

Central Oregon's population is increasing by thousands, and hundreds of acres are the sites of new houses and apartments. As new people move here they want to learn how best to maintain and preserve the qualities that brought them to Central Oregon in the first place. As a fourth generation Oregonian who has lived outside of Oregon more than half my life, each time I've returned, OSU Extension has provided information and assistance that I've needed to adjust to changes and challenges.

Conserving water resources and maintaining the health of the aquifer that supplies water to agriculture, business, and residents is an increasing concern. Population growth and climate change have made this even more important. OSU Extension provides valuable information about gardening practices that rely on natives and other "water wise" plants. This has the potential to decrease demand on our increasingly scarce water supplies, as well as decrease water bills for individuals and our cities.

Historically rural Oregonians have lived with wildfire. Climate change has increased the danger to homes, farms and ranches, and summer smoke has impacted air quality and created more health issues. Paradoxically we are learning that many of the values we treasure in our forests are adapted to and are dependent on fire. OSU Extension classes offer background on forestry that helps us understand and support practices that will increase the health of our forests.

Staff and volunteers in the OSU Extension office in Redmond, and their user-friendly & beautiful publications, offer valuable information and education to newcomers and people like me. These resources are essential as more people move into this area.

Please give serious consideration to restoring the 2020 funding cuts to OSU Extension and our other public services, as well as providing the very essential funding to cover the many cost increases. To a significant extent our healthy life style in Central Oregon depends on it.

(From Katherine Applegate, Bend, Oregon)