



August 19, 2024

New Mexico Environment Department
1190 St. Francis Drive, Suite N4050
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

*Submitted via Online Public Comment Form:
<https://nmed.commentinput.com/?id=CBNFsRjDM>*

Re: New Mexico Wild Comments Supporting NMED's 2024 ONRW Designation Nominations

Dear New Mexico Environment Department:

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance (New Mexico Wild) strongly supports the New Mexico Environment Department's 2024 ONRW Designation Nomination for "Surface Waters Designated as Special Trout Waters, or Wild and Scenic Rivers, or Located within a Wilderness, Park, Monument, or Refuge." New Mexico Wild is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) grassroots organization dedicated to the protection, restoration, and continued enjoyment of New Mexico's waters, wildlands, and wilderness areas. We represent thousands of individual members from all corners of New Mexico and across the nation. New Mexico Wild has engaged in a variety of avenues working to protect and restore New Mexico's waterways, ensure equitable access and management over our water resources, and engage in advocacy to ensure species and habitat protection and water availability for all uses, including recreation. New Mexico Wild also advocates for responsible wildlife policies and the protection and long-term stewardship of Wilderness Areas and Wild and Scenic Rivers.

By nominating these streams, the New Mexico Environment Department has shown strong leadership in pursuing a commonsense solution that will help maintain the health of New Mexico's ecosystems and the communities who rely on them. ONRWs are a critical tool for protecting the water quality of New Mexico's streams, especially in response to the recent Supreme Court *Sackett* decision, which removed federal Clean Water Act protections for up to 95% of our state's waters. Additionally, ONRWs protect traditional community water uses, such as acequia-based agriculture, while safeguarding against degradation and negative impacts from mining, development, transportation, pollution, and climate change. Finally, this action will directly support our growing outdoor recreational economy by protecting the water quality in streams

Wilderness | Wildlife | Water

PO Box 25464 | Albuquerque NM 87125 | 505.843.8696 | www.nmwild.org



that provide some of the best trout fishing opportunities in the state, as well as other recreational opportunities.

Designating these streams as ONRWs will benefit all New Mexicans and the wildlife that calls our state home. New Mexico Wild strongly supports this designation and urges the New Mexico Environment Department to move forward with the full petition. Thank you for this opportunity to comment, we look forward to future opportunities to continue engaging in this critical rulemaking.

Sincerely,

[s] Sally Paez

New Mexico Wild
Sally Paez
Staff Attorney
sally@nmwild.org
(505) 843-8696

Wilderness | Wildlife | Water

PO Box 25464 | Albuquerque NM 87125 | 505.843.8696 | www.nmwild.org