Sanctuary Pointe

BY CARLOS GALARZA
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SENECA — The ball is in South Carolina tourism officials' court on when to unveil detailed plans for the 325-acre Sanctuary Pointe development on Lake Hartwell, near the Interstate 85 Welcome Center in Oconee County.

A Seneca-based group trying to develop a destination spot on the Lake Hartwell property that likely would include a golf course, hotel and conference center, restaurant and rental cabins. The group is hopeful that the S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism will make a formal announcement of the plans sooner rather than later.

Elmon Henry, a principal with Sanctuary Pointe, LLC, said talks on the project are at the moment between SCPRT and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps leases the 325-acre Hartwell property to SCPRT.

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>
> **Elmon Henry**
> Principal, Sanctuary Pointe

"We're not involved in those meetings," Henry said. "We're waiting for any response or push back."

Marion Edmonds, a spokesman for SCPRT, describes the ongoing process as "preliminary discussions" in which SCPRT, the Corps and Sanctuary are bouncing questions and answers off each other.

"The timeline is partly driven by how quickly questions and answers are exchanged," Edmonds said. "There are oral and written questions going back and forth. We don't control all the questions and answers. We're only one-third of the process."

waiting on state

Billy Birdwell, a spokesman for the Corps, said, "there has been no agreement" yet on the developers' plans or sub-leasing the 325 acres to Sanctuary Pointe.

Almost two years have passed since Sanctuary Pointe submitted a plan in response to a Request for Proposal issued by SCPRT. Sanctuary Pointe was the only group to respond to the state's RFP.

Birdwell said the development must be approved by the state and consented to by the Corps of Engineers.

"At this point, a final development has not been accepted by the state or presented to the Corps," Birdwell said.

Henry said Sanctuary Pointe has done its part and is waiting on the other two players.

"We'd like to see something definitive by the end of August," he said.

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