

The best-known figure at EPA is Andrew Wheeler, the ex-coal lobbyist who is now the fox in charge of the henhouse. But it's worth looking at some of the key remaining staff so we can see just what's happened to EPA since Trump took office. Compared to some of Trump's cabinet appointments, they all look pretty good, but that's an incredibly low bar — though surprisingly, two of them actually seem somewhat committed to the agency's mission.

Bill Wehrum is the head of the air division, and thus also in charge of climate change issues since greenhouse gases are regulated under the Clean Air Act. He was also in EPA under the Bush Administration. [NRDC](#) described him as “a corporate attorney for coal, oil, gas, and chemical conglomerates with a long record of opposing common-sense rules to protect clean air.” His clients included the American Petroleum Institute, American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers, the American Chemistry Council and the National Association of Manufacturers. During his confirmation hearing, he was dodgy on the issue of climate change, referring to ocean acidification as “an allegation.”

Henry Darwin is the chief of operations, but more importantly, is also performing the duties of the Deputy Administrator. He was Arizona's chief of operations after previously working as an assistant attorney general in charge of hazardous waste. When he got hired at EPA, he wrangled a job for his wife, who had done environmental work for Arizona state. He explained his approach in an [interview](#): “Now, there are a lot of people out there that suggest we shouldn't be calling those who we regulate our customers, but I'm not one of them. I believe that we do and should recognize our regulated community as our customers so we can apply business-related principles to our work.”

Matthew Leopold, the General Counsel, comes from private practice in Florida, before which he worked in Rick Scott's Administration there. He was favored for the position by the Federalist Society, having taken stances in favor of reducing administrative discretion and shifting power from federal regulators to the states.

Dave Ross, the head of the water division, worked for Scott Walker's Administration in Wisconsin. He had participated actively in litigation to stop the clean-up program for Chesapeake Bay, limit federal protection of wetlands by litigating against the WOTUS rule, and avoid opening individual construction-site stormwater plans to public scrutiny,

Jennifer Orme-Zavaleta is in charge of the research office. She's a career EPA scientist who has been there since 1981. She's a temporary, acting appointee, because the Administration hasn't been able to find the person it wants for the position. Obviously she's a bit of a misfit among this group.

Alexandra Dapolito Dunn, who is in charge of the chemical safety office, is the other outlier, perhaps even more so than Orme-Zavaleta. She has legitimate environmental credibility. The [Washington Post](#) described her as a centrist, and detailed her career, which included teaching environmental justice and advising an environmental law review. Her appointment is out of kilter with the Trump Administration's normal operation procedures. How she got in with this crowd is anyone's guess.

Brittany Bolen is in charge of the Office of Policy. She's a former Inhofe aide - the guy who thought he could disprove the existence of climate change by bringing a snowball to the Senate floor. That's probably all I need to say about her.

Susan Bodine is the head of enforcement. That must be an easy job, because there's hardly any enforcement going on. Referrals to the Justice Department are much lower than they were even under Bush, when the agency was often criticized for taking it too easy with polluters. She worked for Republicans on the Hill and did a stint in the Bush EPA before becoming an industry lobbyist.

So what can we see about this group? They generally have quite a bit of experience - like Wheeler and unlike Pruitt, they know their way around environmental issues. As opposed to Scott Pruitt, for instance, they're less likely to do something really outlandish, but more likely to succeed at their efforts. Apart from the two outliers, Dunn and Orme-Zavaleta, their ties are all with industry or anti-regulatory ideologues like Scott Walker and James Inhofe. The two outliers are interesting, though. Dunn's role at the research office seems to be due to the difficulty of finding someone to take the job, as well as the general indifference of the Trump Administration to anything relating to science. Dunn's appointment may be attributable to the fact that toxics issues are the one area of law even Scott Pruitt purported to care about. It has the advantage of not much involving the Administration's favorite industries, coal, oil, and gas. But on issues that the fossil fuel industry and agribusiness care about, EPA is packed with opponents of federal regulation.