Friends of Oregon

1000 Friends of Oregon has been working with Oregonians to plan for and create livable communities for over 45 years. Food Systems Program Director and Southern Oregon Advocate Greg Holmes has been an active member of the RVFSN Council since it was founded in 2013, and has served as the Chair or Vice Chair of the Oregon Community Food Systems Network (OCFSN) since 2017. Meet Greg!

RVFSN: Tell us about yourself and your work in the food system.

Greg: *I am a generalist by nature. I like to live in the big picture, to see how things are related, to connect the parts of the whole. When the opportunity came up to work as the Southern Oregon Advocate for 1000 Friends in 2002 I jumped at the chance—one day I'm working on affordable housing issues inside cities; the next on forest issues; the following on helping create a functional transportation system that includes, but is not entirely dependent on, cars; and on another day, preserving farmland so that it remains available for farming. This was a chance to help make the communities we live in function better and meet the needs of all of the people who live here.*

I am also a Master Gardener, I know my way around a kitchen, and I appreciate good food. I like to eat well, and I like to know where the things I cook with and eat come from. Although I grow a lot, my small urban yard cannot provide all the food my family needs. So I have relationships with a number of the local farmers and independent merchants we buy much of our household food from. This has given me a basic understanding of some of the challenges faced by the people who feed us.

It was through the convergence of these interests that I began to view a lot of the work I do through a food systems lens. According to the American Farmland Trust, the US loses about three acres of farmland every minute, or nearly the entire state of Delaware (if it was ALL farmland) every year. Thanks to our land use planning program, Oregon does a better job of preserving farmland than most states, but we still convert a lot of farmland to other uses every year. It is clear that with climate change and an ever-growing population we cannot sustain these losses indefinitely.

Since its early days, my organization has used the regulatory system to prevent the unnecessary conversion of farmland to other uses. We can't grow food without farmland. But while the preservation of the right farmland in the right places is critical, it is not itself sufficient. If that land is to stay in production, then the farmers who are working the land need to be able to earn a reasonable income for their work. By partnering with organizations like Rogue Farm Corps, Rogue Valley Farm to School, OSU Extension Small Farms and others, I get to work with passionate people who see how all of our work is connected, and who understand that working together to create a better food system helps us all.

RVFSN: What does your vision of a resilient and sustainable local food system look like?

Greg: *Everybody has access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food—*

AND the resources (including refrigeration and a place to cook) to utilize that food. But “affordable” does not mean the food is inexpensive. All of the people that grow, process, transport, and prepare that food for us need to be treated and paid fairly along the way, and need to be able to afford to buy that same food.

In addition, in a resilient and sustainable food system, farmland is not viewed as empty land waiting to be developed for other uses. Growing food is the highest and best use of the flat land in the bottoms of the valleys in southern Oregon.

A healthy, resilient and sustainable food system ecology shares many of the same core pillars as a thriving human ecology. Balanced. Diverse. Plant Based. Adaptable. Preventative. Whole.

RVFSN: How do you imagine that vision being accomplished?

Greg: *Right now we are led to believe that there are trade offs necessary—that we can’t pay the people that grow our food and work in our food system (meat processing, back end of grocery stores, restaurant dishwashers, etc.) a living wage because if we do food will be too expensive for anyone to buy. It does not have to be that way, but fixing that is going to take some structural changes in our economy and our culture.*

We need to get over the idea that “cheap” equals the most efficient or the best for society as a whole. At the very least, we need to stop subsidizing commodities that go into cheap food products, and start rebuilding the processing, storage, and other infrastructure that small and medium-sized farmers need in order to bring the food they can produce to market. At the same time, everybody who works full time at any job should be paid enough to have a home and sufficient food—which means we may need to adjust minimum wages and other economic policies.

Finally, we need to change our cultural relationship with farmland. It is time to move beyond the myth that we’ve ever had absolute property rights in this country that mean we can do whatever we want with land and that it won’t have consequences for our neighbors or society at large. We have a limited amount of land that is appropriate for growing food. With climate change and increasing population, we need to preserve the best of that land for that purpose.

RVFSN: What's your favorite food to eat that's in season now?

Greg: *Even in the middle of winter there are lots of options around here—either still in season or things that were grown for storage and meant to be eaten now. In that latter category I have to say the winter squashes. We bake them and then turn them into all kinds of things—from chunks in stew to purees that we use to thicken broths and sauces.*

To learn more about 1000 Friends of Oregon, visit their website and follow them on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter.



Job and Volunteer Opportunities

The State is now accepting applications for two vacant State Board of Agriculture positions

The Oregon State Board of Agriculture is a 10-member board that advises the Oregon Department of Agriculture on policy issues, develops recommendations on key agricultural issues, and provides advocacy of the state's agriculture industry in general. The Office of Governor Kate Brown is accepting applications to fill partial terms for two producer positions on the State Board of Agriculture. This is one of seven seats reserved for board members who are actively engaged in the production of agricultural commodities. [Learn more and fill out an interest form here](#), or contact Andrea Cantu-Schomus by [email](#) or at 503-881-9049 for more information.

Farmers Market Representative with [Banyan Botanicals Farm](#)

We are seeking a candidate who will feel comfortable representing the Banyan farm and selling organic produce at Farmer's Markets. The Farmer's Market Tender will be responsible for all aspects of creating a booth at 2-3 local markets a week; loading up the box truck at the farm in the morning, booth set-up and breakdown, artfully presenting fruits vegetables and value-added products, and providing excellent customer service. This is a part-time position: 20-25hrs/week. Contact [Tommy](#) for more information.

