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Joe Sherman

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FARM GRAM



A publication of the Marion County Farm Bureau
Promoting, Protecting & Advancing Farm Interests in Marion County

MCFB Board Endorses Local Candidates

The Marion County Farm Bureau invited local political candidates to participate in one of two candidate forums hosted by the MCFB Board of Directors. Participating candidates provided written responses to a series of questions developed by the MCFB Board, addressing issues such as: agriculture's contribution to Oregon's economy, tax credit for crop donations to food banks, immigration reform, mandatory paid sick leave, indexing the minimum wage, water and water storage issues, and land use planning.

A total of ten candidates engaged in the live forum process. The forums provided each participating candidate an opportunity to share his or her political vision as well as address specific questions posed by the Board members.

At the conclusion of the forum process, the Board elected to make the following endorsements:

- Kevin Cameron (R), Candidate for Marion County Commission
- Paul Evans (D), Candidate for House District 20
- Jodi Hack (R), Candidate for House District 19
- Patti Milne (R), Candidate for Senate District 11
- Alan Olsen (R), Candidate for Senate District 20
- Kim Thatcher (R), Candidate for Senate District 13

MCFB President John Zielinski found the candidate forum's to be "educational and invigorating." "We had the opportunity to learn a lot about how these candidates view themselves and their ability to contribute to the political process, and we were pleased to provide them with insight to the needs and challenges faced by the agricultural community. I think they all came away with a clear understanding of the county farm bureau's expectations of its political leaders."

Oregon's 2014 general election will be held on November 4, 2014.

MCFB Annual Meeting & Banquet—November 13, 2014



The Marion County Farm Bureau's Annual Meeting and Banquet will be hosted Thursday, November 13, at the Quality Inn Suites (formerly the Renaissance Inn), 5188 Wittenberg Lane NE in Keizer.

The evening begins with time for socializing at 6:30; dinner service is scheduled for 7:00. The evening's program includes election of officers, annual reports, and a keynote speaker.

Tickets for the banquet are \$15 per person; reservations can be made by calling the MCFB office at 503-378-0595 or emailing jessica@marioncofarm.com. To ensure an accurate count for the banquet, please RSVP no later than noon on November 3, 2014.

Ditch the Rule Campaign Under Way

Reprinted from oregonfb.com and ditchtherule.fb.org

Puddles, ponds, ditches, ephemerals (land that looks like a small stream during heavy rain but isn't wet most of the time) and isolated wetlands dot the nation's farmland. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) on March 25 issued a proposed rule that would expand its regulatory authority under the Clean Water Act (CWA) to these types of land features and waters, giving the agencies the power to dictate land-use decisions and farming practices in or near them. The rule will make it more difficult to farm or change a farming operation to remain competitive and profitable.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Congress passed the CWA in 1972, banning discharges of pollutants from a point source (i.e., a single source or conveyance) into navigable waters without a federal permit.

The CWA has established a system of cooperative federalism that gives federal agencies—mainly EPA and the Corps—the authority to regulate navigable waters such as interstate rivers. The law calls these “waters of the U.S.” State and local governments have jurisdiction over smaller, more-remote waters, such as many ponds and isolated wetlands, because state and local governments are more accountable to their citizens and more in touch with local environmental and economic situations.

Two sections of the law have particular impacts on agriculture. Section 404 requires anyone wanting to discharge “dredge and fill” material into navigable waters to obtain a federal permit. This section deals with any discharge that would result from moving the soil. It has impacts for individual landowners and homebuilders, as well as farmers who want to plant trees, construct buildings, install drainage, deep-plow the soil—the list goes on. Section 402 establishes the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permitting program to enforce discharge mitigation requirements and limit point source discharges into navigable waters.

EPA and the Corps continually have tested the jurisdictional limits of the CWA over the last 40-plus years by issuing guidance documents and regulatory enforcement actions based on ever-broader interpretations of “waters of the U.S.” Specifically, in 1986, EPA and the Corps used the “migratory bird rule” to assert authority over isolated waters by saying those waters that are or could be used by migratory birds, which cross

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2014 Mary Petzel Scholarships Awarded

At its July 2014 meeting, the MCFB Board of Directors reviewed applications for the Mary Petzel Scholarship. The scholarship is made available on an annual basis to any immediate member of a Marion County Farm Bureau family preparing to study at any university, four-year college, or junior college.

