

Regional Forester
(Attn. Ed. Slusher)

520 (2320)
July 26, 1961

JOHN H. MILORAGOVICH, Forest Supervisor by

Purchases, Donations - Selway Bitterroot Primitive Area

Attached for your information is a copy of a letter from Bill Magnuson, Moose Cr. Ranger in which he describes the current attitude and activities of the several private land owners in the Primitive Area.

We would appreciate being kept currently informed on the availability of purchase funds in the event one or more of the homesteads become available for purchase.

ATTACHMENT

cc: D-6
RWM:rm

ROBERT W. MILLER

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Forest Supervisor

DATE: July 21, 1954

FROM : District Ranger, Moose Creek District

SUBJECT: Land acquisition in the proposed Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Area

I would like to discuss the feelings and intentions of the private landowners on the Moose Creek District in regards to the acquisition of their land by the Government for "wilderness".

I have talked personally with four of the six owners. They are dubious of our stated intentions to purchase their lands as finances permit. They feel that some sort of condemnation procedure will be used to force them to sell. The other two owners, Fae Smith and George Case, have written letters questioning me but have not indicated much concern.

The owners of HES 455 (Selway Lodge) have subdivided a front portion of their land into 1/4-acre lots for sale at \$1500.00 per lot. One sale has been made but I feel it is merely a move to establish an inflated land value should condemnation procedures be started. The former owners of Moose Creek Ranches (HES 457, 458, 459, and 788) were going to sell lots also. Since purchase this spring by Kenneth Christensen this might be changed. Paul Christman now owns HES 459. His stated use of this ground is for a summer home. However, in the past he has mentioned selling lots and I feel that this is his aim in retaining ownership of this homestead.

The owners of the actively operating dude ranches (Selway Lodge, Moose Creek Ranch, and Jim Renshaw) are improving their facilities for handling guests. Richardson, (HES 460) has a modern lodge and barn and by hiring a packer could handle 80-100 persons in a hunting season. He has not operated commercially the past 3 years.

George Case (HES 787) and Fae Smith (HES 785) are doing nothing with their property but they have talked with various packers about renting their homesteads for hunting camps.

The purchase price on these places is so high and the operating costs so great that for a person to operate them commercially as dude ranches is economically unfeasible as demonstrated by the rapid change of owners at Moose Creek Ranch.

I feel that the future of these lands, if not purchased by the Forest Service, will develop in the following ways. They will be purchased by persons who are financially independent and run as a "hobby" or "club" with a limited clientele, or they will be purchased and lots sold to finance development of buildings and facilities for a resort colony. The latter would mean the establishment of a "colony" at 2 or 3 places within the wilderness area.

Inquiries were made in 1960 to each landowner about possible sale of his land to the Government. The only answer was from George Case (HES 787) who was slightly interested. He said he had turned down \$17,000.00 in 1957 for his 153 acres of land on which there are no improvements. The other owners did not bother to answer the letters.

W. Magnuson
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District Ranger