

Trump Nominates Pesticide Industry Insider to Run U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Nominee Would Be Unprecedented as Most Unqualified in Agency History

By [Center For Biological Diversity](#)

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The Trump administration has nominated a former Monsanto employee to run the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Aurelia Skipwith has been at the Department of the Interior since April 2017 and has helped oversee virtually every effort to dismantle protections for wildlife, national parks and monuments.

“Aurelia Skipwith has been working in the Trump administration all along to end protections for billions of migratory birds, gut endangered species safeguards and eviscerate national monuments,” said Brett Hartl, government affairs director at the Center for Biological Diversity. “Skipwith will always put the interests of her old boss Monsanto and other polluters ahead of America’s wildlife and help the most anti-environmental administration in history do even more damage.”

Under [current U.S. law](#), the president cannot appoint a person to run the Fish and Wildlife Service unless the person is “by reason of scientific education and experience, knowledgeable in the principles of fisheries and wildlife management.” Skipwith’s nomination breaks with decades of tradition from presidential administrations of both parties in that she has neither education nor experience in fisheries and wildlife management.

“Skipwith is utterly unqualified to run the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,” said Hartl. “Putting unqualified ideological fanatics into positions of power continues to be the Trump administration’s game plan. These people have utterly no compunction or shame about destroying the very agencies they’re being appointed to lead.”

During Skipwith’s tenure the Fish and Wildlife Service has repeatedly put the interests of the pesticide industry ahead of imperiled wildlife. In the spring of 2017, the Service scrapped the first nationwide biological reviews that assessed the impacts of pesticides on endangered species. In August it reversed a [2014 decision](#) prohibiting bee-killing neonicotinoid pesticides and genetically modified, pesticide-resistant crops on national wildlife refuges.

Skipwith has also overseen the national park system in her current position and was instrumental in the agency’s sham review of the national monument system that enabled

Trump to illegally eliminate Bears Ears National Monument and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

“The Senate should ask Skipwith hard questions about her tenure at the Service, because confirming her would be a travesty for our nation’s wildlife,” said Hartl.

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