

Endangered earth

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Fall 2004

Act under Attack

Center fighting harmful legislation aimed at Endangered Species Act

Led by Congress' greatest opponent to the Endangered Species Act, the House Resources Committee voted this summer to approve legislation that would weaken protections for imperiled wildlife.

The two bills would drastically reduce habitat protections for endangered species and add roadblocks to the process of listing and recovering wildlife under the Endangered Species Act.

The legislation comes as no surprise, since the committee is chaired by none other than Rep. Richard Pombo (R-CA), who has long sought to repeal the Endangered Species Act and was appointed head of the committee to accomplish just that.

The first bill, H.R. 2933: *Critical Habitat Reform Act of 2003*, would undermine protections for "critical habitat"—the areas essential to the recovery of an endangered species.



Photo courtesy of NOAA

The Center's population modeling studies on Puget Sound's southern resident orca played a key role in drawing worldwide attention to the killer whale's plight and launching our efforts to protect the population as endangered. The Center's population models of the orca and bowhead whale gained international recognition in the scientific community, resulting in invitations to present our research at International Whaling Commission meetings in Rome and Japan. But under newly introduced legislation designed to weaken the Endangered Species Act, research like ours would be arbitrarily excluded from the debate on protecting wildlife.

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Habitat loss is widely known to be the primary threat to endangered plants and animals nationwide. And it is well established that the best way to protect endangered wildlife is to protect their habitat.

Yet H.R. 2933 would make the entire habitat protection provision of the Endangered Species Act voluntary—giving political appointees such as Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton sole discretion to designate critical habitat for protected species, and removing enforceable deadlines to do so.

The second bill, H.R. 1662: *Sound Science for Endangered Species Act Planning Act*, smacks of irony—since by establishing arbitrary criteria to determine what constitutes "sound science," the bill would allow politicians and other decision makers to dismiss scientific research that contradicts their objectives.

For example, the bill would give federal wildlife agencies discretion to discount scientific information that is not field-tested.

Act under attack continued on back page...



ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT

Emily B. Roberson, Ph.D. Director, Native Plant Conservation Campaign

Remembering Plants in Peril

They're not as firmly planted in the public eye as their animal counterparts on the endangered species list—but native plants are the foundations of healthy ecosystems worldwide. The Center for Biological Diversity and California Native Plant Society have joined forces to step up the oft-forgotten fight to protect imperiled plants.

In 2002, the Center for Biological Diversity and California Native Plant Society formed the Native Plant Conservation Campaign (NPCC)—the first U.S. national organization dedicated to advocacy for native plant science and conservation. Imperiled animals have long had national organizations working on their behalf. Remarkably, before we formed the NPCC, the entire plant kingdom had no nationwide advocate and no organized national constituency to speak up for its protection.

As a result, native plants have become “second class conservation citizens” in the U.S. Conservation laws such as the federal Endangered Species Act do not provide the same level of protection for plants as they provide for other species. In some circumstances, federally listed plants can be deliberately driven to extinction without violating the law.

The lower priority given to plant protection is also reflected in grossly inadequate staffing and funding for botanical research, plant conservation and management. Agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land Management employ far fewer botanists than other specialists—despite the overwhelmingly important role plants play in maintaining ecosystem health.

Sixty-one percent of the organisms on the federal endangered species list are plants. However, federal records show that less than four percent of funding for recovery—the primary goal of the Endangered Species Act—goes to listed plants. Thus, many plant recovery plans are implemented either poorly or not at all.

In short, imperiled plants historically have faced even longer odds for recovery than the rest of our gravely endangered species.

Meanwhile, irreplaceable plants and their habitat continue to be destroyed by logging, road building, overgrazing, off-road vehicles, and development.

We created the Native Plant Conservation Campaign to find solutions to these problems.

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Making inroads

In the two years since we launched the NPCC, we've created strong coalitions on which to build a thriving campaign. Our work has included:

- Creating a growing network of 30 affiliate native plant societies, botanic gardens, and arboreta in 29 states—representing almost 60,000 individual members.
- Creating a network of 13 cooperating scientific and conservation groups that share our goal to conserve biodiversity

but do not focus primarily on plants. These groups allow us to reach hundreds of thousands of scientists and activists nationwide with information on the plight of imperiled plants.

