It's a tough job, but somebody's got to do it. Covering the Senate Republicans' continuing obstruction of judicial nominees is about as exciting as watching paint dry, but the good folks at Defenders of Wildlife, one of the nation's most venerable environmental organizations, have decided to invest in doing it, with their vital blog, Judging The Environment. It's run by staff attorney Glenn Sugameli.

Senate obstruction thrives in darkness: no one knows what is happening, so no one can complain. JTE is trying to do what it can. As they note:

> Judicial appointments rarely are thought of as an environmental issue, but they have become an environmental priority. Because so many environmental enforcement issues end up in court, federal judges play a crucial role in deciding not only how to interpret and enforce, but also whether to uphold or strike down, the laws that protect our nation's clean water, clean air, communities, and special natural places. Unfortunately, activist judges often place their interests first and prevent laws from being carried out as Congress intended.

Of course, Legal Planet readers have known this all along. But *Judging the Environment* is useful for another reason: it continually highlights how Senate Republicans are not just blocking "controversial" nominees, but *uncontroversial* ones — nominees that have the support of both home state Senators, even extremely and radically right-wing home state Senators.

Consider Robert Bacharach, an Oklahoma magistrate judge nominated by President Obama last year to the Tenth Circuit. Bacharach is about as non-ideological a candidate as there could be. He has the support of both Tom Coburn and James Inhofe, whom no one would call tree-huggers. And Senate Republicans filibustered him *anyway*.

Usually, in the wake of a clear an convincing election victory, minority party Senators will defer at least a little to the will of the public — especially if the President nominates indisputably centrist judges. But the Senate GOP is not interested in such things. That's why Judging the Environment is an important source going forward. Check it out.