

# Oil drilling detrimental to land

Bush proposal to drill for oil in wildlife refuge is inefficient.

The battle over the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge isn't new. The struggle between the oil industry and environmentalists in that region began almost 50 years ago. In 1957, Secretary of the Interior

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Fred Seaton set aside 8.9 million acres as the Arctic National Wildlife Range, as well as an additional 20 million acres for commercial oil and gas leasing. In 1968, Atlantic Richfield and the Humble Oil and Refining Company (now Exxon) discovered oil at Prudhoe Bay west of ANWR and pressured Congress to allow them to drill in the refuge until the passing of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act in 1980, which doubled the size of the range, renamed it the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and closed 1.5 million acres of the coastal plain to oil and gas exploration unless approved by Congress.

Last summer the House approved legislation that would open ANWR to oil exploration. Congress returned from a spring vacation April 8, and members of the Senate are expected to vote soon on ANWR drilling as part of an energy bill.

A report released last month by the U.S. Geological Survey warned that drilling would harm the Porcupine River caribou, the second largest herd in the United States, displace some of the 160 species of migratory birds by infringing upon their feeding grounds and increasing air traffic, encroach upon vital polar bear dens and disturb musk-oxen, who remain in the coastal plain during the winter when drilling would be at its peak. Other animals, such as grizzly bears, wolves and whales would also be at risk.

Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton commissioned a new report almost immediately after the first was released. The new report, written by the same scientist, says that two additional scenarios currently under consideration in Congress would decrease caribou calf survival rates only by 1.2 percent.

Norton also said, "People are beginning to realize that what we're talking about is the production of 700,000 jobs from this proposal - that this would have impacts throughout our economy and really make a difference for working men and women."

Norton's data, however, comes from a 1990 study funded by the American Petroleum Institute that has been discredited by the

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Congressional Research Service, the Tellus Institute and the Economic Policy Institute.

The Bush administration is also playing on Americans fears of economic dependence upon the unstable Middle East, especially now that Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein has announced that he will suspend oil exports for 30 days.

"This week more than any other we have the proof that the need for legislation to permit the United States to produce more oil at home and reduce our dependence on foreign sources of supply," Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham said.

The U.S. Geological Survey speculated that ANWR would provide only about six months worth of oil, oil that would take 10 years to bring to market. Even if ANWR was opened for drilling, OPEC nations could still adjust world supply to achieve desired prices. The United States has 2.8 percent of the world's known sources of petroleum; opening ANWR would make it a mere 4 percent.

Drilling in ANWR would reduce imports by no more than would a three mile-per-gallon increase in fuel efficiency, a measure that the Senate rejected in March when it voted against a proposal sponsored by Senators John Kerry (D - Mass.) and John McCain (R - Ariz.) to raise the Corporate Average Fuel Economy to 36 miles per gallon for cars and trucks by 2015, which could have saved as much oil by 2016 as is currently imported from Iraq and Kuwait.

Proponents for opening ANWR have claimed that drilling could be done in a responsible manner and would only be conducted in a small part of the refuge. The "refuge is about the size of South Carolina, and we're talking about drilling on an area that is smaller than most airports," White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card said.

The area Card is talking about, however, only includes the oil drilling pads themselves, not the hundreds of miles of roads and pipelines, refineries, landfills, wells, water reservoirs, docks, causeways, production plants, helicopter pads, gas processing facilities, seawater treatment plants, power plants, gravel mines and living quarters for hundreds of workers.

However, irreparable damage to the region is already a reality. Ninety-five percent of the coastal lands west of ANWR have been opened to drilling. At the Prudhoe Bay oilfield on the North Slope, 60 miles west of ANWR, there are near-daily spills of oil products

and hazardous substances; the spills released 45,000 gallons of crude oil, diesel fuel, propane and ethylene glycol in 1999 alone. Every year oil companies discharge over 56,000 tons of nitrogen oxide, a source of acid rain, and 24,000 tons of methane, a greenhouse gas.

Leaks in the Trans-Alaska Pipeline and accidents on tankers are also common, most notably the 1989 spill of over 10 million gallons of crude oil from the Exxon Valdez into Prince William Sound, which killed over 250,000 seabirds, 2,800 sea otters, 300 harbor seals, 250 bald eagles and almost two dozen whales. Some animal populations have still not recovered from that disaster.

Unbelievably, North Slope oil and gas companies are exempt from hazardous-waste regulations because of a loophole in the law.

I am also loath to trust the Bush administration, the members of which are not exactly impartial when it comes to the oil industry.