■ Building partnerships with international plant groups, such as PlantaEuropa, a European native plant conservation coalition. NPCC worked with PlantaEuropa to draft and secure the 2002 adoption of a Global Strategy for Plant Conservation by the Global Convention on Biological Diversity.

■ Providing testimony to and meeting with members of Congress and agency leaders to educate them about conserving native plants.

■ Bringing native plant conservation into the public eye through outreach materials, an educational website, and widespread media coverage.

Breaking new ground

Just as conserving native plant diversity requires alliances ranging from local to global, we've also developed programs that bring a range of effective tools to bear on our conservation efforts:



Black lace cactus (*Echinocereus reichenbachii* var. *albertii*) is a federally endangered plant in Texas, where it is threatened by agriculture and oil and gas development. Our cooperating group, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, is working to conserve this striking plant and other Texas flora.

Photo by Jackie Poole

- **The Local Advocacy program** provides free or low-cost toolkits to grassroots native plant societies—including letter templates, brochures, web resources, and key legal, political, and scientific information.
- **The Equal Protection for Plants Campaign** works to remedy the second-class status of plant conservation in staffing, funding and law.
- **The Important Plant Areas program**, still in its early stages, will work with botanists to identify and advocate for areas where plant protection is a priority—due to the presence of high diversity, rare species, or simply intact and healthy native plant communities.



Photo by Lorena Moore

Arizona rainbow cactus (*Echinocereus pectinatus*) is found in New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas. It is still common throughout its range but increasingly threatened by commercial collection and development. NPCC affiliates in Arizona and New Mexico are working to conserve this and other native plants in the region.



Photo by Susan Meyer

Graham's penstemon (*Penstemon grahamii*) is only found on shale barrens in the Uinta Basin of Utah and northwestern Colorado, where few species can withstand the blazing heat. Unfortunately, the Bureau of Land Management allows drilling on economically valuable oil shales in the area, as well as off-road vehicles and livestock trampling in the flower's habitat. As a result, our cooperating group, the Center for Native Ecosystems, is seeking federal protection for this plant.

- **The Conservation Economics program** performs and publishes research to debunk the myth that conservation is bad for the economy.

Through such programs, we are making significant progress.

Our advocacy has led to a 30 percent increase in the number of staff botanists at the U.S. Forest Service—still far from what is needed, but a strong first step.

We have also worked successfully with federal agencies to advocate for use of local native plants in restoration projects. Local natives are adapted to their specific habitat, and local wildlife is adapted to them. If non-local—or worse, non-native—plants are used to restore roads or other areas, ecosystems can be irreversibly damaged.

With NPCC support, the federal government has spent more than \$10 million to grow seed from local native plants, and these plants are used more widely every year.

What's next for native plants?

We have created the first national native plant conservation organization in our nation's history. Now we must use that organization to change policy. In the coming years, the NPCC will redouble our efforts to mobilize citizens, conservationists, scientists and decision-makers in effective coalitions.

We will also continue to make sure our message is heard in the halls of Congress, sending advocates to Washington, D.C. each year.

Finally, we will continue to produce up-to-date outreach tools for grassroots advocates—and citizens who want to become native plant advocates but don't know where to begin.

Plant conservation occurs at the local, regional, and national scales. All depend on dedicated, educated spokespeople who understand the complex laws and science of plant conservation. Together, we are working to make it easier for more people to become effective advocates for the protection of imperiled native plants. ■

To learn more about how you can help preserve native plant diversity and support our Native Plant Conservation Campaign, please contact Emily Roberson at emilyR@cnps.org or visit www.cnps.org/NPCC.

Native Survivor



Photo by Doug Wedrauch

Robbins' cinquefoil (*Potentilla robbinsiana*) is an alpine rose that grows in only two places on the cold slopes of New Hampshire's White Mountains. It was listed as federally endangered with designated critical habitat in 1980 after decades of trampling by recreationists and commercial collectors.

An NPCC affiliate, the New England Wildflower Society, joined with the Appalachian Mountain Club and federal agencies to reroute recreation away from the plant's protected habitat and propagate the species for replanting in the wild.

Thanks to these efforts, the Robbins' cinquefoil rebounded from about 1,800 plants in 1973 to over 14,000 by 2002. It was removed from the endangered species list in August 2002 but continues to be monitored and protected by agencies and volunteers.

