

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/27/2017 7:00:00 AM

First name: Deb

Last name: McFarlane

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Deb McFarlane

268 Cliff Place

Spring Creek, NV 89815

October 5, 2017

Dear Susan Elliott,

This letter is in response to the Forest Services' request for comments regarding the proposed leasing of portions of the Ruby Mountains for oil and gas exploration. The Ruby Mountains, from Harrison Pass north, must never be leased for oil and gas.

Geologically the norther Rubies are composed of an uplifted metamorphic core complex. The rocks are granitic and high temperature metamorphic rocks. Oil and gas cannot occur in this type of environment. No legitimate oil and gas company would ever propose leasing in an area with no prospect of success.

I live in Spring Creek, Nevada because of the Ruby Mountains. The view from my living room is spectacular. My husband and I often joke that we have a million dollar view of the mountains. Like Yosemite National Park, the Rubies are carved by glaciers. Snow clad year round on the rocky craggy peaks, covered by aspen trees that turn light green in the spring progressing to brilliant golden in the autumn on their mid slopes, culminating with lovely tans, golden and dark green of sagebrush, mountain mahogany, and grass on their lower slopes. A significant percent of the sale value of my house is our spectacular view of the Rubies. In addition, approximately 20,000 people live in Spring Creek. Any disturbance of the view shed would affect the resale value of thousands of houses.

(picture of the Ruby Mountains)

View from our house taken October 5, 2017. Proposed lease sale (T.32 N., R57 E.) would cover most of the mountainous portions of this view shed. Taken with my cell phone, no telephoto.

I moved to Spring Creek in 1980. The Ruby Mountains are my back yard. I have hiked to Ruby Dome and the Ruby Crest Trail numerous times. During the summer and autumn months there is not a week that goes by that I do not hike in the Ruby Mountains. I hike because of the beauty and the quiet. I hike to look for bighorn sheep, mountain goats, and birds. I hike to photograph autumn foliage and spring flowers.

The Spring Creek (property owners) Association owns a private campground in Hennen Canyon bordering the Forest Service. A well-marked trail leads from the Spring Creek Campground to Griswold Lake. Most people access Ruby Dome by this trail then continue cross-country to the top. The proposed lease sale parcel (T.32 N., R57 E.) is adjacent to this private campground. Hennen Canyon and Griswold Lake are within the proposed lease sale.

The 43-mile Ruby Crest National Recreation Trail is world renowned and receives 1000s of visitors a year. It is well advertised (BACKPACKER Magazine, Nevada Magazine, TripAdvisor, AllTrails, OutDoorProject, Friends of Nevada Wilderness, American Trails, Summitpost, and numerous blogs and internet sites, and trail guidebooks). Not only have I seen license plates at the trailhead from most states and Canada, I have spoken to hikers from all over the world. While backpacking on the Ruby Crest in August, I met a family who chooses one trail in each state to thru-hike. The Ruby Crest was their 36th trail in their 36th state. They were so impressed with the Ruby Crest that they planned to come back. North of the Harrison Pass trailhead, 2.5 miles of the Ruby Crest Trail lie within the proposed lease parcel (T. 28 N. & T.29 N., R 57 E).

The northern Ruby Mountains are the most spectacular scenery in all of Nevada. The lightly-trammeled beauty, the rugged peaks, and the solitude of the Ruby Mountains draw many people to the area. Loss of this spectacular habitat would be a serious blow to the economy of Elko County.

Geologically the northern Ruby Mountains are a metamorphic core complex and the granitic rocks and high temperature metamorphic rocks do not contain hydrocarbons. This geologic terrain extends from north of Lamoille Canyon to south of Harrison Pass.

Please remove all of the sections in T.32 N., R57 E., T.29 N., R57 E., and T.28 N., R57 E. from the proposed lease sales.

* T.32 N., R57 E. contains the most spectacular rugged beauty in Nevada.

* T.32 N., R57 E., T.29 N., R.57 E., and T.28 N., R 57 E. contain high temperature metamorphic and granitic rocks which preclude the formation and/or accumulation of hydrocarbons. Any hydrocarbons in the original sediments would have been destroyed during metamorphism.

* T.29 N., R.57 E., and T.28 N., R57 E. lie on the Ruby Crest National Recreation Trail.

Geologically, the southern-most portions of the proposed lease sale (T. 27 N., R 56 E., and T26 N., R57 E.) are less metamorphosed and may potentially contain hydrocarbons. While these sections are beautiful they do not contain the rugged glaciated beauty of the northern Rubies. I prefer that they not be leased for oil and gas, however, I do not have factual data to preclude it. Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Deb McFarlane