

# John Stossel rips the EPA and NRDC too. Because they re practically the same thing

By Gil Ross — July 31, 2015



ACSH friend John Stossel, writing for Reason.org, calls out the

EPA for its much-too-cozy relationship with activist groups espousing environmental causes. But the NGOs goals are ideological, not scientific. Perhaps the best example: NRDC and its revolving-door with the federal environmental agency.

Libertarian journalist and FoxNews TV commentator John Stossel, an old ACSH friend, wrote a column recently in the think-tank Reason s blog. Entitled [Zealots at the EPA](#) <sup>[1]</sup>, he skewers the federal environmental agency for its ultra-close relationship with the deep-green (but very well-endowed) nonprofit, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC).

Stossel points out that they are close enough to be kissin cousins, more or less, since numerous NRDC activists have found cushy employment at the EPA, only to resume their prior science-free activist careers when they return to the private sector.

He expands upon one such example a proposed mining exploration in Alaska, requested by a former Bill Clinton (and Al Gore!) environmental policy advisor, Thomas Collier. When Mr. Collier applied for permission from the EPA to begin mining for silver and gold in his Pebble Mine (after hiring hundreds of experts in environmental impact analysis to send on to the agency) he found that his project had been denied even before the environmental impact study had been reviewed, an unprecedented event. How did such an arbitrary and capricious response come to pass?

Here s how, according to the Stossel exposÃ©:

*So why would the EPA do that? It's simple: the agency has been captured by environmental zealots. One of the world's biggest environmental groups, the Natural Resources Defense Council, opposed the mine. The NRDC doesn't do science well it employs mostly lawyers, not scientists but the lawyers are good at raising money by scaring people about supposed environmental "disasters" like mines.*

*He points out that two big mines "sit right on the edge of the Fraser River ... the second largest sockeye salmon fishery in the world... No problem with the salmon."*

*To arouse public opposition to the Pebble Mine, the NRDC funded TV ads that claim the mine will mean a "natural paradise (is) destroyed by a 2,000-foot gaping hole." The mining company will build "huge earthen dams up to 50 stories tall, holding back billions of tons of mining waste." That sounds frightening, because the NRDC doesn't mention that the "waste" is sand not some poisonous chemical.*

*Actor Robert Redford lent his voice to the ad, claiming, "The EPA has confirmed that the Pebble Mine, a massive gold and copper mine, would devastate Bristol Bay." After watching that ad, I thought the proposed mine must be right next to Bristol Bay, but it turns out that the Bay is 90 miles away.*

*It also turns out that some NRDC activists now work for the EPA, and although activists aren't supposed to get involved in issues pushed by the agency, they do it anyway. The NRDC's Nancy Stoner became an EPA regulator. Then she wrote her former colleagues, "I am not supposed to set up meetings with NRDC staff," referring to a pledge she signed not to participate in any matters directly involving her former employer. Then she got around these restrictions by qualifying that she could attend such a meeting if "there are enough others in attendance."*

*Isn't that revealing? It's the evil private-public "revolving door" that activists usually complain about. Stoner later left the EPA to work for still another environmental group.*

*She didn't respond to my questions, so I asked NRDC spokesman Bob Deans about his group "colluding with regulators" to shut down a mine. He smoothly replied, "NRDC is a source of expertise, and sometimes government takes advantage of that." It sure does.*

*He goes on to note the loss of hundreds of jobs that disappeared for no reason, thanks to the NRDC's influence with the EPA. Perhaps the most poignant message is this one:*

*I wish activists would personally experience the economic devastation that occurs when they block every project that might have a slight impact on nature. "NIMBY" used to be the anti-economic-growth refrain. Luddites shouted, "Not in my backyard!" Now, watching bureaucrats stop projects such as the Keystone oil pipeline and the Pebble Mine, it's clear that the phrase has become "BANANA": "Build absolutely nothing anywhere near anyone!"*

*His conclusion should be read to every regulator and legislator under these ideologues' sway: Propaganda is what the NRDC produces. It shouldn't be the basis for EPA policy. These days, too often, it is because activists and regulators collude.*

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**Links**

[1] <http://reason.com/archives/2015/07/29/zealots-at-the-epa>