PROGRAM NEWS...

“Deal” to take state lands from public derailed

In June the Center played a key role in derailing a campaign by developers and ranchers to change the state constitution to substantially reduce environmental oversight on Arizona state lands.

The plan would have eliminated competitive bidding on state land leases—shutting conservationists out of acquiring state lands. With no public bidding process, the plan would have forced the state to sell millions of acres to ranchers and developers and allow decades-long grazing leases with no meaningful environmental oversight.

The terrible “deal” required a state legislature vote to be placed on the ballot, but a huge outpouring of opposition by the Center, other conservation and public interest groups, and the public divided the legislature and derailed the plan.

The Arizona constitution requires that state lands be leased to the highest bidder with profits going to the public school system. For decades, however, leases were given to ranchers at ridiculously low rates in an exclusive process that did not allow conservationists to bid.

That process was overturned several years ago by the Arizona Supreme Court in response to a lawsuit brought by conservation groups.

Rather than face the prospect of fair and open bidding, the livestock industry teamed up with other groups in an attempt to override the Supreme Court by changing the constitution. The resulting plan would have put as much as 25 percent of all state lands on the chopping block.

In return, only three percent of state land would be set aside for conservation purposes—with some development allowed on even that three percent.

The plan will likely be resurrected this fall by a lame-duck legislature led by rancher Jake Flake (R-Snowflake). We thank the thousands of Center members who made phone calls and sent letters opposing the plan. If the plan resurfaces, we may need to call on your help again.

Judge rebuffs rancher request to round up wolves

In July a federal court in Albuquerque denied a motion by ranching groups to halt the Mexican gray wolf reintroduction program and remove all wolves from the wild in New Mexico and Arizona.

The Center intervened on the government’s behalf in this suit, along with partner organization Defenders of Wildlife. While the judge denied the ranchers the preliminary injunction to remove the wolves, the case itself continues.

In the ongoing case, the groups claim to have the wolves’ best interests at heart, arguing that the purebred wolves have been released into an area where they might breed with hybrids—thus diluting the gene pool and threatening the success of the program and the wolves’ survival.

The judge didn’t buy this line of argument any more than a previous judge bought a reverse argument from ranching groups in a separate case five years ago. Back then, livestock industry plaintiffs stated that the reintroduced wolves—which all stemmed from decades of captive breeding after, ironically, the government had exterminated the



Mexican gray wolf

subspecies in the wild—were not true Mexican wolves but rather wolves that were hybridized with dogs or coyotes. The case was dismissed in 1999.

Our joint intervention in the current case enables the Center and Defenders to present facts and legal arguments separate from those made by the government, and ensures that the Bush administration cannot reach a settlement with the plaintiffs behind the public’s back.

Landmark win: Court rebukes agency standard in failure to protect tortoise

A federal judge ruled in August that the Bush administration’s U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) failed to adequately protect the desert tortoise within 4.1 million acres set aside as protected “critical habitat” for the tortoise in the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA).

The ruling has sweeping implications for other cases involving critical habitat, as Judge Susan Illston also challenged a long-standing guideline used by the agency to decide whether to permit potentially harmful activities in protected habitat.

Since 1986, USFWS has used a definition that prohibits such activities only if they are likely to negatively impact both the survival and the recovery of a species.

Under that definition, the agency could permit activities that might harm *recovery*—the goal of increasing populations of a species until it is no longer considered endangered—as long as those activities weren’t likely to harm *survival*—which doesn’t necessarily improve the health of the species.

But in her ruling, Judge Illston called that definition a violation of Congress’ original intent in enacting the Endangered Species Act, which requires designation of critical habitat to provide for the recovery of endangered plants and animals.

The ruling struck down the agency’s 2002 biological opinion approving Bureau of Land Management (BLM) plans for the management of the CDCA—plans that permitted extensive cattle grazing and off-road vehicle use within protected tortoise habitat.

From the beginning, the Bush administration has attempted to undermine the critical habitat provision of the Endangered Species Act by arguing that critical habitat doesn’t work.



Desert tortoise

By ordering USFWS to apply stronger standards in its management of protected habitat, the court has made it more difficult for the administration to create a self-fulfilling prophecy—wherein by poorly managing critical habitat, the administration “proves” it doesn’t work.

