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# Advocating for Agriculture

## Jefferson Co. Farm Bureau proactive on spotted frog issue

Will the ESA-listed spotted frog become the spotted owl for Central Oregon? Not if Jefferson County Farm Bureau has anything to do about it.

This summer, two environmental groups — the Center for Biological Diversity and WaterWatch of Oregon — threatened to sue the Bureau of Reclamation and the North Unit, Central Oregon, and Tumalo Irrigation Districts under the Endangered Species Act, alleging that habitat for the Oregon Spotted Frog was being impacted. The groups want operations at Crescent Lake and Wickiup and Crane Prairie reservoirs to be changed to better protect the frog.

That's a scary thought for farmers in Jefferson County, whose water availability is already stretched thin in the midst of an ongoing drought.

"Irrigators in North Unit, which is primarily in Jefferson County, have junior water rights. And those rights are associated with stored water in Wickiup reservoir," said Kevin Richards of Jefferson County Farm Bureau.

"With these potential lawsuits, there's a threat that farmers will not have access to the amount of water we typically have."

As of the writing of this article, no lawsuit has been filed.

In an effort to bring awareness to this issue — along with the challenges farmers face in a prolonged drought — Jefferson County Farm Bureau organized two tours to highlight the innovative work the North Unit Irrigation District and local farmers have done to improve water efficiency and conservation. The tours focused on the operations



Members of Jefferson County Farm Bureau hosted two tours this fall to share with local, state, and federal lawmakers, conservation groups, and others about how farmers work closely with local irrigation districts to maximize water efficiency. Threatened lawsuits involving the spotted frog may jeopardize already limited water availability.

of the irrigation district and recent and ongoing efficiency investments and improvements, and also included visits to farms to discuss on-farm conservation practices in water use, soil management, and other environmental practices.

A land use and resource conservation group took the tour on Sept. 30, while the tour on Oct. 8

included congressional staff, county commissioners, city council reps, media, and the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture.

"The tours were very successful and a great opportunity to show how Jefferson County farmers and the irrigation district are working together, being proactive, and doing our part to conserve water," said Richards.

The tour also achieved the always important goals of general outreach and education for the public. The region produces high-value specialty crops, including carrot seed, onion seed, grass seed, garlic, and mint for peppermint oil — often a surprise to even local residents.

"It's common for folks to not have a full grasp of what we raise and how we farm here in Jefferson County," said Richards. "People are continually amazed by what's going on right on the farm and how the irrigation district is working with its patrons to make efficiency improvements."

As the situation progresses, Jefferson County Farm Bureau will continue its great work representing the concerns of members and raising awareness of farmers' dedication to water conservation and environmental stewardship.

## Court halts Waters of the United States rule

On October 9, Farm Bureau was thrilled to hear that the Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit ordered the Environmental Protection Agency to stop enforcement nationwide of the controversial Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule.

This is very promising news and a testament to the work of Farm Bureau members in Oregon and nationwide who joined the Farm Bureau-led grassroots campaign beseeching the EPA to #DitchTheRule.

By making this order, the Cincinnati-based court recognized that this rule has serious flaws and cannot go forward until the courts have had an opportunity to understand its effect on farmers, ranchers, and landowners



of all kinds, said American Farm Bureau Federation President Bob Stallman in a statement.

"The judges expressed deep concerns over the basic legality of this rule. We're not in the least surprised: This is the worst EPA order we have seen since the agency was established more than 40 years ago. The court clearly understood our arguments," Stallman said.

The decision expands a stay that a North Dakota

judge imposed in August, the day before the rule took effect, and that only applied to 13 states.

While farmers and ranchers are confident the courts will strike down this rule, cases like this almost always take years to win — and stays don't last forever, Stallman noted. "So we again ask the Senate to pass legislation to nullify this rule just as the House has already done. Farmers and ranchers cannot afford to wait."

