



**BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS**
NEVADA

Josh Nicholes,
District Ranger,
660 South 12th Street, Suite 108,
Elko, Nevada 89801
775-778-6109

Re: South Jerritt Exploration Project

Backcountry Hunters and Anglers is a nationwide organization with state and province chapters across North America. Our stated mission is to advocate on behalf of wildlife and wild places to maintain our tradition of public land hunting and fishing. We recognize the multiple use mandate of public lands under the purview of the USFS. However, extreme care must be taken to avoid negative wildlife impacts as much as possible especially with the potential ESA listing of sage grouse.

While the proposed disturbance is small (500 acres), the relatively long duration (7 years) of the project along with the extensive wildlife inhabiting the area, make this a project with the potential for significant wildlife impacts.

Given the numerous creeks within the project area that contain Lahontan Cutthroat Trout, we would like to see specifics concerning how this project will impact these streams i.e. water quality from increased run off from road and/or pad construction, or water withdrawal on downstream flows.

Greater sage grouse leks are directly adjacent to the proposed project area and additionally, the entire project consists of high quality sage grouse habitat. We would like greater clarification on the cessation of all “ground disturbing activities” during lekking season (Mar 1-June 30) to include drilling activities over and above just pad and road construction.

The project area contains crucial winter habitat for mule deer and some sort of equal measure mitigation should be included for the reduction in range productivity from exploration activities.

We would ask that it be explicitly stated that NDOW is to be consulted at every step of the decision-making process, so that wildlife impacts can be addressed. Additionally, the project’s plan of operations should be available online so that it may be reviewed by a broader audience for comment.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments, and concerns,

David Ricker, Policy Chair, NVBHA



WWW.BACKCOUNTRYHUNTERS.ORG/NEVADA_BHA
NEVADA@BACKCOUNTRYHUNTERS.ORG



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