



Native Plant Society of New Mexico
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505-373-8779

November 5, 2021

Wendy Mason
EMNRD, Forestry Division
1220 South St. Francis Dr.
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Dear Ms. Mason,

The Native Plant Society of New Mexico is a 45-year-old, member-supported organization with chapters all around the state and in El Paso, Texas. We are comprised of amateur naturalists and professional botanists, conservationists, educators, landscapers, public servants, individuals and families with an interest in our natural heritage. We write to you in support of the amendment to 19.21.2 NMAC as proposed by the EMNRD Forestry Division to strengthen protections for our state's endangered plants and to add American Hart's-tongue fern to the list of protected species.

We appreciate the fact that EMNRD has studied similar statutes in western states and has arrived carefully at a moderate improvement of New Mexico's rule, clarifying the types of harms prohibited and exempted, accommodating scientific and traditional purposes for taking plants, and applying penalties to a degree commensurate with the extent of damage to fragile populations of irreplaceable plants.

Our native flora is just as important as our other wildlife and is its main support. Our rare and endangered plants are part of what makes our state a unique and interesting place to live or visit. Our neighboring state Arizona recognized this long ago with laws that are still stricter in ways than the rule change currently proposed here. It is not just about their iconic saguaros, and not only endangered plants, but applies to a wide array of its native species and does cover their presence on private property. New Mexico should do what it can to hold onto the full diversity of our special environment.

Therefore, we urge the adoption of the proposed rule change just as it is written. Thank you for the chance to comment on this important issue.

Tom Stewart
President, NPSNM
Albuquerque, NM