

## HOOD RIVER NEWS

### County finalizes forest land swap with Mt. Hood Meadows

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The county is finalizing its controversial exchange of forest service land with Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort.

That move has been protested by the Hood River Valley Citizens Committee who believe Meadows is making a strategic move to develop a destination resort in the upper valley.

However, Dave Riley, Meadows general manager, said the only problem with the debate over development plans is that there has been no application submitted for any project.

In August, the Hood River County Commission authorized the trade to proceed following an independent appraisal if the county did not have to pay more than \$1.5 million to gain about 140 acres in the trade. Meadows has proposed turning 785 acres over to the county in return for 640 acres that lies near the Cooper Spur Inn property it purchased this summer.

Ken Galloway, county forester, said the appraisers have valued the county's property at \$1,324,023 and that owned by Meadows at \$2,334,908, a difference of \$2,200,885. Both properties are zoned exclusively for forest use and Galloway said any change in the at designation would have to undergo a lengthy and complex conversion process by the planning department and planning commission that would be open to public comment.

He said the deal was negotiated because it makes good business sense since the county will gain more land and be allowed access to 100 acres of high yield timberland that can now only be reached by helicopter operation, increasing the standard \$50-75 per 1,000 board feet to between \$375-\$450. Galloway said after the country recently completed the exchange of its 1,000 acres of Scenic Area properties with the U.S. Forest Service for about \$7 million, he was instructed to seek out other timber land that could replace that revenue base. In addition, Galloway said he routinely searches out parcels that can consolidate property for both landowners to save survey and roadbuilding costs.