



DOUGLAS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 14, 2021

COMMISSIONERS DEDICATE OHV STAGING AREA TO FORMER COMMISSIONER DAN VAN SLYKE

(Douglas County, Ore.) On Friday, April 9, 2021, the Douglas County Board of Commissioners officially changed the name of the Douglas County Parks, Umpqua Dunes OHV Staging Area in Winchester Bay to the “Dan Van Slyke OHV Staging Area County Park”, during a special dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony honoring the former Commissioner.

Dan Van Slyke is a former Douglas County Commissioner, serving from 2003-2006, who’s passion and determination during his tenure as Commissioner resulted in the coordination and transfer of state and federally owned land to the county for management in 2004, and the subsequent development of a dedicated OHV access corridor on the dunes (Umpqua Sand Dunes Recreational Area); creation of a quiet space between the corridor and neighboring residents; an OHV accessible campground and a paved ‘launching pad’ staging area for OHV’s. The very important staging area allows riders to park, unload their off-road vehicles and head to the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area without having to ride along Salmon Harbor Drive.

Commissioner Tom Kress presided over the dedication ceremony and commented that, “*Development of the Winchester Bay area has long been a priority for the Douglas County Commissioners. The infrastructure projects, improvements and investments in the last 25 years has definitely shaped the economic vitality of our coastal communities and businesses, created recreational opportunities that are second to none, improved the safety of the roads and provided a destination for tourists. We owe a lot of gratitude to Dan for his vision of what this area could become nearly 20 years ago, and that is why we have chosen to dedicate this area to him today.*”

The dedication ceremony featured the unveiling of the new sign at the staging area and was attended by all three Douglas County Commissioners, Tom Kress, Tim Freeman and Chris Boice; the Douglas County Sheriff, John Hanlin, Undersheriff Jeff Frieze, Douglas County Parks Director, Rocky Houston, Douglas County Sheriff’s Office Deputies, Douglas County Parks Department Staff, Former Douglas County Commissioner, Doug Robertson, Dan Van Slyke and his wife Tracee and several members of their family. The dedication ceremony comes on the heels of a Douglas County Park expansion project at the OHV Staging Area, which essentially doubles the capacity (now 37 spots) for the staging and parking of Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) trailers and trucks seeking access to the Umpqua Dunes portion of the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area. The project is set to be completed in the next few weeks.

Prior to 2004, the access corridor and staging area did not exist, and County Commissioners were concerned about the safety of both OHV riders and passenger vehicles utilizing the main road between Salmon Harbor and the dunes at the same time. The Commissioners were looking for a way to resolve the access problem and work with local residents and businesses, while still keeping the dunes area open for recreational access, at a time when the State was considering shutting it all down. There were many hurdles, including multiple jurisdictions and the maze of rules and restrictions that needed to be transferred or changed. But, Dan, a County Commissioner at the time, gladly took on the challenge that would ultimately improve access to the dunes and provide a benefit for both the County and the private business sector as well. For more than a year he made it his mission to find a resolution, and when it was all said and done, Dan had negotiated and worked out a solution with local businesses, the State, the Governor, the Forest Service, the Coast Guard, the BLM and even the Department of Defense, and of course all of law enforcement agencies with responsibilities in the

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area, especially the Douglas County Sheriff's Office. Dan's business background was in the private sector, and he also understood how important it was for the County to make every effort to work closely with the various private entities in the area, especially the RV Park that was adjacent to the dunes recreational area.

Former Douglas County Commissioner, Doug Robertson also joined the dedication ceremony and commented that, *“What we see here today is the result of Dan’s vision, leadership, and commitment. Not just to improve the access and safety for the public, but to do it by recognizing the importance and value of the Government working with the private sector for the benefit of all involved.”*

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Former Douglas County Commissioner Dan Van Slyke and his wife Tracee still reside in Douglas County, and are active in our community. Dan has been the Executive Director of Wildlife Safari in Winston since 2007.

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Attachments: Dedication Ceremony Photos



Photos:

Top Left: New Sign at Dan Van Slyke OHV Staging Area.

Top Right: Dan and Tracee Van Slyke with their kids and grandkids.