

Member Profiles

Meet Sage and Nathan: The busiest people get it done

To say Nathan and Sage Hodges keep busy is an understatement. Between raising three children—Eden (8), Sky (4), and Dove (the sweet baby); running a farm-to-table bakery and managing a 17-acre farm all while being flexible during the pandemic—they definitely have their hands full. Like many islanders, when they moved to Lopez Island 10 years ago, they thought it would be temporary.

For the past eight years, they've been running the Barn Owl Bakery. Recently, they purchased and moved into a 5,000 square foot barn structure that serves as their bakery and home. Off to a good start, they had Doug Poole (a local green building expert who offers Home Energy Snapshots) come out and advise them in how to make their space as efficient as possible in order to make living affordable. In addition to insulating and getting better windows, they also purchased a ductless heat pump through the OPALCO Switch It Up! program. They installed a wood-fired oven for the bakery so they can use local biofuel to bake their bread and pastries.

The Hodges grow a large portion of the grain for their bread on Lopez, and what they can't get from the island they get from Skagit Valley organic

growers. They use heritage grains and wild leaven that add flavor and nutrition to their baked goods. Limiting their carbon footprint by not transporting grain and building up the local soil through traditional farming practices are both key to their business model. It's important to them to make their community a better place and honor the long tradition of agriculture on Lopez Island. "Offering goods and services that are valuable to our community and to use what we have access to is part of island life," Sage says as she talks about what it takes to be a family-run business out here in the islands.

They have big dreams for the property including having a local art gallery above the bakery, an outside eating area and more farming of the land. For now, they are scaling back for the winter months and to ride out the pandemic (don't worry – you will still be able to get their bread and goodies in stores or at their farm stand).



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www.opalco.com/why-run