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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Don't Allow Fracking in the Ruby Mountains

Dear Ms. Elliott,

This is a landscape far more valuable over the years for recreation in nature and for its ecosystem services provided to north-central Nevada. The higher peaks are sky islands, with natural features due to their isolation and elevation not found over much of the basin and range province.

With abundant big game, robust trout fisheries and dense sage grouse habitat, the Rubies are a critical resource for wildlife. And that's just for the bigger and more obvious vertebrates. I have backpacked there several times and have witnessed myriad species in the sort of combination that makes each of Nevada's sky islands unique. But it's not just the higher sky islands but all of the ecological zones from basin floor to mountaintop. The Ruby Marshes fed by precipitation-catching mountains are not to be forgotten in the considerations of habitat destruction and pollution caused by unneeded fossil fuel exploration and extraction on slopes above.

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,

Carl May

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