

“Patriotic” Habitat Plan?” Give Me a Break!

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How is telling someone his land is habitat and they need to either sell it or place a conservation easement on it in perpetuity being “patriotic?”

It’s hard to understand, but that’s exactly what the proponents of the San Antonio/Bexar County-led Southern Edwards Plateau Habitat Conservation Plan (SEP-HCP) claim. They say it’s because their plan is to help our “life-saving military medics at Camp Bullis” and that alone makes it patriotic for other American citizens to place their land under someone else’s control.

To use our fine military as their main argument leads every reader down the path they want you to follow, but it totally misdirects the reader so they don’t see the real effects of the Plan on surrounding counties and the landowners they are targeting.

Proponents claim this plan is “voluntary.” What they don’t say and don’t want anyone to understand is, they are going to draw lines on a map and target the land they consider habitat for endangered species.

Then, they intend to identify a minimum of 10,000 acres of private property in each of seven Central Texas Counties, a minimum of 70,000 acres, which can be used by Camp Bullis and developers in the region as mitigation so they can continue to grow and build.

So, because San Antonio doesn’t want to lose the “Pentagon’s multi-billion-dollar investment in San Antonio as the nation’s center for military medicine,” they are willing to target and sacrifice thousands of private acres and hundreds of Texas landowners so the federal government can confiscate more land.

How is being targeted on a map voluntary? If the landowners whose land has been targeted and designated as critical habitat ever want to sell or subdivide their land, the City of San Antonio and Bexar County will be able to demand a fee for every acre they disturb – that’s called mitigation. If a private person demanded that kind of payment, it would be called extortion, but because it’s our government, they call it mitigation.

What this means is, landowner’s private property will be targeted two different ways. The first will be when a developer wants to build around Camp Bullis and can access the SEP-HCP for mitigation acres and the second will be when the landowner who is told he has habitat wants to build a fence, put up a barn or build a home for his children has to pay a fee to San Antonio.

Either way, it’s the federal government that benefits all supposedly to build a preserve for two birds.

Another fact to discuss is the Memorandum of Understanding Camp Bullis has with the City of San Antonio to benefit developers who want to build homes and businesses inside the Military Influence Area. This agreement, signed in August of 2008, set up the system whereby a developer who requests an application from the City to build within a five mile radius of the Camp will have access to the SEP-HCP and landowners who now find themselves in this “voluntary” program will be targeted to either sell their land or place a perpetual easement on it.

This HCP is exactly what is happening around hundreds of military bases across our nation. Environmental groups, along with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, have figured out how to help each other by using federal environmental laws.

The U.S Fish and Wildlife Service expands their “command and control” influence and environmental groups get to implement their agenda and take private property under the guise of “helping” our military bases. And, in this case, developers benefit and landowners suffer.

Now, who is unpatriotic?