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<http://endingthefed.com/wyoming-rancher-sticks-it-to-the-feds-wins-big-time-against-obama-and-the-epa.html>

## Wyoming Rancher Sticks It To The Feds...Wins Big Time Against Obama And The EPA



This is one for the good guys.

It might have lacked the drama of the Bundy ranch standoff in Nevada two years ago, and the bloodshed of a related militia occupation in Oregon last year, but a court settlement this week was a smashing victory for a Wyoming man fighting an ever more intrusive federal government.

And while the settlement won't create a legal precedent, it's a property rights victory for Americans throughout the country — a victory won by a young rancher and the Constitution-protecting legal team that stood with him.

The case that drew the attention of national news outlets pitted rancher Andy Johnson against the Obama administration's Environmental Protection Agency and its overzealous agents who tried to fine Johnson millions of dollars for a pond he created on his own land, at his own expense, in Fort Bridge, Wyoming.

The battle started two years ago, when Johnson obtained a state permit to dam a small creek running through his 8-acre property, according to [The New York Times](#). The pond that was created was not only a benefit to the Johnson's ranch, to be used for watering his horses and cattle, it also became an attraction to wildlife.

But the federal government decided Johnson hadn't gotten the EPA's approval for the project and was violating the Clean Water Act. It ordered him to dismantle the pond — on pain of fines reaching a ludicrous, business-killing \$37,500 *a day*.

Johnson refused and eventually sued the government, engaging in lengthy, expensive battle with the feds, relying on the help from the Pacific Legal Foundation to try to protect his property rights.

Johnson maintained the Clean Water Act did not cover stock ponds, but a major part of the case was that the federal government had no business trying to regulate a body of water that had no connection to a navigable waterway.

In a settlement reached Monday, he won.

The Pacific Legal Foundation is a conservative watchdog group that fights for “limited government, property rights, and a balanced approach to environmental regulations, in courts across the country.” The Johnson fight was exactly the kind of battle the foundation was created to wage, staff attorney Jonathan Wood said in a news release this week.

“This is a victory for common sense and the environment, and it brings an end to all the uncertainty and fear that the Johnson family faced,” he said.

Under the terms of the settlement, the pond Johnson enjoys with his wife and four daughters will be allowed to remain. The fines the family braved — which had reached an astronomical \$16 million — are no longer imposed.

“This is a huge victory for us as well as private property owners across the country,” the rancher said. “The next family that finds itself in our situation, facing ominous threats from EPA, can take heart in knowing that many of these threats will not come to pass. If, like us, you stand up to the overreaching bureaucrats, they may very well back down.”

And as Jazz Shaw, an editor at [HotAir.com](https://www.hotair.com), put it:

*“Under Gina McCarthy, the Environmental Protection Agency has been completely out of control, seeking to expand the agency's control over virtually all activity which takes place on either dirt or water. (Read: the entire country.) But among all of the regulatory overreach which this administration has attempted, the expansion of the Clean Water Act is one of the boldest and most intrusive, while receiving far less media attention than their crippling of the energy industry.*

*“Access to and use of public waterways impacts every aspect of life, and that applies to city dwellers as well as those in rural areas. Gina McCarthy would like to dig the government's fingernails into every*

*roadside culvert and wet sidewalk in the country, and without someone to push back against these schemes the way the Johnson Family and the Pacific Legal Foundation have, she'll get away with it."*

Not this time. And hopefully not again after January 20, 2017.

h/t: [WND](#)