



ORGANIC FARMING

AT A CROSSROADS

Some organic purists still want to battle the 'Empire,' but the market seems to be adjusting to the presence and influence of 'Big Ag.'

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

At this point, maybe organic producers and processors should just declare victory. They've won, haven't they? Sales of organic products show double-digit growth year after year. Consumers increasingly associate organics with safer food and better nutrition, health, soil and plants, not to mention more humane treatment of livestock and better conditions for farmworkers.

That little green USDA Organic symbol on a package says this costs more because it's special. And it's all delivered by a chemical-free small farm worked by a smiling couple and their beautiful brood of happy children.

Right?

Well, sure, to a certain extent.

But within the organic community, some worry the movement — and that's how many see it, as a movement — will lose its soul as "Big Ag" takes over organic production and snaps up small organic processors.

"If we continue to mainstream, is there anything left of what was organic, or do we just become product manufacturers?" asked Oregon organic pioneer David Lively.

Turn to **ORGANIC**, Page 12



"If we continue to mainstream, is there anything left of what was organic, or do we just become product manufacturers?"

David Lively, Oregon organic pioneer

Inslee administration: More people need more public land

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

OLYMPIA — A Washington Farm Bureau lobbyist told lawmakers they should "draw a line" and halt the growth in state-owned lands, though an adviser to Gov. Jay Inslee said public recreation areas should expand as the population grows.

House Bill 1008, introduced by Rep. Matt Shea, R-Spokane Valley, would require state agencies to sell land at least as fast as they buy it.

Recreation groups, such as Trout Unlimited and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, criticized the legislation during a hearing Feb. 10 in front of the House Capital Budget Committee.

State agencies also lined up against the proposal. Jon Snyder, the governor's policy adviser on outdoor recreation and economic development, said the state budget office projects Washington will grow by 1 million people in the next decade.

The state probably will need to

acquire more property to keep recreation areas from becoming overcrowded, he said.

Rep. Richard DeBolt, R-Chehalis, asked Snyder, "So is your opinion, if we grow in population, we have to grow in public lands?"

Snyder said that was a "natural assumption."

"If we do grow, the possibility for needing more public lands does increase," said Snyder, who said he

Turn to **LAND**, Page 12



Courtesy of Washington Department of Natural Resources

Leader Lake Campground in the Loup Loup State Forest is among the land in public ownership in Okanogan County in north-central Washington.

Bill seeks reversal of Oregon GMO pre-emption



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press
Elise Higley of the Our Family Farms Coalition speaks at a recent press conference in support of House Bill 2469.

Legislation would allow local governments to regulate biotech crops

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

Biotech critics are calling on Oregon lawmakers to overturn a prohibition against local government restrictions on genetically engineered crops because statewide regulations haven't been enacted.

In 2013, the Oregon Legislature

passed a law that pre-empted cities and counties from setting their own rules over seeds, which blocked most local ordinances banning genetically modified organisms, or GMOs.

Groups that opposed the pre-emption bill say state inaction since then has justified the passage of House Bill 2469, which would carve out an exemption allowing local GMO regulations.

"Oregon farmers can't wait another four years to protect themselves from this harm," said Amy van Saun, a legal fellow at the Center for Food Safety nonprofit group.

Van Saun said measures are needed to prevent cross-pollination of conventional and organic crops with biotech

Turn to **GMO**, Page 12



7 29467 70125 0



What is Watrustology?

Find out inside.

Washington Trust Bank