



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on April 25, 2014

Texas Warns Obama to Back Down on Plot for “Illegal” Land Grab

With the public [already steaming over the increasingly lawless and out-of-control federal government](#), top Texas officials on both sides of the aisle were quick to react after recent reports suggested the Obama administration’s Bureau of Land Management was plotting yet another unconstitutional land grab. This time, the BLM is reportedly eying some 90,000 acres along the Red River on the Texas-Oklahoma border. From the governor’s office to the attorney general to the legislature, however, the message from Texans was loud and clear: “Don’t Mess With Texas.”



Already facing nationwide [outrage and criticism over its extreme tactics at the Bundy ranch in Nevada](#), the BLM, of course, was quick to deny the reports — sort of. It issued a dubious statement claiming that the administration was not actually planning any more *new* heists. “The BLM is not — I can say categorically — not seeking to seize any privately held land along the Red River,” bureau “Public Affairs Specialist” Paul McGuire was quoted as saying, with the double-negative presumably unintentional.

However, there are some caveats, it seems. According to news reports, the BLM claims that even though citizens have been buying, selling, and using certain lands between the middle of the Red River and its south gradient bank, that area is not in fact private property. A 1988 court ruling against a landowner there, in which he lost a significant chunk of his property to authorities, apparently gives the federal government “precedent.” No “comprehensive land survey” by the BLM has yet been performed, officials said, but agency is now taking some “initial steps.”

The BLM claims that it is simply creating a “resource management plan” while engaged in a broader, multi-state “review” of the lands it claims to own. It is also working to help determine the boundary between supposed “federal” land and private property. “What we are trying to do,” the BLM “public affairs specialist” claimed, “is to determine how and whether these lands can be managed for the benefit of the American people.” That language alone, though, sparked more alarm.

Either way, at the highest levels of state government, Republican and Democrat officials across Texas indicated that they were not buying the BLM’s denials. Top Lone Star State leaders also said it appeared that the federal agency was threatening private-property owners in the region by claiming ownership over private land that has been owned, maintained, and cultivated by Texans for generations. Responding to the reports of more potential land grabs, top officials promptly put their foot down.

“It’s not a dare, it’s a promise that we’re going to stand up for private property rights in the state of Texas,” Republican Gov. Rick Perry [told](#) Fox News, adding that the federal government was “out of control” and would be resisted in the Lone Star State if it tried to steal more private property. “The federal government already owns too much land.”



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Gov. Perry's deputy, meanwhile, went further, accusing the administration of flaunting the law in its mad grab for more land and power. "The federal government's history of arrogant overreach is approaching a new low with the Bureau of Land Management's threat to confiscate up to 90,000 acres of Texas land," Lt. Governor David Dewhurst said in a [statement](#), calling for a lawsuit to stop the BLM's "illegal" abuses. "This outrageous, illegal act makes my blood boil as it should for every Texan who believes in the sanctity of private land ownership."

It is not the first time, though, that Texan landowners have been abused by the BLM. "This is a federal land-grab, pure and simple and the BLM has done it before," Dewhurst continued, referencing the agency's seizure of another landowner's property on the Red River some 30 years ago. "Taking private property away from Texas families, who in some cases have paid taxes on the property for over 100 years since they assumed ownership from the State of Texas, is entirely unacceptable." Like other prominent elected officials from Texas, Dewhurst, a former Texas land commissioner, has also called for Obama to be impeached.

Liberty-minded Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott, who is also the front-runner in the race for governor and has [earned a national reputation for standing up to federal abuses](#), offered the most forceful rebuke of the BLM so far. "I am about ready to go to the Red River and raise a 'Come and Take It' flag to tell the feds to stay out of Texas," the popular figure [told](#) Breitbart Texas in one of a series of powerful public statements in the media warning the administration not to mess with Texas or Texan property owners.

"This is the latest line of attack by the Obama Administration where it seems like they have a complete disregard for the rule of law in this country," he added. "And now they've crossed the line quite literally by coming into the State of Texas and trying to claim Texas land as federal land. And, as the Attorney General of Texas I am not going to allow this." In an interview on Fox News, Abbott also threatened to battle the BLM in court if needed, expressing optimism for success.

Separately, in a [stinging letter](#) to BLM boss Neil Kornze — [a former staffer for scandal-plagued Sen. Harry Reid \(D-Nev.\)](#) — Abbott demanded to know what the agency was thinking. "I am deeply concerned about the notion that the Bureau of Land Management believes the federal government has the authority to swoop in and take land that has been owned and cultivated by Texas landowners for generations," he wrote, asking a series of questions that the BLM chief must respond to.

"The BLM's newly asserted claims to land along the Red River threaten to upset long-settled private property rights and undermine fundamental principles — including the rule of law," the attorney general added in his letter. "Yet, the BLM has failed to disclose either its full intentions or the legal justification for its proposed actions. Decisions of this magnitude must not be made inside a bureaucratic black box."

In a strong show of bipartisanship, even the radical Democrat candidate for Texas governor, Wendy Davis, blasted the BLM machinations. "Wendy Davis strongly opposes any potential seizure of private property" from Texans to the BLM, declared a statement released by her campaign communications director. Other Democrat lawmakers in Texas have gone even further, pushing for a bipartisan review of the federal government's anti-property rights machinations in the next legislative session.

On the ground along the Red River, Lone Star State landowners, too, have expressed alarm. In a phone interview with *The New American*, property owner and rancher Scott Carpenter of Nocona, Texas, warned that Americans should stand up against the BLM and the harm it is doing. "At this moment, we



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are not in the 116-mile stretch, it's 20 miles from us, but if this would take place, it would set precedent and they could just continue down river," he said. "If they've already sunk their teeth in, what would stop the government from coming in and taking our property, too, so we're in danger also."

Carpenter said the federal agency, which many critics argue [is not authorized by the Constitution](#) and is therefore unconstitutional, has been operating in a bizarre and suspicious manner in the region. "The BLM has yet to come out and say what exactly their plans are for using this property," he said, praising Texas' elected officials for immediately stepping in to protect the people and their rights. "They are being very tight lipped about this, very cloak and dagger about it."

While he is not yet sure what the BLM is plotting, "obviously it's not for hospitals and highways, it's just a land grab. I don't know, maybe they're after land rights, water rights, or mineral rights, too." He said a lot of the land the BLM appears to be eying "for their overreaching" has "been in these families for generations." It is even bigger than that, too.

"It's more than just a loss of acreage. It's a loss of food, of revenue to the producers; then you lose tax base for local schools and county governments, and that means fewer jobs for teachers, fewer jobs for everybody," he said. "The whole economy will suffer — if there's not as many dollars, not as many people, that affects everyone."

It is time for people to do something about it, though. "I believe the American people are tired of our government — especially this administration — constantly overreaching," Carpenter continued. "Private property rights being taken away, now the EPA has changed the Clean Water Act to take more control of our land; it's always more and more regulations — and they just won't stop."

The rancher said other states should look at how Texas has responded when the federal government tries to overreach. "We don't have to lay there and play dead and just accept whatever they're wanting to do to us," Carpenter concluded. "We need to work together. We live in a free country. We have to use our ability to vote to put leaders in office who have the same mindset as we do as Americans."

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