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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I have hunted the Ruby Mountains since the 1980s and have seen the deer migration negatively impacted by habitat destruction. During migration I would see herds of fifteen to twenty deer migrating to south Ruby wintering grounds and further. Archery hunting was wonderful one by one the water holes dried up and vegetation was destroyed. I personally saw the deer migration numbers dwindle to groups of four to five. A migration report was done by biologists, at the department of wildlife, and the migration route was mapped out using collared deer data that was collected to assess habitat protection. The Bald Mountain mine expansion was approved, but mule deer habitat was of great concern. In the final analysis of the expansion Ore surface area removal was decreased due to deer habitat destruction which includes pits and haul routes.

That August 2016 after the expansion was approved a fire decimated the Overland Pass, destroying more critical deer habitat. Approximately 8900 of sage, mountain mahogany, juniper, serviceberry, bitterbrush and piñon pines were burnt. This area was considered so important that The Overland Pass Big wash Habitat Improvement Project was created to form fire breaks by removing vegetation to form defensive islands so the whole area would not be destroyed by a fire. The Money was slated for this project for years before a committee was formed and still the project was not completed. Two weeks after the last meeting a fire started due to a smolder from a lightning strike a week earlier.

In conclusion how can an area so important for deer migrating not be rehabilitated and suddenly slated for a fracking field. This is right through the migration area. An area so important that the mine expansion had to reduce pay loads and roads. What do you think drilling rigs, trucks, and contaminated and/or lack of water will do to the deer. The deer in this area are already stressed and more heavy industrial activity will definitely put the final nail in the heart of the migration. This is Twenty five percent of the states mule deer herd. That is a huge loss to the citizens of Nevada and the numerous sporting industries in the state. Mule deer have used this migration route for hundreds of years and once it's gone it's gone and there is no going back or no amount of money that will replace them.