

# NEWS

## Oregon State Marine Board

*Boat Oregon!*



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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Mack's Canyon Campground on the Deschutes River Now Provides All Boaters Access**

Providing and improving access to Oregon's waterways is a key mission for the Marine Board, however, boating improvements can only be accomplished with willing partners who are able to dedicate time, staff and matching funding. Being in the waterway access business, one might think that building a boat ramp shouldn't be a hard thing to do, but add in a scenic waterway, protected fish, multiple jurisdictions, surveys, design concepts, permits and funding challenges, and things can get complicated quickly. In the case of Mack's Canyon Campground on the Deschutes River, a strong partnership formed between the Marine Board and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in 2008, when both agencies started down the path of improving the parking, restrooms and boating access at the site. Fortunately, this partnership remained strong through the diverse challenges.

After seven years, the improvements were completed and the final Boating Facility Grant payment was issued in June, 2015. The Mack's Canyon boat ramp improvements include a new concrete motorboat ramp, non-motorized ramp with staging area, and expanded single car and trailer parking. The site also has two, ADA –accessible walkways and vault toilets, and a dump station for disposal of human waste from boater's portable toilets.

The cost for the improvements totaled \$217,828 with the Marine Board contributing \$104,414 in state motorboat funds and the BLM contributing \$113,414 in cash and administrative services.

A local Maupin resident had been watching this project develop through the years and proposed an idea to make this project more special than it already becoming. Ron Walp wanted to explore the idea of having this ramp dedicated to Oscar Lange, a local hero and well-known river runner/guide. As a young man, Walp learned how to safely float the Lower Deschutes River from Oscar, who made a deep impression on him. Walp helped organize not only the naming of the facility, but the dedication event as well. Friends and family gathered at the boat ramp on June 3, to remember a remarkable man, and to give thanks to the various agencies that partnered in making these improvements happen. Based on first-hand accounts from friends, admirers and family during the facility's dedication, it was clear that Oscar made an impression on everyone he came in contact with, infecting everyone with a love and appreciation of the river. Many of the people who shared stories, including Walp, started out as customers and later became professional guides themselves. A local businessman, Oscar owned and operated Oscar's Sporting Goods in Madras for decades, which was a one-stop-shop for many visitors to the area. He quickly earned a reputation of being strong willed, but full of knowledge that he was willing to share. Walp's single intention was to honor Lange in order to preserve his memory so people don't forget the past and to inspire others to learn and love the river the way Oscar did. A special plaque, provided by Sherman County, was unveiled by two of Oscar's daughters, and Craig Lesley, Oscar's nephew and author of "The Sky Fisherman," a novel inspired by Oscar shared the inscribed words.

"The Marine Board, in partnership with BLM and Sherman County, are happy to be part of naming the site, Mack's Canyon/Oscar Lange Memorial Power Boat Ramp," said Janine Belleque, Boating Facilities Manager for the Marine Board.

“Recreational boaters will enjoy and appreciate this facility for many years.” Belleque added, “It’s a beautiful thing to be able to dedicate this ramp to someone who was so passionate about conservation, preservation, and stewardship of the river. This is a special place that’s brought so many people together, and now everyone from rafters to motorboats can share this river and experience it’s magnificence.”

To view a slideshow of the dedication, visit <http://bit.ly/1Pu082k>.

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**OSCAR LANGE**  
*Legendary River Guide*  
B. 1922 - D. 1991

Of all the rivers, Oscar loved the Deschutes best. A master guide, he ran it over thirty years and never lost a boat. He braved White Horse rapids and all the other "wreckers" countless times. Fishing season started mid-May with the salmon fly hatch and ended in November when the steelhead take dwindled.

His excellent vision spotted horn and fin better than anyone else. "Put your lure there!" If a fisherman hit the place Oscar pointed, they had a lunker. Three pound rainbows were routine and eight pound steelhead.

At the river, his wife Mac sketched her beautiful paintings. Their daughters Annette, Marjorie, and Phyllis learned to fish.

An Air Force fighter pilot, he served his country four years. In Madras, he volunteered for fire and ambulance duties. "Skook," his family nickname, means "Strong Spirit" in Chinook. Now Skook flows with the wild currents, and Oscar is one for the ages.

Craig Lesley - Oscar's nephew and author of *The Sky Fisherman*

