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# Opinion

## Editorial Board

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## OUR VIEW

# A cautionary tale for work near streams, wetlands

The Oregon Department of State Lands wants to fine a farmer \$6,000 for alleged violation of state fill-removal laws.

The potential fine seems excessive, particularly to the actual harm — or, more accurately, the lack thereof. But rather than a story about fines and punishment, the case serves as a cautionary tale for landowners with streams and wetlands — or anything that can be later so classified.

Kelly Sampson grows hay and nursery stock on 80 acres near Canby, Ore., on the banks of Milk Creek.

Sampson told Capital Press that he noticed a section of the stream bank was eroding, and he decided to plant willow trees to



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press

Farmer Kelly Sampson stands near Milk Creek, a tributary of the Molalla River, which runs through his 80-acre property near Canby, Ore. State officials warn that landowners should seek advice before working near streams, rivers or wetlands.

stabilize the soil.

He put hay bales onto rocks

next to the creek to retain moisture for the young trees.

Ordinarily, landowners don't need a fill-removal permit from the Oregon Department of State Lands if they're adding or removing less than 50 cubic yards of material in a waterway or wetland.

But in this case Milk Creek — a tributary of the Molalla River — is designated as "essential salmonid habitat," so any amount of disturbance requires a permit, according to the agency.

Sampson was unaware of the designation, and says his reading of the rules on the DSL website made him believe he was in the clear.

A complaint received by DSL indicates that Sampson placed hay bales as well as "horse manure and barn cleanout" below the creek's ordinary high

water mark.

Though Sampson's intentions were good, he was in apparent violation of the law.

To its credit, when DSL finds an unintentional violation it works with the landowner to work things out. If you can restore things as they found them, the fine can be waived. Or, the fine can be reduced to the extent that the effort is successful.

The best policy for a landowner is to assume a permit is needed and seek professional advice.

"Give us call and we can advise them," said Lori Warner-Dickason, field operations manager for DSL. "If they proceed without confirmation from us, they do so at their own risk."

## OUR VIEW

# Agriculture means opportunity for young people

In the U.S., about 21 million jobs are involved in agriculture, food and related industries. That's more than 1 out of every 10 jobs in the nation.

For today's young people, that means opportunity, and lots of it. Jobs are readily available in every aspect of agriculture. It could involve cutting-edge research seeking a cure for a nettlesome animal or plant disease. Or it could involve running the family farm or ranch. Or it could involve repairing and maintaining the equipment on which farmers rely.

Just as important are the support jobs in areas such as the sales, law and finance.

Those many job categories require widely varied backgrounds, experience, training and education.

The options are nearly limitless.

The toughest question any high school graduate faces is this: What's next? Often that question leads down the path toward attendance at a four-year college or university. Others choose to start their academic career at a community college before transferring to a four-year school. Still others go to vocational school, take part in apprenticeship programs or dive directly into the job market, learning as they earn.

All of the options have their pluses and minuses.

For example, four-year universities offer a lot of opportunities, but they usually come with an outside price tag. About two-thirds of all students borrow money for college, according to Credit.org, a nonprofit that provides financial counseling. A recent study found that the average student loan debt is more than \$35,000.

Unless a student can attract a significant amount of scholarships and grant help, the jump to a college degree will be accompanied by a hefty student loan balance. Those loans will be a huge drag on any



Tim Hearden/Capital Press

From left, Basil Frew, Chase Tanaka and Austin Okeson measure the inside of a connecting rod during a basic engine theory class at San Joaquin Delta College in Stockton, Calif. The three are students in the college's mechanic program.

young persons as they set out on their own.

However, other educational and training options offer lucrative career opportunities without overly burdensome financial baggage. Last week we reported on some of the many training programs available to young people who want to become a diesel mechanic or heavy equipment technician. Working on tractors, combines and other heavy-duty equipment requires state-of-the-art skills and knowledge, ranging from "turning wrenches" to electronics and computers. When a complicated piece of equipment worth several hundred thousand dollars goes down, only a well-trained technician can get it back on the job.

Many community colleges offer programs affiliated with manufacturers and dealers or similar programs that allow students to gain the knowledge and experience they need to walk out the door and into a well-paying job involved in agriculture.

