

Oregon

Tiny Oregon chub threatened no longer

22-year recovery effort pays off; first fish removed from list

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

The Oregon chub, a 3-inch minnow that lives only in the Willamette River basin, is the first fish to be removed from the federal endangered species list.

Federal and state officials announced the completion of a 22-year recovery process during a ceremony Feb. 17 at the Finley Wildlife Refuge near Corvallis, Ore. Oregon

farmers and other landowners contributed to the effort by signing "safe harbor" arrangements in which they agreed to manage land in a way that did not further harm the fish. In particular, landowners agreed not to drain waterways, promised not to introduce non-native fish that would compete with the chub and agreed not to apply pesticides or other ag chemicals directly into waterways. In return, they were held harmless from additional regulation.

The Oregon chub lives in slow-moving sloughs, bogs and beaver ponds along the Willamette River. It lost habi-

tat as those areas were drained or developed. The fish was listed as endangered in 1993, at which time the population was estimated at fewer than 1,000 fish in eight locations. By 2013, however, a survey estimated the chub population at approximately 160,000 fish in 83 spots.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which administers the Endangered Species Act, announced in 2014 that it intended to remove the chub from the list, and completed that process this year.

Only a handful of animals, most notably bald eagles, have been removed from the endangered species list.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The Oregon Chub is the first fish to be removed from the federal endangered species list.

Legend in E. Oregon agriculture dies

Staple of Umatilla County agriculture dies at 78

By JADE MCDOWELL
EO Media Group

Umatilla County lost a giant in the agricultural community on Sunday when Chester "Chet" Prior died at age 78.

Prior owned Eagle Ranch outside Echo, Ore., and lobbied on a local, state and national level on agricultural issues. He held several prominent roles, including previous chair of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center Authority and sitting president of the Hermiston Development Corp. But he was also characterized by those who knew him as a humble man who preferred to work behind the scenes.

He was so modest, in fact, that when he was presented with Hermiston Man of the Year for 2010 he stood up as soon as he realized presenter Phil Hamm was talking

about him and told him that he didn't need to list any more accomplishments.

Craig Reeder, vice president of Hale Farms, was sitting at Prior's table and remembers Prior's embarrassment at being honored.

He said Prior was a "true gentleman" who earned the respect of everyone who associated with him and it is hard to imagine the agricultural community without Prior at the table.

"He mentored a lot of us younger guys. ... He's one of those guys that for the next generation, we've never known the business without him," Reeder said.

He said Prior often called to persuade Reeder to join him in donating to scholarships and other worthy causes.

"He's how communities are built," Reeder said.

Kim B. Puzey said he first got to know Prior in 1994, when Prior was a Port of Umatilla commissioner and Puzey was hired as the port's new manager.

"Chet was passionate and

generous and brilliant," Puzey said.

He said any time it was imperative something was done right, Prior was the man to call, which is why he was a clear choice for chair of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center Authority and to fill the Hermiston Development Corp. president's role after founder Joe Burns retired.

"If you drive around to the major projects in Hermiston in the last two decades there is hardly anything you would find that doesn't have the Prior name on it as a sponsor or a contributor or a benefactor," Puzey said.

Lloyd Piercy, owner of Sno Road Winery in Echo, said Prior was a staple at Echo events, providing the equipment for community cleanups and founding the local food bank. Prior was scheduled to serve as trail boss of this year's Red 2 Red ride next week.

"He was the heart of Echo," Piercy said. "There was not a charity he wasn't

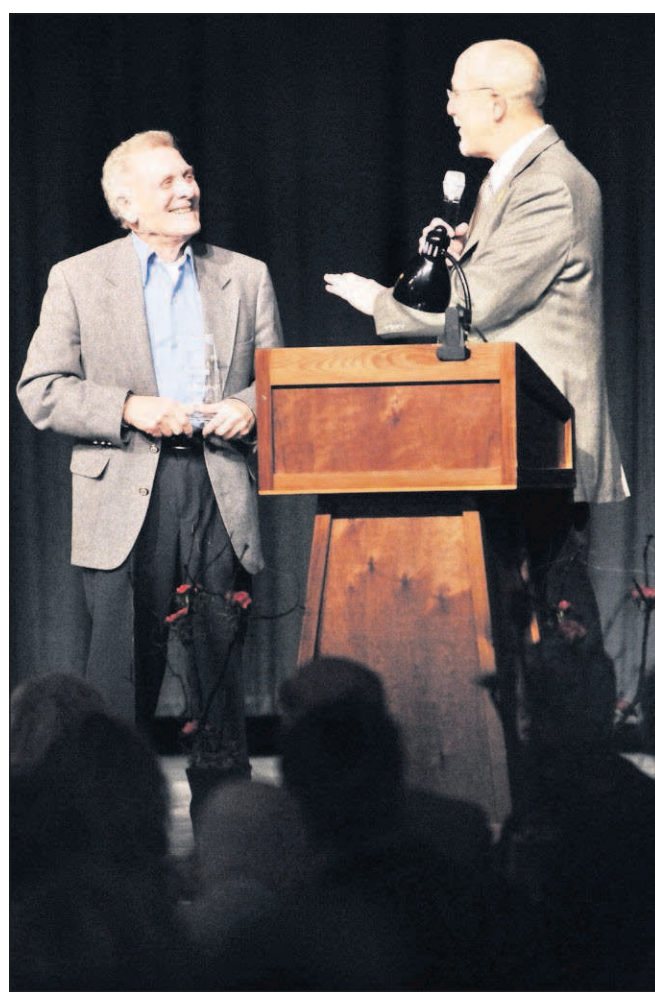
involved in."

Piercy said Prior was "irreplaceable" to Echo. He said from an agricultural community perspective Prior's skill and passion for lobbying to improve the water situation in Umatilla County will also be missed.

"There are no words to describe the sadness around here," Piercy said.

He said he also respected Prior's hard work in building a legacy for his sons, Art and David, through the family farm and Prior's habit of making time for family, most recently to share his grandsons' passion for duck hunting.

Other accomplishments of Prior included helping found the Oregon Water Coalition and Farmers Ending Hunger, and serving on the boards of the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce, Oregon State University Extension Center, Umatilla County Budget Committee, Potato Growers Bargaining Committee, Hermiston Airport Advisory Board and Good Shepherd Medical Center.



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Phil Hamm, right, jokes with Hermiston Man of the Year Chet Prior while introducing him during the 2010 Distinguished Citizens Award Banquet at the Hermiston Conference Center.



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Oregon's 'alcohol cluster' jobs create an economic buzz

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

Let's raise a toast to Oregon's wine grapes and hops growers, who have no doubt contributed to one of the state's economic success stories.

A new report from the state Office of Economic Analysis says Oregon's "alcohol cluster" jobs outperformed the rest of the state's employment sectors in recovering from the recession.

In a report released Feb. 11, Senior Economist Josh Lehner said the number of jobs in wineries, breweries, distilleries and their distributors and retail outlets increased 46 percent since the start of 2008. The sector now has an estimated 5,200 jobs. The growth rate and total number are probably larger because some breweries, or brew pubs, are classified as restaurants and it's difficult to separate their job counts, Lehner said in his report.

Lehner said Oregon generally accounts for 1.2 to 1.4 percent of the U.S. total when measuring various economic standards such as population, jobs and exports. But in alcohol cluster employment, Oregon makes up 2 percent of the U.S. total, "which is quite large relative to all of our other rankings," Lehner said in the report.

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