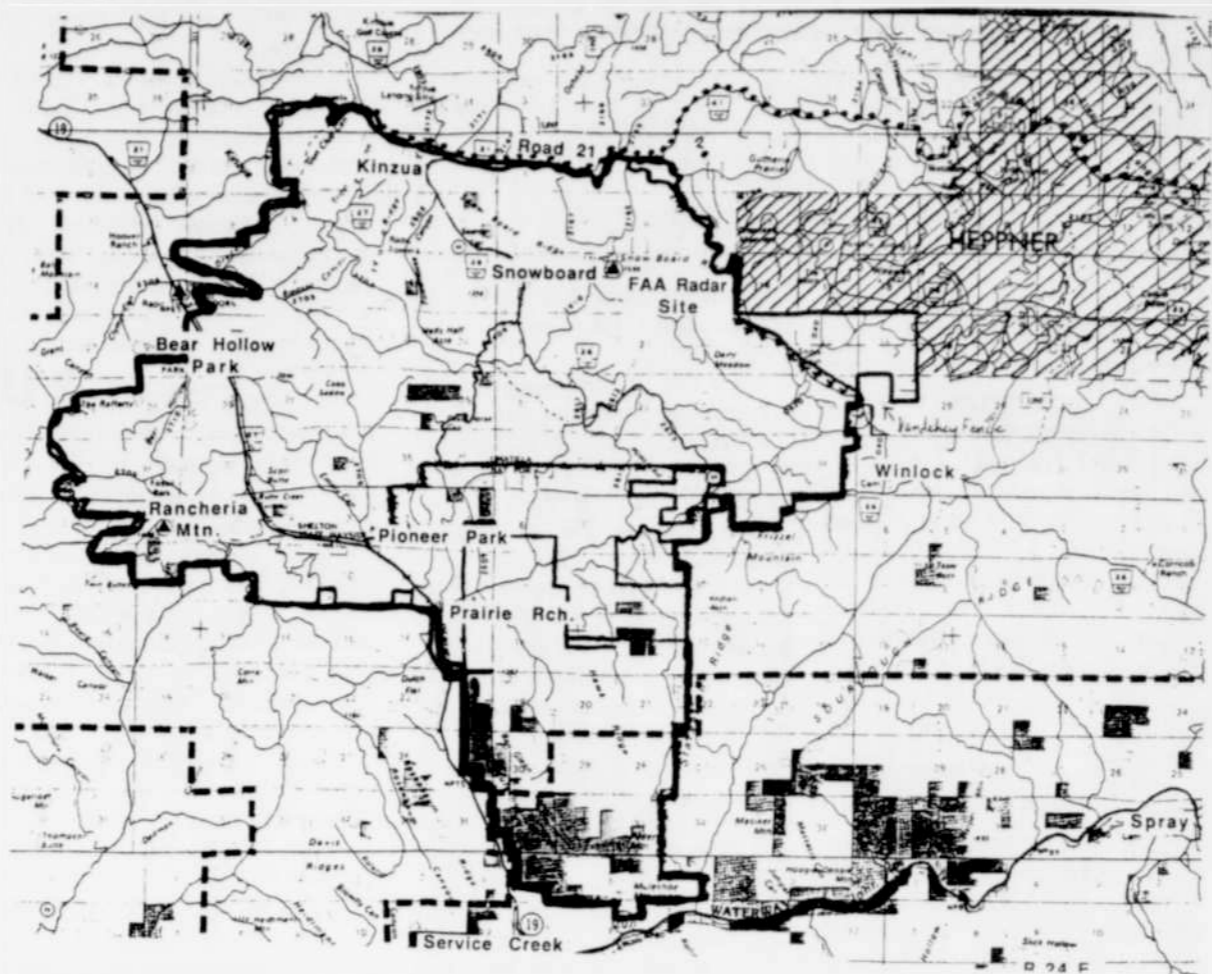


Local hunters, recreationists hear of dwindling public access to former Kinzua Corp. properties

Lease-holder willing to work with locals to find common ground



By the Condon Times-Journal
Game hunters, fishermen and women, mushroom hunters, campers and others who have for half a century or better traversed the: thousands of acres of prairies and timberland formerly owned by Kinzua Corporation gathered at Isobel Edwards Hall at Fossil last Thursday to hear more about dwindling public access in the area.

About 60 people met with Bryce and Peg Logan who have recently leased the hunting and recreation rights on about 35,000 acres of former Kinzua-held land in an area known by Oregon Fish and Wildlife terms as the North Fossil Unit. An additional 40,000 acres or so of former Kinzua land lying north of Road 21 was leased, and access reduced, last year.

Pioneer Resources, the company which purchased the land from the Kinzua Corporation of old, offered the lease to the Logans, they explained at last week's meeting. At first the Logans said no, but later reconsidered, after thinking that if "the land will be closed (to public access) no matter what, it might as well be leased to someone local."

The area circled by the heavy black line on the map below roughly defines the 35,000 acres now leased to the Logans. The area for which the lease will be in effect is, where possible, bordered by roads or fences. The northern border of the Logan lease is Road 21, the main haul road from Kinzua to Camp 5 to Highway 207, and another massive block of former Kinzua land lies north of Road 21, which is leased and closed to public access.

"We are going to do fee hunting," Bryce Logan told those at the meeting last week. "And in order to do that, it must be closed."

The area will be closed to public access during archery, deer and elk hunting seasons, Logan said. The roads will be closed.

