



Sales, Sharon <ssales@blm.gov>

Fwd: Comments from National Park Service at Great Sand Dunes

1 message

RG_Comments, BLM_CO <blm_co_rg_comments@blm.gov>
To: Sharon Sales <ssales@blm.gov>

Fri, Jan 5, 2018 at 9:33 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Bunch, Fred** <fred_bunch@nps.gov>
Date: Thu, Dec 21, 2017 at 4:05 PM
Subject: Comments from National Park Service at Great Sand Dunes
To: blm_co_rg_comments@blm.gov

Dec. 21, 2017

Dear BLM,

Thank you for the opportunity for the National Park Service (NPS) to comment on the scoping for the proposed oil and gas leasing in the area just east of the Great Sand Dunes National Preserve.

Some of the parcels proposed for mineral extraction are close (.90 mile) to the eastern boundary of Great Sand Dunes National Preserve and 4.5-5 mile from the dunes themselves. Since that area of the preserve is part of the Sangre De Cristo Wilderness that was established in 1993, some of the comments from the NPS are concerns that oil and gas development would impact wilderness values including; air quality, dark night sky, natural quiet and opportunities for solitude.

Our other comments include concerns for the natural condition of the park and preserve including the prevention of the spread of invasive species of non-native plants, prevention of impacts to wildlife including migratory birds, linkages for large mammals and impacts to the existing flora and fauna including a population of dwarfed short horned lizard (*Phrynosoma hernandesi*) occurring on top of Mosca Pass near the proposed lease area. This population occurs at a higher elevation than the normal short horned lizard and is genetically divergent from the same species in the San Luis Valley. (Lathi, 2010).

The National Park Service in partnership with the U. S. Forest Service is working to control the spread of white pine blister rust, a fungus that infects Limber and Bristlecone Pines. These species of trees occur on the preserve and the forest near the proposed leasing areas. This control project includes trimming of infected trees and collecting seeds from resistant trees and propagating resistant seeds in order to propagate a rust resistant strain of pines. Since this project is occurring near the proposed lease area it is important to bring this to your attention.

Although the proposed area is in a different watershed than the park and preserve, good water quality is always important in natural areas.

There is concern that if oil and gas development occurs and fracking is done, the area could become more active seismically and frequency and intensity of earthquakes could increase.

Sincerely,

Fred Bunch

Great Sand Dunes N.P. & P.