

NPS Conservation Committee Winter report

September 2023 – January 8, 2024

Activities from September to January

10/19/23 The Gila Chapter and NPSNM signed on to a petition written by Wild Earth Guardians and Wild Workshop to ask the US Forest Service to define fens and prohibit their destruction on National Forest System lands.

12/1/23 Submitted a letter of support on behalf of NPSNM for the Building Native Habitats with Federal Projects Act introduced by Senator Heinrich. This act would promote use of native plants in landscaping around federal projects.

12/16/23 Reviewed but did not comment on new monitoring requirements for National Forests and Grasslands. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/11/28/2023-26161/forest-service-manual-2000-national-forest-resource-management-chapter-2040-national-forest-system>

Congratulations to the Albuquerque chapter for organizing a cactus rescue group!

The new web page on Conservation for NPSNM is nearly done!

Upcoming Issues

LANL proposed powerline across Caja del Rio (affects BLM and Santa Fe National Forest land), <https://environment.lanl.gov/resources/epcu/>. Comments due Jan. 17. Renee Galeano-Popp and Sylvan Kaufman and have read over the NEPA document for this and it seems pretty reasonable regarding plant protection and restoration. The bigger issue which I don't feel qualified to comment on is whether there needs to be a powerline at all. Whether there is or is not a powerline won't affect the plant community much given that much of the route is already highly disturbed and as far as I can tell it would not affect plant dispersal much given the types of plants in the area. This might be more of a Santa Fe Chapter issue.

Land Management Plan Direction for Old-Growth Forest Conditions Across the National Forest System, <https://usfs-public.app.box.com/v/PinyonPublic/file/1394174142375>. Comments due Feb. 2 on the Notice of Intent, but could wait until the Environmental Impact Statement comes out and comment on that. This does affect many forests throughout NM and I think it would be good to comment on.