

TIMELINE OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AS THEY RELATE TO LARGE, FOR-PROFIT MILITARY AND PARAMILITARY TRAINING COMPLEXES IN JEFFERSON COUNTY

An account by The Tarboo Ridge Coalition; October 2019

Joe D'Amico, Fort Discovery, Inc, and the Rally Point are a county-wide issue.

Fort Discovery, Inc. and Security Services Northwest (SSNW) are businesses owned by Joe D'Amico of Sequim, WA. SSNW provides commercial, home, and personal security services. Fort Discovery, Inc. hosts military and paramilitary training, manufactures and sells weapons, and markets a "Rally Point" where "like-minded people" can gather after a government collapse.

In the Beginning; 1988 - 2017 Joe D'Amico leases a site near Discovery Bay where he is permitted to train SSNW employees. After 2001, neighbors become alarmed at growing noise from automatic weapons fire, explosions, and helicopter landings. In 2005, Jefferson County red-tags buildings constructed without permits. In response to a lawsuit, WA state courts rule that SSNW can train up to the 22 employees that were vested prior to 1992 on the site; SSNW loses its appeal of this ruling in 2010. But D'Amico continues to host military and paramilitary training without permits and in defiance of the court ruling. He loses his lease on this property in 2017.

2017 Fort Discovery, Inc. holds a pre-App meeting with Jefferson County Dept. of Community Development regarding its proposal to build 7 shooting ranges, 2 helicopter pads, a bunkhouse, a clubhouse, cabins, and RV sites at a site the company has purchased near Tarboo Lake—a popular public recreation area. Alarmed by the scope of the project and determined to protect the lake and legacy of conservation work in the Tarboo Creek Watershed, a small neighborhood group forms to organize opposition. They register under the name Tarboo Ridge Coalition.

Under current zoning, commercial gun ranges are restricted to small-scale, recreational, and tourist use. County officials fear that these rules are not adequate for the scope of Fort Discovery's proposed project. They establish a one-year moratorium on the development of commercial gun ranges along with a review committee to advise the drafting of ordinances to regulate them. The Moratorium ordinance notes that Kitsap County has effective gun-range regulations that have stood up in court and protect environmental interests. TRC deliver a petition supporting the moratorium with over 1200 signatures from Jefferson County residents and property owners.

Note: Over the 18-years of dispute over Fort Discovery's activities, Mr. D'Amico has filed numerous lawsuits against the county, harassed opponents with lawsuits and defamation letters, and filed many dozens of public records requests. A recent lawsuit against Jefferson County, for example, claims over \$100,000,000 in damages. Experienced professionals call these tactics "paper terrorism" and "Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP), and describe their goal as intimidating and bankrupting individuals and local governments.

The county enters into mediation with Fort Discovery Inc., apparently in response to the threat of additional lawsuits. TRC confirms that county officials have been meeting frequently with Joe D'Amico and his attorney, Greg Overstreet, during the moratorium. In response to a public records request, the content of those meetings are heavily redacted due to "mediation privilege." But no mediator has been present at these meetings.

In September 2018 the county issues two draft ordinances that together allow large-scale military and paramilitary training of unlimited size and scope. Opponents are stunned.

The Planning Commissioners review the draft ordinances and recommend that they be revised to include "bright line" regulations including 500-yard setbacks from large public lakes, no military training, no aircraft, outdoor shooting only from 8am to 5pm, 8' security fencing, and 16' noise barriers. In December 2018, the BoCC passes Title 8 (public health and safety) and Title 18 (land use) ordinances that **ignore the Planning Commission recommendations and open up 76% of unincorporated Jefferson County to commercial gun ranges of unlimited size and scope.** On his Facebook page, Mr. D'Amico offers to partner with other businesses that wish to start large-scale weapons complexes in the county.

2018-2019 Through monthly, legally conducted drone flights, TRC discovers that Mr. D’Amico is developing his Tarboo Lake property without permits. In response to evidence of wetland alteration, the WA Dept. of Ecology and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers send Fort Discovery separate notices concerning apparent violations of stormwater permit regulations and the Clean Water Act. Meanwhile Jefferson County officials ask Mr. D’Amico to voluntarily cease his unpermitted activity.

In December 2018, Tarboo Ridge Coalition appeals the Title 8 and Title 18 ordinances to the Growth Management Hearings Board. In September 2019, the Board invalidates the ordinances and gives the county until March 2020 to pass acceptable ordinances that include an appropriate environmental review. The BoCC passes a 6-month moratorium on commercial shooting ranges.

Recently *The Pacific Northwest Inlander* publishes a story reporting that Fort Discovery’s attorney, Greg Overstreet, wrote a series of 10 dystopian novels called *299 Days* using the pen name Glenn Tate. The novels depict the degeneration of the democratically elected government, its violent overthrow by “Patriots,” and its replacement with a libertarian state. Walters’ story reports that *299 Days* helped inspire work by state representative Matt Shea and sympathizers, who have published tracks called *The Biblical Basis for War and Restoration*, which establish guidelines for the establishment of a “Christian” libertarian state.

The Port Townsend *Leader* follows with a related story that reports that Joe D’Amico is the model for a character in the *299 Days* novels. The character, named Joe Tantori, leads a group of AWOL Marines called Tantori’s Raiders who help storm Olympia and bring down the government by force of arms—the culmination of the book series. The *Leader* story also details that Fort Discovery has been manufacturing and marketing an AR-15 called the Expedition Rifle, which is sold with a Rally Point coin that will admit purchasers to the Fort Discovery’s facility in the event of a government collapse.

Willamette Week publishes a story by Aaron Mesh, reporting that a series of three novels called *A Great State* were written by Anne Marie Gurney, who is married to Greg Overstreet, Mr. D’Amico’s attorney. The novels depict the degeneration of Portland into social chaos and the recognition of Sharia law.

Currently

- Fort Discovery’s 2005 violations at their former location have never been resolved. The red-tagged buildings were moved to the Tarboo Lake location, without permits.
- TRC is working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, WA State Department of Ecology, and Jefferson County Departments of Community Development and Environmental and Public Health to enforce the extensive permitting violations that these agencies have documented at the Tarboo Lake site.
- TRC has renewed its work to urge the county to write “bright line” rules that follow the recommendations of the Planning Commissioners in the new ordinances. TRC continues to inform the public and to seek help from the State Attorney General to assist the county in resisting the threatening lawsuits.

Sign up for the Tarboo Ridge Coalition’s mailing list at www.tarbooridgecoalition.org to stay informed, make donations to help with TRC’s legal fees, and learn other ways you can help.