



C. Railsback

231 Depot St., Apt. 7

Grass Valley, CA 95945

SACRAMENTO CA 957

06 FEB 2019 PM 2 L



MAIL ROOM AT 954



2019 FEB 11 PM 2:30

ATTN: COASTAL PLAN OIL & GAS  
LEASING PROGRAM EIS;  
222 WEST 7th AVENUE,  
STOP # 13;  
ANCHORAGE  
ALASKA 99513

231 DEPOT STREET

APT 7

GRASS VALLEY

CALIFORNIA 95945

5th February 2019

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LEASING PROGRAM EIS;  
222 WEST 7TH AVENUE,  
STOP # 13;  
ANCHORAGE  
ALASKA 99513

DEAR SIRS,

ENCLOSED please find this  
eloquently and succinctly written  
article highlighting the disparity  
of NEED for this program.

We have NO NEED to destroy countless  
valuable species or 40,000 years of THE  
GWICH'IN PEOPLE's culture.

PLEASE THINK PEOPLE EQUALITY  
PLEASE THINK OF OUR PLANET  
PLEASE SAY NO to Profit and  
Needless development.

Thank you

Charmin Raulstock

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## IDEAS & OPINIONS

# THE UNION

DON ROGERS, Publisher | drogers@theunion.com 530-477-4299  
BRIAN HAMILTON, Editor | bhamilton@theunion.com 530-477-4249

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## A lasting decision

Some decisions are irreversible. When the outcome is positive, we leave an amazing legacy. But when the outcome is negative, we're left with a lasting sense of regret; a gnawing wish that we could repair the damage we've done.

And when those decisions are made by a country and they permanently damage the survival of a culture or an ecosystem, that regret is deep and widely shared across generations.

People of the Gwich'in nation have lived in the region of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, in what is now northern Alaska, for more than 40,000 years — 165 times longer than the United States has been in existence and 25 times longer than the English language has been spoken. Throughout that time, the lives of the Gwich'in have been closely intertwined

In our modern culture ... the cultural impact of the destruction of such wildlands can seem abstract.

with those of the Porcupine caribou. The caribou have not only provided a source of meat and cloth-

### OTHER VOICES *Mark Wilson*

circles of life that have played out for tens of thousands of years are threatened. After more than 50 years of federal protection, the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act opened 1.5 million acres of the Coastal Plain to oil and gas drilling. To understand the effects such drilling would have on the area, you only need to look 100 miles west, to Prudhoe Bay, where roads and pipelines crisscross the region and massive industrial buildings sit atop thawing permafrost. This is not an environment that will recover once the infrastructure is removed, if indeed it ever is. It has been permanently degraded.

What would we gain in return for destroying 1.5 million acres of this pristine wilderness and the Gwich'in culture? The United States Geological Survey estimates about 10.4 billion barrels of oil. For perspective, the United States consumed a total of 7.28 billion barrels of petroleum products in 2017. So we would trade the Gwich'in culture, the calving area for Porcupine caribou, migratory destinations for millions of migratory birds from six continents, and habitat for bears, musk ox, and other animals for less than a year-and-a-half supply



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with those of the Porcupine caribou. The caribou have not only provided a source of meat and clothing for the Gwich'in, they have been inextricably linked to their culture and their traditional way of life. Without the Porcupine caribou, the essence of what it means to be Gwich'in would disappear.

The Porcupine caribou's calving grounds are in the Coastal Plain area of the refuge, near the Beaufort Sea. The refuge is the last remaining intact Arctic and Sub-Arctic ecosystem left in North America.

While the Porcupine caribou's migration route is vast — in fact, the longest land migration route of any land mammal — their calving grounds in the Coastal Plain are essential to their survival. The Gwich'in people don't set foot in the Coastal Plain because it is known to them as "the sacred place where life begins." It's understood that the life that begins there sustains life well outside of the coastal plain.

The life that begins there reaches well beyond the caribou. The refuge contains the greatest variety of plant and animal life of any protected area within the Arctic Circle — among them, black, brown, and polar bears and musk ox. Millions of migratory birds from all four North American flyways and six of the seven continents migrate to the refuge each year to reproduce and raise their young before returning to their homes around the world.

Today, however, these

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In our modern culture, we're mostly detached from the kind of wilderness found in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, so the cultural impact of the destruction of such wildlands can seem abstract. But we all can understand what it would mean personally to lose the parts of our lives that give those lives value and connect us to something larger than ourselves — to forever cut us off from our culture.

Last December, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the coastal plain oil and gas leasing program for public review and comment. The BLM is accepting public comment on the plan to auction the Coastal Plain to oil and gas companies until Feb. 11. You have until then to write a letter that will let you tell your grandchildren that you played a part in keeping a process that has continued for millennia to continue for millennia more.

Comments on the draft EIS can be sent online, (see this story at [TheUnion.com](http://TheUnion.com) for a direct link), or by mail, to Attn: Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS;; 222 West 7th Avenue, Stop #13; Anchorage, Alaska 99513

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*Mark Wilson lives in Nevada City.*