This year the Board selected three scholarship recipients:

- Taylor Brentano, Senior majoring in Horticulture at Oregon State University
- Jaimee Brentano, Senior majoring in Agriculture Sciences/Agriculture Education at Oregon State University
- Samantha Brentano, Sophomore majoring in Agriculture Business Management & Sustainability at Oregon State University

Applications for the 2015 Mary Petzel Scholarship will be available on the MCFB website (www.marioncofarm.com) early next year. Please contact the MCFB office for additional information (503-378-0595).

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state lines, are interstate waters or “waters of the U.S.” The regulated community, including agriculture, has pushed back, resulting in precedent-making court decisions concerning the scope of the agencies’ jurisdiction.

In two cases the Supreme Court rendered decisions that reaffirmed the CWA’s limit on federal jurisdiction, drawing the line at navigable—the migratory bird rule notwithstanding. The American Farm Bureau Federation filed amicus briefs in both cases. However, the 2006 Rapanos ruling was not as clear-cut as the earlier decisions, and not as clear as Farm Bureau would have liked. Eight justices divided evenly between supporting the broad reach of EPA/Corps regulations and affirming that the CWA covers only navigable waters. One of the justices, Anthony Kennedy, was an outlier, writing that a significant nexus between an isolated wetland and a traditional navigable water could be enough for federal jurisdiction. Justice Kennedy did not define significant nexus, and the proverbial waters have remained murky ever since.

DITCH THE RULE!

In releasing the new “waters of the U.S.” proposed rule, EPA (the lead agency on the rule) has said that it is clarifying the scope of the CWA. However, EPA’s “clarification” is also a broad expansion of the types of waters and lands that would be subject to federal permit requirements and limits on farming practices and other land-uses. EPA also has claimed that the rule would have minimal economic impact and would not affect many acres—only about 1,300 acres nationwide—a laughable assertion when one considers the amount of acreage in just one state or even county that has hydric soils and, therefore under EPA’s proposal, adequate characteristics to be considered “waters of the U.S.”

It is vital for agriculture that the proposed rule does not become final or, if that is not possible, substantially changed. Farm Bureau will pursue this goal in the following ways:

- Comment about the impact the proposed rule would have on farms
- Support any efforts in Congress to rein in the federal government’s expansion of control over private land
- Engage in traditional social media campaigns to bring attention to the impacts of the proposed rule on landowners, small businesses and the economy, as well as agriculture

For additional information, visit the Oregon Farm Bureau website at <http://www.oregonfb.org/ditchtherule/>.



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Important Dates

MCFB Board Meeting
September 17; MCFB Office in Salem

OFB Golf Tournament
September 24; Stone Creek Golf Club

MCFB Annual Meeting & Banquet
November 13; Quality Inn Suites in Keizer

OFB Annual Convention
December 9-11; Salishan

American Farm Bureau Annual Convention
January 11-14, 2015; San Diego, CA

MCFB Board Member Recognized as Agricultural Leader

Congratulations to MCFB Board Member Brenda Frketich for her inclusion in Agri-Pulse magazine's "50 Under 50" list of agricultural leaders from across the country.

Brenda Frketich, 30, St. Paul, Oregon, raises grass seed and hazelnuts. In addition, she grows crimson clover, green beans, straw, and wheat. Frketich didn't plan to make a career of farming. After high school, she went to Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles to major in business. While there, "I realized how special this place [the family farm] was," she says. "I missed harvest. It broke my heart."

When Frketich talked to her father about moving back to the farm, he offered her a two-year internship. She says she's in her eighth year farming now, and her father has retired. Frketich says in her family, living in a community of about 300 people, there was "never a question that you would be involved." In addition to farming, Brenda is a firefighter and emergency medical technician, and is involved with Oregon Farm Bureau's Young Farmers and Ranchers program.

Frketich believes there's a need for transparency in agriculture today, as consumers have a thirst for understanding how food is grown. She uses a blog and Twitter to talk about "hot" topics and heartwarming ones, such as the Frketich's first son, who may someday be the fourth generation on the Oregon farm.

You can see Frketich's blog at: <http://nuttygrass.com/> as well as follow her Twitter feed at <https://twitter.com/ORFarmer>.

Don't Miss Your Newsletter!

In an effort to be careful stewards of our resources, MCFB plans to switch to e-newsletters to save money on printing and postage. Members are encouraged to forward your email address to jessica@marioncofarm.com.