

## **Ensure oil and gas development is compatible with conservation of Chaco Culture National Historical Park!**

**The Chaco landscape and ancient sites have international significance.**



Last August, northwestern New Mexico's Chaco Culture National Historical Park (NHP) became the 4th unit of the U.S. National Park System to receive designation as an International Dark Sky Park by the International Dark-Sky Association. Added to the National Park System in 1907 by President Theodore Roosevelt and designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987, Chaco Culture NHP encompasses the high-desert

landscape of Chaco Canyon and the grand ruins of the heart of the Ancestral Puebloan or Chacoan culture, which spread throughout the Four Corners region 1,000 years ago.

### **The growing demand for oil and gas development in the northwestern corner of the state will impact the resources of Chaco – including the quality of the night skies.**

Flaring of natural gas and an increase in intensive artificial lighting from construction activities, vehicle traffic, and operation of support facilities can all affect the quality of the night skies both at the park's higher elevations and inside the canyon. NPCA and our partners are currently working with the New Mexico Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to plan for new oil and gas development in the Chaco region with the goal of protecting not only the incredible cultural and natural resources, but the incredible night skies that the people of Chaco gazed upon and valued a thousand years ago.

### **Possible impacts from incompatible development near Chaco Culture NHP include:**

- Degradation of cultural sites and spiritual values
- Air quality impacts
- Wildlife habitat fragmentation from development
- Water quality and quantity concerns
- Noise and night sky impacts to park visitors
- Increased truck traffic near park



# FACTSHEET

## **Recent efforts to address oil and gas activity within the Chaco area have not always been successful.**

Interest in developing oil and gas resources on the landscape surrounding Chaco Culture NHP is not new. In 2009, due to a formal protest from the Hopi Tribe of an oil and gas lease sale that included parcels near Chaco, the BLM deferred leasing and began a stakeholder consultation process to address public concerns.



Faiada Butte at sunset © NPS

In 2010, a proposal was submitted to the BLM for the development of a Master Leasing Plan on the landscape surrounding Chaco Culture NHP. A Master Leasing Plan would provide a focused analysis of the impacts from potential oil and gas development on the Chaco region. It would also help determine where and how leasing should take place in order to protect the cultural and natural resources of Chaco Culture NHP, along with impacts to the region outside of National Park Service management.

## **The BLM is amending its Resource Management Plan for northwestern New Mexico, and is asking the public to identify issues and concerns.**

Although the stakeholder consultation process has not been resolved and the BLM dismissed the proposal for a Master Leasing Plan, there is a new opportunity to help plan for and guide future oil and gas leasing and development. The BLM commenced a public process for analyzing impacts of new oil and gas development within a six million acre planning area, encompassing the Chaco landscape. Now is the time to voice support for Chaco and ask the BLM to address the potential impacts from adjacent oil and gas development by incorporating a Master Leasing Plan and analyzing impacts to the park's natural and cultural resources.

**Please attend a public meeting in Albuquerque on May 6, 2014 and tell the BLM that a Master Leasing Plan (MLP) or some level of comprehensive planning needs to be completed to ensure Chaco's resources are protected.**

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