

it. There are decommissioning costs, that are underestimated. In fact, we think it's about \$1 million per turbine to take one of these things down and restore the land.

So with over 3,000 turbines in Kansas right now, we're talking at over \$3 billion in decommissioning costs, and we don't know who's going to pay that. A lot of landowners like this, because they get paid, but there's a lot of legal issues that they have to consider, that they probably haven't thought about.

### 'Ensure Baseload Plants Can Compete'

And just some final thoughts. Just from my experience in looking at this, we should require bigger setbacks. In Bavaria, they require 10 times the height of the turbine, which would be over a mile; or require specific time of day bids for electric delivery—that would help to undermine the wind coming on and clearing the market before any of the other sources. Require bonding and escrow for decommissioning; re-

quire full restoration cost for the land. These turbines don't pay property tax. They pay a payment in lieu of tax. So we need to have them pay their fair share in the property tax.

We need to look into reliability requirements, ensure baseload plants can compete. This is the big problem for us. We are retiring coal plants out here, because the wind is so heavily subsidized that when it does come online, it competes directly against the coal and the nuclear and the gas plants, and clears the market before they can even get online. So we are paying—those plants are paying to operate; they're paying people to be employed or to keep their people employed and run our lights 24/7 so that we can accommodate wind. It's just completely backward. The wind should only be a supplemental source of electricity.

This is a subject that we've got to be aware of nationwide, otherwise we're going to continue to make some very, very bad choices and energy policy and other policies, all based on false science.

## Angel Cushing

# Stop the Green Land Grab: Protect Food Production and People

*Angel Cushing is a goat farmer and Lyon County action leader in the Flint Hills region of Kansas. This is an edited transcript of her presentation to the first panel, "The Economic Effects of Green MAD—Mutually Assured Destruction," of the Schiller Institute's July 24, 2021 conference, "There Is No 'Climate Emergency'—Apply the Science and Economics of Development To Stop Blackouts and Death." Sub-heads have been added.*



Courtesy of Angel Cushing

Angel Cushing

My name is Angel Cushing. I live in the Flint Hills of Kansas. Flint Hills is cowboy country. We grow grass here and that produces wonderful livestock that taste absolutely wonderful. We are retired military. We retired to this part of Kansas back in 2015 and shortly after, there was a planning and zoning regulation that was going into effect that would pretty

much eliminate all livestock in this area. They literally zoned everything outside of the city of Emporia as a park. They called it a green space.

### National Heritage Areas

I got involved at that point. That's been a couple of years now, and I've learned an awful lot along the way. We are currently fighting a National Heritage Areas [designation] as well as the "30 by '30" [Biden's Federal Order to "protect" 30% of all U.S. land and water by 2030]. I could describe all of this really easily from the housing study that I came across to the Flint Hills Regional Council. The housing study actually talked about changing this whole entire area from agriculture and agriculture industry, to tourism and energy production. They're planning public use trails along all the major



CC/Christopher Michel

*The idea to repopulate bison, and ban human economic activity, is the point of the American Prairie Reserve project, which originated with the World Wildlife Fund, and is intended to be the largest nature park in the Lower 48 states. With over 3 million acres of combined Federal and private lands in Montana, it would be larger than the nation of Lebanon.*



schools.” But what that is, is federal money earmarked for the trail system. And that trail system is to go along rivers and through riparian areas. How are they going to do that? Well, they’re going to probably use WOTUS and by expanding that floodplain, in which they will then take that out of production, and put in those trails along there.

### Squeezing Out Agriculture

The first thing you have to do is kind of squeeze out agriculture. And here in Lyon County, they did that with regulations. They tried to ban barbed wire and electric fences and all

rivers. This is a tourist attraction for everybody to come out to. They are bringing in windmills and solar farms, and they are regulating out agriculture and industry.

And when I say “they,” I mean every federal department that there is. I got to asking that question, “Who are these people? And where did they come from and why are they doing this?” And I started with the defining words.