Farm Tender with [Banyan Botanicals Farm](#)

The Farm Tender reports to the Farm Manager and is responsible for a variety of duties around the farm. The successful candidate must possess a strong work ethic, be adaptable to rotating tasks and be flexible and willing to work out in the field in all types of weather independently or alongside the farm crew and Interns. The Farm Tender is expected to meet all farm expectations (quality of work, etiquette, cleanliness, attendance, attitude, teamwork, knowledge, etc.). This is a full-time position: 40hrs/week. Contact [Tommy](#) for more information.

Rogue Farm Corps Internship Programs

Are you interested in a deep dive into the world of sustainable agriculture? RFC's Full-Season Internship Program is a spring through fall immersion for aspiring farmers who want to gain significant farming or ranching production experience and don't have a lot of previous exposure. For those seeking an experience for just the summer months, a Summer Internship Program is in development for 2021. The Full-Season Internship Program is an entry/intermediate-level, immersive program that combines hands-on training with skills-based education. No experience is required to apply, however some host farms do prefer applicants have some previous farming or outdoor work experience. RFC recommends some previous outdoor work experience.

The Farm at SOU is hiring a new Farm Assistant

This position would be ideal for anyone looking to expand their knowledge of sustainable agriculture. [Check out the position here](#).

Oregon Pasture Network, Program Assistant

Friends of Family Farmers seeks a motivated and independent half-time organizer (20 hrs/wk) to join our team. This position involves supporting and promoting pasture-based producers throughout Oregon, with particular attention to underrepresented voices. This person will work alongside and complement the Oregon Pasture Network (OPN), Program Manager. [Job Announcement here](#).



OPEN YEAR-ROUND:

Grants Pass Growers Market

Saturdays 9:00am to 1:00pm
JoCo Fairgrounds in Grants Pass

Rogue Valley Growers Winter Market

Tuesdays 10:00am-2:00pm
December 1, 2020 - February 23, 2021
Phoenix Plaza Civic Center, 220 N. Main St., Phoenix

Rogue Produce

Convenient, flexible, economical, and available year-round, Rogue Produce delivers the freshest, highest-quality local and organic produce directly to your door!

CLOSED FOR WINTER:

Rogue Valley Ashland Armory Growers Market

Tuesdays 8:30am-1:30pm through November
National Guard Armory, 1420 E. Main Street, Ashland
CLOSED UNTIL MARCH 2021

Rogue Valley Medford Growers Market

Thursdays 8:30am-1:30pm through November
Hawthorne Park, 501 E Main Street, Medford
CLOSED UNTIL MARCH 2021

Rogue Valley Ashland Growers Market

Saturdays, 8:30am-1:00pm through October
Oak Street, Downtown Ashland
CLOSED UNTIL MAY 2021

Cave Junction Farmers Market

Fridays 4:00-7:00pm
CLOSED UNTIL APRIL 2021

For vendor/booth info contact Alisa Ocean, Farmers Market Manager at (458) 229-2067

Williams Farmers Market

Mondays 4-6:30 pm
For more info and to volunteer, please contact [Kyra Wyant](#).
CLOSED FOR WINTER

Jacksonville Farmers Markets is Cancelled until Further Notice



EXPLORE

New MyPlate Digital Tools and Resources

The USDA and HHS just released the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025* – our nation’s leading nutrition advice to help all Americans lead healthier lives. With the new *Dietary Guidelines* comes an updated **MyPlate** with a collection of new digital tools and resources to help families put these recommendations into action and make every bite count!

- Discover SNAP-Ed recipes on **MyPlate Kitchen**. Check out hundreds of healthy, budget-friendly recipes that provide detailed nutrition and food group information to help you choose recipes that fit your needs.
- Explore **Healthy Eating on a Budget** to find tips on saving money at the store by making a shopping plan, shopping smart, and preparing healthy meals to stretch food dollars.
- Small changes matter. *Start Simple with MyPlate.*

WATCH

A set of great videos you can watch from your cozy house, about the wide wonderful world of agro-ecology, the small farms movement, restoration ecology, and naturalist adventures. A set of learnings that will help awaken your senses and sense of preparedness! All fun, beautiful to watch, and full of relevant teachings to help prepare more of us to engage with farming. Via **The Greenhorns**



RVFSN COVID-19 Resource List

See our [recently updated list](#) of food and farm resources available in the Rogue Valley and across the state to support our communities as we work to identify and address some of the unforeseen challenges that have arisen at this time. Take care and support your local food system!



Resources for Farmers and Ranchers

\$50 Million Now Available for On-Farm Renewable Energy Projects

In order to help producers save money and better utilize renewable energy, USDA's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) will provide at least \$50 million in grant funding to support on-farm renewable energy projects for fiscal year 2021 (FY21). The program also supports the purchase of wind, solar, or other renewable energy systems and provides grants to help farmers with energy audits and renewable energy development. Grant applications are due January 31, 2021 (for energy audits) and March 31, 2021 (for renewable energy projects). [Learn more about REAP and apply today!](#)

Our Family Farms Fire Relief Fund Grants

Seed Grants of up to \$15,000 are available to agricultural workers who lost their homes in the fires. To be eligible, applicants must have been directly impacted by the Almeda and Obenchain Fires and be working at least a majority of their time in agriculture. Download an application from their website to apply or contact them to nominate an impacted farm or farmworker.

List of Oregon Wildfire Resources

A comprehensive list from Friends of Family Farmers of resources to access and organizations accepting donations.

Bi-weekly Farmer Socials on Racial and Food Justice

Join Friends of Family Farmers for a series of virtual Farmer Socials every other week to continue the conversation about farmers' roles at the intersection of food justice and racial justice.



Our mailing address is:

Rogue Valley Food System Network

PO Box 1255

Medford, OR 97501

Add us to your address book

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.