

History of Pine Lakes Ranch
(Talk by Fred O'Brien at the Annual Meeting 2016)
November 12, 2016

Kitty called me a few days ago and asked me if I would give you a history of Pine Lakes Ranch and in a weak moment, I agreed so this is what I came up with. I am sure that there are some of you here who bought lots in the very beginning who could add to this talk. This started over 40 years ago so my memory is not as good as I would like.

Jess Groves and I owned a company called DAAGCO Development, Inc. We had been buying and selling property for the purpose of enhancing mankind. We had successfully subdivided some small parcels in Valley county. We started looking for a larger parcel with lake views when I ran into the old college friend of mine, Steven Van Horn, and I told him what we were looking for. He told me that he knew of a ranch in Valley county owned by Art and Ethel Hall. Steve was a real estate agent living in, I believe, Sandpoint, Idaho. He gave us the Halls contact information and told me if we purchased the ranch to send him a check as a finder's fee (which we did).

We contacted the Halls, lifelong ranchers in Valley County. Art and Ethel showed us the ranch. We fell in love with the property. Our desire was to do a large lot subdivision and the property was ideal for that purpose. We were able to negotiate an option to buy the ranch, subject to getting all the government approvals that we needed to complete the development.

Jess was working for Western National Corporation, a company that Bob Duncan and Ike Corlett had formed to

liquidate the assets of two savings and loan companies that had filed bankruptcy. Jess introduced our project to Bob and in a rather complicated transaction we sold a one-half interest in the ranch and some other property that DAAGCO held. We formed a new partnership called Western Daagco to develop the ranch.

Early in the project I bought out the interest of Jess Groves in DAAGCO and Bob bought out Ike Corlett. Jess and my family remained good friends until his recent passing.

Ike Corlett's sons, Jon and Joe helped in the early development stages of the development as well as Ralph Pafari an employee of Western National.

Bob Duncan has also passed away, a great loss for my family.

A 40-acre parcel right in the middle of the 500-acre ranch was owned by Center Irrigation District, so we had to negotiate the purchase that parcel before we could go forward with our concept. Later on, we purchased 100 acres from Center Irrigation district and 80 acres from an investor, these parcels becoming Pine Lakes Ranch additions 1 and 2 in 1976, which are the 5 Acre tract on the south end of the ranch. With the easement land there is about 1000 acres in the project.

The parcels owned by the Halls and Center irrigation District had permanent agricultural easement lands attached and we acquired this property interest as well. We transferred the easement lands adjacent to the subdivision to the Home Owners Association.

When the US government built what was called Cascade Reservoir the government purchased properties from the Halls

and Center irrigation District with the agricultural easements for the unflooded portion being retained by the Halls and Center irrigation District. The property was to be used strictly for agricultural purposes with no permanent structures being constructed on the property. We could build roads and fences for agricultural purposes.

We then came up with the concept that is currently enforce on Pine Lakes Ranch, that is having cattle graze on any unfenced property and allowing owners to cross other owner's property on foot or by snowmobile. We felt that the cattle would create revenue to maintain the property and keep the property free of long grass and weeds. I would say that this has worked. Owners are allowed to fence for their own private use ten percent of the original parcel and if a parcel is to be split then the second buyer can fence an equal amount. That is, if you own a 10 acre parcel you can fence off one acre and if it is subdivided the second owner can also fence one acre.

The original parcels were called blocks. We did that in the anticipation of any splints that might be made being called Lot 1 and Lot 2 of block X. It did not turn out that way, however, it turned out to be east one half, west one half south one half and north one half.

We came up with extensive covenants to preserve the beauty of the development and I would say that that has worked very successfully.

A nurse looked at Pine Lakes Ranch but did not want the covenants so they bought in round Valley and build a beautiful home down there. After their home was built someone bought the parcel right next to them and moved in a double wide and

build a snow roof over it. She was absolutely sick that she didn't buy in Pine Lakes Ranch.

A recent buyer in Pine Lakes Ranch was referred by someone in Donnelly. He was told to look at the ranch as it is the best subdivision in Valley County and I agree.

When we started out in the development Art Hall helped us immensely, he worked as hard at getting the subdivision started as we did. Art did the farming that needed to be done, removed sagebrush on a great deal of the ranch, graded the roads and advised us on leasing the property for grazing and introducing us to perspective tenants. We also raised hay for a few years.

I found out how thick the ice got on Little Pine Lake when I watched Art drive his pickup completely full of wood right across the center of the lake. I wouldn't drive across it until after I watched him do it.

Little Pine Lake was part of the ranch when we bought it. We constructed Big Pine Lake and we stocked fish in the lakes for the benefit of the owners.

We tried to find a real estate company to market the property for us but none were willing to do the work required on the large parcels. They needed to find the corners on all the ranch which was no little feat. This being the case Bob and I decided to market the property ourselves. We brought our RVs up and spent all our weekends showing and selling the property. A somewhat interesting sidelight, Art would not allow us to build a road through the meadow on the north end of the ranch until we had sold 13 lots. We sold 13 lots the weekend that we open the ranch for sale. We had quite a celebration night.

We built the roads to county specs and got the county's approval on the roads in case we would have to, in the future, dedicate the roads to the public, which we did not want to do. The homeowners subsequently through the use of the grazing fees and dues have greatly improved the roads by graveling and continuous maintenance. When we started the subdivision, decomposed granite met the county specs. There is no way you could build a county road today using decomposed granite.

It may be of interest to you that the highest price that we got on a 10acre parcel was \$25,000 with most parcels selling for \$12,500 to \$15,000.

In closing, I would like to thank the homeowners of Pine Lakes Ranch for the fine job they have done with the maintenance of the Ranch and enforcing the covenants that were put in place when we first started and as they have been changed since then.