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Reprinted from the  
*Wild Ones Journal*,  
Aug/Sept/Oct 2014  
issue.

For more information, or to join  
Wild Ones Natural Landscapers,  
here's how to reach us:

**Phone**

(920) 730-3986  
(877) 394-3954 (Toll-Free)

**Mail**

PO Box 1274  
Appleton, WI 54912-1274

**E-Mail**

ExecDirector@wildones.org

**WebSite**

www.wildones.org

Celebrating natives  
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## GRAPEVINE

By Maryann Whitman

### Use of Controversial Pesticides Banned in National Wildlife Refuges

After facing a series of legal challenges from environmental groups around the country, the United States Forestry Service has issued a memorandum to the effect that by January 2016, it will have phased out use of neonicotinoid pesticides and "genetically engineered crop seeds" on National Wildlife Refuges (over 150 Million acres). "This conforms to the Service's Biological Integrity, Diversity, and Environmental Health Policy" with respect to the refuges, and is "based on the underlying principle of wildlife conservation that favors management that restores or mimics natural ecosystem processes".



Neonicotinoid pesticides not only act as systemic poisons of pollinators, but widespread contamination by neonicotinoids in soils and in surface waters also poisons creatures like earthworms and crayfish, thereby having effects on up the food chain. GM crops permit the increasingly widespread use of powerful and indiscriminant pesticides on row crops.

Further, the Forestry Service recognized that "transitioning any refuge land from a primarily agricultural use to restored, native habitat works to achieve the Service goal of minimizing our carbon footprint as set forth in Rising to the Urgent Challenge, Strategic Plan for Responding to Accelerating Climate Change (USFWS 2010)."

Don't you feel like patting someone on the back—someone in Washington, DC no less. Read more: <http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/press-releases/3298/victory-fish-and-wildlife-service-to-phaseout>