



# Public Notice

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Southwest Region (Arizona • New Mexico • Oklahoma • Texas) [www.fws.gov/southwest/](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/)

## Comments Solicited on Compatibility of New Refuge Agricultural Agreement

Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge (refuge) in New Mexico is entering into a new Forage Production and Harvest Agreement for continuing existing agricultural practices for the benefit of wildlife on the refuge. As part of this process the public is being invited to provide comments regarding the compatibility of utilizing a producer to operate this program.

On many refuges throughout the nation, agricultural programs provide benefits for both resident and migrating wildlife. Agricultural practices provide supplemental forage, manage undesirable and/or invasive vegetation, and provide a safe resting spot for migrating waterfowl and help to keep them off private farm fields. Agricultural programs also provide increased wildlife observation, photography, and environmental education opportunities.

Agricultural Practices are utilized to manage the portion of the refuge's acreage designated as croplands by the refuge manager. The refuge manager determines this acreage in order to produce 1.5 million pounds of supplemental forage for sandhill cranes as well as other resident and migratory wildlife. Agricultural practices are a cost effective tool for the refuge to meet the agricultural demand that migrant waterfowl place on the refuge, provide additional income for the surrounding community, and save on costs that would be associated with refuge personnel time and equipment maintenance if the refuge staff were to perform the agricultural practices rather than the third party Producer.

For a copy of the draft compatibility determination please visit the following website: [http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Bosque\\_del\\_Apache/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Bosque_del_Apache/). Comments will be accepted until February 19, 2015. Comments should be sent to [Kevin\\_Cobble@fws.gov](mailto:Kevin_Cobble@fws.gov); or mailed to Refuge Manager, Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, P.O. Box 280, San Antonio, New Mexico 87832

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