

Florida Today

April 1, 2009

<http://www.floridatoday.com/article/20090401/OPINION/90331029/1006/NEWS01>

Our views: Endangered in Brevard

White House should rescind Bush-era rules that threaten many species

The success of the Endangered Species Act can be seen in our own backyard, where it has helped save animals by protecting the lands and waters where they live.

Lands and waters that are open for all of us to enjoy and which are economically crucial to Brevard County's tourism, fishing and recreation industries.

For instance:

- Saving endangered sea turtles that nest along the South Brevard beaches has led to the creation of the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge.
- Saving the manatees has lent more impetus to stopping pollution from causing still more damage to the imperiled Indian River Lagoon.
- Saving the North American right whales that use our coastal seas as calving grounds in the winter has spurred pressure to keep those waters clean.
- That's just part of the picture in Brevard County, which has 16 species protected under the act. Others include the bald eagle, scrub jay and wood stork.

Throughout Florida, the act protects 112 animals and plants — the fourth highest number in the nation.

That's why the White House should rescind several Bush-era policies that declared open season on the act by rejecting proper scientific reviews and giving the mining, timber and other industries a freer pass to exploit natural resources.

Under a spending bill approved by Congress last month, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar has until May 9 to pull the regulations, which he should do now.

That would restore the standards that have safeguarded endangered species for 35 years.

Two of the provisions are especially important for Florida and Brevard.

One would restore the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to its rightful role as an independent, scientific watchdog over projects that could harm the environment and further imperil species.

Bush cut the agency out of the review process, allowing other agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service to determine whether a project will affect endangered species. That's a conflict of interest because such agencies employ staff dedicated to — and getting revenue from — the industries they're supposed to be monitoring.

The other provision would restore examining the greenhouse gas emissions that are

causing global warming in reviews for coal-fired power plants and higher federal fuel-efficiency standards for vehicles.

Bush gutted the rule even as global warming has worsened, causing staghorn and elkhorn coral along the coral reefs of South Florida and the Keys to be declared threatened species.

In all, more than 50 percent of the federal endangered species recovery plans issued the past three years cite global warming as a threat.

Protecting Brevard's endangered species means protecting their habitats and the major economic benefits they bring.

For example, the shoreline that includes the Archie Carr beaches and coastal waters — along with other elements of the fast-growing eco-tourism field here — are a key to the county's \$2.9 billion tourism industry.

The 156-mile Indian River Lagoon has a \$3.7 billion economic impact, with \$1.2 billion and more than 3,100 jobs concentrated in Brevard waters that are home to one of Florida's largest manatee populations.

The large number of endangered and threatened species in Florida and Brevard requires that our state and community be special stewards of the land.

Rescinding the Bush rules would return the safeguards that have long helped to protect them.

Duluth News Tribune
April 10, 2009

Local view: Don't weaken fish and wildlife's 'bill of rights'

By Marc Fink

The Endangered Species Act is the “bill of rights” for our nation’s fish and wildlife. The act is a fundamental statement that we value other species and that they have the right to exist. If a fish or wildlife species is scientifically demonstrated to be endangered with extinction, it is listed as endangered under the act. The act then prohibits the killing or harming of endangered species, as well as adverse impacts to their critical habitat. The act also requires federal agencies to “consult” with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure its actions would not jeopardize endangered species or their habitats. These protections remain in place until the species are recovered and removed from the list of endangered species.

In the final days of the Bush administration, new regulations were issued to significantly weaken the Endangered Species Act in two key respects. First, the Bush regulations give the fox permission to guard the henhouse by allowing federal agencies to determine themselves when they must follow the common-sense “consultation” procedure. Federal agencies, such as the Army Corps of Engineers, whose primary interest is decidedly not endangered species, are thus allowed to evade consulting with independent scientists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service over the impacts of projects with potentially severe consequences for endangered species. The Bush administration tested a similar policy in 2003 and found that when allowed to “self-consult” over timber sales, the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management violated the Endangered Species Act nearly 70 percent of the time. Rather than scrap the program, however, the administration expanded it to all federal agencies.

Second, the new regulations reduce protections for endangered species by prohibiting the consideration of greenhouse gases, and potentially additional pollutants, during the consultation process. By 2050, nearly a third of the world’s species could be committed to extinction if current levels of greenhouse gas emissions continue, according to recent scientific estimates. Climate change is already undeniably impacting endangered species, as more than half of the recovery plans for species issued in the past three years recognize global warming as a threat.

There is no legitimate reason why federal agencies should not consider ways to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions just as they consider other ways to reduce the impacts of their projects on endangered species.

On March 11, Congress passed an Omnibus Appropriations Bill giving new Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar 60 days to revoke these Bush administration regulations. With the stroke of a pen, Secretary Salazar can rescind these midnight regulations and restore the long-standing protections to species whose very existence is at stake. But the

secretary's authority to act expires May 9. Thereafter, reversing these regulations will be a much more arduous and time-consuming process. The Obama administration should act quickly to remove the Bush regulations and reinstate this important check on federal activities.

Over the past 35 years, the Endangered Species Act has been an overwhelming success in protecting our nation's wildlife and preventing the extinction of 98 percent of all species designated as endangered. While more work is needed, the number of wolves roaming the north woods has steadily increased, and bald eagles are again common in much of Minnesota. With the growing awareness of climate change, along with continued habitat encroachment and degradation, now is not the time to weaken this "bill of rights" for our nation's fish and wildlife species.

Marc Fink of Duluth is an attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity and is its Public Lands Forests Director.

Athens Banner-Herald

April 10, 2009

http://onlineathens.com/stories/041109/let_427920816.shtml

Kay Fisher: Restore endangered species law

Just before leaving office, the Bush administration issued rules eviscerating the central consultation process of the Endangered Species Act; exempting greenhouse gas-emitting projects from regulation under the act; and specifically banning federal agencies from protecting the polar bear from greenhouse gas emissions, the primary threat to its continued existence.

These rules gut our nation's most important wildlife protection law, which has been safeguarding species for more than 35 years, and fail to use this successful law to fight the greatest future threat to endangered species - global warming.