It's easy for young people to "freeze up" when it comes to considering careers. In agriculture, there are many options that open doors to well-paying jobs. Not all of them require a four-year college degree.

If a student's interests lead to college, good. But a fulfilling career does not necessarily require a college degree. The right training can guarantee that.

# Staying above the fray on social media

By KARI BARBIC  
For the Capital Press

Guest  
comment  
Kari Barbic



Keeping a discussion on social media constructive can be a real challenge, especially when the other side goes negative, or even hostile. But nobody wins in an online shouting match. So how do we advocate and educate on controversial issues without getting drowned out by the noise?

### 1. Find your common ground.

This may be easier said than done, but we can usually find some level of common ground with people who hold opposing viewpoints. Granted, those people may have some harsh opinions and unkind words as the conversation heats up, but chances are the discussion would look far different if they weren't shielded by their computer screens.

As you prepare to address a topic, consider opposing views and the types of people who may disagree with your stance. When it comes to agriculture, there's no shortage of opinions — informed or not. This shouldn't surprise us. The people who would tell you how to run your farm may have equally strong opinions on how their doctors and mechanics should do their jobs as well.

We don't have to make sense of everyone else's viewpoints but we can evaluate their perspective and find broad areas to agree on. Take a mom who's anti-GMO. Do you both want safe, affordable food for your families? It's probably safe to assume the answer is yes. You may differ in how to arrive at that goal, but you can lay the groundwork for a productive discussion if you at least share the same starting point.

### 2. Keep your facts front and center.

Be sure to have solid examples and numbers on your side from the start. It's not hard to rally like-minded peers around an issue, but if you want to engage in a thoughtful debate with opposing viewpoints, do your homework and triple-check your facts. Bringing facts straight from your farm can help educate your audience far more effectively than broad

generalizations.

When you're advocating for regulatory reform, talk about the specific steps you've taken and farming techniques you've adopted that have improved your farm's sustainability. Show the difference in the amount of water and pesticides you use thanks to advances in technology. Even better, show your audience pictures or videos of what a modern sustainable farm looks like, or use Facebook Live or Instagram Stories to bring visitors to your farm in real time. You may not win over your opponent with one compelling photo or clip, but you'll leave them with something to think about as you set the stage for your next interaction.

### 3. Acknowledge when the other side has a valid point (and learn from them).

We may learn a thing or two by studying our opponent's playbook. Are there specific strategies and messages that seem to be working for them? To help sharpen your own tools, take some time to consider what makes their messages effective.

None of us can be right about all the things all the time. But we can go a long way in establishing credibility with others who may be listening in on our debate if we give credit where it's due when the opposing side makes a good point. If you stay focused on building your reputation as a credible resource, you have a better chance of making all your words count, even if you don't get the last word.

Few of us have been persuaded to change our opinions after just one discussion. Keep that in mind and relieve yourself of the pressure of trying to change a person's opinions and habits via just one Facebook thread.

Kari Barbic is a media specialist at the American Farm Bureau Federation.

## Readers' views

### Collaborative process a mistake

The first mistake anyone can make when dealing with any government agency is to agree to a collaborative process. The word you agree to is co-operative. My experience has proven that once you have agreed to be collaborative you will never gain any meaningful progress as the opposition can now control the narrative and thus the outcome of whatever subject matter the meetings are about. This is because by being collaborative you

agree that all parties must agree, no matter how minor the point. This allows the opposition to delay and control not only the direction but ultimately the outcome.

Remember that to obtain their goal it becomes necessary to first marginalize and then criticize those whom they perceive to be their opposition. As all liberals believe that they are morally and intellectually superior to those who do not believe as they do it is no wonder you are treated as mindless boobs.

So, what to do now? Get on the horn to mobilize and flood the

next meeting with your people. Demand to be included, as you too are members of the "public" and find a lawyer to represent you at the next meeting.

Learn to play the game by the same rules they play by. Realize that what we have is a war and one does not win wars when one side is armed with bows and arrows while the other side has guns. Pay attention and use the same tactics they use.

Brian Smith  
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