

## BLM Land Grabbers is about 'government arrogance and error run amok'

Imagine you are at home, minding your own business, when an official for the United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM) knocks on your door. After introducing himself, this BLM person asks to enter your backyard and do a survey of your property. Not wanting to be rude, uncooperative or risk offending a government official, you show him to the backyard, inquiring as to the specifics of the purpose behind this survey.

Rather than provide a clear answer, the official goes about his or her business, leaving you to observe as he or she places metal markers in various locations of your yard. Asking what the markers are for reveals that they define the sections of your yard the federal government claims to own. You explain there must be some mistake; the government doesn't own any land in your yard.

You get out your deed to prove this is not federal property. You show him your deed goes back to the 1800s, but the official is unswayed. Dumbfounded by this mad turn of events, you argue that you've paid taxes on the property for years and even pull out papers to prove it. The land belonged to your grandfather before you. You grew up on this land. Your own fam-

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ily lives on this land now. Still, the official remains undeterred.

Your mind races with confusion as you demand an explanation. Rather than offering a justification, the BLM official simply gives you an empty look and shrugs while blithely alleging your state officials made a mistake when issuing your deed and the document is meaningless.

As you continue to spin in bewilderment, the BLM official adds grievous insult to this massive injury when he or she turns around and casually asks you for your opinion regarding how you think the government should manage this property ... in your yard ... that belongs to you. Should the BLM allow recreational activities? Hunting, perhaps? Conservation efforts?

Or, maybe, just maybe, sell a portion of it back to you, but not all, while keeping

the mineral rights for themselves? You can't wrap your brain around what is happening. The only explanation that makes sense is that you've somehow entered an alternate dimension, where your government has lost all respect and recognition of private property rights.

This very mind-blowing experience has been playing out for the last several years in North Texas, to property owners all along the southern border of Red River. The BLM officials have shown up unannounced, entered land owned by citizens of the United States, plopped down markers designating areas they believe they own and even held meetings inviting the public to provide input regarding what to do with that property.

Some unsurveyed owners have received oral acknowledgement from the BLM officials that, despite the fact the BLM has not surveyed their land, it likely claims to own hundreds of acres of land under its Texas deeds.

What's more preposterous is the BLM's complete unwillingness to entertain the idea that they are wrong and recognize the fact its premature claims are an affront to

private property rights across the entire country. So much so, the BLM is moving forward with a Regional Management Plan to determine what to do with all of their newly claimed property.

How can the BLM rationalize creating a management plan for property it hasn't proven, and very likely can't prove, it even owns? Government arrogance and error run amok make it so. Working off what can only be described as their insane interpretation of Supreme Court precedent and even nuttier surveying techniques, the BLM is convinced they own land up to a mile, in some cases more, inland from the southern bank of the Red River.

Fortunately, the Texans along the Red River have chosen to stand up to the BLM Land Grabbers. Represented by the Texas Public Policy Foundation's Center for the American Future, these citizens have filed suit versus the federal government with one clear message: "hands off our private property."

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