On March 11, President Obama signed into law an omnibus appropriations bill giving Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar 60 days to rescind the Bush rules and restore the Endangered Species Act. This is a golden opportunity for Salazar to fulfill Obama's campaign promises to bring science back to federal agencies. We must take steps to repair the environmental damage of the Bush administration.

Kay Fisher

The UC San Diego Guardian
April 14, 2009

<http://www.ucsdguardian.org/opinion/washington-must-protect-endangered-species-1.1714055>

Washington Must Protect Endangered Species

By Joanna Suchman

Dear Editor,

Just before leaving office, the Bush administration eviscerated the central consultation process of the Endangered Species Act — exempting greenhouse gas-emitting projects from regulation — and banned federal agencies from protecting the polar bear from greenhouse gas emissions, the primary threat to its continued existence. These rules gut our nation's most important wildlife protection law, and we've failed to use this law to fight the greatest future threat to endangered species — global warming.

On March 11, President Barack Obama signed into law an appropriations bill giving Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar 60 days to rescind the Bush rules with the stroke of a pen and restore the Endangered Species Act to its former glory. As global citizens, we must urge Salazar to do what is right and take the first steps in repairing the environmental damage of the Bush administration by immediately rescinding the Endangered Species Act regulations by May 9. Call Salazar today at (202) 208-7351 and go to Savethepolarbear.org to send him a letter. The survival of endangered species across the planet depends on it.

The Salt Lake Tribune

April 14, 2009

http://www.sltrib.com/opinion/ci_12140471

**Public Forum Letter
Endangered Species**

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar faces a great test, and our natural heritage is at stake. He has until May 9 to reinstate important protections for endangered species.

As a native Utahn, I take pride in our rich wildlife and habitat, and the Endangered Species Act is vital to protecting those treasures. The law provides a safety net for plants and animals on the brink of extinction. When I was a child, bald eagles were seldom seen in Utah; now, our national emblem is on the road to recovery.

To date, the Endangered Species Act has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of all species on its endangered list. This success is because it requires federal agencies to ensure that their actions do not jeopardize protected species or degrade critical habitat. This safeguard is at risk because new rules released in the twilight hours of the Bush administration create giant loopholes.

Congress granted Secretary Salazar a small window to revoke these weakening regulations. With the stroke of a pen, he can and should rescind them before the deadline expires.

Miyoko Sakashita
Oakland, California

Oakland Tribune

April 16, 2009

http://www.insidebayarea.com/opinion/letterstotheeditor/tribune/ci_12148027

Letters to the editor

Change now

AS OF today, the Secretary of the Interior has 23 days left to save our nation's wildlife. In November, Americans voted for change, including a reversal of the disastrous environmental policies of the Bush administration.

Among President Barack Obama's campaign promises was his pledge to overturn last-minute regulations issued by the outgoing administration that undermine the Endangered Species Act and severely weaken our ability to protect wildlife threatened with extinction, including the polar bear.

The Bush regulations remove scientific oversight from the Endangered Species Act by allowing federal agencies, often with no biological expertise and whose missions conflict with species' protection, to decide for themselves whether their actions will harm endangered species — in short, letting the fox guard the henhouse.

These regulations also allow federal agencies to authorize projects that generate large volumes of greenhouse gases — such as new coal-fired power plants — without considering how that greenhouse gas pollution will impact endangered species like the polar bear.

Fortunately, change seemed to be at hand when the new Congress passed legislation giving Obama's Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar a 60-day window, ending on May 9, to permanently revoke these regulations.

Yet, inexplicably, Salazar has not yet acted on this crucial opportunity to restore one of our nation's most important environmental laws. Today, he will be in San Francisco for a public hearing. This event provides Californians with a timely opportunity to tell him to uphold Obama's promise to undo the Bush administration's assault on the Endangered Species Act.

Salazar needs to deliver a change from Bush's anti-environmental policies that we can believe in.

Shaye Wolf
Center for Biological Diversity's Climate Law Institute
San Francisco

Guam Pacific Daily News

April 17, 2009

<http://www.guampdn.com/article/20090417/OPINION02/904170322/1014/OPINION>

Voice of the people

Urge Salazar to withdraw regulations

Just before leaving office, the Bush Administration issued rules that crippled the central consultation process of the Endangered Species Act. These rules essentially voided our nation's most important wildlife protection law, which has been safeguarding species for more than 35 years.

On March 11, President Barack Obama signed into law an omnibus appropriations bill giving Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar 60 days to rescind the Bush rules with the stroke of a pen and restore the Endangered Species Act to its former authority. This action provides an opportunity for Secretary Salazar to fulfill President Obama's campaign promises to bring science back to federal agencies.

On April 3, Congresswoman Bordallo joined 43 of her congressional colleagues in signing a letter urging Secretary Salazar to use his authority to withdraw the Bush regulations.

As global citizens, we must urge Salazar to do what is right, and take the first steps in repairing the environmental damage of the Bush Administration by immediately withdrawing these Endangered Species Act regulations by May 9. The survival of endangered species in Guam and across the planet depends upon it.

BARRY D. SMITH

Anchorage Daily News

April 16, 2009

<http://www.adn.com/opinion/compass/story/762511.html>

Endangered species are at risk

Not only does offshore oil development threaten Alaska's oceans with industrial noise, increased human activity, and the increased possibility of another catastrophic oil spill, it also directly contributes to the greenhouse gas emissions that are destroying sea ice habitat. For example, under the Bush Administration's five-year plan for offshore oil development 2007-2012, more than 5 billion tons of carbon dioxide would be emitted over the life of the program -- a huge contribution to greenhouse gases.

Unfortunately, under the Bush administration's midnight endangered species regulations, federal agencies are forced to turn a blind eye to climate change and its impacts on polar bears and other ice-dependent species. We cannot protect Alaska's amazing oceans and the animals and people who depend upon them without addressing climate change and the rapid melting of sea ice habitat. And to address climate change, we need the full protections of the Endangered Species Act.

Luckily, the FY 09 Omnibus Appropriations Act specifically grants Secretary Salazar additional authority to repeal the unlawful Bush endangered species rules. We urge the new Interior Secretary to rescind these illegal Bush rules and to phase out damaging fossil fuel development in Alaska's Outer Continental Shelf.

