

Charlie Hubbard

Kim Groninga

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OIL SLICK

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) consists of 19,049,236 acres of undisturbed, and practically uninhabited, pristine wilderness in northwestern Alaska. That is to say, it is the last 19,049,236 acres of land directly unaffected by humans in America. Of course that is an exaggeration but when one thinks on a map of the United States it is hard to find a very substantial area that doesn't at least have a road running through it. For this reason ANWR must be protected from oil companies as the final, vast and truly natural bit of pristine land that can portray earth and her non-human inhabitants as they were thousands of years ago.

SLIPPERY SLOPE

The 1002 region of ANWR (added in 1980) is where the real debate about oil drilling is taking place. The 1002 region of ANWR takes up 1.5 million acres of coastal land on the northern top of ANWR. A pro-drilling opponent of mine might point to this as a logical reason to drill in this portion of ANWR. After all, it only makes up less than 1/10 of the total area encompassed by ANWR and the rest of ANWR is a designated wilderness area where it is illegal to drill. This makes logical sense until one considers where this will lead. Once drilling in the 1002 area begins America's dependence on foreign oil will go down but will gas prices really go down? As most would agree countries like Saudi Arabia are pulling in lots of money from our oil consumption...lots and lots of money. If the American public knows this then so must the

American oil companies. So why would they (the oil companies) lower the price of crude oil (therein reducing their profits) when once the US has forsaken the oil of Saudi Arabia, they have nowhere else to get it but large American oil corporations? The answer is: they wouldn't. Or if they did it would only be a little. So let us say the oil companies are generous and the price of gas in the US drops 5 cents per gallon. Now look how much good the oil companies can do! If only they had more oil to work with the price might even go lower..... Here the problem begins. As oil companies can now site the great service they have done the American people they can also begin to point out the more oil probably lies deeper within ANWR; not only that but more oil probably lies of the coast of ANWR. Rumor has it that there is actually oil in Yellowstone! With the American public still in a euphoric state from saving 5 cents per gallon they will have no problem continuing the destruction of the environment in anticipation of lower gas prices. This means that places such as the gulf coast and Texas, now dotted with oil rigs, will be smeared with a thick lair of oil rigs. As oil rigs become more common than trees across the entire American countryside it will only be a matter of time before once celebrated wildlife sanctuaries become dotted with oil rights...a precedent set by the drilling in ANWR. And when all the oil is gone, along with all the wilderness and wildlife, what then?

FUNKYNOMICS

To be blunt, America is addicted to oil. America consumes more oil products than any other country on the planet and, like a drug addict, would do (or pay) just about anything to continue using oil at the rate it does. Because of this it is easy to draw a comparison between the America-Foreign oil connection and the connection between a drug dealer and an addict

(let's say someone addicted to 'Substance O.')

Now if Person A is the best client of the dealer, and buys 30 grams of the substance everyday at very high prices, it is fair to say that the dealer is living pretty easy off Person A. So what happens when Person A suddenly starts buying half as much from the O dealer? Clearly the O dealer will not want to lose half of his profits from his best client so it is reasonable to assume that the price of substance O will begin to increase to make up for this loss in sales. Not only that, but the O dealer will be upset that his best client has forsaken him. But the problem is (same problem with oil in ANWR) Person A's new hot-spot to get substance O does not have nearly enough substance O to make it last forever; so eventually Person A will come running back to the old dealer. But now the old dealer has Person A by the balls (pardon the expression.) There is absolutely no reason for the dealer to lower his already inflated prices; Person A cannot stop using substance O and the dealer knows this. Because Person A has already forsaken the dealer one time the dealer has no reason to be "nice" to Person A, in fact, it is reasonable to assume that they will be a bit bitter. The last thing America need is for foreign oil suppliers to be bitter toward them, when, in 20 years, they come running back desperate for more oil and apologizing for what they did. The oil in ANWR will not last as long or be as abundant as the oil in countries like Canada and Saudi Arabia. So when America is begging for more oil, with nobody else to turn to, these countries will recognize the profits available and put the screws to the American public; if not because of bitterness then simply to ease the pressure of domestic problems...wouldn't you do the same thing?

DROP IN A BARREL

According to US Geological survey there is a 50% chance that there will be 10 billion barrels of oil recoverable from the ANWR oil deposits, while there is a 5% chance that there will be 16 billion (a number often cited by the pro-drilling) barrels. What does this mean? It means that the oil from ANWR could supply all of the oil that comes from Saudi Arabia from 17 years and after that it would be gone. That is, of course, if the US were capable of pumping out oil at the rate Saudi Arabia does; sadly though, it cannot. A report from the Energy Information Administration stated that if the US reached the maximum barrels per day output for ANWR (876,000 barrels) it would still have to import over two-thirds of its oil as opposed to 70% that it is importing right now. The study went on to point out that, at most, the added oil would drop the price per barrel of oil by around 30 to 50 cents. Currently the price per barrel of oil is around 120\$. So taking of 50 cents is about a 1% decrease in the cost of oil per barrel. This means that the lowered gas prices promised by Oil Companies and drilling proponents are not going to happen, making drilling in ANWR a complete waste of natural beauty.

It is plain to see that destroying the vast, untamed expanse that is ANWR has little benefits when one considers just what will occur if that happens. Drilling in ANWR will create a devastating series of events which includes more pressure to drill all around America (a precedent that would be set by the ANWR drilling) and sharply increasing gas prices in the years after ANWR has dried up; and that is assuming that things go as planned for the pro-drillers. According to the EIA, though, things will not get that far and America will end up pissing a billion dollars down her leg in hopes of "decreasing foreign oil dependence" and lowering gas prices. So, is it worth it?

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