

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/24/2017 6:55:11 AM

First name: Josie

Last name: Lopez

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Don't Allow Fracking in the Ruby Mountains

Dear Ms. Elliott,

The Ruby Mountains of northeast Nevada are the crown jewels of the Great Basin. High, rugged, glaciated peaks rise above thick aspen groves and open sagebrush slopes. The largest herds of mule deer in Nevada call the Rubies home, as do elk, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep and mountain goats.

Some of the best trout fisheries, including those harboring threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout, are in the creeks cascading down from the Ruby Crest. And the Rubies provide abundant, high-priority habitat for vulnerable sage grouse. In short, this is a paradise for Nevada's wildlife.

But this stunning landscape would be ruined if it is opened up for fracking and drilling.

The U.S. Forest Service is considering leasing 54,000 acres in the Ruby Mountains for oil companies to exploit for fracking and drilling. This has the potential to poison the waters of the Ruby Mountains with a toxic cocktail of chemicals - a disaster for the trout fisheries. Widespread oil and gas development has been shown to dramatically decrease numbers of big game like deer. And sage grouse are highly susceptible to disturbance from oil drilling.

Forest Service: The Ruby Mountains are too special for destructive fossil fuel extraction. The Ruby Mountains are one of the most spectacular landscapes in Nevada. With abundant big game, robust trout fisheries and dense sage grouse habitat, the Rubies are a critical resource for wildlife.

Fracking and drilling for oil and gas would irreparably harm this undisturbed area. The waters that our trout rely on could be poisoned in spills or well failures after fracking. Mule deer habitat would be fragmented, and the deers' ability to safely overwinter would be compromised. Vulnerable sage grouse, known to be negatively affected by oil and gas development, will inch steadily closer to extinction.

I urge you not to permit any leasing for oil and gas in the Ruby Mountains. Non-surface occupancy stipulations do nothing to protect our precious aquatic resources from the harms of fracking. The only way to protect the fragile resources of the Rubies is to forbid leasing on all of these parcels.

Thank you,

Josie Lopez

79912