



University of Idaho anthropology master's students Conner Weygint, standing, Katie Kitch, left, and Meghan Caves, right, remove sod before starting excavation at the Polly Bemis Ranch on the Salmon River, 44 miles east of Riggins.

Bemis

(Continued from Page 1)
The ranch is also surrounded by Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness Area.

A statue of Bemis will be unveiled at noon on Aug. 10 on the front steps of the Idaho State Capitol in Boise. Gov. Brad Little and Sen. Jim Risch, R-Idaho, will declare Aug. 10 "Polly Bemis Day." The statue will eventually be placed at the ranch.

Bemis, who was just over 4 feet tall, was smuggled to the United States and sold as a slave in California.

She was taken from San Francisco to Portland and eventually the Idaho Territory to the mining community of Warrens, now Warren, where she worked in a saloon.

She eventually gained her freedom from her Chinese owner, and the 1880 U.S. Census showed her living with saloon owner Charlie Bemis (1848-1922).

Polly Bemis took in laundry from miners and ran a boardinghouse. Charlie was almost killed during a gambling dispute in 1890 when he was shot in the cheek, but Polly nursed him back to health.

Polly Bemis was also a good fisherman and caught and sold fish from the Salmon River. Eventually she and Charlie moved to their ranch 17 miles north of Warren on the Salmon River where they had a mining claim.

They were among the first pioneers to live on the Salmon River. The story of Polly Bemis was the subject of a 1991 film, "A Thousand Pieces of Gold."

(Ralph Bartholdt is Communications Manager of University Communications and Marketing for the University of Idaho.)



Volunteer Dan Lute, left, and Priscilla Wegars use a metal detector to search grids established around the reconstructed Polly Bemis cabin.




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McCall seeks comments on Pine Creek Ranch study

BY DREW DODSON
The Star-News

The City of McCall is seeking public comments on what to include in a study of a 158-acre site near Payette Lakes Middle School and Barbara Morgan Elementary School that could soon see hundreds of homes built.

The 10-day public comment period closes on July 31. Comments can be made at www.mccall.id.us/AOCC.

The study is intended to be a "comprehensive analysis of the natural and built environment" associated with Pine Creek Ranch, a subdivision planned by Donnelly resident Craig Groves.

Groves plans to build single family homes, duplexes and townhomes on 158 acres that back up to existing homes on Woodlands Drive and Fox Ridge Lane. An application has not yet been submitted to the city.

The McCall City Council last month designated the 158 acres as an "area of critical concern," which allows the city to require a detailed study of the area before accepting applications.

The results of the study are expected to guide the application for Pine Creek Ranch, McCall City Planner Brian Parker said.

Another 10-day public comment period would follow the release of the study. The timeline for completion of the study is dependent on

the developer, Parker said.

A draft scope of work released by the city would require the developer to study the site's water features, plants, wildlife, soils, topography and potential climate harm if developed.

That would include an inventory of all soils, plants and wildlife as well as suggestions for how to design the development in harmony with the site's natural features.

The study would also weigh how development on the site could affect the surrounding community, under the proposed draft scope.

That would include an analysis of adjacent land uses, transportation, access roads, utility connections and wildfire danger.

The assessment would also consider how development could affect local schools, housing, childcare facilities, open space preservation and police and fire agencies.

The study will be done by a team of consultants that will be hired and paid

for by Groves, Parker said.

The study is beyond the normal review to which proposed developments are subject by the McCall Area Planning and Zoning Commission.

Pine Creek Ranch is the first development to be subjected to the "area of critical concern" designation, which was added to city code in 2006.

It is unclear how many homes Pine Creek Ranch would build, but Groves expects to submit an application by the end of the year.

The city's future land use plan designates most of the 158 acres as low-density residential allowing up to four homes per acre.

Home prices are expected to range from about \$350,000 up to \$1 million, while rental homes would rent for about \$1,695 to \$2,000 per month, Groves said.

Conceptual plans call for homes with one bedroom and one bathroom, two bedrooms and two bathrooms, and three bedrooms and 2.5 bathrooms, Groves said.

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