

Repeat after me: "All politics is about real estate"

Recently I forwarded that quotation from Fredric Jameson, but it occurs to me that maybe it's application to the San Pedro basin could be a little sharper.

That is, for many years public lands activists repeated the adage that "The main business of ranching is real estate." The slur was mainly applied to millionaire ranchers who bought up (or inherited) large tracts of cheap rangeland (and water rights) and made huge profits selling the land to real estate developers for subdivisions, shopping centers, rights-of-way, etc.

It went along with the contemporary icon of the Marlboro cowboy in a tank-sized SUV pickup, \$1000 Stetson and designer boots.

Like speculators in the land rush days of the 19thC, these ranchers (ranching families) found it more profitable to deal in real estate than in cattle.

Thinking of the apparently tight relationship (or at least parallel policy positions) between development interests and ranchers in the San Pedro basin, I wonder how much land now subdivided was previously owned, and sold at some profit, by ranching families.

A good research topic for some grad student, investigative journalist, or activist.

Fredric Jameson: "All politics is about Real Estate"

Examples abound: from the recent restoration of Ponca land (see link below) to subdivisions in the San Pedro basin, in a world of 7 billion people "all politics is about real estate. Postmodern politics is essentially a matter of land grabs, on a local as well as global scale. Whether you think of the question of Palestine, the settlements and the camps, or of the politics of raw materials and extraction; whether you think of ecology (and the rainforests) or the problems of federalism, citizenship, and immigration, or whether it is a question of gentrification in the great cities as well as in the bidonvilles, the favelas and the townships and of course the movement of the landless--today everything is about land. In Marxist terms, all these struggles result from the commodification of land, the dissolution of the last remnants of feudalism and its peasantries, and their replacement by industrial agriculture or agribusiness and farmworkers."

Fredric Jameson, "An American Utopia," ed., Slavoj Žižek
(London: Verso, 2016), p.13.

<http://boldnebraska.org/in-historic-first-nebraska-farmer-returns-land-to-ponca-tribe-along-trail-of-tears/>