

February 6, 2018

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Attention: Brig. Gen. Paul E. Owen
1100 Commerce St., Ste. 831
Dallas, TX 75242-1317

Lee T. White
2003 Stacy Road
Harrisonville, MO 64701
(925) 395-0219
leewhite1@gmail.com

Dear General Owen:

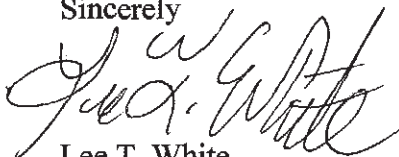
I maintain a blog and Facebook page called Butler County Watchdog that feature news and opinion about the county in Kansas where I grew up. El Dorado Lake, one of your agency's properties, is located in Butler County. Many years ago, I worked for the publisher of The El Dorado Times, David H. Clymer, who was instrumental in getting the lake built. As a result, I feel a sense of duty to address a matter that has arisen concerning the transfer of a lease for the El Dorado Correctional Facility North Unit, also known as the El Dorado Honor Camp.

Enclosed is an article from The Hutchinson News that explains how the State of Kansas is planning to tear the facility down because the Corps of Engineers has declined to transfer a long-term lease from the state to Butler County. The county would use the former Honor Camp as a fairgrounds and headquarters for its 4-H program. This use would fit the area below the dam exceptionally well. There are softball diamonds nearby, a campground that's part of the state park just across the road, and a nature trail to the east. The current fairgrounds at 206 N. Griffith, El Dorado, have become "landlocked" by other development and have outlived their usefulness, having been built in the mid-1950s.

With all due respect, General Owen, I don't understand why your agency would knowingly stand in the way of a youth development program that consistently produces mature, responsible citizens. Granted, the (over) paid staff of the various local governmental entities with a stake in the operation of El Dorado Lake have done a poor job of maintaining a dialogue with Tulsa District leadership. It didn't used to be this way, but alas, economic trends have rendered it difficult to attract and retain the talent level common in Mr. Clymer's day. This lack of communication will end or I will use my "bully pulpit" to end it. The Corps and the lake are of paramount importance to Butler County and should be treated that way!

Meanwhile, I would appreciate your reconsideration of this lease transfer and thank you for your time and service to our great nation.

Sincerely



Lee T. White