Photo by Robin Silver

Center moves to protect 16 Dunes endemics from off-road plan

In a move to protect unique Sonoran Desert wildlife threatened by off-road vehicles (ORVs), the Center joined with Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility and Sierra Club in July to petition the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to list 16 Algodones Dunes species as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

All 16 species are endemic to the Dunes—meaning they occur nowhere else on Earth. They include two sand wasps, two bees, one vespid, two velvet ants, three jewel beetles, two scarab beetles, and four subspecies of Roth's dune weevil.

Conservationists are also seeking to have critical habitat designated for the species concurrent with listing, as required by law.

The Dunes are currently managed under a 2000 agreement between the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, off-roaders, and conservationists that keeps more than 106 square miles open to ORVs, with roughly the other half of the Dunes protected for wildlife and scenic non-motorized recreation.

But the Bush administration's BLM wants to scrap this balanced multiple-use management and open all available dunes habitat to destructive off-roading.

Dunes habitat open to ORVs is hammered by upwards of 240,000 off-roaders on a single busy weekend. ORVs reduce plant cover, further threatening survival of endemic insects that often depend on particular host plants for food and breeding sites. Studies at the Dunes



Algodones white wax jewel beetle

have indicated that even moderate ORV use results in significant reduction of plant cover.

The BLM plan to remove protected areas in the Dunes would be devastating to dozens of other imperiled species—including the Peirson's milk-vetch (a small desert plant), desert tortoise, flat-tailed horned lizard, and Andrew's dunes scarab beetle.

Center "gets the lead out" of condor habitat

The Center kicked off a campaign this summer to eliminate lead bullets from California condor habitat.

Despite heroic efforts to save the condor, less than 100 are currently in the wild. The leading cause of death, lead poisoning, has not been successfully addressed.

Since 1997, five condors have died because of lead poisoning, and lead is suspected in the deaths of at least two more. In the same time period, more than 26 condors required invasive chelation therapy to "de-lead" their blood, saving their lives. Every free-flying condor in California is captured twice a year to have its blood-lead levels checked.

Lead bullets used by hunters are almost solely responsible for the condors' lead poisoning. Bullets and bullet fragments remain in unrecovered carcasses and gut piles that become

condor food. So far, efforts to encourage voluntary measures like the use of lead-free bullets and burial or removal of gut piles have been unsuccessful.

As part of a multi-faceted campaign to ensure the survival of the California condor, the Center is petitioning the California Fish and Game Commission for a ban on all lead bullets in condor habitat. Although they currently cost slightly more, alternatives to lead bullets are readily available and equally effective.

Experience has shown, however, that simply encouraging hunters to use alternative bullets is not enough. Nothing short of a total ban will eliminate lead from condors' diets—and without that measure, the condor is not likely to survive.



California condor

Regardless of where you live, please sign the petition on the Center's website, asking the commission to ban lead bullets in condor habitat: <http://actionnetwork.org/campaign/condor>.

Lawmaker's anti-desert bills sent packing

California's largest state park escaped significant harm in the state legislature last spring with the failure of two destructive bills.

Introduced by anti-

environmental Senator Bill Morrow (R-Oceanside), the bills would have forced both the re-opening of a road through a desert oasis and the reintroduction of feral horses in northern Anza-Borrego Desert State Park's Coyote Canyon.

Coyote Canyon contains rich vegetation of both the wet Peninsular Mountain Ranges to the west and the dry Sonoran/Colorado Desert to the east. Coyote Creek supports three riparian areas: the Upper, Middle, and Lower Willows. Peninsular bighorn sheep nibble through a landscape similar to that viewed by an early Spanish expedition in 1775.

Park managers have taken visionary steps to balance conservation and recreation in this fragile landscape. Coyote Canyon may be one of California's only large natural areas periodically closed to all human entry. The canyon is closed to people four months each summer "to protect the watering rights of bighorn sheep."

In 1996, to protect Coyote Creek, managers also closed a three-mile stretch of road to vehicles through the Middle Willows. Prior to the closure, riparian habitat was trashed by hundreds of jeeps traversing two narrow gorges up the middle of the creek.

Feral horses have also been removed from Coyote Canyon to protect riparian areas, bighorn, and the horses themselves. The escaped horses were in ill health, and they over-grazed sensitive desert vegetation.

