
LAKE TEXOMA MESSENGER

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www.friendsoflaketexomastatepark.org – Kingston, Oklahoma

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Park Swindle Still Not a Done Deal!

- Read the facts, and then decide if you want your park back.

In the fourteen months since Stephen Willis founded the Friends of Lake Texoma State Park, the Madill Record has lied and covered up facts about the **PARK SWINDLE**.

In July, Pointe Vista published a handout titled, "Getting to the Pointe." You can read their Big Lie for yourself on their back page under "How to Get Involved (in the EIS)."

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on major federal actions such as these land sales by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for privatization.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) is the first step in the NEPA process. **Pointe Vista's BIG LIE** has been stated by the Madill Record, the state Tourism Department, and officials at the Tulsa District Army Corps of Engineers:

"NEPA was first set in motion by the prior sale of Areas A and B. However, for that sale, the first step of the NEPA process, the EA for the sale of Areas A and B – the lands occupied by Chickasaw Pointe Golf Course and the former Lake Texoma State Lodge and golf course – resulted in a Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI) because the project's use of Areas A and B after the sale was not significantly different than the use of Areas A and B before the sale."

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What we achieved in our first year:

- 1) We are telling the true story that the Madill Record publisher unethically chooses to cover up.
- 2) We have exposed the Tourism Department and Corps for grossly misleading the public for years.
- 3) We have successfully held Pointe Vista and the Corps responsible for a New Environmental Study.
- 4) We are prepared to stop the sale of "Area C!"

Corps of Engineers Plans Kingston Workshop on "Area C" Land Sale

- New Environmental Study focuses on Pointe Vista Proposal

(Kingston, OK) – The Corps of Engineers have scheduled a public "scoping" workshop for the evening of September 22 at the Kingston Elementary School. If you have been hurt by the premature closure and privatization of the state park lodge, park cabins and lodge golf course due to their first land sale you need to let them know it.

Corps spokesmen informed us about the meeting on August 27, a week after their notice appeared in the Federal Register. They also said they are prepared to record oral statements, as well. Public comments will be taken for at least an additional thirty day, and we will request more time for the public to respond to their proposal to sell an additional 1,022 acres of our federal park land for private commercial uses.

Your comments will define the scope of the federal study and identify the harmful effects of selling the remainder of Lake Texoma State Park, plus shoreline wild lands included in the 1,022 acres, Area C sought by Pointe Vista Development.

The Corps will create a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and for the first time consider the 750 acres sold by the state to Pointe Vista in 2008. (Areas A & B).

Now is the time for Kingston area residents to share their experiences, and how they may have suffered economically since the illegal closure of the State Park Lodge and Cabins in December, 2006. Contact us for help in preparing your responses, or to sign our statements to the Corps officials.

SERIOUS QUESTIONS REMAIN ...

Interior Department officials claim they learned about the sale of Lake Texoma State Park from news reports in the spring of 2005, before the Corps of Engineers published their Environmental Assessment in June of that year. They contacted the Corps' Lake Texoma Project Team in Tulsa, and requested that the scoping for the proposed land sale be re-opened to address the actual sale of the park.

Interior had been informed the Corps was studying the State's proposal to "expand the park, not to privatize it!"

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POINTE VISTA'S BIG LIE (continued)

It is a myth that the 2005 Environmental Assessment (EA) studied Areas A & B, the 750 acres sold to Pointe Vista last year. The following are reasons why this coordinated and often repeated misinformation is false:

1) The 2005 EA was created long before Pointe Vista even incorporated. No study was ever performed on land parcels they call Areas A and B. Pointe Vista named "Area A" and "Area B" when they segmented Lake Texoma State Park into three parts to facilitate their land purchases from the State of Oklahoma.

2) The 2005 Environmental Assessment studied 564 acres, not 750. And it was based on a Commissioners of the Land Office (CLO) proposal to EXPAND THE PARK, NOT ILLEGALLY PRIVATIZE IT for the benefit of two well-connected, wealthy businessmen!

3) In the 2005 CLO plan, the project's use of Area B after the sale would not at all have been different than the use of Area B before the sale. That is because Lake Texoma State Park was to have been completely revitalized and with a new family-style lodge and renovated lodge 18-hole golf course, not privatized.

However, most of Area A, the land surrounding the Chickasaw Pointe Golf Course north of US 70, would have been significantly different due to plans for single-family residential and other commercial developments.

If Pointe Vista was complying with the 2005 approved EA, then all 750 acres would continue to be for public recreational uses. Instead, they are proposing a \$3 billion dollar, 25-year private venture based on an obsolete Disney developmental design.

MADILL RECORD CENSORS THE TRUTH

When the Friends raised these objections with The Madill Record, publisher Mark Codner refused to print our correction. Instead, he cowardly censored and banned The Friends' letters and guest commentaries.

His tactic of repeating these lies over and over is central to deceiving Marshall County citizens about the Corps' fraudulent and misleading Environmental Assessment (EA) created almost five years ago.

