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Chairman Rahjes and Committee:

Had it been possible for this committee to proceed with its charge to examine the 30 X 30 Federal Initiative and its impact on Kansas without needing to respond to calls to “investigate” various pet theories and agendas about how the 30 X 30 plan ties to existing programs, I would not be submitting comments. Ideologically-based campaigns conflating national heritage areas and other programs with 30 x 30 have, however, necessitated that I contribute what I can to the discussion.

As a long-time high school history teacher and member of various historical organizations that interact with the Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area, I feel compelled to address the campaign of misinformation, wild speculation, and out-of-state driven agendas we have seen the past few months.

Living and working on both sides of the Kansas-Missouri border, I have seen important connections made between rural and urban organizations, historical and educational institutions, and across the state line. Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area grew out of a desire to connect people and stories in the region to tell the stories that make it an important part of our national history.

The unique aspects of our area’s history and culture have influenced not only the mission of the FFNHA, but also the statutes spelling out the safeguards and limits on the heritage area that are different than even other heritage areas. These differences seem to be overlooked or ignored by out-of-state organizations intent on furthering their agendas.

Over the past few months, various speculative theories have floated into Kansas from our neighbor to the west (perhaps on the share of water it took thirty years in court to get released) and from our friends in the Lone Star State. Not based on Kansas reality, these are tools for the benefit of other entities.

Some of the “theories.”

Theory #1 – All revisions of county zoning plans are probably tied to organizations working with heritage areas to implement restrictive ordinances.

A story has been passed around of how a Linn County resident called with concern over zoning plan revision and was told that friends in Texas (American Stewards of Liberty) said that’s how heritage areas influence land use. What the well-paid CEO/Executive Director married couple in Texas don’t mention is that Linn County is on the southern fringe of a major metropolitan area. My theory is that a county’s look forward to the need to address future

housing subdivisions, industrial parks, and distribution warehouse complexes might be a more logical explanation for revisions than “meddling” by history nerds.

Theory #2 – The “federal boundary” created by the outline of a heritage area creates more federal power to act.

No use of that theory or court case addressing it seems to exist. What does exist are statutory prohibitions against any such action in heritage area enacting legislation.

Theory #3 – Heritage areas are on a pathway to becoming national parks.

Three areas are implied to be examples of heritage areas becoming national parks. The fact that Shenandoah National Park was created in 1935 – 50 years before any heritage area – doesn’t seem to bother the theorist. All three examples are cases where national historic sites share part of a name with a heritage area/district. The fact that the part of the name is a river valley where they are both located would seem to be explanation enough for the shared name.

Freedom’s Frontier has within its area three NPS Historic Sites; Brown v. Board of Education in Topeka, Ft. Scott in Ft. Scott, KS, and the Harry S Truman Home and Farm in Jackson County, MO. All partner with FFNHA in telling stories from pre-Civil War to 20<sup>th</sup>-Century civil rights issues. Truman’s grandmother suffered under Order #11 in 1863 – he desegregated the American military in 1948. All three sites were established before the creation of FFNHA. In the time it has existed, those three sites have increased in size from 29.32 total acres to 29.32 total acres. Becoming a national park is not the path of Freedom’s Frontier, it is only a story used by some to confuse the issues.

Addressing the real concerns of Kansans regarding the 30 X 30 proposal is a legitimate use of the time and resources of this body. Needing to answer to out-of-state alarmists about every theory they have created regarding unrelated programs is not. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Steve Hitchcock