

- The McKenzie River Trust will participate in the statewide **Oregon Walk the Land Day** event. Visitors can check out Green Island at the confluence of the McKenzie and Willamette rivers 7 am to 5 pm on Saturday, June 24. The property has no address, but for those with a GPS or use Google Maps, the last street address before the property is 31668 Green Island Road. Easy directions to Green Island can be found at bit.ly/1np51uy. Parking on the property is limited, so carpooling is encouraged. To register for the Green Island Walk the Land Day, go to mckenzie-river.org/events/walk-the-land.

- We're tired of corporate PRIDE! There's no pride for some without liberation for all. **Eugene's first Pride march** is being organized by United FRONT's Trans Justice Campaign, co-sponsored by the South Willamette Valley's chapter of NOW--National Organization for Women. The march and celebration is 3 pm, June 25, at the Park Blocks, 8th & Oak downtown Eugene. Organizers say, "We're focused on an accessible and inclusive event, recognizing the need for safety and accessibility for our whole community. We will rally in the Park Blocks with speakers and march a short route through downtown. We'll return to the Park Blocks for a family friendly celebration including live music, face painting, kids activities and more." To get involved, contact transjustice@protonmail.com or find "Queer & Trans Pride March and Celebration" on Facebook.

- Indivisible Eugene presents "**Health Care Policy Primer**" with Marty Wilde, executive director Lane County Medical Society, 7-8 pm, June 28, Unity of the Valley Church, 3912 Dillard Road.

- An initiative petition has been submitted to the city of Eugene that would amend the City Charter to establish an office of **an independent elected city auditor**. Volunteers are needed to gather signatures to place the measure on the May 2018 ballot. The petitioners say, "This is an opportunity for area residents to help reform our city government." A training for volunteer signature gatherers is scheduled for 5 pm, June 28, at the AFSCME offices at 688 Charnelton in downtown Eugene. This all-volunteer effort is open to all those interested in helping in whatever way they can. For more information or to contact the chief petitioners go to cityaccountability.org or call 541-520-9572.

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Meet the Eugene Area Gleaners

A 'gleaner' is traditionally someone who collects leftover crops after they have been commercially harvested, or on fields where it is not economically profitable to harvest," says Brandy Collier, president of the local chapter of the Eugene Area Gleaners.

"Today, a gleaner is someone who collects excess fresh foods from a variety of sources in order to provide it to those in need," Collier says.

Eugene Area Gleaners is run by dedicated volunteers seeking to connect hungry people with available food while reducing local food waste. The organization has an expanding roster of donors, both farmers and private property owners, who request gleaners to pick their extra produce.

"These gleans happen at all times of the year, but mostly during mid to late summer and early fall," Collier says. "During this time, we can become extremely busy with gleans happening at all times — and all days of the week."

Volunteers are trained on proper harvesting techniques by on-site "glean leaders."

"Unripe fruit may be picked at donor's discretion," Collier says. "Gleaned produce is split 50/50 with the donor, who may request that their part of the good, usable produce be donated to FOOD for Lane County. The remaining produce is divided between the volunteers."

In exchange for some free labor, gleaners go home with food to enjoy and preserve. And by donating a portion of gleans to local food banks, they help ensure that fresh, healthy

fruits and vegetables end up on the plates of those most in need.

Historically, Collier says, the notion of gleaning is as old as Western civilization itself. "Gleaning was mentioned in the Bible, so it's very, very old," she says.

So how does one become a gleaner?

"We always need volunteers," Collier says. "It's such a shame to see how much produce goes wasted and rots in someone's yard or on a street when we have kids and entire families going hungry."

Collier says gleaning helps owners who have a surplus, either saving them the trip to donate it or saving them the cleanup.

"And it helps people who need a little extra to get through the month," Collier says. "Food stamps sure don't go as far as they used to."

Collier says that by carefully collecting and preserving the bounty that surrounds us, she and her fellow gleaners alleviate some of the strain on already thin emergency food resources.

"Many of our members know how to can and have been teaching each other," Collier says.

In an age of convenience, the Gleaners are remembering long-forgotten skills, ones our grandparents' generation probably couldn't imagine living without.

"We're relearning 'lost' — or less-popular — food security arts," Collier says.

Collier has been running the local gleaners group since 2009; it incorporated as a nonprofit last year.

"If you want to join, just head to our website and sign up. There are no requirements except to follow the rules."

Rule No. 1 — and there are just six of them — is "Be reliable and on time."

"I didn't even know what gleaning was before we started the group, let alone how many groups there are nationwide!" Collier says.

For more information about the Eugene Area Gleaners, please visit eugeneareagleaners.wordpress.com. This is the third in a three-part series on how local nonprofits are helping neighbors cope with food insecurity.

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