A state assemblyman at the time, Morrow was once cited for driving his state vehicle in a closed area of Anza-Borrego as a protest against the Coyote Canyon road closure. Morrow's first bill to re-open the closed road was vetoed in 1996.

PROGRAM NEWS...

Photo courtesy of BLM



Bighorn sheep

Morrow bided his time and reintroduced a similar bill to re-open the road, as well as another bill to reintroduce the horses, in February of this year. A vigorous campaign by the Center and others finally convinced a Senate committee to reject the bills.

Center petitions to save Siskiyou salamander

A coalition of groups led by the Center filed a petition with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in June, requesting protection of the Siskiyou Mountains salamander as a federally endangered species.

The Siskiyou Mountains salamander lives in old-growth forests of southwestern Oregon and northwestern California, where logging threatens its survival.

The salamander was formerly protected under a provision of the Northwest Forest Plan (Oregon, Washington and northern California) called the "Survey and Manage" Program, which required the U.S. Forest Service and BLM to conduct surveys for the salamander and protect its habitat.

In an effort to weaken the Northwest Forest Plan and increase logging, the Bush administration eliminated the Survey and Manage Program in March 2004.

The Center and its partners also issued a report documenting that 105 other Survey and Manage Species will require protection under the Endangered Species Act, and announcing our intent to petition for these species unless the wildlife survey requirements are reinstated.

The petitioning groups include: Center for Biological Diversity, Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands Center, Oregon Natural Resources Council, Northwest Ecosystem Alliance, American Lands Alliance, Cascadia Wildlands Project, Environmental Protection Information Center, and Siskiyou Regional Education Project.

Court speeds protections for lizard, yellow cress, ground squirrel

The District Court of Oregon in June ordered the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine by December 2004 whether the sand dune lizard, southern Idaho ground squirrel, and Tahoe yellow cress warrant protection as endangered species.

All three species were the subject of petitions submitted by the Center and other groups between December 2000 and June 2002. The Bush administration argued they didn't have to respond to the petitions because the species were already listed as candidates for the endangered species list.

But listing species as candidates provides no immediate protection and often results in lengthy delays for long-term protection. The Tahoe yellow cress, for example, has been a candidate for protection for 29 years,

first petitioned by the Smithsonian Institute in 1975.

Such delays are not unusual. A review of all species listed as threatened or endangered in the U.S. showed that the agency took nearly 10 years on average to list candidate species.

Protection for the lizard, yellow cress, and ground squirrel will also provide important protection for the unique habitat these wildlife species depend on.



Idaho ground squirrel

Photo courtesy of USFWS

The sand dune lizard has the second smallest range of any lizard in North America, only occurring in southeastern New Mexico and western Texas on sand dunes covered by shinnery oak. It is threatened by a combination of oil and gas drilling and herbicide spraying to benefit livestock.

The Tahoe yellow cress inhabits a narrow seven-foot zone between Lake Tahoe's low and high water lines, and is threatened by development and recreation.

The southern Idaho ground squirrel has one of the smallest ranges of any ground squirrel, limited to the low rolling hills of Gem, Payette and Washington Counties of southwestern Idaho. Its sagebrush steppe habitat has been decimated by livestock grazing, development, and invasive species.

8th Annual Phone-a-Thon

We've kicked off our Eighth Annual Phone-a-Thon to our members—a time for us to say hello to our supporters and to raise an important share of the membership contributions that make possible so much of our work to protect endangered plants and animals. Over the past seven years, our annual phone-a-thons have raised a total of more than \$385,000 for Center programs.

In the next few weeks, you may hear from one of our callers asking you to pledge your annual membership renewal or special year-end gift. Please take this opportunity to make a contribution that's meaningful for you—because our work to ensure a future for endangered species depends on the committed support of our members.

On behalf of the wild plants and animals we protect, thank you!



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On occasion, we trade our mailing list with organizations that share our mission. If you would prefer that your name not be exchanged, please contact us.

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Newly Protected

Center campaigns have resulted in recent protected listings and "critical habitat" designations for the following species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) or Marine Mammal Protection Act.

In recent years, the Center has had to fight tooth and nail to win protected habitat for endangered species. Note that many of the protections gained here were dramatically decreased by the Bush administration from the originally proposed habitat. The Center is working to fight politically motivated cuts and rollbacks to protected critical habitat.

