TREE HUGGING
-got a problem with that?
Mission Statement
The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is dedicated to the protection, restoration, and continued enjoyment of New Mexico’s wild lands and Wilderness areas.

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Cover photo by T. Broska; p. 3 tree artwork by A. Ahlander, tree hugger cartoon by B. Maguire, bear photo by K. Ward; p. 4 photo by R. Watt; p. 5 photos by G. Balderrama; p. 6 photo by S. Capra; p. 8 photo of Jack by S. Capra and photo of Jack and Ed by C. Loeffler; p. 9 photo by S. Capra; p. 10 photos by M. Heinrich; p. 11 painting by M. Morrison; p. 12 photo by S. Capra; p. 13 photo of Elsie Mackinnon courtesy of Laughing Lizard, Rosemary Cascio photo courtesy of The Herb Stop; p. 14 photo courtesy of John Toppenberg (1996); p. 16 graphic by J. Adair; p. 17 photo by T. Broska; p. 18 photo by N. Newcomer, graphic by J. Adair; p. 19 illustration by E. Cantor

Wilderness
The Wilderness Act of 1964 established the National Wilderness Preservation System to preserve the last remaining wild lands in America. The Wilderness Act, as federal policy, secures “an enduring resource of wilderness” for the people. Wilderness is defined as an area that has primarily been affected by the forces of nature with the imprint of humans substantially unnoticeable. It is an area that offers outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive or unconfined type of recreation, and an area that contains ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historic value.

African Import?
Native New Mexican!

Since we went with our new masthead, we have received many inquiries about the big, wild cat gracing the left-hand corner of our front page:

“Why do you have an African animal for your mascot?”

“We don’t have cheetahs in New Mexico. Who are you trying to kid?”

“I hope that big cat eats all you wacko greenies”

And our personal fave: “Yo! What’s with the spotted kitty?”

Well, that “spotted kitty” is a jaguar, Panthera onca. El tigre del Norte.

And not an African import, but a native New Mexican. Jaguars have been in New Mexico so long they probably know what happened at Chaco Canyon.

Jaguars once ranged far north into New Mexico, and beyond into southern Colorado and Utah. In 1997, a large jaguar was photographed south of Lordsburg in the Peloncillos. Those mountains don’t get their reputation as a critical wildlife corridor for nothing. In 1998, a black jaguar—passing through what is called its melanistic phase—was recorded in a credible sighting in the Black Range, west of Truth or Consequences.

Other magical creatures have followed the same Peloncillos by-way from tropical Mexico, and the Sierras Madres, into the Land of Enchantment. Coatanmundis — think of a raccoon crossed with a spider monkey — have returned to the Gila Country. This year a broad-billed parrot vacationed at Ted Turner’s Armendaris Ranch east of Elephant Butte.

Parrots once were found in large numbers in southern New Mexico, until meat hunters working for mining companies wiped them out.

Wilderness is the key to these royalty of Creation reclaiming their place in our State’s landscape. Wilderness saves for them and for us important remnants of freedom and grandeur. Without Wilderness, New Mexico could be, well, way too much like Texas. It certainly wouldn’t be the home we love with such fierce passion.

We hadn’t intended it when we set out to jazz up our look, but come to think of it, no better mascot than the jaguar could be chosen to represent New Mexico Wild!

So, dude, that’s what’s with the spotted kitty. Thanks for asking.

YO! What’s with the Spotted Kitty?

Young Voices
Nancy Morton: A Lifetime of Caring
Upcoming Hikes

Tree Huggers
Laughing Lizard
Northwoods’ Herb Stop
Mexican Gray Wolves Struggle
Patriots Love Trees
Joyce Kilmer: Poet, Tree Lover, Hero
Bully!
Wildlands Painted! Art Show A Big Hit
Beauty of Nature
Young Voices

Tree Hugger
Laughing Lizard
Northwoods’ Herb Stop
Mexican Gray Wolves Struggle
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Joyce Kilmer: Poet, Tree Lover, Hero
Bully!
Wildlands Painted! Art Show A Big Hit
Beauty of Nature
Young Voices
For some reason, “tree hugger” has become a term of derision. But what’s objectionable about liking trees? Try living in a world without trees. The people who don’t like trees are the problem. There’s something wrong with them.

