

Which choice will the oil companies make in northwest Alaska?



One Wild Swan

.....OR.....



One Barrel of Oil

There's a worldwide glut of oil. Prices are as low as they've been since 1978. But that doesn't stop the big oil companies from trying to pry open the unspoiled wilderness in America's Arctic.

Exxon, BP, Arco, Amerada Hess, Mobil, Phillips, and Unocal get a cut from every barrel that flows south through the Alaska Pipeline. So naturally, they're interested in getting oil to flow out of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, even at \$13 a barrel. Even if America doesn't need it. Even if close to a fifth of it will be exported to Asia.

But we all know that the real price of this oil is greater than \$13. The more oil they pump, the more gets burned and the worse global warming eventually becomes.

More immediately, drilling for oil destroys uniquely rich habitat for wildlife species that have no place else to go.

WHY SACRIFICE A GREAT WILDLIFE SANCTUARY IN NORTHWEST ALASKA?

Special Areas now at risk within the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska include Teshekpuk Lake and the Colville River.

Teshekpuk Lake is home to what the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service calls a "unique concentration" of molting geese. When geese molt, they lose their feathers and cannot fly. So vulnerable, they are easily disturbed by the presence of humans or machines which can affect survival, especially in young birds. More than a million migratory birds, including three species of geese and several shorebird species, depend upon the Teshekpuk Lake area because, so far as they know, it is one of the last safe places left on Earth.

The Colville River is the largest river in Alaska flowing into the Arctic Ocean. Its high bluffs offer "exceptional areas for cliff-dwelling raptors" and "support unusual concentrations of peregrines." This dry language, in government reports, means observers were flattened with awe by what they found along this river.

The Petroleum Reserve was set up in 1923 by the Harding Administration to make sure that America's navy would have fuel in the event of war. The Reserve was turned over to the Interior Department in 1976 to meet "the total energy needs of the nation."

AMERICA DOES NOT NEED THE OIL IN THE ALASKA RESERVE.

There is more oil in the U.S. and worldwide than anyone dreamed at the time the Reserve was set aside. So much oil, these days, that the price has hit a 20-year low not even adjusting for inflation.

There is no need to drill here, in a place still safe for polar bears to dig their maternity dens and for falcons to raise their nestlings.

Estimates of the recoverable oil around Prudhoe Bay, east of the Reserve, have actually quadrupled in recent years. There is so much oil that laws have been rewritten to allow the oil companies to export it, rather than meet the "energy needs of the nation."

THE FACT IS, WE ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF AN OIL GLUT WITH NO END IN SIGHT.

The only real scarcity is the peace and silence prized by geese and swans, by caribou mothers nursing their calves, by polar bear cubs emerging for the first time into their unmarred world.

So it really does come down to a simple choice.

Do the American people let a few oil giants take a profit on the flow from the Reserve, or do we draw the line and say, "All right, let the natural world win one for a change"?

Here is how to make your choice count.

The environmental review required by law before the oil companies drill in the Reserve was unusually rushed and is woefully incomplete.

Fortunately, the Bureau of Land Management is also required to accept public comments before it can let the drilling begin.

If the agency hears from enough of us, right now, all the oil companies' high-priced lobbying and politicking will not win the day. Common sense will prevail.

And a lot of the birds you see in the sky overhead here in the Lower 48, flocks that travel all the way to Teshekpuk Lake and the Colville River in their yearly migrations, will still be winging overhead next spring and fall.

Not a world-shaking victory, perhaps.

But not a bad achievement for ten minutes over your morning coffee and newspaper.

Please mail the coupons below. Thank you.



BIG OIL'S ASSAULT ON THE NORTH SLOPE

Multinational oil companies want to turn America's Arctic into a vast industrial complex. While continuing to lobby Congress to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, these corporations are now pressuring the U.S. Interior Department to let them raid the National Petroleum Reserve at a time when oil prices are falling and exports to China and other countries are on the rise.

ALASKA EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (ALERT)

ALASKA WILDERNESS LEAGUE

NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

NORTHERN ALASKA ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

TRUSTEES FOR ALASKA

UNITED STATES PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP

THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY

GENE TERLAND, NPR-A PLANNING TEAM
Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office
222 West 7th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99513-7599

I strenuously oppose oil leasing in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. First, Teshekpuk Lake and Colville River Special Areas must be permanently protected. Leasing shouldn't even be considered in the absence of a dire national energy need and a sound energy policy.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY
900 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006

Yes. I agree that the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska should not be disrupted just to profit the oil companies.

I've mailed the coupon. Please keep me updated on how I can help protect America's wild Arctic.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

To find out what you can do to help preserve America's Arctic, visit The Wilderness Society's website at WWW.WILDERNESS.ORG.