STATE LAND OFFICE RESPONDS

We conducted interviews with Interior Department officials, as well as CLO attorney Perry Kaufman. We learned that the Corps of Engineers clearly knew that the federal lands they proposed to sell in 2005 would soon be resold to a private developer.

The proposed buyer at that time was Gagne, a truly experienced developer, unlike Pointe Vista which has never developed anything but fantastic promises.

When Gagne couldn't get \$10 million in state subsidies to pay for their project infrastructure, utilities and roads, they dropped out of the project.

POINTE VISTA WINS PUBLIC FINANCING

Last month, Pointe Vista won approval for a public financing scheme worth \$339 million, or thirty-four times the amount Gagne wanted four short years ago.

How did the infrastructure costs for this project grow so fast? Pointe Vista conveniently included Area C (1,022 acres) AS IF they already own it, in order to super inflate their projected development costs.

Local financial expert David Dunn advised Marshall County Commissioners not to approve it. But they approved Pointe Vista's Tax Increment Financing and Economic Development Project Plan.

WE OPPOSE THIS CORPORATE WELFARE

When the Park needed reinvestment and upgrading, there was no funding to be had. But, when two of the wealthiest oil and gas producers in the state come along, our state legislators and local officials line up to hand over hundreds of millions in public financing. What does that tell you about our elected officials?

The reasons for opposing public financing for Pointe Vista or their Economic Development Project Plan, is that the Corps of Engineers' EIS will study the economic and environmental merits of their proposed development of Lake Texoma State Park.

Environmental reviews that should have happened prior to any of these land deals, or other approvals, have the NEPA process backwards. These deals are driving the Corps' EIS toward their stated goal of selling the remainder of the Park. That's why the public needs to get involved now, this month, to stop the Area C land sale to Pointe Vista Development.

- Stephen Willis, Director

CITIZENS ACTION ALERT

THE FRIENDS HAVE RAISED SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ONGOING SALE (THEFT) OF LAKE TEXOMA STATE PARK. WE WILL CONTINUE WORKING FOR THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT GOALS:

(1) GET OUR SUPPORTERS TO THE EIS SCOPING MEETING ON SEPT 22 KINGSTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

(2) STOP THE ILLEGAL LAND SALES AND PARK CONVERSION, RESTORE PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY OF OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS.

(3) IDENTIFY FEDERAL FUNDING FOR THE RESTORATION & REVITALIZATION OF LAKE TEXOMA STATE RESORT PARK.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

LOCAL MEETING: US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

PLACE: KINGSTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
TIME: TUESDAY, SEPT 22 (TIME TO BE SET)
Public workshop on Corps' proposed sell off of federal lands. Written and oral statements will be taken that night. This is a critical opportunity for Kingston residents.

LOCAL MEETING: FRIENDS SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

PLACE: KINGSTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
TIME: 6:30 PM, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

WE WILL PROVIDE A CAMPAIGN UPDATE AND SUMMARY OF THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS WORKSHOP, AND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO JOIN OUR EFFORTS TO GUARANTEE A REAL ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY THIS TIME.

WE WILL BE GLAD TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS AND PROVIDE ANY INFORMATION YOU MAY NEED TO COMPLETE YOUR WRITTEN STATEMENT TO THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS.

CALL OUR KINGSTON OFFICE AT (580) 564-7205.

CORPS VIOLATED SEVERAL FEDERAL LAWS

Corps military officials at the very top were aware of this request but ignored it. They chose to put out a flawed and fraudulent report, violating key federal conservation laws.

Now here they come again, asking for permission to sell almost twice the acreage they sold in 2005, when they knew it would soon be resold for private commercial uses.

This month you can tell the feds to stop selling off our park lands. This new environmental review process may block any more federal land sales to Pointe Vista. But, it's up to you!

WE PUBLICIZE THE THEFT OF OUR PARKS

There is no more important battle anywhere than our citizens' campaign to take back Lake Texoma State Park.

To respond to personal slurs and innuendo recently published in The Madill Record: Stephen Willis is a registered Marshall County voter and Kingston resident.

We will back up each and every claim made in the Lake Texoma Messenger, and debate Mark Codner any day of the week on the illegalities of this **PARK SWINDLE!**

FRIENDS OUTREACH SINCE LAST SPRING

We met with representatives from **Senator Jim Inhofe's** Committee on Environment and Public Works, and we submitted legal documents proving violations of federal conservation law by the Corps of Engineers. Senator Inhofe's committee is doing nothing about it.

We met with **District Attorney Craig Ladd** in Ardmore and requested help with an Oklahoma Multi-county Grand Jury investigation. He referred us to the U.S. Attorney in Muscogee who is doing nothing about it.

We submitted requests for an investigation by the **US Environmental Protection Agency and the FBI.** The United States EPA Region 6 in Dallas, TX referred us to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Environmental review process which is exactly what we are doing now.

Please, do not miss this important 9/22 meeting!

- Editorial Staff

Who is this guy Willis and Who are the “Friends?”

My name is Stephen Love Willis. My great, great-grandfather was J. “Hamp” Willis, a Chickasaw rancher who founded the town of Kingston. I didn’t know this until I moved here and began reading about him.

