



ECO-SABOTEUR GETS FIVE-YEAR SENTENCE

Rebecca Rubin participated in removing dogs from a California testing facility and in releasing wild horses from an Oregon BLM facility where the mustangs were held before some were auctioned for slaughter. Rubin also aided in burning down that BLM facility and another wild horse facility in Litchfield, Calif., according to a government sentencing memo. From her 2006 indictment for what the U.S. government has labeled “eco-terrorism” until 2012 when she turned herself in, Rubin was a fugitive. On Jan. 27, Eugene federal judge Ann Aiken sentenced Rubin to five years in prison. The government had recommended seven and a half years.

Eugene’s Civil Liberties Defense Center calls “the federal government’s ongoing prosecution of environmental and animal rights activists” the Green Scare. The CLDC says that includes “the government, corporations and politicians labeling activists as ‘eco-terrorists’ and national security threats and giving them long prison sentences.”

Rubin apologized for her participation in the eco-sabotage in court and in a letter to the judge, but the government cited her years as a fugitive in Canada and her not giving the names of other participants as reasons for asking for a longer sentence. Joseph Dibee and Josephine Overaker are the last remaining defendants in what the FBI calls “Operation Backfire,” and they remain at large.

According to her letter to Aiken, Rubin was a fugitive because “I was terrified to be compared to Osama bin Laden in the media, and to have my picture on ‘Most Wanted Terrorist’ posters” and feared 30 years to life in prison. Rubin writes that as a child, books such as *Charlotte’s Web* had an effect on her, and when she committed her acts of eco-sabotage, “I believed my only motivation was my deep love for the Earth; I now understand that impatience, anger, egotism and self-righteousness were also involved.”

Aiken also sentenced Rubin to read Malcolm Gladwell’s *David and Goliath* and UO professor Mary Wood’s *Nature’s Trust*. Aiken previously required another Operation Backfire defendant to read Greg Mortenson’s *Three Cups of Tea*.

While Rubin did not receive the government’s “terrorism enhancement” for her animal rights and ecologically motivated crimes, several others who served time in prison under Operation Backfire were given the terrorism label. The BLM never rebuilt the Eastern Oregon wild horse facility. — *Camilla Mortensen*

FISHY BUSINESS GOING ON IN CONGRESS

Pacific lingcod isn’t really a cod, but its white, flakey cod-like meat is popular with chefs. In 1999, lingcod and seven other groundfish species were declared overfished, and the Pacific Fishery Management Council and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries implemented catch restrictions. By 2005, stocks of lingcod were declared rebuilt seven years ahead of schedule, according to Ted Morton of Pew Charitable Trusts. Morton says lingcod is an example of one of the successes under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, but the environmental protections in that act are under fire from a proposed bill by Washington Republican Rep. Doc Hastings.

The bipartisan Magnuson-Stevens Act was first established in 1976 and has been periodically reauthorized. It is currently expired and up for reauthorization, a process that could take several years. In the meantime Congressman Peter DeFazio says it operates under a continuing resolution. DeFazio, who hosted a listening session on Magnuson-Stevens in Coos Bay Jan. 23, says the act, which regulates fisheries 3 to 200 miles offshore, is “tremendously important to Oregonians” as it affects those who eat seafood, commercial fishing economies, recreational fishers and those who care about ocean habitat. Before the Magnuson-Stevens Act, “it was like the Wild West out there.”

DeFazio says he had hoped to work on a bill on a bipartisan basis, but Hastings, who is chair of the House Natural Resources Committee, introduced his own Republican bill. That bill would really make decisions on stock rebuilding and meaningful limits on overfishing political, not scientific, DeFazio says. He says the act has room for improvement, and he hopes to develop a “meaningful Democratic alternative.”

Pew says the Hastings bill, which is up for a hearing in the House Feb. 4, would also reduce the public’s access to fisheries data, including data collected with taxpayer dollars, exempt fishery management from broader environmental review and result in overfishing. — *Camilla Mortensen*

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