"We don't know about the cow season yet. We want to work with other landowners, BLM and Fish and Wildlife," he said.

Fees have been established at \$2,000 for bull elk season, \$650 for deer season and \$1,000 for 10 days in archery season.

The area will be closed to mushroom hunters, wood cutters and turkey hunters. Logan said that it is his understanding from Pioneer Resources that wood cutting will be allowed from the slash piles along Road 21.

The Logans will also have the authority over the traffic and activities at Searcy Pond, the popular fishing and recreation spot for many in the area, young and old.

"We recognize how many people use that (Searcy)," Bryce Logan said. "We're trying to keep that open."

As it stands now, the Department of Fish & Wildlife will stock Searcy with fish this year and fishing will be open to the public probably through mid-August. However, there will be no camping, no camp fires and no firearms at Searcy or throughout the closure area.

The situation for the Searcy area beyond mid-August has not been determined at this point, though ODFW has indicated it will continue to stock the pond with fish as long as the public is allowed access to it.

Asked about the situation at Camp 5, the Logans indicated they have no control over what occurs there. Camp 5, also known as Winland Lake and Wetmore, is not included in the property the Logans have leased.

Fossil resident Lee Bouchard spoke of the heritage of the local people with the land, and suggested that the Logans consider local cow hunts, reduced rates for local hunters, or providing other opportunities for local hunters, who would, in turn, help the Logans in policing the area.

"It's a big project," Bryce Logan responded. "Obviously we'll need some help, and possibly there will be room to trade some favors."

The Logans indicated that they realize the value of the large hunter population that is attracted to the Fossil area during the hunting seasons, and want to continue that attraction. And they are not discounting that there may be other forms of recreation that may develop out of the change, though no specifics were discussed.

"Why not offer more tags for less money for year-round recreation?" the Logans were asked.

"The area has been over hunted in the past," Logan responded. "There have been too many hunters. We're trying to create a quality hunt for fewer people."

In summarizing his theory of the situation, area resident Tom Troxell said that Pioneer Resources is eliminating some of its liability by reducing the number of people in the area.

"It's better that it's in the hands of someone local," he said, "than somebody else. Otherwise we

wouldn't be here tonight sharing our concerns. It's good that it's local."

Persons interested in obtaining more information about the accessibility for hunting and recreation on the former Kinzua property may call Brian Thompson, who is in charge of the grazing and recreational leases for Pioneer Resources at Heppner, 541-676-9000.

As a result of two earlier meetings that were hosted by the ODFW, Bob Krein, ODFW district wildlife biologist at Heppner, has indicated that the following suggestions will be proposed to the regional and Portland ODFW offices:

- First season elk - Either sex; specific number of tags authorized; hunters apply for the North Fossil Unit hunt by May 15, 1998; tags valid only for North Fossil Unit.

- Second season elk - Either sex; no limit to the number of tags; hunters apply for the North Fossil Unit hunt by May 15, 1998; tags valid for North Fossil Unit only.

- Antlerless season - Will be continued; number of tags will be determined by damage problems.

- Archery season - No changes; no review of the archery season framework is anticipated in the near future.

WCC barbecue

The Willow Creek Country Club will have a family barbecue on Sunday, April 27, at 4 p.m.

Each family will bring their own meat to the barbecue. Those whose names begin with "A" through "K" are asked to bring salad, and "L" through "Z", desert.

John and Pat Edmundson, Rollie and Debbie Marshall and Ray and Norma French will host the barbecue.

Rolling Hills Run planned Saturday

The 1997 Rolling Hills Run will be held Saturday, April 26, beginning at Heppner Elementary School.

The annual 5 and 10 K run/walk is held as a benefit by the South Morrow County EMT Association to raise money for equipment purchases for ambulances in Heppner and Lexington and the First Response vehicle stationed at Lone.

For more information about the race, call Bill Sheirbon, 989-8526 evenings and weekends.

HEPPNER



50¢

New playground equipment at elementary school



Volunteers assemble playground at Heppner Elementary School



Almost finished-just waiting for the cement to set.

Heppner Elementary School children are eagerly awaiting April 23. That's the day they will be able to try out the new playground equipment that was installed at the school Friday, April 18.

HES Principal Bill Karwacki said that the school had to remove older playground equipment because it was not safe for children and did not meet insurance standards. The school took out swing sets, a slide and climbing apparatus.

"When we took all of those things out, it left use without a lot for kids to do," said Karwacki.

He said that they had received the okay to purchase the new

equipment out of the school bond issue, but it turned out that it was not necessary, as he was able to pay for the expenditure out of the regular school budget.

Karwacki and his wife, Pennie, worked Friday to install the new equipment, along with Mark and Marcy Miller, Mark, Tami and Shannon Rietmann, Ken,

Memorial Day dinner meeting set

Representatives from churches and organizations sponsoring a public Memorial Day dinner at the county fairgrounds will meet Tuesday, April 29, at 5 p.m. at St.

Kaedene, Madison and Lane Bailey, Bruce, Debbie, Matt and Luke Young, Skip, Sandy, Whitney and Don Matthews, Rick Britt, Jay, Sloan, Baillie and Blair Keithley, George and Kiel Nairns, Kelly and Kelsie Fox, Ron Anthony, Chad Doherty, Chris Paullus and the Columbia Basin Electric Co-op.

Patrick's Senior Center in Heppner.

Individuals and other organizations interested in supporting this event are invited to attend.

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