

# OTERO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

3501 Mesa Village Drive, Alamogordo, NM 88310 - PHONE (575) 437-3100

Bill Mershon, Chairman  
Rick Baish, Vice Chairman  
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Thomas Mendez, Member  
James Evrage, Member

April 4, 2017

Elizabeth Humphrey  
c/o Ciara Cusack  
Sacramento Ranger District  
PO Box 288, #4 Lost Lodge Rd  
Cloudcroft, NM 88317

RE: NMMJM Habitat Project-Sacramento

Dear Ms. Humphrey:

The Otero Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a political subdivision of the State of New Mexico made up of seven volunteers and one staff member. Part of our mission statement is to help effectively manage our natural resources in Otero County. The Otero SWCD has read the proposal and has the following comments:

The proposal states that its aim is to protect critical habitat, improve riparian condition, and improve water quality. The only projects described in this proposal are fencing, handling facilities and water developments. We are concerned that there is no indication in the proposal of any planned treatments in the adjacent drainages to reduce flows into the habitat area that would meet those objectives.

Exclosure fencing – Will the livestock areas have hardened access lanes to reduce sedimentation into the stream channel and provide ease of access for livestock and wildlife? Will these areas be monitored? If so, what type of monitoring methods will be used? How long will these areas be excluded from livestock and elk? Is there a plan to re-assess the locations if there is a shown improvement or degradation of critical habitat over a 5-10 year period? Who will be responsible for maintenance of these fences?

Handling facilities and water developments – Will the new facilities be strategically placed to provide the greatest benefit to livestock management needs and NMMJM needs? Will the new water developments be dual use (livestock and wildlife) and placed near or within the new handling facilities to maximize management flexibility?

Based on the size of the Sacramento Grazing Allotment this proposal is lacking watershed scale projects (erosion control structures, grade control structures, headcut stabilization, and invasive species control of plants and animals) that would provide a measurable improvement to the habitat of the NM meadow jumping mouse.

Sincerely,



Victoria A. Milne  
District Manager