

'War' on Wildlife

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Right when I thought things couldn't get any worse in terms of the politicization and corruption of Alaska's wildlife management by Governor Palin, she announced Wayne Anthony Ross as her new pick for Attorney General and included these words: "As Attorney General, Ross also will... work tirelessly to manage Alaska's fish and game resources for abundance through science and not politics."

Through science and not politics? I can't believe she said that with a straight face.

Just recently Palin overtly politicized the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) by creating a brand new "leadership" position and filling that position with family friend Corey Rossi who has for the past year been a Board member and spokesman for a radical new hunting organization whose only work so far has been to try to kill as many animals as they can that may have blood-stained pointy teeth.

In fact, that same group - the Alaska chapter of Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife/Sportsmen for Habitat - had a slew of controversial proposals before the Board of Game seeking to legalize things like the snaring of bears and helicopter transport of "hunters" who participate in such activities. I and many other longtime hunters didn't really think there was a chance any of those proposals would pass, but we showed up at the Board of Game meeting anyway and strongly opposed them in both written and oral testimony.

But the fix was already in. After Palin appointed Corey Rossi to this new #3 slot in the chain of command, ADFG mysteriously reversed every recommendation it had previously given regarding the snaring of bears and supported the extreme measures of the proposals from Rossi's group. And guess who was the ADFG representative who went before the Board and testified in favor of those same proposals? You guessed it, Corey Rossi. The Board of Game was then able to use the blessing of Rossi that was ostensibly based on ADFG "science" to pass the proposals.

Back to the press release about Wayne Anthony Ross as the pick for AG: The job of the AG isn't to "manage" Alaska's fish and game resources, so one wonders why Palin is intimating that Mr. Ross will also be taking over the ADFG Commissioner's job. If confirmed, perhaps he will be the new media star and proponent of Palin's so-called "abundance management" policy which is really just another term for a "maximum sustained yield" policy that isn't in fact a part of our state constitution no matter how many former Board of Game members and predator control advocates claim it is.

Yes, Alaskans, in various op-eds, you are being lied to when those supposedly in the know claim that the word "maximum" is right in front of the words "sustained yield" in Article 8 of our state constitution. It isn't. The constitutional convention Delegates discussed this in great length back in 1955 and based on advice from wildlife scientists that maximum sustained yield was an extremely poor management policy that leads to over-browsing and range damage, large crashes of wildlife populations and a host of other negative consequences, they wisely used the term "sustained yield."

Interestingly, if you visit the web site of the organization Corey Rossi was spokesman for before being placed in that new high-paying leadership position at ADFG (Where did the funding for that come from? And didn't Palin promise not to create any new govt. positions?), their mission and terms are strikingly similar to what you hear from Palin. What you find are terms like "Guaranteed Abundance Management Endeavor" and a mission that seeks to "assure maximum sustained yield for consumptive uses."

"Abundance Management" is a smoke screen that is unconstitutional and down the line ends up in the aerial shooting of bears, the snaring of bears, "hunters" buzzing around in helicopters, and God knows what else.

Which again brings us back to Wayne Anthony Ross and where he fits in regarding this extremism in wildlife management. Make no mistake, wildlife science has already been thrown under the Palin bus, and now it looks like she is hoping to use the Department of Law to somehow promote and legalize this stealing of true science from all Alaskans, to obfuscate in lawyerly terms what is really going on.

This hunter hopes things don't get even worse.

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