The term is often used as an attempted insult by those who can only see the Earth and its diversity of life as something more than a ready supply of resources to be exploited for industry. For those who care to remember, in the early eighties the Forest Service developed policies that allowed clear-cutting of old growth forests to be called “management.” This cynical artifice occurred during the administration of Ronald Reagan—you know, the guy who once blamed pollution on trees. Thank goodness some brave Tree Huggers remembered the Boston Tea Party and employed the time-honored American tradition of civil disobedience. If not for them we may not have any ancient forests left.

The focus of those battles was the old growth in the coastal regions of the northwest. But what about here in New Mexico? As anyone who has hiked the high mountains of our wonderful state knows, old growth exists here as well. Those giant spruce and fir trees you will find in the backcountry are several hundred years old. A recent survey of trees living on the lava flow of the El Malpais National Monument found Douglas firs that are the oldest living individuals of these species ever found in North America. The innermost ring of one particu-

lar tree was dated at A.D. 719. You read that right: in 16 more years we can stand up and sing Happy Birthday for its 1300th year living on Earth!

And that granddaddy of a Douglas fir is almost a child compared to a remnant Rocky Mountain juniper that was found near Bandera crater. It was 1,888 years old, making it the oldest tree known to have lived in the American Southwest. Experts believe there are juniper trees living in our state over 2,000 years old!

TREE HUGGER – WHO ME? If you have read this far, you probably don’t flinch at the term. After all, how can anyone not be inspired by trees? There are few better ways to seek relief from the stresses of this world than seek refuge among the trees. The soothing green softness of a juniper, the smell of a ponderosa pine, the quaking of aspen and cottonwood, all bring a calming effect to the anxious mind. And then there are the giants, the old growth Douglas firs, blue spruces, alligator junipers, and bristlecone pines. Humble moments are felt within the presence of these mighty trees as they speak to an ancient wisdom that goes well beyond our human timeframe. All together now – “Tree hugger. You bet.”

YEAH, BUT ARE YOU A CACTUS KISSER? Whoa, I don’t know about that, you’re thinking. But in recent times, due in no small part to eloquent writers like Edward Abbey and Anne Raymond Zwinger, deserts are getting the appreciation they deserve. When you take the time to study the details, there is a lot more to deserts than meets the eye. The Chihuahuan Desert, that reaches as far north as Socorro, contains a greater diversity of butterflies than any other ecoregion in the world (go butterflies!). New Mexico has some great wild deserts. Our colorful, lazy sunsets simply can’t be beat. From the vast expanses of Otero Mesa and the Nut Grasslands to the Sky Islands of southwestern New Mexico with their incredible biological diversity, people of all persuasions are seeing deserts in a new light.

Well, nearly all persuasions. That’s the problem. Just like people who don’t like trees are the problem.

IT TAKES US ALL! Whether you claim to be a tree hugger, a cactus kisser, bunny hugger, wild eyed greenie or just a regular Joe or Jane who loves this land called America, it is going to take all of us working together to save what we’ve got left. So, what can you do? First, plan a trip ASAP to your favorite wild spot. Get out there, roam and explore, then sit quietly under a large tree before a grand vista. Soak in the wisdom of the trees and the earth. After your rejuvenation, come back and help protect this place we call home. NMWA always needs folks to write letters to our congressional delegation and agency personnel, or to get out on the ground and help with restoration work. Reclaim an illegal road some rude four-wheeler tore into the land. Bring a spring back to life. Clean up a trail. Talk to others. Get involved. It’s what all good Tree Huggers do!