Rebecca Noblin, staff attorney
Center for Biological Diversity
Anchorage

San Francisco Chronicle

April 15, 2009

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/04/14/EDOM172996.DTL>

Don't hamstring the Endangered Species Act

By Eric Biber

The Endangered Species Act provides essential life support to a wide range of species on the edge of extinction, including native salmon, grizzly bears and California condors.

There are costs to the Endangered Species Act. We might lose economic development opportunities when we protect native habitat. The regulatory program has its share of paperwork and administrative costs. But when Congress passed the act in 1973, it concluded that species protection was worth these costs. Congress hasn't changed its mind since then.

One key provision of the act requires federal agencies, when they pursue development projects, to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The goal is to help both sides work together to determine possible impacts of development on endangered species. If the proposed project might cause serious harm to the species - what the act calls "jeopardy" - it is prohibited unless it is changed to reduce or eliminate that harm.

Consultation ensures that both the development agency and the Fish and Wildlife Service gather relevant information about endangered species and potential impacts on those species; it ensures that the service - a disinterested agency not committed to the development project - looks over the data and draws reasonable conclusions from that data; and it ensures that if that data show serious harm to endangered species, the project is stopped or changed. The consultation process is particularly important because, in many cases, we know very little about why species are endangered, or what the impacts from development projects might be. By requiring the development and analysis of information by an outside agency, the consultation process gathers better information about endangered species. Better information means cheaper and more effective protection for endangered species.

Unfortunately, the Bush administration undermined the consultation process by introducing loopholes in the implementing regulations. These loopholes potentially exempt a wide range of development projects from consultation. But these exemptions generally include the very types of projects for which we lack information about potential effects on endangered species. Indeed, in some cases, projects would be exempt from consultation precisely because of the lack of information about impacts on endangered species. But if we are serious about protecting endangered species, we need more information, not less.

Congress has given the Obama administration authority to undo these regulatory changes. The Obama administration should use its authority to restore the role of high-quality information in endangered species protection.

Eric Biber is an assistant professor at the UC Berkeley School of Law.

Tucson Citizen

April 19, 2009

<http://www.tucsoncitizen.com/ss/fromcomments/114699.php>

Our Opinion: New hopes for environment under Democratic rule

Tuesday marks the first Earth Day in eight years that engenders hope instead of despair.

Whatever one's opinion of the Bush administration, no one can deny its anti-science, pro-business approach wreaked havoc on our environment.

President Bush for six years denied even the existence of global warming, and his 2001 refusal to have the U.S. sign the Kyoto treaty outraged environmental and government leaders worldwide.

Indeed, the Bush administration even bucked a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 2007 that greenhouse gases must be regulated under the Clean Air Act.

Not until Friday was the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency finally free to report that carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases endanger public health.

This step toward reality, just in time for Earth Day, explains the new hope Americans harbor as President Obama and a Democratic Congress work to speed America's fight against global warming and accelerate our use of renewable energy sources.

Corrections are critical in other areas as well:

- The Bush administration eviscerated the Endangered Species Act, and Interior Secretary Ken Salazar should right that wrong straightaway. The famed Center for Biological Diversity, based in Tucson, is in the vanguard pushing for that fix. (See article below.)
- The National Park System has suffered myriad onslaughts, from permission for uranium drilling beside Grand Canyon National Park to attempts to weaken air quality standards in parks; allow park visitors to carry loaded, concealed guns; and lift the snowmobiling ban in Yellowstone, where the government also let 1,167 bison be slaughtered in 2008.
- The Bureau of Land Management made cleanup at oil and gas drilling sites purely voluntary, and it opened Colorado's Roan Plateau to such drilling despite local, state and congressional opposition.

These examples, however, only skim the surface of deep damage to our public lands, air and water quality and overall environment.

Now Mother Nature gets a second chance, and all Americans should join forces to heal her wounds and produce real reasons to celebrate Earth Day.

Arizona Daily Star
April 21, 2009

US must reverse harmful endangered-species rule

By Randy Serraglio

The Endangered Species Act is one of the most effective environmental laws ever created. Of all the desperately imperiled species listed under the act since its passage 36 years ago, 99 percent have survived. In some cases, thanks to the act's strong legal protections, species have recovered and flourished to the point of leaving behind the "endangered" label.

Not surprisingly, such success makes the Endangered Species Act one of the most popular environmental laws as well. I believe this stems at least in part from the fundamental need of the human spirit to maintain its connection to the wild.

Arizonans want to know that jaguars and leopard frogs and even tiny topminnows are still breathing life into our beautiful mountains and deserts. And it is profoundly satisfying to know that our hearts are big enough, and our government effective enough, to ensure that such species do not succumb to the tragedy of extinction.

But neither should it surprise anyone — considering the mess we are in now and his vast unpopularity — to learn that one of President George W. Bush's final actions before leaving the White House last fall was to take a damaging swipe at such a popular and effective law by imposing new rules that significantly weaken it.

One of the fundamental facets of the act is consultation, whereby federal agencies are required to ask the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to weigh in on proposed federal actions whenever they might cause harm to endangered species. Using the best available science, Fish and Wildlife must issue an opinion on the expected impacts to the species, which often results in modifications to the proposed action and mitigation and other steps to protect the species.

President Bush thought it would be a good idea to remove this requirement and allow federal agencies to oversee themselves on endangered-species matters.

But Bush's attack on the Endangered Species Act went further than that. His new rules also prohibit consideration of the impacts of greenhouse gases on endangered species, despite the fact that catastrophic climate disruption resulting from the buildup of such gases in our atmosphere is now the single greatest threat to biodiversity worldwide.

We are on the brink of a devastating extinction crisis, we know the causes, and we have an effective legal tool to help deal with them — yet Bush's rules prevent us from using it.

Fortunately, Congress recently granted new Interior Secretary Ken Salazar the authority to rescind the Bush rules with the stroke of a pen. During his campaign, Barack Obama made a clear commitment to strongly support endangered species protections.

Secretary Salazar should honor President Obama's commitment and rescind the Bush rules before the May 9 deadline. We must act, so that the miraculous diversity of life in southern Arizona and around the world is not diminished forever.

