

Local & State

Clean water pioneer, and Baker City native, could be honored with naming of spring in Bend watershed

■ Roger Prowell, a 1967 Baker High School graduate who died of Lou Gehrig’s disease in 2014, worked for the city of Bend’s water division for 24 years

By Michael Kohn
The (Bend) Bulletin

BEND — Prowell Springs is known to many Bend residents as an integral water source for their city. But look on any official map and the site is labeled simply “spring.”

That could change soon as the unofficial name of the spring may soon get state-wide recognition. On Monday the Deschutes County Commission agreed to recommend the name to the Oregon Geographic Names Board.

The name of the spring is derived from Roger Prowell, a Baker City native who worked for the city of Bend water division for 24 years, channeling much of his energy into protecting Bend’s municipal watershed, including the springs. Prowell graduated from Baker High School in 1967.

Following the recommendation from the county, the naming process reverts to the Oregon Geographic Names Board, which will discuss the matter in June or July 2020, said county administrator Tom Anderson.

“It’s a good opportunity to document this water supply for the citizens of Bend and it should be protected,” Commissioner Tony DeBone said in a phone interview.

Prowell took it upon himself to learn how Bend



Roger Prowell

Submitted photo

could improve its drinking water following the 1979 Bridge Creek Fire, which left the Bridge Creek water supply cloudy with sediment, according to comments made by Patrick Griffiths, the water resources manager for the city of Bend.

“He made it his life’s mission to protect the surface water for the entire time he was there,” Griffiths told the county commissioners. “The favorite saying that he liked to repeat was that every day he protected water for the grannies and the babies.”

Prowell, who started working for the city of Bend in 1984, was instrumental in es-

tablishing a boundary around the Bridge Creek watershed, said Griffiths. He also set up water testing protocols and water training programs that were shared by other districts around the state.

Prowell parted ways with the city of Bend in 2008 to become the district manager for the Chenoweth Water Public Utility District in The Dalles. In 2014, at age 65, he died of Lou Gehrig’s disease. Prior to his death the city began the process of renaming the springs in his honor.

The spring is located at 6,350 feet above sea level, in the Bridge Creek watershed west of Tumalo Falls. Water

from the spring flows into Bridge Creek and then into a catchment where it’s filtered and channeled toward Bend.

Water from Bridge Creek has been funneled to the city since 1926. The city needed a new source of drinking water after pollution from logging and mill activities made water from the Deschutes River unsafe to drink.

About half of Bend’s water is sourced from Bridge Creek watershed. The other half of Bend’s drinking water comes from regional groundwater.

“The water supply is award-winning,” said Griffiths. “That is why we have so many breweries and distilleries in town. We are very proud of the water supply and we are all standing on Roger’s shoulders for that.”

SENATE

Continued from Page 1A

As of Monday, Jones said two people have applied — Lynn Findley of Vale, a state representative whose district includes Baker County, and Ron Runyan of Wasco County.

State law requires precinct committee members to nominate three, four or five candidates to fill a vacancy, Jones said.

If fewer than three people apply, then Oregon Gov. Kate Brown would appoint Bentz’s replacement.

But Jones said she expects there will be at least three candidates by the Dec. 30 deadline the Oregon Republican Party set for people to submit a letter of interest. To be eligible, candidates must live within District 30 and have been a member of the Republican Party for at least 180 days prior to Jan. 2, 2020.

Although party committee members nominate candidates, the final choice is made by commissioners from the counties in District 30. That district, the largest geographically in the Oregon Senate, includes all of Baker, Grant, Harney, Jefferson, Malheur and Wheeler counties, as well as parts of Deschutes, Lake, Wasco, Clackamas and Marion counties.

Each county is allocated one vote for every 1,000 registered voters or major fraction of 1,000 (more than 500).

Baker County, which has slightly fewer than 12,000 registered voters, will have a total of 12 votes, meaning each of the three commissioners — Bill Harvey, Mark Bennett and Bruce Nichols — will have four votes each.