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Columbine – Hondo
Rocky Mountain Jewel

by Michael Scialdone,
NMWA Staff

The Columbine – Hondo Wilderness Study Area (WSA) is located in Taos County, north/northeast of the town of Taos. Highway 150 that takes you to Taos Ski Valley forms the southern boundary of the unit. The towns of Arroyo Seco, Questa, and Red River are nearby and also provide access points to the area.

Located between the permanently protected Latir Peak and Wheeler Peak Wilderness Areas, Columbine – Hondo WSA offers all the grandeur expected from the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in northern New Mexico, but is much less visited and an excellent place to seek solitude. This would not have been the case 100 years ago as prospectors scoured the area for ore bodies similar to the ones that created boomtowns such as nearby Red River. The inevitable bust that follows such booms such as nearby Red River. The inevitable bust that follows such booms today may soon come that it has the permanent protection of designated WILDERNESS that it deserves.

With excellent opportunities for hiking, backpacking, fishing, wildlife viewing, and snowshoeing and back-country skiing in the winter months, Columbine – Hondo is one of the best undesigned wilderness areas in New Mexico. May the day soon come that it will delight you with the fresh scent of melissa, horse mint, and other aromatic herbs. Not 50 feet into the hike, the trail enters a meadow of groundsel and fleabane where fritillaries, pine whites, and Weidemeyer’s admirals take nectar. The open meadow creates excellent opportunities for wildflower and butterfly photography. Just off the trail to your left, you slip into a riparian wonder of Western monkshood and Californian coneflower as tall as your eye. The canopy of pine and fir cools the air making this a pleasant hike even on a hot day. When the summer rains have lifted, you may stumble upon tiny harebells woven in with slender grasses, chanterelles sprouting out of the dark, loamy earth, and shelf mushrooms carved into the base of decaying Douglas fir. You may find it difficult to hurry through the hike. The trail crosses the rock-lined stream at several places where you can stop and rest your feet in clear, shallow pools. From the north side of the unit, Columbine Creek Trail offers an easy day hike up a beautiful stream valley. The Columbine-Hondo WSA is a great place to view fall leaves, for several sizeable aspen groves exist within the unit.

LOCATIONS
Northeast of Taos, NM, north of the Rio Hondo and south of the Red River
SIZE: 47,000 acres
ELEVATION RANGE: 7,800 to 12,711 feet at Gold Hill
ADMINISTRATION: Carson Nation Forest
MILES OF TRAILS: Approximately 75
ECOSYSTEMS: ponderosa, spruce/fir, high grassy meadows, alpine tundra
GETTING THERE: Hwy 150 on the south and east sides, Hwy 38 on the north side

LOCAL SUPPORTERS
The following businesses have supported the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance in various ways including carrying our newsletter and joining the Coalition for New Mexico Wilderness. Support wilderness by supporting the next time you head out for a hike in Columbine – Hondo.

When in Red River, get a great cup of coffee and a pastry while looking at the wonderful art gallery at Mountain Treasures Gallery, 212 West Main, Red River, New Mexico. 505-754-2700
Surf the web while enjoying a great bagel sandwich at Magic Circle Bagels Coffees & Cyber Cafe, Furr’s Shopping Center, Taos, NM 87571; (505) 758-0045
Get some organic foods to fuel your on your hike at Kids Food Market, 22 Paseo Del Pueblo Norte, Taos, NM 505-758-1148

Salt and pepper will make your meal go a long way, so stock up at Kerry’s Pantry and Deli, 150 Paseo Del Pueblo Norte, Taos, NM 87571; (505) 751-7102
If you’re looking for a great cup of coffee in Taos, head to The Bean, 930 Paseo Del Pueblo Norte, Taos, NM 87571; (505) 758-7711
Gear-up for that hike at Coltan’s Ski Shops, 207 Paseo Del Pueblo Sur, Taos, NM 87571; (505) 758-2822
If you would like an extended Columbine-Hondo trek with llama carrying some of the weight and guides that have an excellent wilderness ethic, contact Wild Earth Llama Adventures, Taos, NM. (800) 580-5434