For example, in our comprehensive plan here in Lyon County, I kept coming across the term “agricultural landscape.” And I wanted to know who used this, who defined it, where did this term come from? What I discovered [is] that this term, actually comes from an animal rights movement, and it is used by every federal department that there is.

“Greenscape” is another one. That’s defined by the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency). And that’s literally a park. Everything that is green is considered a park. “Open space” is wildlife habitat. “Riparian areas” is wildlife habitat along creeks and rivers.

There is no coincidence that they were talking about WOTUS [Waters of the United States] and prairie chicken endangerment and all of those issues, because if you take a look at programs like Map 21, for example, in the Department of Transportation, it’s now been renamed, and it’s sold as “safe passages to

the things that you use to feed cattle. They tried to ban concentrated feeding. I think it was that you needed a special use permit, if you were to feed two or more animals. So that means everybody, even the recreational horse owner, would have to get a special-use permit in order to set a round hay bale out for their livestock. That’s basically asking permission to take care of your own farm animals.

I got interested in that subject, and we discovered that there’s a National Heritage Area already in Kansas, and there’s another one going in, in north central Kansas and south central Nebraska. And that was a proposal when we started informing people of this National Heritage Area. It’s all the same line. This time, though, it’s in the name of preservation, rather than in the name of recreation. But it’s still the same thing, still coveting land, still pulling out agriculture and still replacing that with tourism and energy production.

We started fighting that and we started informing the public, and we started conducting meetings, and we had anywhere from 300 to 500 people that came to these meetings. And they started asking their county commissioners to pass resolutions against them. Now, the National Park Service requires that before a National Heritage Area goes in, it has to have the approval of the people that these areas would be affecting.

THE WHITE HOUSE



sequestration in the agricultural sector, protect biodiversity, improve access to recreation, and address the changing climate.

Sec. 216. Conserving Our Nation's Lands and Waters. (a) The Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Commerce, the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality, and the heads of other relevant agencies, shall submit a report to the Task Force within 90 days of the date of this order recommending steps that the United States should take, working with State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments, agricultural and forest landowners, fishermen, and other key stakeholders, to achieve the goal of conserving at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030.

*Section 216 of Presidential Executive Order EO14008*

We've discovered that there are 55 National Heritage Areas in the country. Nobody knew they were going in, until after the fact. That's pretty significant, because these are federal boundaries that are voted on by Congress. That's a boundary map, that they are implementing over private property without anybody knowing about it. On the bottom end, it's a fundraiser for special interest groups. On the top end, it's all about preservation through land management. And it just depends on each National Heritage Area as to how they're going in.

We have gotten 38 counties to pass resolutions against the Kansas Nebraska Heritage Area Partnership, and that's out of 49. And we now have one county, down in Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area of Kansas, that has passed a resolution to get out of Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area. That's significant, as 30 of these 55 National Heritage Areas are in front of Congress this year. They are required by law to be self-sustaining within 15 years. Not one is—not one. Naturally, they have to go back in front of Congress and beg for more money. So if there are people in these National Heritage Areas that want out of these 30 National Heritage Areas, now is the time, while it's going through Congress, to start making that demand.

We get asked a lot how this ties into 30 by '30. Well, there's a couple of ways. One is that we know

that there's been land-grabbing going on for quite some time, and for the first time in history, a President put it in black and white and confessed to it. I think that has emboldened those that are in the business of preservation for recreation, and those who want to covet land, that they can continue on and go on. And they're probably right there, that if this proposal—even with the 38 counties that are clearly against this—if this were to go in front of Congress, it would probably get passed, because it can, and because it would be attached to the other 30, They won't back off, we think, because of that 30 by '30 program.

### **Conservation Easements**

The other aspect is conservation easements. We discover wherever these are going in, a lot of the money goes to other special interest groups, who then use that to purchase personal property rights. Conservation easements is a big component of this. The Historical Preservation Act of 1966 is, as well, along with the Antiquities Act of 1906. And that is the one that scares me the most. If you take the 30 by '30 plan, and you realize that this is how we got the monuments and the national parks out West that we have. And now you've just created a Federal Order that creates jurisdiction under the Antiquities Act. It's just ripe. It's just ripe and ready for a President in the right administration to come along and declare that land as a national park.

