

# Building resilient community food systems in the Applegate

BY ALISON HENSLEY SEXAUER

A “community food system” is everything involved in getting food onto our plates and what happens after. It includes the growing, harvesting, processing, packaging, transporting, marketing, consumption, distribution, and disposal of food. It includes the needed inputs (water, soil, oil, fertilizers, and more) and the outputs. It includes who has access to food, and who doesn't. It includes the social, political, and environmental impacts of these actions, and, of course, it involves you. It includes the whole interconnected, complex web of life that feeds us and those around us.

“We live in a beautiful, abundant, and amazing place. So much to offer. Sure, there are missing pieces, but a lot of folks don't know what is already here and how people can access it,” said Megan Fehrman, who has been working in food systems in southern Oregon for many years with the Rogue Farm Corps and is director of vision strategy for A Greater Applegate.

Did you know you live in a food and farming mecca? The Applegate is a place where people come from afar to visit farms, wineries, and foodie destinations through both the Rogue Valley Farm Tour ([roguevalleyfarmtour.com](http://roguevalleyfarmtour.com)) and the Rogue Valley Food Trail ([traveloregon.com/things-to-do/eat-drink/oregon-food-trails/rogue-valley-food-trail/](http://traveloregon.com/things-to-do/eat-drink/oregon-food-trails/rogue-valley-food-trail/)). It is a place where, in almost every tributary of the Applegate River, one can find a small farmstand or micro ranch or farm offering plant starts, veggies, eggs, meats, breads, and cheeses. It is a place with a diversity of microclimates, native and medicinal plants, and great soils. Have you discovered your foodshed yet? If you haven't, I invite you to get to know your community food system. And I challenge you to take one step closer to localizing your diet, whatever that means for you.

If you feel like “eating local” is too expensive, consider a few things: One, if you qualify, you can sign up for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) to help your food budget. Turn those dollars around and put them straight

back into your community. To learn if you qualify, go to [oregon.gov/dhs/assistance/food-benefits/](http://oregon.gov/dhs/assistance/food-benefits/). Also, if you have access to a little plot of land, or a friend's place, growing your own is one of the least expensive and most rewarding ways to support local food production. Be sure to get localized and non-GMO seeds from our many seed growers here in the valley.

There are so many ways to deepen our relationship to our food, the place it comes from, and the people who grow it. Here are a few resources to support you in your journey to meeting your local foodshed:

- **Join a CSA.** In the Applegate we have veggie, milk, and meat shares! “CSA” stands for Community Supported Agriculture, and it is a way for our farmers to get a leg up on the season and know what to expect. You can find a list of local CSAs in this year's Rogue Flavor Guide. Pick one up or find one online at [rvfoodsystem.org/rogueflavor](http://rvfoodsystem.org/rogueflavor).

- **Shop hyperlocally** at the Applegate Evening Market in Ruch from 5-8 pm Wednesdays (see coupon, page 22), or the Williams Farmers Market on Mondays.

- **Shop at Whistling Duck Farm Store**, a one-stop shop for basic organic and local products. They now accept Oregon Trail Cards (aka EBT—electronic benefit transfer—aka SNAP—Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)! Takubeh and the Williams Farm Store also often support small local growers and artisans.

- **Find your neighborhood farm stand.** Eggs, cheese, milk, dairy, or veggies—you can find it all. Consider it a treasure hunt!

- **Meet your neighbors.** Grow a garden and share the bounty, or patronize your neighbors' businesses.

Want to get more involved? There are some of us who just can't get enough of working towards a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable food system. We have a long way to go and need all hands on deck, so please reach out and let's work together.

Alison Hensley Sexauer, Coordinator  
Rogue Valley Food System  
[coordinator@rvfoodsystem.org](mailto:coordinator@rvfoodsystem.org)

# Paragliders to take to the sky again for Applegate race

BY TERRI STEWART

The Rogue Valley Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association has been busy planning the revitalization of the annual Applegate Open Paragliding Race after the global health crisis forced its cancellation in 2020. This year's race is scheduled for June 19-26. Residents, businesses, and spectators alike can expect to see nearly

200 colorful wings soaring the skies from Woodrat Mountain. Wells Land Vineyard is the event host this year. Pilots often land there and at LongSword Vineyard during the week.

It's likely you will see pilots landing throughout the Applegate Valley and beyond depending on the weather. There are many locations open to the public, including LongSword Vineyard, to view the event. Organizers hope the public will, for safety purposes, take advantage of the many wineries to sip and watch rather than stopping along Highway 238.

Organizers are hoping the community will support the race! Here's how you can help: If you see pilots in need of a lift, feel free to offer them one. If you see a pilot in distress, please contact emergency services immediately.

