



Native Plant Society of New Mexico
P. O. Box 35388
Albuquerque, NM 87176-5388

August 10, 2016

Santa Fe National Forest
Forest Plan Revision Team
11 Forest Lane
Santa Fe, NM 87508

Re: Santa Fe National Forest Plan Revision NEPA Scoping

Dear Santa Fe National Forest:

The Native Plant Society of New Mexico respectfully submits the following comments in response to the June 30 Notice of Intent published in the Federal Register. We have reviewed the Notice of Intent, as well as Volume 1 (Ecological Resources) of the Final Assessment, and the Findings from the Final Assessment: Twelve Focus Areas and Needs for Change Statements. NPSNM is a non-profit organization with more than 700 members in seven chapters around the state, and El Paso, Texas. Our mission is to educate the public about native plants by promoting knowledge of plant identification, ecology, and uses; foster plant conservation and the preservation of natural habitats; support botanical research; and encourage the appropriate use of native plants to conserve water, land, and wildlife.

NPSNM strongly supports all of the Focus Areas and Needs for Change statements pertaining to vegetation, as identified by the Forest in the above mentioned documents.

In regard to the Monitoring Focus Area, there is an apparent need for baseline information about certain resources, in addition to tracking progress toward management objectives. Resources without current adequate status information include rare plants and invasive weeds. Given a continuing paucity of resources, the Forest will need to prioritize data gaps, work with partners, and possibly simplify monitoring protocols for maximum efficiency.

We take issue with the assertion that addition of the New Mexico jumping mouse to the federal endangered species list "increase(s) risk to rangelands" (page 114 of the Final Assessment, Volume 1). An example of a management practice that will provide habitat for the mouse and continue to provide necessary water for cattle are what the Forest Service is calling "cattle lanes". These cattle lanes will be installed in all of their enclosure areas to maintain access to water for cattle grazing on allotments where fencing is being installed. This will allow cattle to get to needed water while protecting the important vegetation the mouse needs. Fence construction on National Forests lands will be limited to areas that are currently occupied by the mouse. This amounts to less than .3% of the 22 allotments where the

mouse occurs. In the Santa Fe NF there are 6 allotments (180,212 acres) of which only 283 acres are occupied. While the impact to grazing resources will be minimal, protecting the mouse's habitat will also protect rare and threatened montane riparian vegetation communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the planning process by submitting comments during the scoping phase. We look forward to further interaction during review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rachel Jankowitz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Rachel Jankowitz, Conservation Chair
Native Plant Society of New Mexico