

Significant Issues

Several issues are referenced in the analysis submitted by the responding agencies. Among them are:

- Use of goat grazing to remove phreatophytes and other non-native vegetation has not been scientifically evaluated.
- Anecdotal evidence supports the theory that goats can be effectively used in this process since large trees are less impacted than “smaller” vegetation.
- Goat grazing should be practiced only by those with expertise in weed management as well as goat grazing,
- Eradication of non-native plants could take several years, and the time frame for the pilot program should probably be extended to five or six years.

The NMDA reports that research is still ongoing on the use of biological control agents (mainly a leaf beetle) to control salt cedar. While working under the same principles as goat grazing, the beetle is host specific and will not impact native species to the same extent as goats.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$1,000.0 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year shall revert to the general fund.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

NMDA reports it would expend significant resources to assist in implementing provisions of the bill and carrying out everyday tasks associated with the project and additional resources would be needed.

RELATIONSHIP

HB 280 relates to HB 95, Enhance Pecos River Basin, a bill that appropriates funds for eradication of non-native vegetation in the Pecos and Rio Grande river basins, and HB 124, Phreatyphyte Eradication & Control.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

This request for funding was not submitted to the CHE by the Board of Regents of NMSU, and, consequently, was not reviewed by the CHE

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

1. How successful have goat grazing project proven to be, so far?
2. Who will monitor the projects?
3. Is this proposal supported by people or organizations from soil and water conservation districts?