

AFFIDAVIT OF CLIFF GARDNER

STATE OF NEVADA)
) ss.
COUNTY OF ELKO)

CLIFF GARDNER, being duly sworn on oath and under penalty of perjury, does hereby swear or affirm that the assertions of this affidavit are true.

Because of my involvement in public lands issues and because we share common interest I became well acquainted with Vernon Hawks and his family beginning in 1986.

During the ensuing years "Vern" and I visited often about the problems each of us were having with Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Department of Wildlife officials. On two different occasions Vern ask that I participate with him in meetings involving first Forest Service personnel and then BLM personnel.

Later, when I became aware that BLM and Forest Service officials were using the power of their offices to 'strong arm' certain ranchers into becoming "willing sellers" and mining companies into becoming "willing traders" for the purpose of putting certain lands into the hands of government, I began keeping notes of things Vern was telling me.

From these notes, and notes I took at a later interview, I drafted the following testimony. Vern was aware that I was preparing an affidavit for his signature and had agreed to sign the final draft once it was approved by him, but when I called and read him the final draft in January of 1994, he expressed misgivings - saying that since the sale and trade of his ranch was not yet complete he was still vulnerable to retaliation. Vern did say though, that he would reconsider signing the document after the sale and trade of his ranch had been completed.

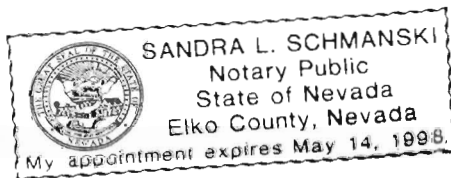
True to his word, in January of 1996 upon returning to the Wells area from his new home in Idaho, contact was made and Vern did sign the attached affidavit.

FURTHER AFFIANT SAYETH NAUGHT.

Subscribed and sworn
before me this 6th
day of March, 1996. *SS*

Sandra L. Schmanski
Notary Public

Cliff Gardner
CLIFF GARDNER



AFFIDAVIT OF WILLIAM VERNON HAWKS

STATE OF Idaho)
) ss:
COUNTY OF Bear Lake)

I, William Vernon Hawks, being duly sworn on oath and under penalty of perjury, do hereby swear or affirm that the assertions of this affidavit are true.

1. Affiant is over the age of eighteen years, makes this affidavit on his own personal knowledge, and is otherwise competent to testify as to the truth of the matters set forth herein.

It wasn't that we were approached by the government to sell the ranch. No, my son Bob wanted to sell, he was able to see long ago that someday we'd have to abandon our Forest permits. Bob wants a place that is all privately owned. And I'm too old, I can't do the riding anymore.

I did ride yesterday though, Greg, my grandson and I went over to Coyote looking for any strays we may have missed. It was a good thing I did too, because the cattle we did find split up on us. So I brought the slow ones and Greg brought the wild ones, and we got them all right. But if I hadn't gone with him he would have lost some of them, and with no snow on the ground he couldn't have gone back and tracked them. And of course they're not suppose to be there now.

It used to be that we'd let Nature bring our cattle home, but you can't do that anymore. Now the Forest demands that you move them on a certain date, and that you get every last one of them. It used to be that the Forest people would listen to us. In fact it was our idea to put in the first rest rotation systems, but now they dictate everything whether it will work for us or the cows or not.

We have a rough ol'country, but its a good country. But it takes a lot of work, and if its done right the cows scatter in little bunches of 10 or 12 head. When you ride, you can miss some of them pretty easy, and if you do, and they get down on a creek bottom where the Forest Service sees them they'll fine you. They did fine us, I think it was for one bull and a cow and calf. You can't run a business that way, not with all the new rules they have. It costs way to much. It'll drive you out of business.

The Forest says we can use 55% of the feed on the uplands, but the cattle never get to the uplands. When you turn a bunch of cows and calves into a pasture very few of them even begin to use the uplands until most of the feed has been used along the creek

bottoms. So, by the time the cattle do start working out on the benches, the Forest says you've got to get off.

Over the years we've built 118 ponds and other water developments on our range, so that the cattle would use the range better. But now with the Forest demanding that we rest so much of our range every year a cow can't take a bit of grass without eating a year or two's dead feed along with the new. Cows don't like that kind of feed, so it makes it even harder to keep the cows off the creek bottoms. We've tried, but we can't keep them scattered. There's been times when Greg and I have been out until way after dark trying to keep the cows off the creeks. You can't do it. It won't work. It wouldn't matter if you only put 10 cows in a pasture, they're not going to stay off the creek bottoms.

The way they have cut our permits - and with all their new rules, we could never make it. It simply costs too much. You can't just use the creek bottoms and leave all the feed on the benches. You can't justify the cost of keeping the fences up, let alone the cost of moving the cattle every so often - particularly over at Coyote Lake - we figured it out and with the cost of moving over there, keeping the cabin up, and the horses and vehicles and everything. It just doesn't pay.

Rod Howard, the Ranger that was here a few years ago, told us that he believed that they would make the Coyote Lake country into a National Park someday. It might be the BLM that's making the trade, but they've got a deal together, the Forest Service and the BLM, you know that.

They want the small parcels of ground that we have scattered within the Forest Reserve too. They've wanted them ever since we moved here. It might be the BLM that's making the trade, but they've got a deal together, the Forest Service and the BLM, you know that.

The Forest has put in twelve miles of fence now - paid for by the mines - fenced the creek bottoms and divided the country up into pastures. You can't run cattle in a mountain country like this with the fences they've put in, especially if we're the ones that have to keep the fence up. But they did quit fencing when we put the place up for sale.

In the two years we've had the ranch for sale, we've never had but one buyer look at the place and that was the mine. The government's killed the ranch market. Our neighbors over here, the Bell Brand has tried every way in the world to sell the three ranches they have. They've tried splitting it up. They've come way down in price. I think they've dropped their price by over half.

Bob said he'd sell his share of the ranch to me but I'm too old to run it, I'll be 81 years old this June, had my back broke once. I can't do it anymore, and besides, America's changing. The people are changing. Nothings like it used to be. Its hard to get good help anymore, they're not loyal like they used to be. I'd like to stop the government from buying up all the ranches, but I don't know how it can be done.

FURTHER AFFIANT SAYETH NAUGHT.

William Vernon Hawks
William Vernon Hawks

Subscribed and sworn
before me this 27
day of January, 1996.

Jolene M. Supp
Notary Public