Surf the web while enjoying a great bagel sandwich at Magic Circle Bagels Coffees & Cyber Cafe, Furr’s Shopping Center, Taos, NM. 87571 Phone: 1(800)580-5434 1(505)758-4715 Fax: (505)751-7102

Other members of the Coalition in the area:
Amigos Bravo’s- Taos
Barry Howard Studios- Taos
Blossoms Garden Center- Taos
Blue Rain Gallery- Taos
Brody & White Fine Art- Taos
Bud’s Cut Flowers & More- Taos
Cedar & Stone- Taos
Child-Rite Inc.- Taos
Coyote Club- Taos
Dave’s Custom Cycle- Taos
Donald Graham Photography- Taos
Fenix Gallery- Taos
Furry Friends Thrift Store- Taos
G&D Sports & Trophies- Taos
General Dentistry- Taos
Inspirations- Taos
Larry Van Eatin, Attorney at Law- Taos
Las Comadres- Taos
Paper Book Exchange- Taos
Paul’s Men’s Shop- Taos
Planet X- Taos
Prairie Ecosystems Association- Ranchos de Taos
Premier Medical- Taos
Rio Grande Weavers Supply- Taos
Southside Copies, Graphics, Blueprints- Taos
Southwest Framers- Taos
Stone Wolf- Taos
Strider A. McCash, D.D.S.- Eagle Nest
Taos Books- Taos
Taos Herb Co.- Taos
Taos Mosaic- Taos
Taos Tack & Pet Supply- Taos
Taos Creek Caffe- Taos, NM Rt. 1 Box 50, Taos, NM 87571 Phone: 1(800)680-5434 1(505)758-4715 Fax: (505)751-7102

Well-worn paths wind through the area to hundreds of mining scars that have been mostly covered, the roads are barely noticeable and the old roads rooms carved into the base of decaying Douglas fir. You may find it difficult to hurry through the hike. The trail crosses the rock-lined stream at several places where you can stop and rest your feet in clear, shallow pools. From the north side of the unit, Columbine Creek Trail offers an easy day hike up a beautiful stream valley. The Columbine-Hondo WSA is a great place to view fall leaves, for several sizeable aspen groves exist within the unit.

When the summer rains have lifted, you may stumble upon tiny harebells woven in with slender grasses, chanterelles sprouting out of the dark, loamy earth, and shelf mushrooms carved into the base of decaying Douglas fir. You may find it difficult to hurry through the hike. The trail crosses the rock-lined stream at several places where you can stop and rest your feet in clear, shallow pools. From the north side of the unit, Columbine Creek Trail offers an easy day hike up a beautiful stream valley. The Columbine-Hondo WSA is a great place to view fall leaves, for several sizeable aspen groves exist within the unit.

For the best in food, visit the Taos Food Market on the north side of the unit, Columbine Creek Trail offers an easy day hike up a beautiful stream valley. The Columbine-Hondo WSA is a great place to view fall leaves, for several sizeable aspen groves exist within the unit.

Towns of Taos, Questa, and Red River are nearby and also provide access points to the area. Today, many of the mining scars have healed and are barely noticeable and the old roads have revegetated or have been turned into hiking trails.

The entirety of Columbine – Hondo is steep and rugged. When driving toward Taos Ski Valley on Hwy 150, you will encounter three trailheads. These trails follow canyons that rise almost 4,000 feet as they join together at Lobo Peak at 12,115 feet! From Lobo Peak one can hike the heart of the unit along a ridgeline trail that leads to Gold Hill, the highest point in the unit at 12,711 feet. Gold Hill can also be accessed from the Taos Ski Valley parking lot at the Twining trailhead. This is an excellent trail as you wind your way through spruce – fir forests to a glacier-carved valley leading to Gold Hill and then you can drop down the backslope to Goose Lake.