Write to Randy Serraglio at rserraglio@biologicaldiversity.org

The San Luis Obispo Tribune

April 17, 2009

<http://www.sanluisobispo.com/letters-to-the-editor/story/686793.html>

Do right, Salazar

Just before leaving office, the Bush administration issued rules eviscerating the central consultation process of the Endangered Species Act; exempting greenhouse gas-emitting projects from regulation under the Act; and specifically banning federal agencies from protecting the polar bear from greenhouse gas emissions, the primary threat to its continued existence. These rules gut our nation's most important wildlife protection law, which has been safeguarding species for more than 35 years, and fail to use this successful law to fight the greatest future threat to endangered species — global warming.

On March 11, President Barack Obama signed into law an omnibus appropriations bill giving Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar 60 days to rescind the Bush rules with the stroke of a pen and restore the Endangered Species Act to its former glory. This is a golden opportunity for Secretary Salazar to fulfill President Obama's campaign promises to bring science back to federal agencies. As global citizens, we must urge Salazar to do what is right, and take the first steps in repairing the environmental damage of the Bush administration by immediately rescinding these Endangered Species Act regulations by May 9. The survival of endangered species across the planet depends on it.

Jane Hughes

Arroyo Grande

The Corpus Christi Caller-Times

April 20, 2009

<http://www.caller.com/news/2009/apr/20/letters-to-the-editor-42009/>

Protect bears

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Christine Adams

The Telegraph Herald
April 13, 2009

Letter to the editor

Just before leaving office, the Bush administration issued rules eviscerating the central consultation process of the Endangered Species Act, exempting greenhouse gas-emitting projects from regulation under the act, and specifically banning federal agencies from protecting the polar bear from greenhouse gas emissions, the primary threat to its continued existence. These rules gut our nation's most important wildlife protection law, which has been safeguarding species for more than 35 years, and fail to use this successful law to fight the greatest future threat to endangered species - global warming.

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John Urbain
Epworth, Iowa

TCPalm

April 15, 2009

<http://www.tcpalm.com/news/2009/apr/15/letter-its-time-bring-science-back-federal-agencie/>

Letter: It's time to 'bring science back to federal agencies'

Just before leaving office, the Bush administration issued rules eviscerating the central consultation process of the Endangered Species Act, exempting greenhouse gas-emitting projects from regulation and, specifically, banning federal agencies from protecting the polar bear from greenhouse gas emissions, the primary threat to its continued existence.

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Joan Moore

Stuart

The Reporter (Fond du Lac, WI)
Letter to the editor

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Mary Fleming

San Gabriel Valley Tribune

April 13, 2009

http://www.sgvtribune.com/rds_search/ci_12135075?IADID=Search-www.sgvtribune.com-www.sgvtribune.com

Protecting species

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Beate Ackroyd
Los Angeles

Redding Record Searchlight

April 13, 2009

<http://www.redding.com/news/2009/apr/13/letters-to-the-editor-april-13-2009/>

Restore species act

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Dave Arnold
Redding

Colorado Daily
Tuesday, April 14, 2009

<http://www.coloradodaily.com/news/2009/apr/14/letter-editor-save-endangered-species-act/>

Letter to the Editor: Save the Endangered Species Act

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The survival of endangered species across the planet depends on it.

Philipp Wickey

Boulder

Marin Independent Journal

April 10, 2009

http://www.marinij.com/marinnews/ci_12113990?IADID=Search-www.marinij.com-www.marinij.com

Fixing environmental defense

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Judy Ranzer, Sausalito

Times Press-Recorder

April 19, 2009

<http://www.timespressrecorder.com/articles/2009/04/19/opinion/letters/letters04.txtb>

Reversing Bush edicts

To the Editor:

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Jane Hughes

Arroyo Grande

West Virginia Gazette

April 25, 2009

<http://wvgazette.com/News/200904250416>

Rahall urges reversal of Bush wildlife rules

By Paul J. Nyden

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Rep. Nick J. Rahall is among a group of House Democrats who are asking Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and Commerce Secretary Gary Locke to rescind two changes former President Bush made five days before leaving the White House in January.

Bush reversed a long-time requirement that any federal agency must consult with biologists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service before taking any action that could threaten a protected species. Bush made those consultations optional.

Bush also issued a new rule exempting greenhouse gases from any regulatory decisions to protect the polar bears under the Endangered Species Act.

The Omnibus Appropriations Bill, which became law when President Obama signed it on March 11, gives Salazar 60 days to rescind Bush's last-minute changes. Salazar can immediately restore federal protections for endangered species, including polar bears, if he signs an order by May 9.

The act, passed in 1973, was signed into law by President Nixon. It has protected a wide variety of animals - from wolves to bald eagles, from salmon to sea lions, from blue whales to turtles.

The April letter follows a complaint to the Bush administration from Rahall, D-W.Va., and his colleagues last September, shortly after Bush first proposed easing ESA regulations.

"They cut at the heart of the law that has protected and recovered endangered fish, wildlife and plants for the past 35 years," the April letter says. "They contradict the letter and spirit of the ESA and will result in reduced protection for imperiled fish and wildlife."

The letter says the budget bill gives Salazar and Locke authority to rescind the last-minute Bush regulations without holding time-consuming rulemaking procedures.

"The Congress chose to grant you this expedited authority because the effect of exercising it ... would be to simply restore the original rules" Rahall's letter states. "Quick withdrawal of these flawed rules is essential. Every day they remain in effect places endangered wildlife at greater risk of extinction."

Francisca Santana, from the Center for Biological Diversity in San Francisco, said the Bush administration changes "exclude the greatest future threat to endangered species - global warming - from consideration under the [Endangered Species] Act.

"Scientists estimate that nearly a third of the world's species could be committed to extinction by 2050 if current levels of greenhouse gas emissions continue."

Groups opposing the Bush regulations include the Ecological Society of America, Society for Conservation Biology, Endangered Species Coalition, Ornithological Council and National Wildlife Society.

On Thursday, the Interior Department sent a proposed "final rule" about the ESA regulations to the Office of Management and Budget in the White House.

That "final rule" would immediately restore requirements that federal agencies consult with scientists before taking any actions that might threaten animals or plants on the endangered species list.

