

NM Strategicplan

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General_Comments=Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Phreatophyte Plan. I have followed this issue for many years both professional and personally and I'm pleased to see this important concern addressed. I appreciate the fact that the plan appears to be rational, using a scientific approach and is inclusive. Too often I feel as though I am on the outside looking in.

This plan needs to be more than about controlling Salt Cedar, Russian Olive and other invaders. It also needs to be about riparian and watershed restoration to a healthy and proper functioning condition. There is more to a healthy ecosystem than simply trying to save water. You need to listen to professionals who know about how to restore riparian ecosystems not just how to remove invasives.

The Task Force needs to be composed of a broad a spectrum of participants as is practical. This is an environmental, agricultural, health and community issue and all points of view should be represented.

It is unclear how projects are selected and how dollars are spent. There needs to be greater accountability. Even the criteria for selecting projects is unclear. How are priorities set?

Many of the projects have used herbicides without knowing all the ramifications of such use. Why isn't more of the projects using mechanical removal techniques?

This program needs more accountability. I believe the program should be housed in a state agency with accountability to the Legislature.

Recommendations_Comments=The Broad-based Technical Advisory Panel should be truly independent and more science based. Scientists are currently under represented.

This Technical Advisory Panel should play a greater role in selecting and evaluating projects.

Private and federally-funded projects should be explicitly linked to the statewide plan.

There needs to be a focused and competitive RFP process to help assure high-quality projects that meet established priorities.

Implementation_Comments=As the State Executive Director of Audubon New Mexico and a state Game Commissioner I have long followed this process with mixed reactions. Removal of invasives like salt cedar is important but must be combined with restoration and recovery of the native riparian communities. Also we should be experimenting with a wide array of removal applications to see how they work relative to each other and to understand their costs. There must be more accountability for the money spent to date and in the future. This is important work but must be combined with a building of a broad base of support for now and into the future.

Thank you.

Templates_Comments=