Down the road, Yerba Canyon – “yerba” means “herb” in Spanish – offers all the grandeur expected from the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in northern New Mexico, but is much less visited and an excellent place to seek solitude. This would not have been the case 100 years ago as prospectors scoured the area for ore bodies similar to the ones that created boomtowns such as nearby Red River. The inevitable bust that follows such booms today may soon come that it has the permanent protection of designated WILDERNESS that it deserves.

GETTING THERE:
Coyote Club - Taos
Donald Graham Photography - Taos
Southside Copies, Graphics, Blueprints- Taos
Premier Medical- Taos
Paul’s Men’s Shop- Taos
Las Comadres- Taos
General Dentistry- Taos
G&G Sports & Trophies- Taos
General Dentistry- Taos
Inspirations- Taos
Larry Van Eatin, Attorney at Law- Taos
Las Comadres- Taos
Paper Book Exchange- Taos
Paul’s Men’s Shop- Taos
Planet X- Taos
Prairie Ecosystems Association- Ranchos de Taos
Premier Medical- Taos
Rio Grande Weavers Supply- Taos
Southside Copies, Graphics, Blueprints- Taos
Southwest Framers- Taos
Stone Wolf- Taos
Strider A. McCash, D.D.S.- Eagle Nest
Taos Books- Taos
Taos Herb Co.- Taos
Taos Mosaic- Taos
Taos Tack & Pet Supply- Taos
Taos Creek Caffe- Taos, NM Rt. 1 Box 50, Taos, NM 87571 Phone: 1(800)680-5434 1(505)758-4715 Fax: (505)751-7102

Other members of the Coalition in the area:
Amigos Bravo’s- Taos
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Blossoms Garden Center- Taos
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Stone Wolf- Taos
Strider A. McCash, D.D.S.- Eagle Nest
Taos Books- Taos
Taos Herb Co.- Taos
Taos Mosaic- Taos
Taos Tack & Pet Supply- Taos
Tierra Wood Stoves- Taos
U.S. Outfitters- Ranchos de Taos
Vibrations- Taos
Love Wilderness and Lose Weight!

by Greta Balderrama,
NMWA Staff

Art Cuaron: a Volunteer Profile

Art Cuaron is a native New Mexican, a patriot, a hunter, a fisherman — and an unabashed wilderness lover.

Art grew up in Las Cruces, but left New Mexico as a young man to see the world courtesy of the United States Navy. He served our country in uniform until he retired in 1979 and came home to New Mexico. While he was gone Las Cruces grew dramatically. Many of the wild places he once knew were gone.

Once wild lands are gone, they are gone forever.

Art is doing something to stop more of our wild lands from being lost. As a volunteer for NMWA, he works so that the next generation still has some of wild America left to visit and enjoy.

“I see Wilderness as a good conservation tool,” Art told us. “One of my favorite places on earth is the Gila Wilderness near Snow Lake.”

Remember, Art has seen an awful lot of this planet.

Art has been joining our monthly hikes. He helps organize our weekend expeditions and assists people on the trail. Helping NMWA out also means working out. He credits our hikes with losing 30 pounds in the last year! Maybe Oprah and Dr. Phil need to put the Wilderness Alliance and Art on their shows!

Besides getting fit while discovering some of New Mexico last wild places, Art says, "I’ve met some great people while hiking with NMWA.”

“I love Wilderness and I think people should get involved to do what they can to protect it. There won’t be enough for the young folks coming up.”

See ‘ya on the next hike, Art.

You can join any of our monthly hikes and outings. They range from easy walks to more challenging treks. We try to take people out to areas they would not discover on their own and make their day a fun time with other friendly, like-minded people. All ages can participate. Our hike leaders know the trails and will do their best to help you fall in love with the wild lands we visit. You can find our schedule of outings on the last page. Or just call us in Albuquerque, 843-8696 or Las Cruces, 547-9962, about what’s coming up. Hey, you just might get to meet Art.

TAKE A HIKE!

by Greta Balderrama,
NMWA Staff

Are you curious about what’s out there on the horizon? Come hike with us and see some of New Mexico’s most beautiful wild areas — some you’ve heard of, some you probably haven’t. The NMWA goes out at least once a month.