Burlington County Times (NJ)

April 28, 2009

http://www.phillyburbs.com/news/news_details/article/313/2009/april/28/species-act-protects-wildlife-human.html

Species act protects wildlife, humans

President Barack Obama's Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, is facing his first significant test as chief steward of our nation's magnificent yet imperiled public lands and natural resources.

He has until May 9 to undo one of President George W. Bush's worst environmental actions — regulations gutting the Endangered Species Act, our nation's safety net for plants and animals on the brink of extinction and one of the few existing tools capable of confronting the growing impacts of global warming, which is hurting threatened polar bears.

The Endangered Species Act grants protections to imperiled species and requires federal agencies to base decisions on the best available scientific information, but Bush's political appointees repeatedly ignored or corrupted science, and subsequently denied species protections to such an extent that the interior inspector general was forced to confront the malfeasance.

The Act has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of all species listed to date, and has positively helped New Jersey coastal species, such as the piping plover, which depends upon healthy beach habitats to survive. Among the law's most effective provisions is the requirement that federal agencies ensure that their actions do not jeopardize protected species or degrade critical habitat, through "consultation" with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

One of Bush's last acts in office, completed at the 11th hour with circumscribed public comment, was to weaken these protections by allowing federal agencies, often with no biological expertise and at the behest of the oil or timber industries, to decide for themselves whether their actions will harm endangered species. The Bush Administration also specifically denied protections for polar bears in a separate rule.

The regulations also create broad exemptions, aimed at greenhouse gases, but potentially encompassing other toxic pollutants as well, from consideration during the consultation process. The Bush plan allows the fox to guard the henhouse.

Congress has now given the Interior Secretary a perfect opportunity to fix the problem: the fiscal year 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act.

The act, passed last month, allows the secretary to revoke the rules with no more than the stroke of a pen, but this authority extends only until May 9. If Salazar fails to act, the regulations will remain in place unless they are overturned by the courts.

At this point, Salazar's decision appears far from certain. The stakes are huge.

Our nation's natural treasures are under siege as never before, with global warming joining habitat destruction and invasive species to form a deadly trio of threats to the natural world.

While America's plants and animals are important in their own right, the reality is that the degradation of our natural habitats is a direct human welfare issue as well.

Coastal jurisdictions along all of our country's coasts are struggling with beach erosion and loss, growing insurance costs, dwindling fresh water supplies, and public health problems relating to the degradation of our natural systems.

In other words, the species protected by the Endangered Species Act now serve as our canary in the coal mine. Thus, there could not be a more crucial time to re-establish our most effective tool for saving these species and the ecosystems on which they depend.

Such is Salazar's great test — he is under intense pressure from powerful anti-regulatory interests to let the Bush regulations stand.

Revoking them is the essential first step toward restoring scientific integrity and the rule of law to his vast department, and it is the only choice which will give so many plants and animals a fighting chance of surviving global warming, which could soon cause rising oceans to gobble up precious beach habitat.

By saving the species act, Salazar will not only fulfill an Obama campaign pledge, he also will reveal true environmental leadership at a time when we have never needed it more.

If Salazar fails to act on both bad and illegal Bush rules, one must wonder if we have received true "change" from the new administration.

Bill Snape

Senior Counsel

Center for Biological Diversity

Ventura County Star
April 30, 2009

<http://www.venturacountystar.com/news/2009/apr/30/rolling-back-a-rule-change/>

Editorial: Rolling back a rule change
Wildlife get full protection

The Obama administration has just made the spring a little greener for environmentalists by rescinding a major change to the Endangered Species Act.

Tuesday, to the delight of environmentalists and conservationists everywhere, the administration overturned a controversial rule change — made in the final weeks of the Bush administration — that let federal agencies planning development projects bypass reviews by government wildlife experts.

“By rolling back this eleventh-hour regulation, we are ensuring that threatened and endangered species continue to receive the full protection of the law,” and that top science will be the foundation of the decision-making, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar told The Associated Press.

Mandatory consultations had been the norm for more than two decades until it was made an option rule in December, effectively removing top biologists from having a say on development occurring on federal lands that could harm plants, animals and fish at risk of extinction.

As The Star editorialized earlier, the Bush administration change, like so many it made, favored special-interest industries — mining, logging and oil — and amounted to putting the fox in charge of the henhouse.

In justifying the rule change, the Bush administration argued that the consultations caused unneeded delays and, that over the years, federal agencies had developed ample expertise to exam their own projects and didn't need input from the experts.

But, environmentalists charged the change would gut the Endangered Species Act, the effectiveness of which there is no denying.

For example, bald eagle pairs have staged a dramatic comeback, from 416 to 9,789 between 1963 and 2006; gray whale numbers rose from 13,095 to 26,635 between 1969 and 1998; and grizzly bears roaming the Yellowstone area have increased from about 224 to more than 500.

More successes are sure to follow now that full protections afforded all manner of species under the Endangered Species Act have been restored.

The Daily Review

May 2, 2009

http://www.thedailyreview.com/articles/2009/05/02/editorial/tw_review.20090502.a.pg4.tw02edit_s1.2492447_edi.txt

The Daily Review: Science must trump politics in regards to endangered species

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar did the right thing this week when, using power specifically given to him by Congress, he reinvigorated key aspects of the Endangered Species Act.

In December the Bush administration had eviscerated important science-based elements of the law, by regulation. The new Congress wisely authorized the Interior Department to evaluate the changes and to rescind them if they failed to meet the objectives of the law, which is to protect endangered wildlife.

The rescinded rule would have left it to individual agencies to determine whether development projects under their regulatory jurisdiction posed serious threats to endangered wildlife. That would have eliminated from the loop the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the only federal agency that employs wildlife biologists with the expertise to evaluate such projects relative to wildlife.

Mr. Salazar also has authority to rescind a “special rule” adopted by the administration on its way out the door. That rule would have precluded any federal regulation meant to protect endangered polar bears, if the rule included anything other than the Arctic itself.

That rule was meant to preclude regulation of greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, which are suspected of contributing to rising global temperatures that are melting Arctic sea ice — one of the polar bears’ habitats.

Mr. Salazar should rescind that rule so that ultimate determinations of the threat to the Arctic will be a matter of scientific inquiry rather than political fiat that precludes inquiry.