The vote breakdown by county: Baker, 12; Deschutes, 17; Grant, 5; Harney, 5; Jefferson, 15; Lake, 1; Malheur, 16; Wasco, 16; Wheeler, 1. Neither Clackamas nor Marion county will have any votes because the parts of those counties within District 30 are mainly in the Cascade Mountains, and neither has more than 500 registered voters.

If commissioners were to pick Findley to replace Bentz, the entire process would be triggered again since Findley’s move to the Senate would leave House District 60 vacant.

That District includes all of Baker, Grant, Harney and Malheur counties, and part of Lake County.

HEART TO HEART

State Police trooper went above the call

I would like to take the time to thank from the bottom of my family’s heart Senior Trooper Eric Madsen of the Oregon State Police. This man went above and beyond what he needed to on the evening of December 21st, 2019, when he stopped and helped us with a blown tire on the freeway. Not only did he get down in the dirt and rocks to help us change the tire when the spare was flat, he offered to call the tire store to see if we could find a used tire and give me a ride to get it. Sadly all the tire stores in Baker City and La Grande were closed. He then offered to take us to Walmart to get a can of fix-a-flat. He tried to help us in any way he could. When finished I found out that he is to retire in 10 days and I knew we had to thank him in some small way. I hope Senior Trooper Madsen reads this and realizes how much his kindness during our little incident meant to us. He didn’t need to do as much as he did and for that, we will always hold his kindness in our hearts.

Wade Foersterling
Baker City

A story with a powerful message

It was with extreme interest that I read “Bob’s Thoughts” recently in the Herald. Sometimes the side articles slip by me, but the Baum name and the editor’s preface to this particular article caught my eye. It was captioned “Rebecca’s Search.”

I am a retired teacher from Union High School and knew the Baum family and their children well. A fine family.

Anyway, this article was bittersweet and its message with his ending captured the spirit of our season of good will, tolerance, etc. Bob’s writing style was well-reflected and the message well put, with Bob’s almost type of humorous ending contrary to the news of the day. There was absolutely something to smile about.

So to Bob, I would say and hope that many of the Herald’s readers would avail themselves of your writing — from a local boy who captures interest and intent well and with a nice ending.

You make an old “school marm” proud.

Charlene Moffitt
Baker City

Making a gift to local arts and culture

One last gift for the year. There is no cost to you. The Oregon Cultural Trust has supported many local programs and projects over the years, giving grants to make more experiences possible in our small community. They have helped finance art shows, art studio tours and creative classroom experiences at Crossroads and in the schools and summer camps at the museum and music camps in Halfway and Cornucopia. They have supported volunteer performing art groups such as community choir, children’s choir, community orchestra, and Eastern Oregon Regional Theater.

Twice a year local directors of your Baker County Cultural Coalition, financed by Oregon Cultural Trust, gather to give about \$8,000 out in small grants to a dozen or more arts groups and artists in Baker County.

It is not too late for you to make more of these gifts possible to our community, at no cost to yourself. For every dollar you have given to nonprofits in Baker County over the past year, if you add them all together and make a donation of equal value to the Oregon Cultural Trust postmarked by December 31, you may deduct the entire amount of your gift to the Trust from the taxes you owe — not from your gross, like other deductions, but from the actual tax bill.

This is the State’s commitment to support culture in Oregon. The state funds the Oregon Cultural Trust by matching your gifts, returns your gift to you, then gives out grants to volunteer arts and culture groups in Oregon communities. It is a perfect example of your taxes at work for the public good.

Please consider adding up your donations to arts and culture for 2019, make a matching gift to the Oregon Cultural Trust by December 31, and you will recover the amount of that gift off of your tax bill for 2019. There is no cost whatsoever to you to support arts and culture in Oregon. Visit CulturalTrust.org or call 503-986-0088 and you can make it happen.

Aletha Bonebrake
Baker City

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