

FIGHTING FOR SURVIVAL

The Wright's Marsh Thistle



Photo: © Robert Sivinski

A THISTLE IN TROUBLE

The Wright's Marsh Thistle was once thought to range across three U.S. states and northern Mexico, but now is only found within four counties in New Mexico: Otero, Chaves, Guadalupe, and Socorro Counties. Because of irresponsible water management, off-highway vehicle use, and control of non-native thistles, the Wright's Marsh Thistle is at risk of extinction. Without federal protection, we may lose this rare flowering plant and its contributions to the web of life forever.

PROTECTING WETLANDS

The largest threat to the thistle is the disappearance of its habitat due to loss of water in the wetlands it occupies. Wetlands are extremely important for a variety of wildlife and plants in the southwestern U.S. If listed under the Endangered Species Act, the Wright's Marsh Thistle should be given habitat protections that will not only ensure its survival for future generations, but other co-existing wetland species as well.

KNOW YOUR THISTLE

- Unique: the Wright's Marsh Thistle is one of 200 species of the genus *Cirsium* in the United States and is one of the few thistles restricted to boggy soil.
- Color: the Wright's Marsh Thistle's flowers are white to pale pink in the Sacramento Mountains of New Mexico, but the Santa Rosa, New Mexico thistles are vivid pink.
- Wetland Bound: the Wright's Marsh Thistle is restricted to wetland habitats, and it is only found within low to moderate elevation in these wetlands.

CLIMATE CHAOS

Loss of wetland habitat from climate change related drought and higher temperatures pose a threat to this fragile wetland plant.

