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>
08/23/02 05:24 AM
EST

To: <pais_superintendent@nps.gov>
cc:
Subject: Protect Padre, Not BNP's Profits

Dear Mr. Whitworth

Re: "Environmental Assessment, BNP Petroleum Corporation, Lemon/Lemon Seed Unit Wells, No. 1-1000S and No. 1-1008S, Padre Island National Seashore, Texas, July 2002"

I am a resident of South Texas and a frequent visitor to Mustang and South Padre Islands. I strongly oppose BNP Petroleum's proposed Lemon/Lemon Seed oil and gas wells and any future drilling within Padre Island National Seashore. I'm concerned that BNP's operations will impair my opportunity to enjoy the wild solitude and beauty of the park. The expected 40 large truck trips per day during well drilling make the beach more like a freeway than a nature preserve and family vacation spot. Massive truck traffic along 12.5 miles of beach will impair the nesting grounds for threatened and endangered sea turtles.

BNP's proposed operations will also destroy nearly 300,000 square feet of fragile dunes and uplands--causing major impairment to habitat for threatened and endangered migratory birds that come to the park to rest and feed.

Although the most recent Environmental Assessment repeatedly identifies many serious direct and cumulative damages to the environment, wildlife, and visitors' experience from BNP's oil and gas operations, it inexplicably concludes that each resource will nonetheless suffer no "impairment." The National Park Service has no basis for determining that all of the damage that it admits will occur due to oil and gas drilling in the park amounts to "no impairment." The Park Service should change its conclusions and recognize that major damage has already and will continue to occur and take appropriate steps to protect the park from further damage.

Please deny BNP's permit request for more drilling in the park, and instead work to protect the park from those that would destroy it. At the very least, a more detailed Environmental Assessment needs to be done examining the impacts of construction and oil spills on sea-turtles and other wildlife as well as visitor experience. The Park Service should also explain in more detail why it is rejecting a drilling closure during sea-turtle nesting season, and what the potential for an oil spill might be.

Oil and gas exploration on the Padre Island sea shore may present a near term profit opportunity for BNP, but the costs will be paid by the residents and visitors to the Texas shoreline for many years.

Thank you,

Rex Robards
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