



DAN JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES BUILDING

150 BEAVERCREEK ROAD OREGON CITY, OR 97045

MEMORANDUM

TO: Clackamas County Board of County Commissioners (BCC)
FROM: Dan Johnson, DTD Director
RE: Commemoration at Carver Boat Launch
DATE: January 13, 2026

REQUEST: Board consideration of a request to place a commemoration of Mr. Bob Toman at the Carver Boat Launch.

BACKGROUND: In late 2023, the Board was approached by local community member Bill Monroe with a request for Clackamas County to rename the boat launch at Carver Park to the *Bob Toman* Boat Launch, in honor of Pacific Northwest fishing guide Bob Toman who passed away in December 2019.

Clackamas County Parks manages/operates the Carver Park / Carver Boat Launch, under an agreement with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). The park, which is on the Clackamas River just off Springwater Road in Carver, is best known for its boat launch and as a convenient location to end your downriver float from Barton Park or another upriver location.

After receiving the request from Mr. Monroe, Clackamas County contacted ODFW to discuss the proposal. ODFW supported the request but deferred the naming conversation back to the County.

In December, the Board heard discussion regarding the aforementioned 2023 request. During that discussion, there were a number of questions requesting more clarity on exactly what is being requested. In response, staff received the attached letter from Ris Bradshaw, retired County Sherrieff. See Attachment A. The following is a summary of the information provided:

- A summary of Mr. Toman's stewardship of the Clackamas River and work with Clackamas River Basin Council,
- Clarification that the ask is for a commemorative rock with an embedded plaque,
- Clarification that funding is available from the Oregon Wildlife Foundation for the commemoration,
- Additional request for signage at the entrance of the park, and
- Proposed verbiage for the plaque.

With this additional clarity, foregoing the signage at the park entrance, staff does not feel this commemoration falls within the current Clackamas County Facility Naming Policy previously discussed.

Staff estimates the total cost of installing the display to be approximately \$1,000. ODFW has offered to pay the entire cost.

Based on this new information, the following options are presented for consideration.

OPTIONS:

1. Approve the request to place a stone commemoration with a plaque honoring Bob Toman near the Carver Boat Launch and direct staff to coordinate with interested parties to locate the commemoration in a manner that does not impact operations of the launch.
2. Decline the request to locate a stone commemoration with a plaque honoring Bob Toman near the Carver Boat Launch.
3. Delay the placement of the stone commemoration at this time.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff respectfully recommend Option 1: Approve the request to place a stone commemoration with a plaque honoring Bob Toman near the Carver Boat Launch and direct staff to coordinate with interested parties to locate the commemoration in a manner that does not impact operations of the launch.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Ris Bradshaw Letter, Undated

Attachment B: Department of Fish and Wildlife Letter, dated April 16, 2021

To: Clackamas County Commission

From: His family, friends and a multitude of users of the Clackamas River

Subject: Memorializing the boat ramp at Carver Park in the name of Bob Toman

Thank you for your attention over the past few years to a request for the placement of a memorial plaque at the Carver boat ramp commemorating Bob Toman's decades-long dedication, devotion and stewardship of the Clackamas River.

Bob Toman's name became synonymous with the Clackamas River not long after his return to Oregon from Vietnam (two bronze stars and two purple hearts).

After a brief stint in the sportfishing industry, Bob became a full-time guide, living on the river's shoreline a short distance upriver from Carver park. He personally adopted and helped care for the boat ramp and, often, the upriver ramp at Barton Park.

Bob removed tons of debris from the ramp over several decades, keeping it clear for use by both boaters of all kinds and emergency personnel...firefighters, Clackamas County sheriff's deputies, especially the river patrol, and Oregon State Police. Bob was often the pilot for county workers who needed to remove boating hazards and frequently did his own debris removal to keep the river safe.

He willingly showed water safety crews changes in the river and advised them on navigating around obstacles.

More than one boater owes their life to Bob's presence and experience when they found themselves in the water.

Even when fishing seasons closed the river filled with recreational rafters (drunk and sober) from Barton Park to Carver, Bob often came to the aid of those unable to get downriver safely after dark. With disregard to his own quiet evenings, Bob willingly transported boaters by vehicle to Carver at all hours to recover their vehicles (often even after the gates closed).

Bob also hosted county parks employees and other staffers who needed access to the river for the performance of their duties.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, which owns that portion of the park where the ramp is located, is not only a strong supporter of recognizing Bob's careful guardianship of the river and its users, but materially depended upon Bob for assistance in vital research to help recover the Clackamas River's wild salmon and steelhead. A letter from the department to the commission in 2021 is attached.

Bob also served several terms on the Clackamas River Basin Council, helping shepherd projects, taking staff members upriver and down to view project sites and transporting equipment to hard-to-reach locations.

He's a recipient of the council's coveted Thalweg Award (a term for the deepest, coolest passages in a river) and has the council's support for the placement of a memorial stone.

There will be no cost to the county for this commemoration. The Oregon Wildlife Foundation is prepared to provide much of the funding for a physical recognition in memory of Bob Toman at the Carver Boat Ramp and friends and supporters will pay the balance.

A simple, yet sizable rock from somewhere in the watershed (large enough to discourage theft) with an embedded plaque could easily be situated in the grassy area of the ramp's turn around, perhaps near the edge of the ramp without interfering with its use or even at the pay station, although that's a bit farther away.

We also had originally thought it appropriate to locate a smaller sign beneath the one at the park entrance labeling it something like "Bob Toman boat ramp," a precedent set by Multnomah County's naming of the popular M. James Gleason Boat Ramp off Marine Drive.

However, we realize that's completely up the commission and your park staff. The department has also said it appreciates its partnership with the county and will abide by your decision.

If it is to be a plaque, we could perhaps include an image and suggest the following, or something along these lines:

In memory of Bob Toman

A shepherd of the river
and its users

Again, thank you very much for bringing this to your table in the course of your very busy agendas.

Ris Bradshaw, Clackamas County Sheriff, retired

On behalf of the Toman family...Bill Monroe, semi-retired outdoor writer for The Oregonian/OregonLive, twice past chair of the Clackamas River Basin Council



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Fish and Wildlife

North Willamette Watershed District

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odfw.com



April 16, 2021

Clackamas County Parks Department
Clackamas County Parks Advisory Board
150 Beaver Creek Road
Oregon City, OR 97045

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife supports the proposal to name the boat launch at Carver Park the "Bob Toman Memorial Boat Ramp." Bob Toman was a very active partner with the department by assisting in fishery research and management projects, promoting Clackamas River salmon and steelhead fisheries, and advocating for the conservation and recovery of these species and the restoration of the habitats the species depend upon. Through decades working as a fishing guide he introduced an innumerable number of people to the sport of fishing and built an appreciation in those customers for the importance of salmon and steelhead and the health of our rivers and environment. While Bob guided fishermen on many rivers in Oregon and as far away as Alaska and British Columbia, the Clackamas River was his "home river" since his youth and the Carver Park boat ramp was an important part of his fishing activities.

We recommend naming the Carver Park boat ramp in honor of Bob Toman in recognition of his contributions to Oregon fisheries and the conservation of salmon and steelhead, and specifically for his contributions in Clackamas County.

Sincerely,

Jeff Boechler
Watershed Manager
North Willamette Watershed District

