

Commentary...

# A journey to the farm Olympics

By Audrey Tehan  
Columnist

My favorite day this spring was the first-ever sixth-grade Farm Olympics. Students had been visiting the farm four times a year, every year since the second grade. A challenge surrounding science, health, and agriculture was just what they needed.

The opening ceremony led teams to chant their team names and cheers before they embarked on their four Olympic farm events. The plant part relay relied on a delicate balance of speed and wit. The compost jeopardy necessitated a keen eye and brought teams together for in-depth brainstorming sessions. Sheer muscle and teamwork had to be utilized during the bed preparation station. Scientific inquiry was critical to the soil nutrient testing and finally, the blind taste-testing made students tune into their senses. The final prize: eternal recognition as the winners of the 2019 Farm Olympics — and \$5 gift cards to Sisters Coffee Co.

Our education programs are the key focus on Seed to Table Farm. The food production, the soil health, and management of pests serve as the perfect classroom for hands-on exploration of nutrition and science. This spring our education programs grew leaps and bounds in the quality and quantity of students served. Due to community support and the generous donations of individuals, the Collins Foundation and the Oregon Community Foundation, Seed to Table was able to hire education coordination. Our previous capacity could not keep up with demand from teachers and students.

To start the spring off we hired Andrea Del Rio, to serve as our part-time high school education coordinator and Crystal Vogt to serve as our part-time K-8 coordinator. Ramping up with these two inspired individuals took our classes to another level;

we developed twice as many lessons to integrate next-generation science standards into more grade-specific activities. We were able to dive into the school and offer K-4 garden club programming three days a week during recess and after school. Some days there was a line out the door as students chose to spend their free time with their hands in the dirt.

At the high school level, we culminated months of learning and growing in the four-season greenhouse into an Iron Grower and Iron Chef competition. The high school agriculture class stunned our board with their presentations of cucumbers growing up to the ceiling and cherry tomatoes ripening in early June (this is an amazing feat). Incorporating these foods into our life does not stop when students leave the greenhouse. Students were challenged to create a seed-to-table meal incorporating 60 percent of the produce they grew, 30 percent of items grown or raised in Oregon and 10 percent of items could be sourced from anywhere. The culinary classroom at the school was a sensory overload of roasting tomatoes, basil sorbet, zucchini noodles and more. It was perhaps the most delicious ending to a class that I have ever experienced.

Our newest project has been an honor as we were invited members of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, to help establish a seed-to-table-type program for their K-8 Academy. Seed to Table was approached by tribal members, two years ago as Seed to Table and Warm Springs were working on increasing the local foods of school lunches. Tribal member John Brunoe was inspired to create a garden-based wellness program in their community. This spring we greeted all the second- and eighth-grade students of the Warm Springs K-8 Academy on Seed to Table Farm. Teachers and OSU garden program

coordinators shadowed staff and are being mentored on how to integrate gardens into daily activities and the intricacies of growing food in the high desert. This will be a three-year project to assist the Warm Springs community in developing their own seed-to-table program to help increase access to nutritious foods and engage students in farm/earth-based education.

Seed to Table has been busy this past spring. Thank you so much to everyone who supports us by following along, purchasing produce at the farmers market, becoming a produce share member or coming to one of our many events. Being a consumer of local veggies or a donor; you are leading the way in improving the health of our community and supporting 1,500 students in receiving farm-based education! The foundation of our farm is our education programs; student's experience is at the center of everything we do.

Please make sure to join us at the Sisters Farmers Market at Fir Street Park on Sundays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Subscribers will also receive an email that highlights all of the events we have coming up on the farm in August and September.

To celebrate the success of our programs thus far, please join us August 7, for our Growing Community Event from 4 to 7 p.m. The event will be held at Seed to Table Farm and feature Boone Dog Pizza, a kids' Farm Olympics and live music. Tickets at the door. We take cash, card, and check. More information at [www.seedtotableoregon.org/events](http://www.seedtotableoregon.org/events).

## Mt. Jefferson hiking trail reopens two years after wildfire

PORTLAND (AP) — One of the most popular treks to Mount Jefferson has reopened more than two years after a wildfire closed it to public access.

The U.S. Forest Service announced Wednesday night that the Whitewater trail in Central Oregon had officially reopened.

*The Oregonian*/OregonLive reports the trail was heavily damaged by a wildfire that started in July 2017 from a lightning strike.

The fire smoldered for weeks before wind picked up the flames. The fire burned more than 22 square miles of forest before cooling down months later.

The Whitewater trail is one of the most popular ways to access Jefferson Park at the base of Mount Jefferson.

In 2018, Willamette National Forest officials estimated the cost of repairing the trail at \$73,500.

Officials had hoped to reopen it earlier, but in May extended the closure for more clean up.

## Legislature fails to approve state hemp commission

SALEM (AP) — A proposal for an Oregon Hemp Commission has died in a Legislative committee.

The *East Oregonian* reported Friday that the proposal for a commission to raise research funds for Oregon's hemp industry failed to pass the Joint Ways and Means Committee in June.

The committee approves budget measures in each legislative session; a similar proposal was rejected by the committee two years ago.

An Oregon State University researcher says an industry-wide organization would help increase understanding of the difficulties faced by hemp growers.

Annual hemp production in Oregon has increased from less than a square mile (2.6 square kilometers) to more than 78 square miles (202 square kilometers) in the past five years.

Officials say Oregon already has 23 commodity commissions that collect assessment fees from farmers, ranchers and fishermen.



SAVE THE DATE!

Central Oregon's  
Premier Juried  
Fine Art & Craft  
Show and Sale

August 23 - 25, 2019






ArtInTheHighDesert.com

Thanks for their support!




For safety, no dogs/pets allowed.  
Thank you.

Come see the largest selection of

# HATS

in town!

Sakroots  
Purses  
Minnetonka  
Sandals



MACKENZIE CREEK

290 W. Cascade Ave. 541-549-8424  
[www.mackenziecreekmercantile.com](http://www.mackenziecreekmercantile.com)



Hair, Nails,  
Brows &  
Waxing

541-549-6566

484 W. Washington Ave.  
Suite B



Serving Sisters  
Since 1995

FAMILY OWNED.  
SISTERS PROUD.

Sweeney  
Plumbing, Inc.

541-549-4349  
260 N. Pine St., Sisters  
Licensed / Bonded / Insured  
CCB#87587