

Save the whales — for oil

Bush administration's policy will result in extinction of endangered species

Bald eagles, the national bird, were on the endangered species list just a few years ago. This was due in large part to farmers using pesticides that were absorbed into the fish the eagles ate. Policies were instituted and conservation was stepped up to save the bald eagles and stop the use of these pesticides. The United States fought hard to revive the ailing population of bald eagles and was successful.



JUSTIN HILL

What if Americans had been told the best way to save the bald eagles was to kill or export the birds? Americans would not tolerate foreigners coming in and killing the U.S. national bird or any other endangered animals, and Americans must not tolerate policies making it OK to kill endangered species in other countries.

The Bush administration has recently proposed changes to conservation policies that "would allow hunters, circuses and the pet industry to kill, capture and import animals on the brink of extinction in other countries," according to The Washington Post. Bush administration officials said this would provide for the demand of live animals, skins and trophies, while at the same time, funding conservation projects in the native countries of the animals. Under the proposal, wealthy trophy

hunters can go to other countries and kill whatever they want to mount on their wall, or exotic pet dealers can now transport highly endangered animals as they please. This policy would reverse precedents set by every president since Richard Nixon, which banned trade and hunting of these endangered species.

Conservationists are rightfully infuriated by this proposal. Adam Roberts, a senior research associate at the nonprofit Animal Welfare Institute, an advocacy group for endangered species, told The Post, "It's a very dangerous precedent to decide that wildlife exploitation is in the best interest of wildlife."

Dangerous is an understatement. The idea that it is necessary to kill endangered species to save them defies all logic. Applying the idea of an Adam Smith style-free market on endangered species has already been proven ineffective.

One must wonder where this idea even came from. One clue is the strong hunting advocate in the Safari Club International which, according to The Post, contributed 86 percent of its \$274,000 in campaign funds to Republicans. Safari Club International is a hunting advocacy group that said the hunting was aimed at conservation. Hunting to save is understandable in situations of overpopulation or plans to thin animal populations, but hunting to save endangered species, many of which are on the endangered species list due to hunting, is ludicrous.

This has become the trend from the White House. First Americans were told that to be saved from the deficit, taxes had to be cut. Next, Americans were told that to save the forests from forest fires, trees had to be cut down. Now Americans are being told that to save endangered animals, they first have to be killed.

For those who are not sheep blindly following the spin machine of the White House, one must wonder what is happening. Rhetoric is going one direction and actions another. Policies such as this have become a staple in the Bush administration. Solutions only beget more serious problems.

It is perplexing to follow the policy proposals of the administration, each seemingly tailored for some fringe constituency. The Healthy Forest Initiative would be a windfall for the timber industry. The Bush tax cuts were overtly tilted to the rich. Farm subsidies and steel tariffs come and go with ebbs and flows in poll numbers. And strangely enough, even Halliburton is having a record-setting year.

It is becoming harder to confront the policy of the White House in a serious and analytical manner. Much of what comes out of Washington is unbelievable. Americans have

been asked so much from their commander in chief and have willingly obliged to most of it. With that said, dissent should never be silenced, and with a stream of radical proposals like their idea of kill for conserva-

tion, Americans must tell the White House that this type of policy is unacceptable, or regret not acting for years to come.

Justin Hill is a senior political science major.



MAHESH NEELAKANTAN • THE BATTALION

A long, hard commute

Unassigned spaces should be given to students at reasonable prices

Every morning, commuting students wait their turns in the midst of a sea of cars, trucks and SUVs in hopes of getting a parking spot in time to make it to class. Each row already has two or three vehicles lined up on each side. More commuters roll into the blue Zachry parking lot every moment, speeding to the least crowded row before others can beat them to the punch.



DAVID EGE

Blue lot commuters resemble vultures waiting for a lame animal to die. While they scramble for a spot, they must wait for the natural course to come about — someone leaving their spot. Even if a student comes 40 minutes early for a class, he still will not get a spot until the students who are currently in classes leave campus.

But there is something many students do not know that might make their view of the parking situation even more ridiculous. According to Rodney Weis, director of Transportation Services, preliminary counts indicate that, on average, between 30 and 45 percent of parking garage spaces are empty at any given time during the day.

This is extremely inefficient to say the least. Although some students may complain that someone should expand the crowded parking lots on campus, this is not necessarily the best way to fix parking predicaments. Commuter students wait in lines for spaces in the Zachry parking lot while hundreds of spaces are empty in multimillion dollar garages.

One reason for this inefficiency can be explained by the reserved space rule in the garages. Students who purchase a garage permit are assigned an individual space. At first glance, this rule seems reasonable because the student is always guaranteed the same parking space. Students who go through the waiting list and pay \$390 for a garage spot will argue that this rule should be kept. They believe that by paying extra money, they deserve a designated spot. However, in the overall scheme of things, this policy is a thorn in the sides of A&M parking planners, not to mention the students still waiting outside in the blue lots.