Many of the hikes are suitable for beginners, so don’t be shy.

This past June, we had a really fun group of 32 that decided to ditch the summer heat and head for the Gila National Forest. We hiked south of Emory Pass along the Crest Trail of the Black Range. We walked through lovely, old forests the whole way. There were seniors on the trip — some real tough ones, at that — as well as preteen kids and all ages and fitness levels in between. We had a few “first timers” on this hike. One of them was Sonia Bañuelos. She was a little nervous at first, but had this to say at the end of the hike:

“It was my first hike ever. It was a great experience and I would recommend it to everyone. If you have never been hiking, go when you get a chance. It was a beautiful and wonderful experience out in the mountains. It was a 9-mile hike and I cannot lie, I was a little sore... but that’s okay...

It was a good kind of sore. I enjoyed myself.

Thank you so much to Greta of the NMWA and all the other people who were on the hike.”

Just check the back cover of this newsletter for upcoming hikes. We vary the locations and difficulty level so you should be able to find one that’s right for you or you and your family. We hope to see you on the trail soon.

WILD!
Otero Mesa Update

Voices calling for the protection of Otero Mesa are being heard all over New Mexico. Some voices are coming from quarters that might surprise you.

Ranchers Speak Up Against Oil & Gas

In late July, the ranchers of Otero Mesa and the Paragon Foundation, a group that campaigns to protect private property rights, spoke up in support of protecting Otero Mesa.

“IT’s a matter of survival for us all,” said Bob Jones, a rancher with public leases on Otero Mesa and president of the Paragon Foundation. “If we can’t get them stopped, we’re through. All we get out of it is destruction.”

“I’m not going to let ‘em destroy it,” said G.B. Oliver III, executive vice president of the Paragon Foundation and president of the Western Bank in Alamogordo. “Our goal is the same.” —NMWA couldn’t agree more. With that in mind, we will continue to place

Pearce Hears From Constituents

Early one August evening, residents of the Socorro area packed a town hall meeting with Congressman Steve Pearce. The crowd was vocally opposed to his position on Otero Mesa and other issues. More than a few were openly hostile. But what really caught the crowd off-guard that evening and literally drew an audible gasp from the audience were Pearce’s comments about selling off public lands.

“I think we have far too much public land,” Pearce said, and proceeded to blame public land for being a drag on New Mexico’s economy.

Obviously Pearce is unaware that tourists, a lot of whom visit New Mexico’s public lands for their beauty and solitude, add over 3.9 billion dollars to the state economy annually. Public land recreation is the major force keeping many rural communities going. We have heard some people say that Steve Pearce really wants to make New Mexico more like Texas. Selling our public lands would be one sure way to start.

“I think we have far too much public land,”

-Congressman Steve Pearce

malfunctioning. Keep letting him know what you think.

Sportsmen Speak Out

All the past Directors of the New Mexico Game and Fish Department for 30 years joined the leaders of New Mexico’s sportsmen’s groups in an open letter to Sen. Pete Domenici that appeared as a full-page advertisement in the Albuquerque Journal. They criticized the U.S. Bureau of Land Management’s plans that will open Otero Mesa to “high-density drill pads, noxious waste pits and hundreds of miles of new roads and pipelines.”

“The BLM has shown it cannot protect Otero Mesa from the harm oil and gas development have caused elsewhere in our state. Please help us save Otero Mesa for future generations of New Mexicans,” said the open letter to Domenici. He was asked to work with other New Mexico leaders to see Otero Mesa protected as a National Conservation area.

Matt Letourneau, a spokesman for Domenici responded to the ad by saying, “If the reserves are of significant size, he (Domenici) will support low-impact drilling.”

