

Stayton grad gets taste of national rodeo competition

LUIS RAMIREZ
SPECIAL TO THE STAYTON MAIL

Charlie Weeks was born to be a rodeo star.

His family has been participating in rodeos for decades and he developed a love of the sport from a young age, following in his family's footsteps.

"I've been doing rodeo as long as I can remember," Weeks said. "My whole family has competed in rodeo so I was kind of born into it."

In July, Weeks competed at the 2016 National High School Finals Rodeo in Gillette, Wyoming.

He qualified for nationals after competing at 10 rodeos throughout the state and finishing in the top four in team roping and steer wrestling. However, despite graduating from Stayton and living in Scio, Weeks was representing the state of Washington.

"I represented Washington because the guys that I roped with live in Washington," Weeks said. "All the rodeos in Oregon are on the east side of the state so it was just as close for me to go to Washington."

Steer wrestling is an individual event where a horse-mounted rider chases a steer, drops from the horse to the steer and wrestles the steer down to the ground. Team roping includes two mounted riders attempting to rope a steer to the ground and then roping the steers' feet together.

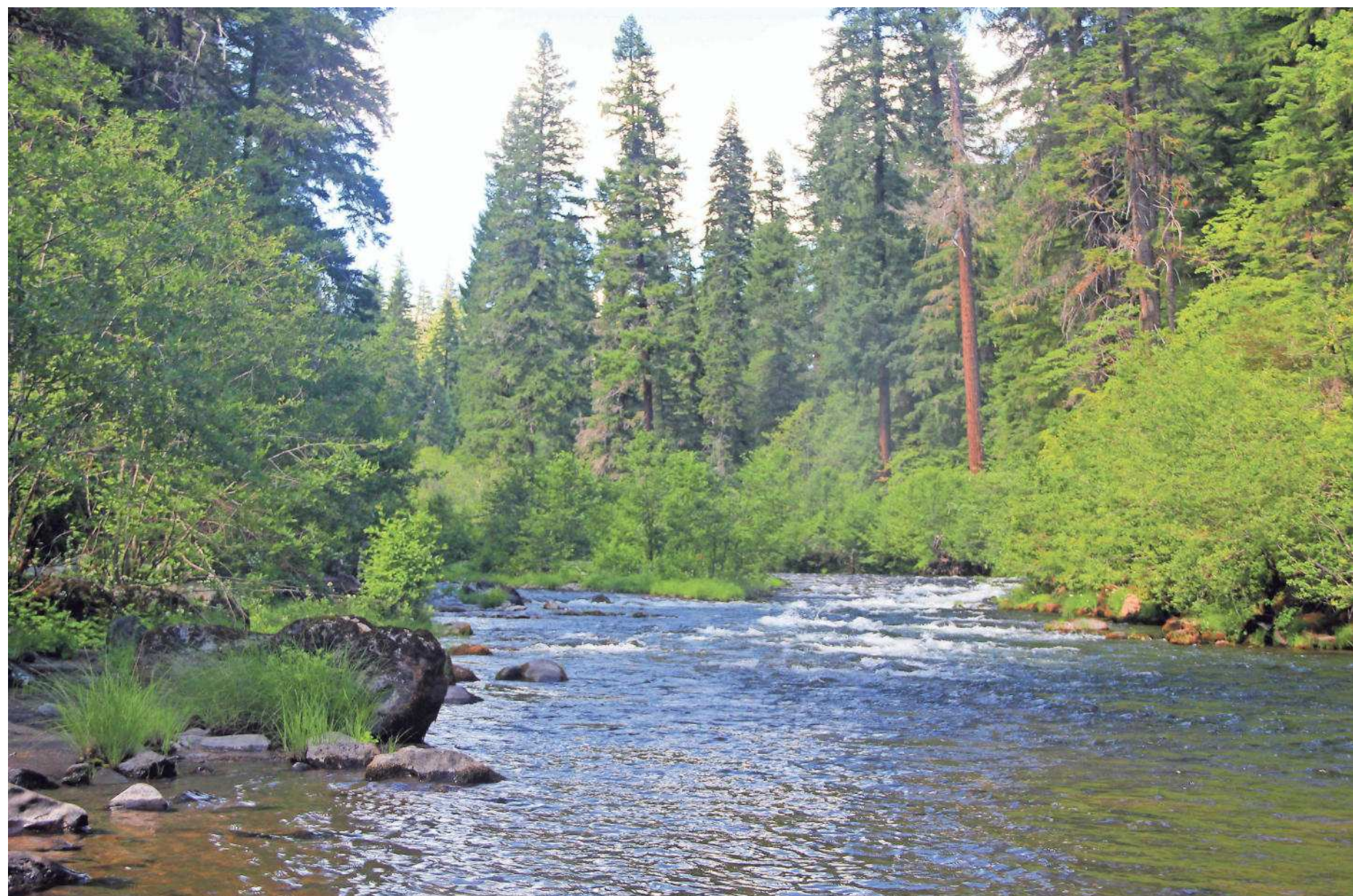
Weeks won a belt buckle after placing



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Charlie Weeks developed a love for rodeo at a young age.

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Ponderosa pines and firs rise above the North Fork Rogue River.

Kayaking the headwaters of Rogue River

ZACH URNESS
STATESMAN JOURNAL

PROSPECT - In the minds of most kayakers and rafters, the Rogue River begins at Lost Creek Lake.

Southern Oregon's iconic river is impounded not far from its birthplace and transformed into a 10-mile reservoir that allows close regulation of the river's lower 157 miles, including its world-famous "wild section" between Grants Pass and Gold Beach.

Built in 1977, the reservoir decreases flooding, cools water for salmon and steelhead, and provides predictable water levels for anglers, rafters and jet boaters. In many ways, Lost Creek helps make the Rogue an economic powerhouse for recreation.

And yet ...

There's something deeply satisfying about setting your boat on the upper river — above the reservoir — and experiencing the Rogue in its infancy.

Fast and reckless, jade-green and ice-cold, the Upper Rogue squeezes through



Jim Heck prepares to put his kayak onto the North Fork Rogue River.

lava tubes, roars into basalt canyons and drops off multiple waterfalls in a lush, sweet-scented forest of ponderosa pine and Douglas fir.

The thrill of hurtling into complex, punishing rapids and rolling peacefully

below towering trees on this immature river is one of my favorite whitewater experiences in Oregon.

Officially known as the North Fork Rogue, this spring-fueled stream is one of the few free-flowing rivers that can be

kayaked into late summer.

Despite that, the North Fork Rogue gets little use from boaters. No outfitters run this stretch of river — permits are not available — and the put-in spot is a long way from Oregon's major population centers. On most days, you'll be the only group on the river.

"The North Fork is largely unknown and has great Class III and IV rapids through a beautiful canyon," said Zach Collier, owner of Northwest Rafting Company and a writer for WhitewaterGuidebook.com. "Most rapids are pretty straightforward Class III, but there are some tricky Class IV rapids that require strong eddy-catching skills so you can get out and scout the rapid."

While it's mostly experienced hard-shell kayakers that run this stretch of river, a handful of inflatable kayakers also tackle the North Fork. Doing your homework — knowing which sections of river match your ability level — are important to determine before putting your

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