According to Weis, there are approximately 31,500 commuters and only 9,500 residents, yet garage permits in main campus lots are only sold to the latter. South Side Parking Garage contains about 1,975 spaces and is virtually

only residential. North Side Parking Garage contains about 1,845 spaces with about 1,685 set aside for residents. Unversity Center Parking Garage next to Koldus has about 1,000 spots, more than half for residents. The new West Campus Parking Garage is the only garage that has significant space available for commuting students — 2,400 out of 3,700. But if commuting students wish to park in any garage, they must pay by the hour.

Keep in mind that a whopping 20,411 commuter blue permits were sold this year. But there are only 11,700 blue and red lot spaces combined. Just by looking at the numbers, anyone can see commuters will have a problem. Why not open up the 7,500 reserved garage spaces to commuters? Many of these currently numbered spaces are empty during the day anyway.

The point is that there is enough parking on campus; it just is not allocated appropriately. University parking officials should be allowed to sell more permits to residents and commuters for the garages. Instead of assigning a specific space for a particular student who may not have his car there during the day, many

more students would be allowed to use the garage, which would make more efficient use of the space. They would estimate how many permits could be sold for each garage to fill the garage every day with vehicles, but not too many that would prevent a student from parking at all. If officials allocated the spaces correctly, the only grief that would be caused by this is that a student might have to park a few spaces down

from where he parked the previous day. By selling more permits to the garages, the cost may decrease.

Perhaps officials could set up a general parking plan based on seniority. Faculty members would receive the most convenient spots, then seniors, then juniors and so on.

One thing is for sure; students are irritated every day by parking stresses. Although some may scream of the need to expand parking lots, the crux of the matter lies with properly managing the space that is currently available with new policies. There needs to be a serious discussion on campus about how spaces are allocated in general and how the available space is operated. By the way, the students in the blue lots are still waiting.

David Ege is a junior computer engineering major.

MAIL CALL

Founding Fathers wanted separation

In response to an Oct. 27 mail call:

It should be pointed out that the quote in Ms. Scamardo's mail call was from President John Quincy Adams, not his father John Adams.

Since her argument is based on what kind of nation the Founding Fathers intended to create, that quote does not exactly further her case. John Adams can be quoted as saying in a letter to Charles Cushing, "Twenty times in the course of my late reading, have I been upon the point of breaking out, 'this would be the best of all possible worlds, if there were no religion in it.'" Also, in 1797, Adams signed the Treaty of Tripoli which in part read, "The government of the United States is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion." Her other source was James Madison, who said, "Religion and government will both exist in greater purity, the less they are mixed together."

Chris Cole
Class of 2005

Recall elections represent citizens

In response to Hayden Migl's Oct. 22 column:

While I understand that many find California's Recall election an error, I don't think the legitimacy of the process should be questioned. The citizens of California felt that the leadership of former Gov. Davis was incapable of handling the state's issues effectively, and they removed him from office. They then placed their trust in somebody else. That's their choice, and it's their right to make it.

Furthermore, suggesting that states should restrict the election process is contrary to what America stands for: The freedom to make a choice — even the wrong choice — defines a fundamental concept on which the Constitution is written. In a time where we are trying to rebuild two countries whose previous governments controlled their con-

stituents, I think America should be teaching freedom and not learning oppression.

Thomas Critz
Class of 2005

All groups share a right to exist

In response to Rhiannon Meyers Oct. 24 article:

Many things about the article on the GBLTA and YCT discussion panel alarmed me. The Battalion reported that Matt Maddox believed that if an organization failed to receive a majority vote by students, the said organization just must not be valued by anyone and any such organization should cease to exist. Even though an organization may not be supported by the majority of the student body, the fact that this organization is in existence must mean that it is valued by somebody. One has a right to belong to any organization he wants, not just those the majority of the student body deems valuable. Voltaire, an 18th century philosopher, is quoted saying, "I may disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." The concept of majority opinion — and thus tyranny of the majority — has no impact on the right of free speech; I do not see why it should with the ability to organize.

Victoria Montemayor
Class of 2007

Let students vote on all school fees

It seems that the YCT could have the right idea in regard to allowing students to vote for where their money goes when they pay tuition. Though I

would like to say then, if we are going to start with student fees, why not give us the right to vote on every other cost on our tuition statement? What about the library fee, if I do not use the library that much, or the Rec center, if I choose not to work out, or the Student Computing Center fee, if I have my own computer at home. The reasoning is just as ridiculous as not paying for the GLBTA. As stated, it is a service organization and is not politically labeled, like the Aggie Democrats, as few as there may be, or any other organization on campus.

Camille E. Munoz
Class of 2003

Football team must attend yell

This Saturday, the "Twelfth Man" stood and watched a horrible game that was over after the third quarter, and yet even when it rained the majority of the student body was there until the end. We watched as our team moped out onto the field, heads down and we still stood. Then came the end of the game. While we sang the "Aggie War Hymn," the "Twelfth Man," and had ourselves a yell practice, the team scampered off the field. We are lucky to go to a school where the students do not boo their team, where we treat the opponent's fans with respect, stay until the end and are bound by spirit and tradition. Act like an Aggie. Do not walk off the field as if you do not have to participate in yell practice like other students.

Kendall Turnipseed
Class of 2004

