WMR has learned from a senior Democratic congressional source that the Bush family, most notably former President George H. W. Bush, is reaping windfall profits from the transfer of title of public federal and state lands to private hands. The elder Bush, according to our sources, has a vested financial interest in land title companies that specialize in the transfer of public lands to private interests.

The revelations represent the first evidence that the elder Bush has benefited from the transfer of public lands to private hands in a giant scheme to defraud federal and state governments, as well as the American taxpayers and Native Americans.

The land-grabbing scheme primarily involves the transfer of federal lands, including Native American lands and national forest system lands, in the Rocky Mountain West, state lands in Texas, and both federal and state lands in California, Mississippi, and Florida to private entities. The scheme is also at the center of the scandal surrounding jailed GOP lobbyist Jack Abramoff who conspired to privatize federal lands and assets around the country to benefit his corporate clients.

In 2004, under pressure from Abramoff and the White House, Senators Harry Reid (D-NV) and Jim Gibbons (R-NV) shepherded the passage of the Western Shoshone Distribution Act, which was quickly signed by President George W. Bush. The act settled federal violations of the Ruby Valley Treaty of 1863 with the Shoshones and compensated them a mere $135 million for 24 million acres of Shoshone land illegally seized by the federal government in Nevada, California, Utah, and Idaho. The Shoshones cried foul, saying their land is rich in gold reserves. Gibbons, who is now governor of Nevada, instantly moved legislation to privatize the former Shoshone lands. Reid, Gibbons, and Senator John Ensign (R-NV), all received lucrative cash contributions to their campaigns from Abramoff clients.

Bush White House official Jennifer Farley urged passage of the bill claiming that Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney were personally interested in its enactment, further adding that the legislation was considered “hot.” Cheney paid a visit to Nevada as the Senate voted to pass the bill.

The Washington Post reported that Farley and Karl Rove were recipients of sporting event tickets from Abramoff’s assistant Kevin Ring, arrested and jailed this past week for his involvement in the Abramoff bribery scandal. Farley termed tickets as “fruit” in her conversations with Ring. Abramoff, already serving a prison sentence for a guilty verdict from a Florida case, received an additional four years in prison last week for his role in the scandal, which has tainted a number of Republicans in Congress, as well as senior members of the Bush administration. Tony Rudy, another Abramoff assistant and a former deputy chief of staff to former Texas Republican Representative Tom DeLay, pleaded guilty in the bribery scandal.

WMR has also learned that the Bush administration ordered a number of California and other Western state forest wildfires purposefully set with the intention of damaging and destroying federal and state forestlands, thus making them ripe for exploitation and sale to private interests. California Republican Representative John Doolittle, also under investigation in the Abramoff bribery scandal, promoted the passage of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, which

permitted national forests to be purposefully thinned by timber companies to make them less susceptible to the fires, exacerbated by global warming, that were being set by others within the Bush administration. The purposeful destruction of federal forests was carried out with the knowledge of top officials of the Interior Department under both Interior Secretaries Gale Norton and Dirk Kempthorne.

In 2003, California law enforcement concluded that a number of devastating fires that destroyed 718,000 acres in the state were the result of arson. Some within the Bush administration suggested that “Al Qaeda” terrorists could be behind the blazes. It now appears that it was the Bush administration that was the actual terrorists in carrying out the arson to enrich their friends in the real estate, Indian gambling casino, mining, and other exploitation industries.

In Florida, under both Governors Jeb Bush and Charlie Crist, the St. Joe Company, a firm that has close financial ties to both Jeb and George H. W. Bush, has steadily encroached on lands adjacent to state and federal wildlife management preserves, state forests and parks, and national forests.

TVNL Comment: As we said, welcome to Bush's ownership society!

Source...