



from the Center for Biological Diversity and its newsletter *Endangered Earth*

JUDGE HALTS PLAN TO FRACK 60,000 ACRES IN UTAH

Thanks to a lawsuit by the Center for Biological Diversity and its allies, on Dec. 11 a judge overturned the Trump Administration's plan to lease out more than 60,000 acres of public land for fracking in northern Utah's Uintah Basin, including areas near Dinosaur National Monument.

“This is a strong rebuke of Trump’s disastrous fracking frenzy across our public lands, which is destroying the climate, wildlife and frontline communities,” the Center’s Taylor McKinnon said. “President-elect Biden’s ban on new federal fossil fuel leasing can’t come soon enough.”

MONARCH BUTTERFLIES WAITLISTED FOR PROTECTION

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [announced](#) Dec. 15 that Endangered Species Act protection for monarchs is “warranted, but precluded.” That puts the butterflies in a bureaucratic limbo where they get no protection.

The iconic black-and-orange pollinators are in drastic decline because of pesticides, climate change and other threats, which is why in 2014 the Center for Biological Diversity and its allies petitioned to have them listed as “threatened” under the Act. The most recent population counts show a decline of 85 percent for the eastern U.S. population and 99 percent for monarchs west of the Rockies — both well below the thresholds at which their annual migrations could collapse.

“Not only are monarchs beautiful, but they play important roles in nature and culture, and their migrations are jaw-dropping,” the Center’s Tierra Curry said. “We owe them and future generations an all-in commitment to their recovery.”