

September 14, 2016

To: Rocky Houston and PAB Members

From: Debra Gray

Subject: Public Comment for September 15, 2016 Parks Advisory Board Meeting

Thank-you for your time and allowing us to comment on the Parks Director's logging plan for Mildred Kanipe Memorial Park.

It is important for you to understand that the Friends of Mildred Kanipe are not against responsible logging.

We live her and we work here. Many of us grew up here and have families that are in the timber industry. And some of us knew Mildred. And we know what the provisions of the will were and that the county accepted those provisions.

This park is not O&C lands and Mildred did not leave it to be used as a substitute for lost timber revenue for the county. It is a park in the middle of communities that love it as Mildred intended when Douglas County accepted it from her.

We believed the county made this arrangement with Mildred, with its stipulations, in good faith.

We have been enjoying and loving and working in this park since then – in gratitude to Mildred for the gift and assisting the county in good faith.

The county had three years to decide whether to take this gift. And they took it with full knowledge of the restrictions.

---- If not, it was to go to charitable trust like C. Giles Hunt. Her intentions were clearly for an undeveloped area for people to enjoy. She directed that wildlife and timber to be protected.

Please, for a moment, put yourselves in our place.

We live in North Douglas County. We use Mildred Kanipe Memorial Park. We know it is an attractive place for visitors because they tell us. They love it because it is in the country and it feels remote even though it isn't far from I-5 and Oakland. It's a place where you can experience the solitude and quietness of big trees and small streams without having to drive an hour to get to them.

This park and the trees in it have more economic value the county and to our way of life than logs.

Collectively, we who loved her gift, began using the park immediately, enjoying the beautiful stands of fir trees that she loved and spoke of so fondly, building and maintaining equestrian and hiking trails through them, treating hawthorn and blackberries, caring for the buildings, repairing fences, cutting poison oak, putting in hours upon hours of work, lovingly, gratefully – because we love this gift this hard working, solitary pioneer left for us.

We accepted it too – with the stipulations and have been working hard for and with you to care for it.

When the county accepted the ranch from Mildred with her stipulations that it not be logged, and that it be protected as a refuge and for park purposes, we trusted that you would keep your word.

Mildred loved the trees too and said so more than once. She wrote about them and how folks tried to get HER to use them as income. She resisted. And that is why we have this jewel.

“I think that the early pioneers who settled here acquired much of the same characteristics of the oak trees among which they lived. They had to in order to stay and survive.

At the present time oak timber has no value, at least not here in this vicinity. But the time will come when it will be valuable. I hope it is in the far distant future, for then the oaks like the firs will be doomed.”

“Most everybody told me, if you’d cut that timber, you would have some grass... But I wasn’t going to cut those trees, those fir trees, I was always crazy about trees.... Nope, I said, I ain’t gonna cut them trees.”

The news review reported in 1999 that Trustee, Don Dole said Mildred Kanipe was adamant about not wanting the ranch logged. - that he had “strong evidence of Mildred’s wishes and the park should not be logged.” And later notes from commissioners meetings have him clarifying that “necessary” logging meant blow downs, beetle kills, and fire protection” – things to protect the trees.

In that same meeting, Commissioner Roberson said about logging for revenue, “the issue is simple.... That isn’t what the timber was for”...

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We just want the park to be managed as a park, as Mildred wished and as you agreed to do when you accepted the land as a Park.

Thank-you all for your time.