Pilots will be attempting to fly to designated goal fields throughout the valley, but sometimes they don't make it and land short. Pilots are briefed to avoid fields where there are crops or where the landowner has notified the local club they are not welcome to land. But sometimes it happens. If there are problems, please contact the organizer. Also, if you have a large field on your property that you are happy to have pilots



A pilot's view of Wells Land Vineyard.  
Photo: Dan Wells.

land on, please contact [Board@RVHPA.org](mailto:Board@RVHPA.org) for further discussion.

Planning an event during a pandemic poses some challenges, but organizers want to assure the public that COVID-19 protocols are in place, including vaccinations and negative testing for pilots and staff. Attendees will be wearing masks and social distancing. Hand sanitizer will be available and proper cleaning standards will be followed. Keeping the pilots and the community safe is our top priority.

Area businesses wishing to offer discounts or otherwise increase patron traffic during race week are welcomed to contact [AO-Organizer@RVHPA.org](mailto:AO-Organizer@RVHPA.org) to discuss details.

## Volunteers needed

Finally, we are looking for volunteers. Each year about 30 non-race pilots travel to support the event and get a few flights in; however, the public health crisis is forcing many to stay safe at home. If you are interested in volunteering for the race event, lunch is on us. Please contact [AO-volunteers@RVHPA.org](mailto:AO-volunteers@RVHPA.org) to learn more.

Terri Stewart  
President  
Rogue Valley Hang Gliding and  
Paragliding Association  
[President2019@RVHPA.org](mailto:President2019@RVHPA.org)

## ■ EVENING MARKET

*Continued from page 1*

to the mellow tones of the Day Trippers band as the sun made a slow journey over the mountains.

It was all about community.

“We came here to support a local event,” said Tracy and Eric Lindorf, from Humbug Creek. “We used to go to the Barter Fair and loved the local artisans.”

Alix Marmulstein, a local business owner (Blissful Being, with massage, yoga, and herbalism), said she had come because she was “enthusiastic to support the community.”

Haley and Andy Peterson, from Thompson Creek, came out of curiosity and because it was close. “If we had to go all the way to town, we wouldn't have come,” Haley said. They were impressed by the number of booths and attendees at the event.

“Local” seemed to be the theme. Most of the vendors were from the Applegate or Jacksonville. The farthest away was from Ashland.

The initial vision for the market was clear. “Our dream is to have enough producers and farmers so the community can buy local meat, cheese, mushrooms, bread, and produce so you won't have to go to town for a grocery store,” Alison



Community residents and vendors turn out in droves for the new Applegate Evening Market. Photo: Sarah Osborn.

said. “Ruch Store is great for the things it provides, but it's hard for them to support local farmers.” She hopes the Applegate Evening Market will step into the vacuum.

The market has a good start for doing that, with beef from Salant Family Ranch, cheese from Huizache, produce from Red Buttes and Red Fern farms, eggs from Birds and Bees, and muffins from Paulazzo Pasticceria.

The idea of having a farmers market in the Applegate has been floating around the valley for a long time. A Greater Applegate (AGA) and the Rogue Valley Food Network have been listening to Applegate farmers, who prioritized a local market on

their list of needs. AGA gave the Applegate Evening Market a boost with a Technical Assistance grant for small businesses.

“It was a community call that was heard and picked up on,” Alison said.

“A void that needed to be filled” was the way Sarah put it. And she had the land to do it on. When she bought the old Fiasco Winery last year, she felt it had “tons of potential” as a spot for hosting events. So, as she and Sarah were brainstorming over lunch at the Indigo Grill, the idea of the Applegate Evening Market was born.

“Sarah took the idea and ran with it,” Alison said, but Sarah has equal praise for Alison: “She is amazing in making

Laura Ahearn does double duty in the combined McKee Bridge Historical Society and Friends of the Animal Shelter booth. Photo: Diana Coogle.



things happen. She moved everything in a forward direction.”

The third partner, James Mulhern, market manager, has been equally instrumental. He is “the face of the market.” And he was thrilled with the opening day's turnout. “Applegaters are so supportive,” he said. “There are so many small businesses in the Applegate, we have a waiting list for booths.”

The market will be open from 5 to 8 pm every Wednesday through October. There'll be music from 5:30-7:30 pm. The market is ADA accessible and family-friendly. Dogs and smoking are not allowed. Masks and social distancing are encouraged.

Ken Snope, with the Day Trippers, neatly summed up the general feeling: “It's an awesome event.”

Diana Coogle • [diana@applegater.org](mailto:diana@applegater.org)