The Californian

April 21, 2009

<http://www.thecalifornian.com/article/20090421/OPINION03/904210310/-1/NEWS17>

Urge interior secretary to restore Endangered Species Act

Before leaving office, the Bush administration issued rules eviscerating the central consultation process of the Endangered Species Act; exempting greenhouse-gas-emitting projects from regulation; and banning federal agencies from protecting the polar bear from greenhouse gases, the primary threat to its existence. These rules gut our nation's most important wildlife protection law, which has been safeguarding species for more than 35 years, and fail to use this law to fight the greatest future threat to endangered species - global warming.

On March 11, President Barack Obama signed into law an omnibus appropriations bill giving Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar 60 days to rescind the Bush rules with the stroke of a pen and restore the Endangered Species Act to its former glory. This is a golden opportunity for Salazar to fulfill Obama's campaign promise to bring science back to federal agencies. As global citizens, we must urge Salazar to do what is right and take the first steps in repairing the environmental damage of the Bush administration by rescinding these Endangered Species Act regulations by May 9. Call Salazar at 202-208-7351 and go to www.savethepolarbear.org to send him a letter. The survival of endangered species across the planet depends on it.

ELAINE TOBOSA

Salinas

Poughkeepsie Journal
April 25, 2009

Endangered Species Act changes must be reversed

Catering to the oil and gas lobby, the Bush administration changed two key components of the Endangered Species Act right before leaving office, constricting the effectiveness of the act in protecting species. Under the altered Endangered Species Act, federal agencies are banned from assessing the effects of global climate change when determining whether vulnerable species should be protected. This will be devastating for species such as the polar bear, which already is suffering because of global climate change.

The rule changes were clearly a response to pressure from the oil and gas lobby that fears certain Endangered Species Act provisions will damage profits. Further, the changes allow for federal agencies to complete projects (that have potential environmental harm) without having to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar has until May 9 to reverse these changes simply by the stroke of a pen. Forty-four members of Congress recently sent him a letter urging him to do so. I was disappointed to see New York's Rep. John Hall was not among those who signed this letter. Hall, why would you endorse these blatant attempts to hamstring the Endangered Species Act and its ability to preserve wildlife and critical habitat?

It is time to end environmentally destructive policies that sell off future generations' quality of life for short-term profits. We can only hope Salazar will immediately reverse the leftover Bush-era politics that continually undermined environmental protections.

Larissa Liebmann
Poughquag

The Journal News

April 27, 2009

<http://www.lohud.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2009904270308>

Endangered Species Act needs protection

Before leaving office, the Bush administration concluded an already destructive eight-year term by creating regulations that would fundamentally destroy key provisions of the Endangered Species Act. These major changes included withdrawing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services from having to consult with other federal agencies concerning federal projects that could harm endangered species, as well as exempting greenhouse-gas emitting projects from comprehensive environmental review.

Keeping the status quo would give oil and gas lobbies the ability to railroad through environmentally destructive projects without taking precautionary steps to protect critical habitat and endangered species.

Rockland is home to several species under the protection of the federal Endangered Species Act. It should not matter that a Rockland County citizen may have never seen an endangered Indiana bat fly overhead, or witnessed a threatened bog turtle swimming in the Hudson. These species are county and national citizens just the same, and need the strong protections granted by the species act.

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar can annul Bush's regulations and save the Endangered Species Act if he acts before May 9. Our community can make a difference in this decision: Rockland citizens can let Salazar know that the ESA and our environment are worth everything.

Opposition to Bush's regulations should come from anyone who values nature. Environmental awareness is vital to our community. Now is the time to be vocal: our wildlife is at stake.

Alyssa Irizarry
Chestnut Ridge

Las Vegas Sun

May 4, 2009

<http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2009/may/04/protecting-endangered/>

Protecting the endangered

Obama administration restores scientific review of federal agency projects

As part of his environmental agenda, President Barack Obama announced in March he would order a review of a regulation approved late last year by the Bush administration that severely weakened the Endangered Species Act.

The prior administration turned its back on animals and plants in December by giving federal agencies permission to ignore input from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service when constructing dams, highways, parking lots and other projects. The reasoning was that many federal agencies have their own scientists, but those individuals don't necessarily specialize in wildlife and habitat issues.

Thankfully, that wrong-headed regulation has now been reversed.

As announced last week by Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and Commerce Secretary Gary Locke, federal agencies will again have to adhere to the protection of endangered species the way they did before the Bush administration. That means consulting with federal fish and wildlife experts before shovels go into the ground.

“By rolling back this 11th hour regulation, we are ensuring that threatened and endangered species continue to receive the full protection of the law,” Salazar said.

Now that the regulation has been reversed, one wonders what then-Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne was thinking when he approved the rule change a month after Obama had been elected and a month before Bush left office. Kempthorne had to know there was a high probability that the regulation would be reversed, given Obama's vow to strengthen environmental protections.

This is just one of many examples of how the Obama administration is finding itself bogged down by the legacy of the Bush presidency.

The timing of the decision by Salazar and Locke is critical as the nation enters a new phase of construction projects that are being financed by the economic stimulus package. Although these projects are essential to creating jobs and getting the economy moving again, the input from wildlife and habitat scientists will help ensure that endangered plants and animals are protected.

Pasadena Star News

May 2, 2009

http://www.pasadenastarnews.com/opinions/ci_12279748

Endangered Species Act

Just before leaving office, the Bush administration issued rules eviscerating the central consultation process of the Endangered Species Act; exempting greenhouse gas-emitting projects from regulation under the Act; and specifically banning federal agencies from protecting the polar bear from greenhouse gas emissions, the primary threat to its continued existence.

These rules gut our nation's most important wildlife protection law, which has been safeguarding species for more than 35 years, and fail to use this successful law to fight the greatest future threat to endangered species - global warming.

President Obama and Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar can restore the Endangered Species Act to its former glory. This is a golden opportunity for Salazar to fulfill Obama's campaign promises to bring science back to federal agencies. As global citizens, we must urge Salazar to do what is right, and take the first steps in repairing the environmental damage of the Bush administration by immediately rescinding these Endangered Species Act regulations by May 9.