The oil and gas industry, one of Bush's top 10 contributors for the 2000 presidential election, contributed \$1,761,567 to his campaign and \$1 million to the Presidential Inaugural Committee. Oil and gas companies also contributed at least \$556,700 to Bush's 1994 and 1998 gubernatorial campaigns. Bush himself used to own Arbusto Energy Inc. and Bush Exploration, which merged with Spectrum 7 in 1984 (Bush was named chairman and CEO), which was bought out by Harken Oil and Gas in 1986.

The oil and gas industry was also the largest contributor to Vice President Dick Cheney's 1988 congressional campaign. Cheney has served on the Board of Directors and the Public Policy Committee of the American Petroleum Institute and was CEO of Halliburton Company, the world's largest oil service company, which has contributed more than \$1.6 million to federal candidates since 1992 and is already drilling on the North Slope and would profit from drilling in ANWR.

Norton worked for the Mountain States Legal Foundation, which was funded by Amoco, Marathon Oil and Phillips Petroleum. Energy and natural resource companies contributed more than a third of the funds to her 1996 Senate campaign; the oil and gas industry was her second largest contributor.

If drilling in ANWR is allowed, which "wildlife refuge" will be next? In Ralph Nader's 1971 essay, "We Need a New Kind of Patriotism," he asks, "If it is unpatriotic to tear down the American flag (which is a symbol of the country), why isn't it more unpatriotic to desecrate the country itself - to pollute, despoil and ravage the air, land and water?" The saddest thing is that Bush doesn't see the environment as sacred at all, but rather worthless until developed for a profit.

# Indecision about career path normal, even funny

After sleepless nights, when the career shoe fits, you'll laugh about the past.

Recently while visiting home over a weekend, I was reminiscing with (translation: mercilessly picking on) my younger sister, who is a freshman in high school, over her "career choices" that she had insisted upon at various times in the past.

The most distinct memory that I have along those lines is of her as a seven-or-eight-year-

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old child, clutching a Cabbage Patch doll that, had it been a real baby, would have been dead of asphyxiation, and shrieking insistently, "I'm gonna be a BIG MAMA when I grow up!" Days/weeks/months later, she rethought this sentiment and decided that, no, she would rather be an archaeologist. No, a zookeeper. No, a lighthouse maintenance person. No, an interpretive dancer on the Academy Awards. No, a clown that waves at the car wash. Et cetera.

Even though it's fun to pick on her, I have no room to talk - nor do many of us. In high school I decided that, without a doubt, I was going to be a veterinarian when I "grew up." It had to be so, what with NC State and their veterinary college practically in my own backyard. And, more importantly, I loved animals.

Except for the annoying ownerless neighborhood-roaming dog that I occasionally shot with a BB gun because it constantly, mercilessly attacked our cat. But that seems irrelevant.

As determined as I was to make this "dream" become a reality, it all came crashing down around me when we had to take our old, ailing poodle named Penny to the vet to have her anal glands "expressed" (for the sake of being non-graphic, let's just say it means "drained").

That pretty much closed the book on me wanting to be a vet, as I do not think that I could handle all of the doody-related tasks that vets are routinely expected to perform, which I will not be describing at this time.

So that meant my life was now aimless and without direction, at least until people (mostly old people with limited reasoning capacity) started telling me that I should become a doctor.

I thought maybe this was a compliment to my intelligence and reasoning skills - until they made me sign contracts saying that when I became a physician that I would treat them for free.

Medicine was something that I hadn't really considered, but I felt like I could make a pretty good doctor - just so long as wherever I worked didn't care if I wore T-shirts, sneakers and jeans every day. After all, Patch Adams wore a clown nose and giant shoes and also converted an entire building into a female reproductive tract, and Doogie Howser dressed like a normal kid and was also boring.

So why couldn't I? But, just like my veterinary dream, that idea ended up smashed on the floor like my

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grandmother's porcelain dentures that I once accidentally dropped. This time, it occurred to me that I could never perform surgery on anyone else, partially because broken bones and dislocated joints make me cringe, but mainly because being in the presence of a cotton ball being torn in half freaks me out. I can't explain it, and I don't know why, but to me a cotton ball being torn in half is far worse than fingernails being raked across a chalkboard.

So, since cotton balls are an inseparable element of the medical world, that negated that particular career aspiration, and once again I was alone, broken and dejected - no, wait. I meant that I had no clue what to do at that point. Yeah.

Anyway, while at home over the summer prior to starting at Wake, one day I was bored to tears, and so I decided to watch some of the old dumpy movies that my friends, siblings and I had made using my grandmother's clunky VHS-C video camera.

Mostly these consisted of various scenes featuring our hamster, various action figures or our hamster with various action figures in front of overwhelmingly colorful cereal boxes (our "backdrop," for God-knows-what reason).

