

AFFIDAVIT OF MAC HEDGES

STATE OF NEVADA        )  
                              )     SS:  
COUNTY OF ELKO        )

I, MAC HEDGES, being duly sworn, declare and say the following:

1. That I, MAC HEDGES am a resident of the State of Nevada, County of Elko.
2. That I was born in <sup>Paris</sup>~~Teoia~~, Illinois on Oct. 29, 1942 and have been associated with ranching all my life.
3. That my mailing address is HC 60 Box 580, Ruby Valley, Nevada 89833.
4. That I, Mac Hedges, am over the age of eighteen years, and am of sound mind and faculty at the giving of this affidavit.
5. That this affidavit is being offered because of my concern for the future of the public lands ranching.
6. That I am making this affidavit of my own free will and accord and am not promised any reward or gain relevant to this matter.
7. That professionally, I have worked on ranches, have owned and run my own cattle, have managed ranches, have written short stories, and have written one novel based on my life experiences.
8. That the following is a summary of my own personnel experience during a time when I was managing the Coyote Creek Ranch in Northern Nevada.

In 1981 I went to work for Bob Albrecht. Bob had recently purchased the Coyote Creek Ranch which is located about 55 miles in the Buena Vista Valley, south of Winnemucca Nevada.

Unbeknown to Mr. Albrecht at the time of purchase, the Bureau of Land Management people had instigated, or were in the process of instigating a 50% cut in allotted use on the Coyote Creek Allotment.

Consequently, soon after I went to work there, I spent quit a bit of my time at the BLM office talking to Clint Oaks and others, trying to find out what could be done in order for the BLM to reinstate the lost use.

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Finally I was told, that if we would either fence the allotment or put a man on full time so that no cattle could trespass onto other allotments that they would reinstate our full use.

So with this understanding, we went about setting up a cow camp about 14 miles from the ranch headquarters and then hired a man to ride and be with the cattle on a full time basis.

In the ensuing months, there were people from the BLM office coming out on a regular basis checking on us.

There were several of these people that I got to know pretty well, and by the second year I was on good terms with them - enough so, that we talked freely with one another.

During one of our conversations, one of these fellows, (I'm not going to tell you his name), was quit frank. I can't remember if he said it as fact, or whether it was his opinion as to how the BLM people were operating. But I do remember him saying that the worst mistake a small rancher could make was to take the agency to court, because they knew, that if they ever got a small rancher in court that they could outlast him.

This same BLM employee explained that they were well aware that if the rancher didn't have outside money, that he could not afford to pay an attorney and operate his ranch at the same time.

He also said their strategy was, (meaning others within the agency), to target only one or two ranchers at a time in any given region - that way, there would be less tendency for other ranchers to come to their aid.

This person told me also, that if I ever told anyone that he told me these things that he would deny it.

This is an example of the way that agency people operate. They try to make it just as expensive and difficult as they can for certain people.

To have a man riding full time and me riding with him two to three days a week, as we were, was costing us a good deal more than if we had simply purchased pasture in Lovelock - not to mention that the cattle would have done a good deal better as well. But the owner of the ranch was intent on holding his permit so that the value of the ranch would be maintained.

Needless to say, in cooperating with the BLM people as we did, we upset many of our long established neighbors - for there was no way that they could do as we were doing and stay in business.

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Other than that, we enjoyed living there at Coyote Creek. But we liked Elko County better, and when we had the opportunity, we went back to work for Kent Howard in 1988.

I hereby affirm that the statements made herein are true and correct under penalty of perjury of the laws of the United States.

Signed this 2nd day of April, 1998. Mac Hedges  
Mac Hedges