My great-grandfather, Holmes Willis, was born on July 16, 1857 at Willis, Pickens County, Indian Territory. He was a merchant and a rancher and lived his whole life in what later became Marshall County.

My grandfather, Overton Love Willis, spent his whole life in Kingston. And my grandmother, “Ettie” Gibson Willis taught English in Durant and Kingston public schools. I have visited here since I was a child.

We would frequently go to Lake Texoma State Park, as well as Willow Springs, on the other side of the Roosevelt Bridge in Bryan County. I love the Park.

My dad was John Gibson Willis and he was born in Kingston in 1924. He retired here twenty-three years ago, and died thirteen years ago from Alzheimers’. My mom is Sue Freeny Willis, of the Caddo Freeny’s. We are proud tribal members of the Chickasaw Nation.

These relatives of mine were all highly-respected, intelligent and loving Christians, according to those who knew them. I am proud of all of them and the contributions they made during their lives to the betterment of their fellows in Kingston, the Pickens District and Indian Territory.

Friends of Lake Texoma State Park Update

With the Corps of Engineers considering a second sell off of park lands, we will be covering every move they make on our updated website and a new online blog.

We will publish the Lake Texoma Messenger in hard copy at least monthly and possibly more often in the coming months if our budget supports it.

We have well over 300 supporters in the Kingston area, according to our former president Boyd Steele. And we have thousands more supporters who have signed petitions and sent letters of support and small contributions.

Your personal contributions large and small are equally appreciated. We also need volunteers to help distribute newsletters and action alerts about the EIS meeting 9/22.

While we are not a “membership” group, we do need your support in order to continue our media outreach and legal campaign. We plan to incorporate as an Oklahoma non-profit in the fall. Please volunteer and/or contribute to our campaign now, if you support the work we are doing. We won’t give up, but we cannot succeed without your help and participation.And it’s never been a “done deal!”

Checks or money orders may be made payable to:

**The Friends of Lake Texoma State Park
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Kingston, OK 73439**

Friends of Lake Texoma State Park

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THE FRIENDS OF LAKE TEXOMA STATE PARK

Mark Codner, the publisher of the Madill Record, is an unethical pinhead who sucks up to out-of-county Big Money and corrupt politicians to the detriment of Marshall County. He panders to these outside corporate interests and should be ashamed. He fills his pages with misinformation to cover for **the ongoing massive public SWINDLE at Lake Texoma State Park!**

We will back up each and every claim made in the Lake Texoma Messenger, and debate Codner any day of the week on the illegalities underlying the **PARK SWINDLE!**

To respond to personal slurs and innuendo recently published in The Madill Record: Steve Willis is a registered Marshall County voter and Kingston resident, contrary to the propaganda pumped out like lake bottom mud by the friends of Pointe Vista Development at The Madill Record.

Why did I start this campaign in the first place? Did I think it would be loads of fun to confront the crooked politicians and public officials behind the park theft? Not hardly.

John Wigley, the treasurer, and Boyd Steele, the former president, of Oak Ridge Property Owners Association inspired me to create the Friends, and our web site, and this Lake Texoma Messenger

Were it not for their courage in sharing their stories about the attempted takeover of Oak Ridge by Pointe Vista operatives, and the specifics of the “Durant Six,” I would likely be doing something else today.

The most interesting story they told me was about a Durant builder who identified the key backers of the so-called “privatization” of Lake Texoma State Park, apparently bragging about their big plan. This man declared that the power brokers behind the curtain include: State Senator Jay Paul Gumm, former state senators Billy Mickle and John Massey, and Coldwell Banker realtor Martin VanMeter, all of Durant.

The other two that he named were former U.S. Congressman Wes Watkins from Oklahoma’s Third Congressional District, and Chaparral Energy CEO Mark Fischer. Fischer is the business partner of Chesapeake Energy CEO Aubrey McClendon, the other “silent” owner of Pointe Vista Development, LLC of Oklahoma City. But, silent for how long?

Wigley later claimed that Tourism Department Director Hardy Watkins is the son of Wes Watkins who sponsored federal legislation in 1999 (WRDA) authorizing, but not mandating, the sale of 1580 acres at Lake Texoma. Director Watkins told Madill reporter Jon Dohrer that Congressman Watkins is a cousin. Clearly they are related in more ways than one.

The park in 1999 was the single most popular and most profitable of all 50 Oklahoma State Parks. No wonder these clever businessmen wanted to get their hands on it. If they could pull this off under the guise of “privatization,” then they could take over our public park, which was protected by federal laws, and convert it into hundreds of millions in private profits.

In our last newsletter, I stated that the Corps of Engineers’ EIS will provide a critical opportunity to expose their wrong doing of four years ago. And it will.

Our legislators and public officials must be embarrassed by being exposed. They must be held accountable and then prosecuted to be stopped. This will be a massive legal battle and we need many, many people to help us by spreading the word. It is possible to take back the park, if you don’t give up before the fight. It’s only a “done deal” if you give up the park. We want to force the feds to restore our park, before Pointe Vista can destroy it.