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## Trump And Endangered Species? A Terrifying Dumpster Fire

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Among all the nightmares to contemplate with the next administration, consider this one: President Trump and his band of villains trying to save endangered species.

Just look at the people who have his ear on whether to save endangered wolves, whales and sea turtles.

Steve Bannon was made chief executive officer of the Trump campaign in August and has now been picked to be President Trump's chief strategist and senior counselor. Prior to joining the Trump campaign, Bannon was executive chairman of Breitbart News, which has often been criticized for racist, xenophobic and misogynist content, particularly under Bannon's leadership.

Lesser known are the frequent tropes on Breitbart mocking protections for endangered species and the Endangered Species Act. For example, an August 2015 Breitbart piece, "Animals That Aren't Delicious or Useful Deserve to Be Extinct," crassly called elephants "the original fat acceptance campaigners" and said the severely endangered vaquita porpoise of Mexico "can definitely die out" because its name "just sounds like a Mexican hooker."

This style of offensive mockery is all too characteristic of Breitbart and bespeaks of a Trump presidency with little respect for endangered species or other environmental protections, not to mention a pluralistic society.

Myron Ebell is the head of environmental and energy policy at the conservative Competitive Enterprise Institute and Trump's pick to oversee the transition of the Environmental Protection Agency. Ebell's employer has received millions of dollars from the oil and gas industry and is a leading opponent of action to address climate change and environmental and safety protections overall. Although Ebell, who has no background in science, is best known for his global warming skepticism, he is also a frequent critic of the Endangered Species Act. Early in his career, he worked for Arizona Congressman John Shadegg in an effort to rewrite the law to make it "more respectful of private property rights." That's almost always code for short-changing endangered animals and plants in favor of development, sprawl and profits.

David Bernhardt is the consummate insider, shifting back and forth between industry groups and Republican administrations his whole career. He was solicitor of the Department of the Interior under the George W. Bush administration, where he worked zealously to weaken species protections and was,

until this week, in charge of transition. He remains a likely pick for a deputy secretary or similar position at Interior. Since leaving government, Bernhardt has worked as a lobbyist and lawyer at Brownstein, Hyatt, Farber and Schreck helping big agriculture, oil and gas, mining and other industries oppose protections for endangered species. Bernhardt, for example, represented the Rosemont Copper Company in its effort to develop an open pit copper mine in the Santa Rita Mountains south of Tucson, Ariz., which if built would be a disaster for several endangered species like the jaguar, ocelot and yellow-billed cuckoo, as well as damage the quality of life for people in southern Arizona. He recently testified in Congress opposing protection of habitat needed for the recovery of endangered species.

Bernhardt's replacement for heading Interior's Transition, Doug Domenech, is not much of an improvement. He comes to the administration from the ominously named "Fueling Freedom Project," whose mission is to stop regulation of greenhouse gas emissions.

And then there's president-elect Trump himself, who has promised "to conduct a top-down review of all Obama Administration settlements, rules, and executive actions under the Endangered Species Act and other similar laws," and change or rescind any "that are unlawful, bad for American farmers and workers, or not in the national interest."

Sadly it's all too clear that our soon-to-be-president and the industry cronies he's bringing with him don't give a rip about saving plants or animals on the brink of extinction, ensuring that we have a secure climate future or even protecting clean air and water that we all depend on for our own health and survival.

Our planet may be in the throes of the sixth wildlife extinction spasm but Bannon, Ebel, Bernhardt and Domenech will do everything they can get the new president's ear and maximize profits for their polluting friends and slake the desires of people who simply don't care if wildlife go extinct. We must all work together to fight this vapid short-sightedness.