

Alaska is the last frontier, therefore we must destroy it!

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Wait, what? Slow down, Mr. Trump

Like many Breaking Bad fans, I found the new film sequel, “El Camino,” to be unnecessary but satisfying. It was nice to finally see Jesse realize his dream of starting a new life in Alaska, a seed that was planted back in the original series. Unfortunately, Jesse may not have long to enjoy the natural beauty up there — not if President Donald Trump has anything to do with it.

I say this because Trump now has an unholy trinity of major policy proposals to his name that would forever destroy three of the largest and most pristine ecosystems on the planet. Trump has opened the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) for [oil drilling](#), revived the proposed [Pebble Mine](#) near Bristol Bay — which could devastate the most valuable salmon fishery in the world — and most recently, he [opened the Tongass National Forest](#) to logging and development. Sorry, Jesse.

Each of these decisions is harmful and shortsighted enough on its own, but together they make for a particularly nasty batch of cynical Trumpian environmental vandalism. Just how stupid and reckless are we talking here? Well, this is stupidity as measured on a log scale. For simplicity's sake, and in keeping with the spirit of simple-mindedness, I'll go in chronological order.

ANWR is about **19 million acres** of pure nothingness, but the size of North Carolina. Pristine wilderness untouched by development; the last place of its kind in the United States. ANWR, also known as "America's Serengeti," was **created** by President Eisenhower in 1960 and has been protected ever since. But this is now at risk because Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) snuck a **measure** into the GOP's 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, of all places, that mandates oil drilling in ANWR. In a very poor choice of words, Senator Murkowski giddily said that this was a "**watershed**" moment for Alaska. Yes, it is a watershed moment in that it will likely destroy several watersheds.

Where there is oil drilling, there are oil spills, and this is bad news for the **700 plant and animal species**, not to mention the many **indigenous people** who rely on this robust ecosystem. North America's **largest caribou herd**, which has between about 120,000 and 200,000 caribou, could be adversely affected by oil spills and the construction of roads and other infrastructure. But at least the oil lobby will be happy with almost **12 billion barrels** of oil! Sucks to be a caribou!

Meanwhile, in the southwest portion of Alaska, near Bristol Bay, the Nushagak and Kvichak watersheds "produce **nearly half** the world's sockeye salmon." A massive proposed open-pit mine, referred to as Pebble Mine, however, could destroy the fishery's long-term viability. Bristol Bay supports an average annual run of about 37.5 million sockeye salmon, and the Obama EPA **estimated** that the salmon fishery supports about 14,000 full and part-time jobs and produces about \$480 million in revenue per year. The mine would only create about 1,000 to 2,000 jobs for its short lifespan.

Unfortunately, the Trump Administration **reversed** the Obama-era decision to block the mine, which would be about two miles wide and 2,000 feet deep and produce about **80 billion pounds of copper**, **107 million ounces of gold** and **5.6 billion pounds of molybdenum**, worth an estimated **\$350 billion**. Obama's EPA, however, **determined** that the adverse impacts on fish populations would be "significant." About 10 billion tons of waste from the mine could **destroy 94 miles** of streams and 5,350 acres of wetlands, ponds and lakes and remove about **35 billion gallons** of water from the watershed per year. This would permanently devastate a sustainable fishery for

short term profits and temporary jobs, even though [polls](#) show that most Alaskans oppose the mine.

And now to the Alaska panhandle, where Trump's Department of Agriculture is [proposing](#) to allow logging in a 9.4 million acre section of the Tongass National Forest that was previously [protected](#) by President Bill Clinton under the 2001 Roadless Rule. 165,000 old-growth acres and 20,000 young-growth acres could be [clearcut](#). And these trees don't just provide valuable habitat, they also sequester incredible amounts of carbon. Sucks to be anyone or anything impacted by climate change!

So in summary, Jesse Pinkman isn't gonna have much luck if he hoped to live out his days as a peaceful fisherman up in pristine Alaska, so he'd better start rediscovering his meth-cooking chops. Fast.

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