

From: Kat Heatherington

To: Mason, Wendy, EMNRD

Subject: [EXTERNAL] protect endangered plants

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Hello,

I am writing to state my support for the Rule Change to the NM State Endangered Plant Law to strengthen the law and give native and endangered plants similar protections afforded to animals.

Once we allow the loss of species, the death of entire ecosystems cannot be far behind. The current endangered species laws neglect not one species, not merely a group of species, but the entire plant kingdom. If we continue to tolerate unlimited destruction of our rarest plants, efforts to preserve biological diversity and a healthy environment will inevitably fail. Healthy environments are complex and intricate assemblages in which all life forms – plants, animals, butterflies, ants, birds, fungi – are integral and essential. These systems need all of their parts if they are to be stable, sustainable, and thrive.

Threats from unrestrained and poorly planned development, excessive logging, mining, and other activities are at unprecedented levels. A recent report by the World Conservation Union found that as many as 29% of plant species in the U.S. are at risk of extinction.

New Mexico has 235+ rare plants species. 109 are found nowhere else in the world. 11% of New Mexico's native plant species are at risk of extinction.

To prevent extinctions, our laws need to mandate plant protection from damage or eradication in situ not only from removal. New Mexico laws need to protect the ecosystems where rare plants occur to be effective.

best,

Kat Heatherington
Sunflower River Farm
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"I come down to the water to cool my eyes. But everywhere I look I see fire; that which isn't flint is tinder, and the whole world sparks and flames." - Annie Dillard