

The next chapter in Half Moon Lake Lodge's celebrated history

By Matthew Manguso

PINEDALE – After 59 years of providing horseback, boating and dining experiences to Sublette County, Half Moon Lake Lodge will be put up for auction on Aug. 29. Terry Pollard, former co-manager of the lodge, said the decision to sell was not due to foreclosure or because the business owed money, but simply because “it’s time.”

For a complete listing of Half Moon Lake Lodge go to www.ameribid.com/upcoming-auctions. The auction will commence on Aug. 29 at 2 p.m.

to move on. Little did Archie know that logging would be replaced by recreation.

New owners came and went, came and went and came and went, with each one adding utilities, new cabins and legends to the lodge.

Because of the consistent turnover in owners, the lodge began to fall into disrepair until, in 2000, brothers Mick and Vic McMurry took ownership and breathed new life into the business.

“All of the owners never really put much into it, and it was close to getting shut down,” Pollard said. “The McMurrys came in and really started doing renovations and brought it up to specs.”

The McMurrys, both Casper residents, completely renovated the cabins, added a basement to the lodge and installed a water system that rivals the Town of Pinedale’s.

Half Moon Lake Lodge was reborn and became one of the premiere destinations in western Wyoming.

“They put a heck of a lot into it,” Pollard emphasized.

The business did very well and became a favorite spot for locals and tourists alike, but two years ago, the McMurrys, along with Pollard and his wife Barbara, also a co-manager, began preparations to sell.

“Mick and Vic [McMurry] have had it for long enough and interests have changed. That’s the main thing,” Pollard said. “It’s important to make sure this is not a forced auction. They don’t owe any money; it’s free and clear. [The McMurrys] could keep it forever, they’ve just decided it’s time for them to move on and ... it needs someone who has

The auction is not the end, but rather the next chapter of the legendary lodge’s story.

Half Moon Lake Lodge began in the summer of 1953. Archie Pollard, Terry’s grandfather, was spending a relaxing day fishing for trout on the lake’s shore. At that time, there were only two cabins and a foundation for a bigger lodge. Archie noticed a small handwritten sign on a tree that read “For Sale.”

Newly retired from the Salt Lake City Fire Department, Archie inquired about the price. A man working on the lodge said between \$5,000 and \$6,000. Archie looked in his wallet, which contained \$100, and asked if that would be enough for a deposit. The man said it was and the two sat down to write an agreement. Archie rushed back to Salt Lake City.

“He put his house up for sale and told Grandma they were moving,” Pollard described with a laugh.

Archie completed the lodge, received permits from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Half Moon Lake Lodge was born.

During his 15-year ownership, Archie built more cabins and attained more permits to include hunting and fishing camps.

In 1968, Archie learned the USFS was trying to remove all commercial businesses from lakeshores by 1980 to make room for logging operations, so he decided it was time



Matthew Manguso photo

Since the beginning of the season, Half Moon Lake Lodge has been closed. An auction will be held at the end of August to find new owners.

the interest to run it.”

The lodge was listed at \$2 million but a sale never came about, so the McMurrys decided an auction was the best option.

The sale is being run through Ameribid, an international auction company. Though Ameribid will be the primary seller, Pollard said local realtors are encouraged to participate with their clients.

“[Ameribid’s] influence of potential buyers is significantly more than what we would have with local listings,” Pollard added.

According to Ameribid’s listing, the auction will begin at \$100,000 and go to the highest bidder, but it’s not only the physical building that is up for sale. Equipment, boats, tack and just about everything except for horses will be part of the “as-is, where-is” auction. Ameribid’s listing describes the lodge as a “spectacular western Wyoming lodge/restaurant, cabins and marina [that] sits in the Wind River Range and includes complete furnishings and business opportunities for outfitting, guiding, resort, marina and

pasture grazing.”

Because the property, more than 130 acres, is located entirely on USFS land, the winning bidder will need to be approved by the USFS before the resort and marina, outfitting and guiding and pasture grazing permits can be reissued.

The decision to put the business up for sale was relatively easy, Pollard said, because the McMurrys were ready to sell. But the choice to leave it closed this season was difficult.

“[The community] wants it open,” Pollard said. “We really debated opening it while we’re trying to sell it, but we decided not to.”

Inquiries about cabin availability are made daily, Pollard added, but lining up employees and keeping it open while simultaneously trying to sell was too much for the Pollards to handle, especially since their primary business, Bald Mountain Outfitters, is taking tourists out on pack trips daily. Bald Mountain Outfitters neighbors the lodge to the north and south, and Pollard said his business, which is not for sale, would continue to support the new owners of the lodge.

“Our clients love going up there to stay and eat. It’s amazing how many people have a natural affinity for that place,” Pollard said.

With such close familial and personal connections, Pollard himself has a strong love for the lodge and its patrons, but he knows the new owner, whoever that happens to be, will have an amazing opportunity to run an already established business.

“It really is a turnkey operation,” he said. “The minute they open the doors, they’ll have a bunch of people there. It’s such a fabulous place.” ■



Half Moon Lake Lodge courtesy photo

Situated on the shores of pristine Half Moon Lake, the lodge has been an integral part of Sublette County for 59 years.

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Are you going to see Uncle Kracker?



No. *Blake Brause, Marbleton*



Maybe. *Brittany Keiter, Big Piney*



I have no idea. *Taylor Long, LaBarge*



Probably. *Matt Armstrong, South County*



Yes. *Hayley Ivie, Pinedale*

In case you were wondering ... How much rain we’ve gotten this month.

An unseasonably warm and dry spring and early summer left Sublette County with wildfires and drought. May and June are traditionally two of the region’s three rainiest months, but this year July has had to deliver the badly needed rain. As of Thursday, 1.43 inches of precipitation have fallen in July, compared to 1.04 inches on average.

IN CASE YOU WERE WONDERING

Let us know what you're wondering. Email editor@pinedaleroundup.com or call (307) 367-2123.