The survival of endangered species across the planet depends on it.

Debbie Lee
Arcadia

Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

April 26, 2009

http://www.dailybulletin.com/editorial/ci_12233983

Speak out to protect the Endangered Species Act

By Frank Schiavone

In the waning days of George W. Bush's presidency, his Interior Department hastily promulgated new rules that essentially eviscerated the Endangered Species Act. These regulations, if allowed to stand, will have dire consequences.

First, they would dramatically redefine the fundamental premises upon which the ESA rests. The new rules would only consider direct causation or "essential causes." Rarely are species wiped out by a single, direct action. Rather, plants and animals are threatened by cumulative impacts that occur over time. Species disappear not because of one action but due to a complex combination of factors - loss or alteration of habitat, pollution, climate change, edge effects, overhunting or fishing, etc.

By failing to recognize systemic causation, we are sealing the fate of literally thousands of plant and animal species.

Second, the new rules exempt federal agencies from the Act's Section 7 consultation process. The Endangered Species Act states, "Each Federal agency, in consultation with and with the assistance of the Secretary, shall insure that any action authorized, funded or carried out by such agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered species or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of habitat. ..." In effect, an executive action overturns a key provision of a landmark law.

Third, the new rules prohibit consideration of greenhouse gas-emitting projects under the Act; specifically banning federal agencies from protecting polar bears through the regulation of greenhouse gas emissions, the primary threat to their continued existence.

Plainly, the overarching goal of the ESA is to conserve threatened species. The ESA defines "conserve" to mean "to use and the use of all methods and procedures which are necessary to bring any endangered species or threatened species to the point at which the measures provided pursuant to this Act are no longer necessary." The very intent of the ESA is "to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered species depend may be conserved."

The ESA requires species recovery and not merely species survival as affirmed by the U.S Supreme Court in *Babbitt v. Sweet Home* and *TVA v. Hill*. Both decisions upheld that the purpose of the ESA is "to halt and reverse the trend towards species extinction, whatever the cost" and that "this is effectuated not only in the stated policies of the Act, but in literally every section of the statute."

By shifting emphasis to direct causation and ignoring disparate contributing causes, the end result will be that proposed project developments can contribute significantly to the destruction of habitat and the extinction of species but will be approved unconditionally because they do not directly cause the elimination of a species or directly reduce the population of a species or extent of its habitat. Almost all proposed developments that were previously understood as "cumulative impacts" will no longer be seen as "causes" of habitat destruction or species extinction and will be permitted.

Furthermore, Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act explicitly states that Federal agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, must take concrete steps "to ensure that actions they fund, authorize, or carry out do not destroy or adversely modify critical habitat to the extent that the action appreciably diminishes the value of the critical habitat for the survival and recovery of the species." This give-and-take, consultation process allows projects to go forward while at the same time mitigating harm to protected species. But Interior's new rule eliminates this vital check and allows department-centric projects to take precedence.

Ten thousand years ago, 80 percent of all mega-fauna disappeared from North America. Gone are the mastodons, mammoths, giant beavers, ground sloths, short-faced bear, dire wolf, saber-tooth cat, woolly rhino and giant camel. Today, we are in the throes of a similar extinction event and it's happening before our very eyes. More than 16,000 species worldwide are threatened with extinction, according to a 2007 report from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which compiles an annual "red list" of endangered species. Scientists warn endangered species could become extinct 100 times faster than previously thought. They say methods used to predict when species will die out are seriously flawed and dramatically underestimate the speed at which some will disappear.

But not only the "walking dead" are at risk. Deer herds in the West are declining. Elk herds are a fraction of what they once were. In the Upper Midwest, moose populations are dying off in startling numbers. Here in California, bighorn sheep and pronghorn antelope sightings are rare indeed. Bison in Yellowstone are being slaughtered by the hundreds. Large-bodied predators are suffering similar fates throughout North America.

The ESA has served this nation well. But the Act has been in the cross hairs since its inception. Efforts by the previous administration to undermine the efficacy of one the nation's most cherished environmental laws were more than just cynical. They were clearly a parting shot designed to inflict as much damage to the law as possible.

If you feel as I do, please urge President Obama and Secretary Salazar to do what is right, and take the first steps in repairing the environmental damage of the Bush administration by immediately rescinding these hurtful regulations. Your responses should be made by May 9.

Frank Schiavone is a resident of Rancho Cucamonga. Write him at fschiavone@verizon.net

News-Journal (Daytona Beach, Florida)
March 29, 2009

From brink of extinction- What it'll take to revive Endangered Species Act

If the Endangered Species Act were a polar bear, it would look eviscerated and bleeding on ice. The act was so bowdlerized during the Bush administration as to be itself endangered by irrelevance. There's hope of a recovery.

The Obama administration isn't yet reversing Bush rules. But on March 3, Obama issued a memorandum stopping last-minute rules from being enacted while asking the Interior Department to evaluate the previous administration's approach to endangered species. Suspending those rules is a good first step. Reversing them would be better. It'll be a daunting act of correction.

Under the first President Bush, federal agencies added an average of 59 species a year to the endangered list. Under Bill Clinton, the average was 65 a year. By 2004, under George W. Bush, the average had fallen to 9.5. "Critical habitat" was no longer so critical, either, as less than half the acreage federal biologists recommended for protection was so designated by the administration. "New Environmentalism," according to the Interior Department's code of the last eight years, meant letting private land owners decide how best to manage habitats of endangered species rather than prohibiting intensive human activity in those habitats.

It also meant attempting to privatize more than half the jobs in the National Park Service. It meant allowing snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles in national parks already overrun by recreational-vehicle campers, and motorboats. It meant authorizing the private purchase of immense tracts of public, scenic federal land under a back-door provision of a 19th century mining law. It meant turning over entire offices of the Bureau of Land Management to mining and energy industry employees as so-called "hosted workers," paid for with industry dollars to help speed up industry applications for mining and gas and oil drilling permits.

In the last weeks of the Bush administration, it also meant adopting a rule that eliminated the requirement that all federal agencies had to consult with scientists before going forward with any project that impacts the environment. That last rollback, which the Obama administration suspended (but has not repealed), amounted to a death sentence for the Endangered Species Act -- in the field, where ecosystems would suffer, if not in the law proper.