Due to inaccurate media reporting and industry propaganda from HEYCO (Harvey E. Yates Company, the company leading the push to open Otero Mesa), Domenici’s staff and some of the public are being mislead about Otero Mesa’s oil and gas potential. According to the Bureau of Land Management, and even other oil & gas companies, the amount of oil or gas beneath the mesa is expected to be very minimal and have little impact on our nation’s energy needs. Otero Mesa is not a vast reservoir of oil or natural gas reserves. It never has been and never will be.

The Coalition for Otero Mesa is generating hundreds upon hundreds of letters to Senator Domenici. In Las Cruces, thanks to the hard work of Jim Steitz of the Southwest Environment Center, over 1400 signatures have been collected on a petition to the Senator. Tabling events and slideshows on Otero Mesa are occurring across the state. A Science Research weekend drew over 50 people who collected basic data on the grasslands, birds, and prairie dogs of the region. A Religious Retreat out to Otero Mesa has produced an interfaith advisory statement that will be circulated to all of the churches in New Mexico.

Thanks to all of you, who are contributing to the campaign to save Otero Mesa. Because of your work, we are that much closer to protecting America’s largest and wildest Chihuahuan Desert grassland. Thank you!

Reminder

The Final Environmental Impact Statement for Otero Mesa is due out the second week of December. Please call, write or fax Senator Domenici and ask him to work to save New Mexico’s Otero Mesa.
OUR FAVORITE LETTER:

SCORPION DAMNATION!

Having read the info on your web site I now know what an environmental wacko really is. To hell with the scorpions and snakes and whatever other wildlife is there. We need gas at reasonable prices.

Doris Andre

Doris, while your assessment of us is essentially true, gas prices are a product of the cost of imported oil, not domestic. Even if we managed to wipe out every living creature in the state with new oil wells, you wouldn’t pay less for gas. If you want to save gas money, drive a fuel efficient car.

-NMWA

REGULAR FOLK APPRECIATED

Hi -

I read a copy of your newspaper while visiting the Zele Cafe in Santa Fe. It was very compelling. I especially appreciated the articles written by ranchers who have had their lives impacted by gas drilling. And a home owner outstanding in his field, (ha). It's much more significant to read the first hand experiences of the locals, rather than a one sided article from an environmentalist.

I tore out the “Please Join Us” box so I could send you a donation.

Best wishes -

Robert Marcos, photographer

Thank you, Robert! Just goes to show that not all the people that care about the environment are extremist wackos like us.

-NMWA

WILDERNESS IS A BLAST!

Dear NMWA-

I am still telling everyone I see about our trip to Otero Mesa last weekend. Rich and I had such a great time with you all, and were amazed at all the animals we saw. As we were leaving at dusk, we saw several herds of white-tailed mule deer, and a herd of Oryx. I forgot to tell you that while we were walking out around the prairie dog towns that I saw a large jack rabbit. I startled him and he ran past me. So cool ... I hope we'll see you again soon. Thanks again for a great learning experience.

Sincerely,

Gail Kelly

We were glad to have you, Gail! Everyone should join our sponsored hikes in New Mexico’s WILDlands. See Page 20 for upcoming events.

-NMWA

NOT NICE FOLK

People that will ruin the earth so they can make a few thousand dollars are the worst criminals.

Sali Dalton
Santa Fe, NM

Sali, you and Doris should have a little talk.

-JMWA

WILDERNESS IS FOR PEOPLE!

I do not want to be a member of N.M. Wild. Alliance. People have the right to use our public land. I think your goal is to keep people out so the animals and etc. can have it. You are putting them over humans. I don’t think you should have complete control over public land. Its not your right to do so. Farmers and Ranchers do not need Mex. Gray wolves to kill their cattle.

I think this whole thing is a bunch of boloney and the next idea will be to take private land from people that has worked and paid for it.

-ANONYMOUS

“TO HELL WITH THE SCORPIONS AND SNAKES AND WHATEVER OTHER WILDLIFE IS THERE. WE NEED GAS AT REASONABLE PRICES.”

over public land. Its not your right to do so. Farmers and Ranchers do not need Mex. