

LAUREN BOEBERT
3RD DISTRICT, COLORADO
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
BUDGET COMMITTEE



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0603

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DURANGO, CO 81301

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March 23, 2022

The Honorable Dan Prenzlou
Director
Colorado Parks and Wildlife
6060 Broadway
Denver, CO 80216

RE: Support for the Montezuma County's Grant Application for Phreatophyte Removal

Dear Director Prenzlou:

I write in strong support of the Montezuma County Noxious Weed Department's (MCNWD) grant application for their Phreatophyte Removal Project. Noxious weeds are plaguing Montezuma County with an estimated 8,000 acres infested and pose a major threat to the County's ecosystem. Both the Russian olive and the salt cedar have deep tap roots and devour large amounts of water from the ground which negatively degrades local streams and ponds. The goals of the project would be to remove Russian olives and salt cedars from 600 acres in the San Juan Watershed by June of 2025, and re-seed and replant native and desirable species within the treated properties.

The Russian olive and salt cedar are non-native to North America and are a major issue for residents in the region. These phreatophytes are choking the region's wetlands, waterways, and natural hydrology. Likewise, the salt cedar squanders precious water resources, limits recreational opportunities, degrades wildlife habitats, and negatively impacts flood as well as wildfire mitigation efforts. Salt cedar can consume up to 200 gallons of water per day per plant and continue to create significant challenges for local communities already suffering from drought and abnormally dry conditions.

These two invasive species kill local vegetation and reduce the presence of big game. The increase of Russian Olive and salt cedar populations have unfortunately decreased the forage production in these areas and as a result led to a reduction of big game like deer and elk. This reduction has also reduced the presence of the Bald Eagle habitat's range.

The project will help the local agricultural economy and local conservation efforts, and if successful I believe it will encourage similar projects in the region. Experts on the ground have informed me that, the quicker we restore the land to its original habitat the less expensive it will be over the long-term. These two invasive species pose a problematic and costly problem for private landowners and public land managers. I urge your full and fair consideration of this grant application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lauren Boebert". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "B" and a star-like flourish at the end.

Lauren Boebert
Member of Congress