



The Threats To Theodore Roosevelt National Park Fact Sheet 2014

Overview: Widespread oil drilling is threatening North Dakota's only National Park, Theodore Roosevelt National Park. In the winter of 2013 an oil company staked a well on the border of the Elkhorn Ranch Unit of the park. Elkhorn Ranch is the site of President Theodore Roosevelt's ranch where President Roosevelt developed his conservation ethic, and the ranch is known by many as the cradle of conservation. The permit to drill near Elkhorn was eventually withdrawn, but the threats to the park still remain.



Aerial of TRNP, wells can be seen almost adjacent the park boundaries. Photo credit: Bruce Farnsworth Photography

Incongruent Development: Currently two incongruent developments are threatening the pristine nature of TRNP: a gravel pit, and a proposed road. Both the road and the gravel pit would significantly damage the park's pristine nature. In addition, both the gravel pit and the road will ensure that many trucks and traffic will be in the area of the park, thus damaging the visitor experience.

Threats to the Viewshed: Being able to visit a National Park is something people value. Not having to see development from a National Park is also something that most park visitors also value. A viewshed is the area around a park that is visible to visitors as they approach the park entrance, and it also comprises what is visible to visitor when they are in a National Park. National Park visitors want the viewshed to be pristine. Currently many developments are impacting the viewshed of TRNP. Flares from oil wells, oil development visible from the park boundaries, the noise of truck traffic, and proposed power-lines all threaten the pristine nature of TRNP's viewshed. Dakota Resource Council and others are working to ensure TRNP's viewshed remains pristine so that visitors can still have a true National Park experience.



Buffalo grazing in TRNP south unit



Extraordinary Places: This past winter North Dakota conservation groups and the Attorney General worked to get special considerations for oil and gas permits in and around the park. Currently any North Dakota oil permit near the park boundaries is subject to special consideration. DRC and other organizations will work in the 2015 North Dakota Legislature to expand the protections of TRNP, while working to get more places designated for special consideration prior to being allowed to drill .