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Shannyn Moore: The tea is laced with Kool-Aid, and the state is serving

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By Shannyn Moore — comment

The State of Alaska has one hand out palm up, and the other raised with one finger prominently extended -- again.

The upcoming "Federal Overreach Summit" to be held at the Dena'ina Center in Anchorage seemed like a tea party function. I don't have a yellow flag with a snake on it or a three-cornered hat, so I didn't pay much mind.

Until this week.

An email found its way to me from a Department of Natural Resources employee.

Karrie Improte signed an email announcing the "very interesting news; on page 1 there is an announcement on the Commission sponsored 'Federal Overreach Summit' scheduled for August 12 and 13 in Anchorage, more information will be posted to our website as it becomes available" with Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas with a Fairbanks address.

I was confused. I wondered why a state employee would be so brazen about using her work account for her extracurricular activities. Karrie was just doing her job. I wish to heaven it wasn't true.

Sure enough, there was that middle finger posted on DNR's website.

The commission is appointed by Gov. Sean Parnell and other elected members of our Legislature. You know, the same people who apply for flood relief and fly to Washington, D.C., to beg the Pentagon to not move military installations out of Alaska and could we please have a new airport at any number of places.

I held my breath. The director of the commission is Stan Leaphart. He was a featured speaker at the Deltana Liberty Rally last month. Other featured speakers included tea party celebs, and I'm sorry I missed "Law of the Sea Treaty -- UN takeover of the seas" and, even more, "Civil War Truths and The Flags That Were Flown." All under a giant yellow flag with a snake on it.

According to AlaskaSalaries.com, Leaphart was paid \$98,484 for his work in 2012.

Initially I was thinking this was some weirdo tea party group. Then I found out it was state-sponsored. Then I found out it was both!

Who are the "citizens"? Mark Fish, the chair of the Libertarian Party who had to withdraw his name from a second term on the state Human Rights Commission after he blogged that "radical" feminists are out to "eliminate men from the face of the earth."

Or Board of Game member Ron Somerville, who gave a lame "if you were offended I'm sorry" apology after he said Natives who were absent from a meeting were off drinking beers. The Alaska Native Brotherhood had opposed him in 2010 being the state's second choice for commissioner because "he has a long and hostile history toward indigenous people of Alaska." They said, "We consider the forwarding of Ron Somerville by the Joint Boards of Fisheries and Game a direct slap in the face to the Native community."

So is it less of a slap that he's now on a citizens' board? Seriously!

Also on this board:

- Sen. John Coghill, who is obsessed with controlling women's bodies.

- Rep. Wes Keller, who is the state chairman for the American Legislative Exchange Council -- a clearinghouse for bills written by corporations.
- Kathleen Liska, who runs the 907 Pray Contact Act website for "prayer warriors."
- Warren Olson, who years ago formed the Alaska Constitutional Legal Defense Conservation Fund to sue the federal government pitting urban against rural Alaskans for hunting.
- Rod Arno, from the Alaska Outdoor Council, who hasn't met an animal he wouldn't shoot from a plane. Well, I'm guessing that last part but he's big on predator control.

When you read the notes from the CACFA it reads like a bunch of lazy hunters who moan about not being able to drive their four-wheelers wherever they want to shoot whatever trophy they are missing from their collection.

The commissioner of DNR, Dan Sullivan, is in Afghanistan serving with the military. His commander is President Obama and he is working for America. At home, his department is staging a campaign against the federal government.

I can't take the hypocrisy.

The notion that Mr. Sullivan or Gov. Parnell really just want smaller government for the citizens of Alaska is disingenuous. In 2011, when the Lake and Penn Borough citizens passed a ballot initiative (it's called democracy) to have a say on the Pebble mine, the governor jumped in front of the foreign mining companies to sue the borough.

What's next -- a "Local Overreach Summit"?

The tea party takeover has happened with board appointments. If that's the finger we want to point at the federal government, we need to put the outstretched hand back in our pocket.

Shannyn Moore can be heard weekdays from 6 to 9 p.m. on KOAN 1020 AM and 95.5 FM radio.

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