Find a video on [oregonfb.org](http://oregonfb.org) by AFBF that explains why the temporary stay of EPA's WOTUS is welcome news for farmers — and what needs to be done to quash the government agency's regulatory overreach.

To learn more about WOTUS, visit [oregonfb.org/ditchtherule](http://oregonfb.org/ditchtherule).



Tell ODFW to stick with the provisions of the Oregon Wolf Conservation & Management Plan and delist the gray wolf from the state ESA.

## OFB Action Alert on wolf delisting

The Oregon Fish & Wildlife Commission is considering removing the gray wolf from the list of species protected under the Oregon Endangered Species Act (OESA). Oregon's Wolf Conservation & Management Plan calls for the possible delisting of wolves when Oregon reaches the conservation objective of four breeding pairs for three consecutive years in eastern Oregon. This objective was met in 2014.

"When it was enacted, the wolf plan was negotiated between the state, environmental groups, and ranchers. Ranchers have honored their end of the bargain," said OFB Director of State Public Policy Jenny Dresler. "However, now that the population objectives are met, environmental groups are not honoring the commitments they made and are instead

requesting greater protections for the wolves."

### What you can do to help:

1. Contact the Oregon Fish & Wildlife Commission and let them know that Oregon's farmers and ranchers support honoring the state wolf plan and initiating the delisting process. Visit [oregonfb.org/advocacy](http://oregonfb.org/advocacy) for help on drafting a letter.
2. OFB also asks farmers and ranchers to attend the next Commission meeting to testify about the impact of wolves on the health and safety of their animals and the viability of their operation. If you can, plan to attend the next meeting on Nov. 9 at 8:00 a.m. at the ODFW Salem Headquarters, 4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE in Salem — and share your story.

## Take the Farm Bureau Challenge!

WOTUS, wolves, and the Endangered Species Act are just three of many critical issues Oregon Farm Bureau is diligently working on this fall for our members.

What topic is of most concern to you? Share the most pressing agricultural issue(s) facing your farm or ranch at [oregonfb.org/challenge](http://oregonfb.org/challenge) — and OFB will respond with an update on what's being done on those specific topics.

Let us show you how Farm Bureau is valuable, necessary, and worthy of your support and membership.

Today, less than 1 percent of the population makes their living in agriculture. Through Farm Bureau, you join 7,000 fellow family farmers and ranchers across Oregon, and more than 5 million members across the United States, who actively advocate for agriculture



Scene from the 2014 Douglas County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting.

and rural communities. Simply put, there is no more effective way to amplify your voice in the legislative arena than membership in Farm Bureau.

And you can easily recoup the cost of annual dues — and enjoy many more savings — through Farm Bureau's wide variety of great member benefits programs.

OFB's newest discount for members is with Caterpillar. Farm Bureau members can receive up to \$2,000 off



a wide variety of Cat machines.

Members also save \$500 on a new or leased GM, Chevy, or Buick vehicle (a discount that's stackable with other GM offers); save up to 50% on Grainger purchases and get free shipping with online orders; get \$200-\$300 off Polaris off-road vehicles; receive \$300-\$500 off certain Case-IH tractors or implements. Eligible farm and ranch operations can get a substantial Verizon discount for business lines.

As a Farm Bureau member, you also have access to savings on propane, prescription medications, hotel stays, rental cars, and more.

Become a Farm Bureau member today! Get the application at [oregonfb.org](http://oregonfb.org) or contact OFB's Melissa Armour at [melissa@oregonfb.org](mailto:melissa@oregonfb.org), 800.334.6323.

## Upcoming events

For more information, visit [oregonfb.org](http://oregonfb.org).

- County Farm Bureau Annual Meetings continue through November
- Free Effective Social Media for Agriculture training during the OFB Annual Meeting, Dec. 9, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sun River Resort in Sun River
- 83rd Oregon Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, Dec. 8-10, Sun River Resort in Sun River

