



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OHV COMMUNITY OPPOSES DUNE CLOSURE AS PART OF SOLUTION TO BORDER INCURSION ISSUES

BODY COPY:

A United States Border Patrol (USBP) agent was killed recently while attempting to stop two alleged smuggler's vehicles in the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area (ISDRA) near Yuma, Arizona. The incident prompted the publication of an article which falsely claims that dune users would strongly support closure of the area in order to reduce illegal activity.

On Saturday, January 19, 2008 while attempting to stop the two fleeing vehicles in the ISDRA, 32 year old Senior Patrol Agent Luis Aguilar, a husband, father and six-year veteran of the agency was laying spike strips across the road when he was fatally struck by one of the speeding vehicles. Both vehicles escaped into Mexico.

The Los Angeles Times published an article on March 2, 2008 by reporter Richard Marosi, titled Smugglers Hide In Plain Sight, which argues that closure of the dunes south of Interstate 8 is the most effective means of inhibiting the trafficking of drugs and illegal immigrants in the area.

The reporter falsely claims that dune users support a proposed closure. He makes this claim because (during the course of an interview with a Border

Patrol official in the dunes), a group of dune recreationists approached the BP official and the reporter to express their sympathy for the loss of the agent and to express their appreciation for the service of the USBP in the dunes. The reporter asked the recreationists if they would be concerned if the dunes south of I-8 were closed to assist in border issues. The recreationists responded that they did not want to lose the riding area, but that if it would help to control the issues at hand they could live with such a closure.

While most any steward of the dunes would answer the reporter's question in the same manner, the LA Times takes a stern slant towards the closure of these dunes. Simply put, an expression that we are law abiding recreationists is not to be construed into a Duner's call for closure. Further, the eyes of thousands of dune visitors serve as a valuable tool in reporting suspicious activity to the USBP, 'closure' of this area would be a step of digression towards enforcement. Contrary to the reporter's claim, dune users are not in support of closure of the area until other more logical steps are taken.

The USBP has increased their enforcement to address the smugglers in this area. Last month, the USBP enacted a Zero Tolerance Policy for dune traffic that crosses over the Border, citing fines, arrest and/or vehicle seizure as potential penalties. In addition, the USBP has increased in the number of agents in the area.

The American Sand Association (ASA) with 32,000 members vehemently oppose any closure of the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area.

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About the American Sand Association

The American Sand Association is a non-profit organization of approximately 32,000 members dedicated to preserving the use of public lands for sand sport enthusiasts' use, improving OHV safety and promoting responsible land use. Some local sand sport areas include the Imperial Sand Dunes, Oceano Dunes (Pismo Beach) and Dumont Dunes in California, Sand Mountain in Nevada and Hotwell Dunes in Arizona. The ASA is an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff. We rely on the financial support of sand sport enthusiasts and small businesses. Most of the members are family-oriented, have a rich family history going back for generations enjoying the sand sport; and most have a significant financial investment in their equipment, gear and campers. Additional information can be found on our web site at <www.americansandassociation.org>.