



Land Ethic Mentorship

For Historically Underserved Farmers & Ranchers

MEET THE MENTEES

Dolores Miller, Bandon, Oregon



Dolores Miller

“.....

My stepdad, who is Klamath Indian, raised me. Being caretakers of the land—that is a huge thing that has always been there from when I was young. I take a lot of pride in that.

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Dolores Miller is transitioning onto her family's 300-acre ranch. The family currently raises sheep, but she is hoping to add cattle back onto the land. Aside from sheep, her land also has extensive Douglas Fir timber stands.

Her Story

Dolores's roots run deep on the land located about ten miles from the Pacific coast. The 300-acre ranch has been in her family since 1886, and her father is currently managing their sheep herd with help from Dolores. They raise a mixed meat breed commercial herd for wool and meat, and a Katahdin hair sheep and a hair sheep mix herd that is for meat only.



In addition to the sheep, the ranch also has Douglas Fir stands used for timber. They are a source of beauty for Dolores. “The trees are beautiful. We have some nice timber. Otherwise, the hills are pretty bare. It's very beautiful and park like.”

Dolores credits her grandmother with her desire to come back to the ranch. “She taught me everything I know.” Until about 20 years ago, the ranch also raised Simmental cattle. “My grandmother was in her 90's when she was running the farm on her own. She became a little more frail, and the cattle became too much. My dad has just stuck with the sheep.” Beyond their nostalgic value, Dolores hopes reintroducing cattle will help protect the ranch from wildfires by reducing the amount of dry standing forage, which is a highly combustible fuel source.

Dolores is working to become the next generation of stewards of her family's land. She is finding that her career off-ranch has given her skills that are transferrable and essential to the management of the operation. Her ability to organize has been useful on many fronts, from getting the barn in shape, to applying for funding. She has also been able to use her tech-savvy to support her father and help him apply for funding through NRCS and Western SARE.



DOLORES'S ADVICE FOR NEW FARMERS:

Get a mentor and talk to people. Having a mentor is a key thing. I really believe it has been so helpful. Go to conferences and networking events. I am always amazed at how open people have been, willing to share and give advice. Go out on the tours.

Talk to people in your local community. Utilize them as a resource. Local knowledge is really important when people are just starting out. Connect with different people – there are different ways to do things.



Her Mentor

Dina Moore and her husband Mark, of Lone Star Ranch in Eureka, California, were the 2016 California Leopold Conservation Award Recipients. On their 5000-acre ranch, Dina and Mark use a rotational grazing system for their cattle, and acquired a Non-Industrial Timber Management plan for their forestland. This requires them to practice uneven, aged management of the forests. Because of the similarities, Dina has practical knowledge to offer Dolores on everything from water access in a rotational grazing system to sustainable timber management. Most importantly, because Dina and her family are the fifth generation to live and work on the ranch, Dina has been able to support Dolores in her own generational transitions, as she takes over from her father, and prepares for the next generation.

Lessons Learned

"My mentor has been a powerhouse. Her family is also ranching together. It's worked out, and has been compatible between us." Because of her work with Dina, Dolores has implemented a different water system for the entire ranch. To contend with drought conditions, she now has a 3500-gallon tank that pulls

from a spring. She also has installed cisterns to catch rainwater from the barns. Beyond her conservation practices, Dolores relies on Dina's wisdom and experience with the intergenerational aspect of her ranch. "She has been a real help in how we organize ourselves and how we handle things legally. I didn't know anything about that, so that has been really helpful, and I have been able to see what works for Dina's family. I don't have to recreate the wheel."

What is Next?

Dolores hopes to bring cattle back to the ranch. Unlike sheep, cattle will eat taller grass which is a fire hazard in the Pacific Northwest. Her goal is to take over the ranch in a few years, when she can retire from her regular job.

Enroll Now!

Learn more and sign up for this free mentorship opportunity at:
sandcountyfoundation.org/mentorship
or contact Nikki D'Adamo-Damery at:
nikki@sandcountyfoundation.org



Natural Resources
Conservation Service

The Land Ethic Mentorship program serves historically underserved (socially disadvantaged, beginning, limited resource, and veteran) farmers and ranchers with resources to support their conservation and production goals. Sand County Foundation's network of Leopold Conservation Award-winning farmers and ranchers, who have been recognized for extraordinary conservation achievement, serve as program mentors. Mentors support their mentees as they develop their conservation and agricultural practices to balance farm productivity, ecosystem health, and community wellbeing.



Sand County Foundation inspires and empowers a growing number of land owners and managers to ethically care for the land to sustain water resources, build healthy soil, enhance wildlife habitat, and support outdoor recreation.

www.sandcountyfoundation.org