Usually the hamster would sniff the action figures, knock them over unintentionally, and all the while my brother and I would be screaming "KILL THE MONSTER! ARGH! IT RIPPED MY TORSO OPEN!" Fortunately the sophistication level of our films progressed rapidly as we got older.

But anyway, one of the voices in my head began to say, "Hey, have you thought about doing this as a career?"

Instead of going away (like most of them do), it got louder and more insistent, and so once I got here, I decided to move out of the dorms and into the prison cell-like editing bays in Carswell's basement.

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So that's why I do my show every couple of weeks - but I'm not here to shamelessly plug Speedboat Justice Team (every midnight but Thursday on WAKE TV 6!).

I want to, in some meager way, try and encourage those of you who don't know what you want to "be when you grow up." Take it from me, I'm the abnormal one here - most people have no clue what they want to do once they get out of school. It's OK, and no one is going to hold a gun to your head and force you to decide on a career.

If by chance that does happen, just scream "business administration" since that seems to cover most of you people, anyway.

So don't worry. Things will fall into place, I promise. If not, well ... You could always make movies with a hamster and some G.I. Joes. It worked for me!

# Judicial system ignored relevancy of cultural tradition

One student's cultural keepsake led to drug charges, judicial hearing.

I realize that there have been a number of articles written by students expressing their disdain of the current judicial system. However,

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what I was subjected to prior to the start of this semester makes me even more frustrated and annoyed. I have had my fair share of run-ins with the Wake Forest administration over the four years I have been a student here, and I believe that the school has done nothing substantial to improve the system currently in place.

My most recent situation confirms my belief that the administration intends to prosecute students without sufficient evidence for the purpose of filling quotas.

Much to my surprise, I was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and the possession/consumption of

marijuana subsequent to the finding of a "bong" in my room during inspections over the winter break. This was a shock to me since I have never smoked marijuana, nor do I intend to.

What I learned thereafter continues to amaze me.

First of all, what I possessed wasn't a "bong" but a "hookah." I grew up in the Middle East and to this day believe that I have done nothing wrong and, if anything, it was Wake Forest University and its administrators who have come out with something they didn't have before: valuable knowledge of the customs and traditions of another culture.

During the ensuing hearing I fully explained the extent of the "hookah," and, specifically, what it was doing in my possession. Previously unknown to those involved, I explained that this "hookah" was a Middle Eastern tradition commonly used for smoking flavored tobacco.

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This sociable pastime of smoking "shisha," as it is called, has been around the Middle East for centuries. The myth for many foreigners that it is an illicit activity couldn't be farther from the truth. I believe that the school's ignorance towards this Middle Eastern tradition led them to initially charge me with drug possession/consumption and possession of drug paraphernalia.

led them to initially charge me with drug possession/consumption and possession of drug paraphernalia. Since I was found not guilty of using the "hookah" to smoke marijuana and that a stranger used it without my permission, then it is not drug paraphernalia but merely the possession of personal property of Middle Eastern origin that was used illicitly by an outsider.

Not only did I bring it to Wake Forest with the blessing and knowledge of my parents for the purpose of smoking flavored tobacco, but I also have the absolute right to the customs and culture of the country in which I

spent the first 18 years of my life. I have done nothing illegal here and should not be found guilty of anything but bad judgment for leaving the "hookah" unattended in an unlocked room.

What made me even more upset was the incompetence and lack of professionalism of the University Police, specifically when we (my roommate was also charged) were denied the viewing of the results of a drug test the police claimed they conducted that proved there were traces of marijuana in the "hookah." If the results to the drug test were the primary source of evidence, then should not we have been given the right to examine them?

The administration was essentially charging us without taking the steps to provide, at any point in time, proof of illegal activity. Furthermore, we provided ample evidence that supported my description of the "hookah" and its role in Arabian culture, including published magazines and an unopened carton of shisha tobacco that I offered to be tested.

All we received in return were the findings of the Resident Advisers and the official police report, which is accounted for at all campus hearings. However, because this case was

extremely unique and required tremendous consultation, specific documentation of all official tests and procedures should have been presented.

Unfortunately, I believe that the university took this case too lightly and had determined our fate even before we went before them.

This entire situation has taught me a great deal about this school, and, specifically, the characteristics of its judicial system. This is a highly respected institution that has attracted some of the most ingenious people over its history.

Regrettably, although the school preaches diversity, I find it hard to believe that the particular actions in this case support these claims. In order to maintain the high standards and continue on the path toward so-called "greater diversity," an appreciation and understanding of unfamiliar cultures is a necessity. The school was advocating one thing and acting another throughout this case, and I hope someone else will never undergo the same misfortune that I did.

Wake Forest University and its administrators learned a real lesson, and I hope they realize this and take it to mind when making any future judicial decisions.