We keep getting told how inspiring we are, and how much we're making a difference, and we're encouraged a lot; but in all honesty, it feels like I'm losing this battle. It feels like nobody's hearing. The federal level where these decisions are being made isn't listening. Half of the people, as much as they think that we're inspiring, they don't realize what's at stake, that the choice of what they have on their own dinner plate is at stake here. That's very scary.

So while we try to be inspiring as much as possible, at the same time, you know, I feel that I need to warn everybody, that if they're not paying attention, they're not getting to know who their congressmen are, they're not getting to know who their county commissioners are, they could have their choices limited drastically.

Lyon County is a perfect example of that. Sadly, we are not the only one. The method in which this is done is called the Joint Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Regulations: What that does is combine the city with the rural areas. You usually have more city supervisors or more city commissioners, than you do in the county. So once this deal is set and made, that's it, it's done. The city now outvotes the county. They're now going to have more representation and they're going to vote to trail on your land and fish out of your cattle pond. It's recreation to them, so they'll vote in that favor. So it's really hard to undo these programs once they come in.

How they're getting in, is through grant money. They're waving lots of dollars in front of city commissioners or county commissioners, and say, "All you got to do is update your plans in order to obtain grant money. We can help you find a contractor that will re-write your planning and zoning for you."

In our case, it's the Urban Collaborative out of Portland, Oregon. They are cricket farmers, literally. On their website, they have this big thing about how livestock are ruining the Earth, and the protein of the future is bugs, with the adorable little girl shoving crickets into her mouth. These are the people that wrote our Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Regulations for us. They were compensated for that again, through a grant from the HUD, from Housing and Urban Development.

### **Regulated Out**

And it was just walked through under the table. They did the minimum notification necessary to meet Kansas law, but, kind of under the table, they really didn't invite too many people, and they weren't really on the up-and-up about what exactly they were doing. I actually went to one of these meetings at one time. They did not say, we're rewriting your Comprehensive Planning and Zoning. They said, "We're here to find out, to do a survey, just to find out what your needs are."

So it's all on the down-low, very, very shady that they're coming in and using regulations. That's a first

step, I think, is regulations. Once you start regulating people out, and a lot of people might not even realize that they're being regulated out.

A good example of that is, sitting at a picnic table, a lady asked me how—she was overhearing our conversation—and she asked me, if this had anything to do with the shingles on her roof? When I inquired further, she explained to me that she is up in Johnson County; for those that don't know, that's the Kansas City area. She said that she needed new shingles on her roof, and she opened the phone book. She called roofers. They told her that she first needed to go down and get a permit. She went down and she got a permit. The folks at the permit office asked her what kind of shingles she is using. And she said, "I don't know, I guess we have to discuss that with the roofer." They pulled out a board with shingles samples, and said, "You have to pick one of these."

That's how drastic this comes to. Turns out that they do have a Joint Comprehensive Plan over them. They do have these regulations. I would describe them as a homeowners' association—you know, from a very dark place—very controlling, and it controls all the way down to what products that you're going to be able to shingle your own roof with.

And it's all about protecting the viewshed. And the viewshed is best described, by what would you see if you were driving down a New England road, from your car: pastel colored houses, with shutters and pretty shingles, and just the picture-perfect world. And they paint this as the optimum place that we should be, here in the Midwest.

We get asked a lot, especially by the old timers, if this has anything to do with Buffalo Commons. I'm young enough that I actually had to look that up, and Google that word, that phrase. My answer would be that though I found no evidence that says that this is Buffalo Commons, I have found no evidence that says this is not Buffalo Commons. What Buffalo Commons is, is an older version of 30 by '30. It's to depopulate these Plains States, and turn this into a national park area.