

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/23/2017 2:32:12 PM

First name: Joe

Last name: Ratliff

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Don't Allow Fracking in the Ruby Mountains

Dear Ms. Elliott,

Dear Ms Elliott:

Since I became a Nevadan in 1971, I have enjoyed and explored the gorgeous Ruby Mountains and surrounding regions such as the Ruby Marshes. 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.

As a retired federal soil scientist and research associate at the University of Nevada/Reno, I had the tremendous opportunity to conduct original research studies in the Ruby Mountains. No where In the Great Basin are there more beautiful and unspoiled ecosystems than in the Ruby Mountains! Therefore,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, wildlife and domestic livestock 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 from fracking and all other fossil fuel development!

As you well know, any proposed, large fossil fuel development, such as fracking on these public lands will require NEPA environmental studies and public review prior to any leasing action. A proposed leasing of 54,000 acres will surely require a full environmental impact statement preparation and documentation. I would like to be kept informed of any proposed action so I can provide comments and evaluations.

Thank you,

Joe M. Ratliff
BLM Soil Scientist/Natural Resource Specialist
Winnemucca, Nevada
775-403-3776

Joe Ratliff

89445