

ABOUT OREGON AGRITOURISM PARTNERSHIP

SPARKING AGRITOURISM CONNECTIONS

PURPOSE

Oregon Agritourism Partnership (OAP) is a broad-brush and charitable Oregon nonprofit created in August, 2014 by a statewide leadership group of agritourism producers to:

1. Connect the public with Oregon farms, ranches, wineries, other agriculture value-added operations and the people who operate them, and agricultural and farm-related events in order to build relationships and enhance knowledge, familiarity, and appreciation for farming, and to establish a sense of place.
2. Provide the public with easier access to sources of fresh, wholesome foods as well as local sources of plants, fiber and farm animals;
3. Connect the public with the land and its resources;
4. Provide fun and educational experiences that will encourage families to get outdoors and enjoy spending time together.

Board of Directors

President – Evan Kruse, Kruse Farms, Roseburg

Vice President – John Zielinski, E.Z. Orchards, Keizer*

Vice President – Dan Hoynacki, Sustainable Communities Advocate, Aumsville*

Secretary – Jeanne Carver, Imperial Stock Ranch, Bakeoven/Maupin*

Treasurer – Barb Iverson, Wooden Shoe Tulip Farm & Vineyard, Woodburn*

Director – Jim Clawson, Agritourism Advocate (retired UC-Davis rangeland specialist), Dallas

Director – Bill/Jennifer Cameron, Alpacas at Marquam Hill Ranch, Marquam

Director – Samara Phelps, Clackamas County Tourism Development Lead, Oregon City

Ex Officio – Mary Stewart, OSU Extension Service, Marion County*

*founder

Major Projects to Date

1. Agritourism Summits
2. Agritourism Limited Liability Sign Program
3. Oregon Farm Loop



Agritourism Limited Liability Sign

ORIGIN

OAP has its roots in Clackamas County, yet its reach is statewide.

Since 2006, agritourism has been one of the three pillars of tourism industry growth in Clackamas County. Because agritourism has had major emphasis in Clackamas County, the area has proven fertile ground for agritourism industry growth.

Timeline:

- In **2009-10**, the Clackamas County Tourism Development Council (TDC) and Danielle Cowan, Executive Director of Clackamas County Tourism and Cultural Affairs (CCTCA) commissioned the production of a Master Plan for Agritourism and a follow-up Agritourism Action Plan for Clackamas County. These plans were authored by Mary Stewart, the County's Agritourism Consultant. (Stewart began her work for TDC/CCTCA in 2006 and completed her work in FY 2015 when she accepted an assignment as an agritourism faculty for OSU Extension Service).

Among many of the plans' recommendations to stimulate industry growth, was a recommendation to form a nonprofit organization to support the independent and sustainable growth of the industry. To share this planning and development work statewide, the Master Plan for Agritourism in Clackamas County was made available as a resource publication at the first statewide Oregon Agritourism Summit held at OSU.

- In **2012-13** as they implemented the Action Plan, TDC initiated a project to form a nonprofit agritourism organization to serve the agritourism industry segment. They tasked agritourism consultant Mary Stewart to do the groundwork to establish the nonprofit and paid the legal fees for the nonprofit registration. Tonkon Torp LLP Portland provided legal assistance.

Since there was no statewide organization to support agritourism at that time, TDC—as a leader in the state’s agritourism industry—decided to broaden the scope of the organization to potentially serve all Oregon counties. In order to measure the merit of the broader organizational concept, Travel Oregon’s Kristin Dahl was interviewed by the county’s agritourism consultant. Dahl indicated there would probably be a need for an organization to accomplish certain initiatives that were beyond the scope of Travel Oregon’s role.

Simultaneously, as the scope of the nonprofit organization was under development, the three agritourism communities and driving routes (called jointly Oregon Farm Loop) located in Clackamas County, had matured to the point that they were ready to operate independently as a nonprofit.

Historically, the Farm Loop concept was founded in 2007 by Mark and Mary Stewart who saw the potential of organized agritourism communities to spark sustainability of local family farms and rural communities. The development of these farm loops was supported by a combination of membership dues, grants, donations and volunteer time given by the farmer members and others. The Stewarts gave significant time and carried the fiscal, liability and legal obligation for the private farm loops with the vision that the loops would become a nonprofit once the loop communities became mature. In 2017, the three farm loops are: Canby Farm Loop, Farmlandia Farm Loop and Molalla Country Farm Loop.

In **August, 2014** The Oregon 501(c)3 nonprofit Oregon Agritourism Partnership (OAP) was officially formed. The Oregon nonprofit was then registered with the IRS.

FIRST PROJECTS OF OREGON AGRITOURISM PARTNERSHIP

The organization was initiated to provide an organization when there was none in place. At startup, the organization was designed to carry out a limited number of immediate projects but more so, to be up to speed and with leadership in place ready to meet needs expressed in the future by the time the agritourism industry was ready to articulate needed projects and programs for the state. In its startup mode, the organization purposefully appointed a very lean board and conducted little business.

The organization conservatively began with project development, grant writing and other funding efforts, including:

- A large grant ask--supported by the Willamette Valley Visitors Association RDMO--was made to Travel Oregon for support that would help grow the capacity of the nonprofit, but was not awarded the grant funding.
- A grant project awarded by Clackamas TDC to establish and test agritourism limited liability sign design and installation.
- The organization became licensed to operate Oregon Farm Loop.
- In 2016, OAP partnered with Clackamas TDC to present the Clackamas County Agritourism Summit at OSU's North Willamette Research and Extension Center.
- In 2016, the OAP Board expanded the Agritourism Limited Liability sign program piloted in Clackamas County to statewide distribution, at the request of members of the industry.
- In 2016 a grant ask to Clackamas TDC for a project to provide website and social media content - historical stories and images of local farm and rural community points of interests. That project was taken in-house by the TDC.

- At all times, the organization was interested in hearing what projects and programs that could be undertaken and would be of value to the state.
- Added members to the Board of Directors.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS/OBSERVATIONS OF THE ORGANIZATION AS IT STANDS TODAY ARE OFFERED BY OAP BOARD MEMBERS:

1. The OAP Board of Directors is producer-driven, with the majority of board members actually operating or advising rural business/agritourism entities. All directors are experienced with agritourism operations firsthand and are passionate about agritourism development in Oregon. The group may serve as a brain trust and sounding board to others. Currently, there are eight members on the board, with one “member vote” a husband/wife team. There is also one ex-officio board member who serves as the board administrator. The bylaws allow for more members to be added.

Geographically, the OAP Board of Directors currently represents: The Portland Metro area, Willamette Valley, Central Oregon and Southern Oregon. Goals of board membership is to represent all regions of the state.

2. A patron/membership structure for the organization needs to be developed.
3. OAP currently provides information and standardized services to agritourism producers that haven't been readily available from other resources. (Liability signage, provide education at gatherings of the industry).
4. OAP is an advocate for all sizes and types of farms, including agritourism producers who may be in the early stages of developing as a visitor ready business. (Early point resource connector).

5. OAP offers an economy of scale for basic marketing tools. (marketing clusters, liability signs, farm loop brochures)
6. OAP intends to sustain itself as a useful vehicle for agritourism producers to be able to continually improve their product/ visitor experience through peer innovation, problem-solving, and best practices.
7. As a 501(c) 3, OAP is not permitted to lobby or provide endorsements. Partnering organizations with this ability would need to fill that role or a new advocacy group would need to be formed. However, the 501(c) 3 organization is able to conduct a reasonable amount of research and provide opinions, information and testimony.
8. It is not the intent of OAP to become a substitute for the role of DMOS in marketing agritourism.

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