Species

California tiger salamander, listed as threatened under the ESA in July.

AT-1 population of killer whales, reduced to just eight individuals in Alaska's Prince William Sound, designated as depleted under the Marine Mammal Protection Act in June.

Two highly imperiled plants on the island of Rota in the Northern

Marianas, *Osmoxylon mariannense* (ginger family) and *Nesogenes rotensis* (verbena family), listed as endangered under the ESA in April.

Four subspecies of fox in the Channel Islands off the coast of Southern California—the Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, San Miguel and Santa Catalina Island foxes—listed as endangered under the ESA in March.

Habitat

21,800 acres in southeastern California's Algodones Dunes, designated in August for the endangered **Peirson's milk-vetch**, a small desert plant. The final designation excluded more than 30,000 acres from the 52,780 proposed—absurdly locating nearly all protected acreage in areas closed to off-road vehicles, the largest threat to the plant.

836 miles of stream habitat in Iowa, Minnesota and Nebraska designated in July for the endangered **Topeka shiner**. By creating loopholes in its cost-benefit analysis, the administration managed to slash 1,500 miles of Kansas and South Dakota streams from the proposed habitat.

41,089 acres of coastal dune habitat and wetland areas in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties, designated in March for La Graciosa thistle, an endangered plant. The administration reduced the final designation by more than 3,000 acres—again excluding a heavily-used off-road vehicle area.

21,129 acres of waterways in Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties, designated in February for the **Santa Ana sucker**. The final designation excluded important portions of the fish's breeding and feeding grounds in Riverside County—leaving protection of those areas to an unfinished habitat conservation plan that may or may not protect the threatened fish.



In August, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service designated 8.6 million acres of forest in the Four Corners states for the threatened **Mexican spotted owl**.

The action nearly doubles the Bush administration's original designation of 4.6 million acres for the owl in 2001. However, that designation fell far short of the 13.5 million acres originally proposed by the Clinton administration a year earlier. In 2003, in response to a Center lawsuit, a federal judge called the Bush administration's first designation "non-sensical," as it slashed nearly 9 million acres—including all 11 national forests in Arizona and New Mexico where the majority of owls occur.

The new designation, which comes in response to a court order by the judge, again falls far short of the 13.5 million acres proposed, and again strategically excludes areas earmarked for logging projects—opening old-growth forest to the timber industry.

The Center plans to return to federal court to ask a judge to compel the administration to protect more of the proposed habitat for the owl.

Mexican spotted owl

Photo by Robin Silver



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Act under attack *continued from front page*

Conveniently, “field-tested” is defined in this case to exclude scientific findings that involve statistical or population modeling—tools that wildlife studies almost always include.

Thus, under a hostile administration, conservation decisions are more likely to be politically motivated and less likely to be based on the best available science—or the protection needs of endangered plants and animals.

Disguised as efforts to “reform” and “modernize” the Endangered Species Act, these bills would instead cripple the act.

Opponents of the Endangered Species Act have long openly crusaded to overturn the law.

But the American public overwhelmingly supports endangered species protection—so instead, the Act’s enemies are scheming piecemeal assaults, away from the public eye.

Fortunately, the bills have failed to slip by unnoticed. Instead, they have met with resistance from conservation groups, as well as more than 420 scientists who opposed the legislation in a letter to Congress the week of the committee’s vote.

As the bills make further progress before Congress, public opposition will also be critical.

The legislation is now headed to the full House of Representatives, where it is uncertain whether the bills will surface in House debates before the end of the year.

However, Pombo may pressure Republican leadership in the House to call up the bills at any time—with the goal of passing them quickly and quietly. And given the current climate in the House, this legislation is likely to pass if there is not significant outcry from the American public.

The Center has been working in coalition to oppose the legislation, letting Congress know the importance of the Endangered Species Act and the disastrous implications of these bills.

We will vigilantly monitor the progress of the bills this fall. If they do come up in the House, we will be moving quickly to mobilize our members—asking you to contact your Representatives and tell them to stop the gutting of the Endangered Species Act by voting no on H.R. 2933 and H.R. 1662.

If we are to leave a legacy of protecting endangered species and the special places they call home, we must defeat these two misguided bills.