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Comments: FW: Comments on Draft Environmental Impact Statement, WRNF

Comments from Robert Millette.

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From: Fitzwilliams, Scott -FS

Sent: Monday, December 03, 2012 6:18 AM

To: Francomb, David A -FS

Subject: Fw: Comments on Draft Environmental Impact Statement, WRNF

From: Bob Millette [mailto:peregrine@rof.net]

Sent: Saturday, December 01, 2012 05:38 AM

To: Fitzwilliams, Scott -FS

Subject: Comments on Draft Environmental Impact Statement, WRNF

Mr. Scott Fitzwilliams

Forest Supervisor

White River National Forest

900 Grand Ave.

Glenwood Springs, CO 81601

Dear Mr. Fitzwilliams:

I am grateful to provide my comments on the draft Environmental Impact Statement (dEIS) for Oil and Gas Leasing in the White River National Forest (WRNF). I am deeply concerned about development of the Thompson Divide Area. Therefore, I am urging the Forest Service to implement a plan that would prevent all future leasing on the WRNF and ensure that development of existing leases will not degrade this area.

Please consider the following points:

- 1) Water is a very precious resource in Colorado, especially with the droughts we have been experiencing. The more than 15 watersheds in the Thompson Divide are critical to the health and wellbeing of this area. They provide valuable water for people, ranches, wildlife, and help to maintain this area's outstanding wildlife habitat. The streams in the Thompson Divide are home to our endangered Colorado River cutthroat trout which deserve full protection. Oil and gas development in this area has a high potential of damaging and polluting these valuable water sources and must be severely limited or prevented
- 2) The Thompson Divide Area forms an essential part of the outdoor recreation-based economy for the towns of Carbondale, Glenwood Springs and surrounding areas. This multi-billion dollar recreational industry attracts thousands of tourists every year, and is a major source of jobs for our local economy. It supports a huge economy based on hunting, fishing, skiing, snowshoeing, camping, hiking and more. This industry far surpasses the current and potential jobs and revenue that would be derived from the oil and gas industry.
- 3) Our towns and communities cannot afford to have the destructive impacts of truck and equipment travel that would result from oil and gas development in the Thompson Divide. This would pollute our neighborhoods and severely damage the recreational activities that bring people and dollars to our area. And, it would negatively impact real estate and tourist attractions in Garfield County in areas surrounding Carbondale and Glenwood Springs.
- 4) The USFS must ensure that development of existing leases is carried out in a manner that protects valuable wildlife habitat as well as threatened or endangered species. The FS must protect all non-oil and gas related values of the National Forest, and either allow existing leases to expire or invoke the most stringent environmental protections for any future development.

I want to thank you for considering my comments. The area in question for development, mainly the Thompson Divide, is virtually in our back yard. It is this area we depend on for our health and recreation. The sustainability of this area depends on clean air, clean water, and viable fish and wildlife habitat.

The Thompson Divide Area is essential for the economic wellbeing of our communities. It deserves full protection from future oil and gas leasing.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Millette

0116 Deer Park Ct.

Glenwood Springs

CO 81601

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