All this at a time when, according to a consortium of scientists writing in the journal *Nature* last year, endangered species may become extinct at a rate 100 times faster than previously thought.

Damaging as it was, the era of "self-consultation" and voluntary compliance with the Endangered Species Act is over. But proper enforcement of the act won't happen by rule change alone. Field biologists, inspectors, park rangers cost money. So does land

acquisition and other protective measures scientists usually recommend and the last administration neglected. Between catching up on lost ground and instituting stronger rules against increasing threats to habitats, the public should be willing to support initiatives that won't be cheap, and that may result in immediate costs to cherished services, like higher national park and camping fees. Think of it as a national version of programs like Volusia and Florida Forever, or of Flagler County's tax to acquire and protect sensitive lands: The same enthusiastic impulse behind those popular programs should fuel support for their national equivalent.

Not least, industry (loggers, miners, gas and oil exploiters), coddled and subsidized too long, should be required to pay higher royalties on their extractions while conceding that protecting habitats sometimes means excluding intensive human activity of any kind, no matter what wealth may lie beneath.

The environment can use a friendly president. To be effective, the president will need more sacrifice from the public, less rapacity from industry, and more money from both.

Species in trouble*In Florida, 56 animals and 55 plants are on the federal threatened and endangered species list. Endangered animals include wood storks, loggerhead sea turtles, gray bats, crocodiles, manatees, panthers, several species of mice and more than 30 others.*Some 2,254 plants and animals are on the national list.*Worldwide, 16,000 species are listed officially as threatened with extinction.*Detailed lists of endangered and threatened species by categories are available at the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Web site, fws.gov/Endangered/wildlife.html).

The Pantagraph (Bloomington, Illinois)
April 18, 2009 Saturday

Bring science back to federal agencies

Just before leaving office, the Bush administration issued rules eviscerating the central consultation process of the Endangered Species Act, exempting greenhouse gas-emitting projects from regulation under the Act and specifically banning federal agencies from protecting the polar bear from greenhouse gas emissions, the primary threat to its continued existence.

These rules gut our nation's most important wildlife protection law, which has been safeguarding species for more than 35 years, and fail to use this successful law to fight the greatest future threat to endangered species - global warming.

On March 11, President Barack Obama signed into law an omnibus appropriations bill giving Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar 60 days to rescind the Bush rules with the stroke of a pen and restore the Endangered Species Act to its former glory.

This is a golden opportunity for Secretary Salazar to fulfill President Obama's campaign promises to bring science back to federal agencies.

As global citizens, we must urge Salazar to do what is right, and take the first steps in repairing the environmental damage of the Bush administration by immediately rescinding these Endangered Species Act regulations by May 9. The survival of endangered species across the planet depends on it.

Charles R. Seggerman
Secor

Chattanooga Times Free Press

April 30, 2009

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2009/apr/30/environmental-rules-risk/>

Editorial: Environmental rules at risk

President Barack Obama took office promising to reverse the Bush administration's most noxious industrial intrusions into the nation's remaining pristine roadless wilderness areas, which were legally protected under the 2001 Clinton-era Roadless Rule. He also promised to reverse Bush policies that would undermine the Endangered Species Act. He and his new cabinet heads, however, haven't had time to act on his promises.

The ironic result is that holdover Bush appointees are continuing to push court cases that threaten most of the nation's 60 million roadless acres in national forests. And time is running out to safeguard the Endangered Species Act from the Bush-era downgrading. The president's promises demand more attention.

The court cases in California, Wyoming and Idaho in which federal lawyers are defending industrial development in the wilderness areas mainly involve the Forest Service, part of the Department Agriculture. In each case, the Obama administration, under carry-over work, is defending plans approved by Bush appointees and campaign cronies for building roads for logging, oil and gas drilling, or mining operations in the protected lands. The latter would affect Yellowstone National Park.

The Obama administration shouldn't be defending any of these cases. The Roadless Rule that former President Clinton put in place followed the most extensive public hearings in federal rule-making history. The rule was intended to protect from development the last, best wilderness areas in the nation's public lands and forests, areas which are scattered over a number of states.

Of Tennessee's 698,000 acres of national forests, for example, about 85,000 acres qualified for the classification of protected, roadless wilderness.

Around 150 Senate and House advocates have signed letters asking the president to call off the legal appeals of court rulings that have upheld the Roadless Rule over the weaker Bush substitute. The cases came about after the Bush administration froze implementation of the painstakingly approved Clinton rule, and then substituted a deliberately diluted rule which would have shredded the original rule's protections. It also would have given states the option for jurisdiction over industrial development in the national forests.

The courts have rejected the Bush rule because it essentially gutted the Roadless Rule and was not properly approved.

It's irony enough that federal lawyers are now appealing federal court decisions that, in each of the three cases, struck down the Bush substitute rule. It's more astounding that

these appeals are going forward in conflict with the wilderness protection policy that President Obama promised as both a senator and presidential candidate to preserve.

That doesn't make sense. President Obama should issue an executive order, available under precedents, directing the Forest Service to not propose or implement any projects that would be inconsistent with the 2001 Roadless Rule. Federal lawyers then could be directed to suspend their appeals and put the court cases on hold pending final action.

Similarly swift action is needed to strike down the 11th hour Bush regulations which undermined the Endangered Species Act. The president's authority to issue a countervailing directive will expire May 9th.

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar has initiated a review of the Bush regulations, which shorted the mandatory rule-making process and then stripped the existing Endangered Species of key provisions for delisting endangered species. The most controversial change removed the requirement that federal agencies had to consult with Fish and Wildlife Service biologists before taking actions that might harm a protected species. It made such impartial scientific findings optional if Agricultural officials — including political appointees with an anti-environmental agenda — professed to believe little harm to protected species would occur.

Another change installed a special rule for the polar bear that explicitly exempts greenhouse gases from federal regulation.

Senate and House advocates of the original Endangered Species Act have asked the president to strike these hastily and wrongly processed rule changes before the May 9 deadline to avoid another lengthy rule-making exercise.

As with the Roadless Rule, President Obama should stick to his promise to halt the damage to the Endangered Species Act. There is no reason to do less