

Galisteo Basin Noxious Weeds Factsheet



Potential negative impacts

- Roads provide a major conduit for the spread of exotic plants into natural areas, particularly in arid and semiarid landscapes of the American West. (BLM 1999)
- Vehicles and road-fill operations can transport noxious weed seeds into areas not yet infested with noxious weeds; and road construction and maintenance operations can provide sites for seed germination and seedling establishment (Schmidt 1989; Lonsdale & Lane 1994; Greenburg et al. 1997; Trombulak & Frissell 2000)
- A Montana State University study showed that a vehicle driven several feet through a spotted knapweed infestation could pick up about 2,000 seeds. Only 10 percent of the weed seeds remained on the vehicle 10 miles from the infestation; therefore seeds were deposited over the range the vehicle travelled.

Potential positive impacts

- There are several watershed improvement and restoration efforts currently underway in the Galisteo Basin. These include efforts by: Central New Mexico Cooperative Weed Management Area, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (Edgewood, Coronado, and Santa Fe-Pojoaque), Galisteo Watershed Partnership, Santo Domingo Pueblo, and the Army Corps of Engineers
- The oil and gas industry has been an active partner in watershed restoration work in parts of the country where their operations are present. This could present an opportunity to obtain an additional watershed partner and funding source for the watershed restoration work that is ongoing in the Galisteo Basin.

Possible solutions

The key to environmentally sound oil and gas exploration and production is properly written, executed and enforced lease agreements. These agreements should include detailed language covering noxious weed prevention and control measures. Points to be addressed should include:

1. Ingress and egress vehicle and equipment washing standards.
2. The submission and adherence to detailed noxious weed management plans. These plans should include early detection and rapid response contingencies, as well as post production treatment for a minimum of five years.
3. Post production reclamation of roads, well pad sites and other disturbed areas. This should include the reestablishment of native plant communities as well as the elimination of noxious weeds.

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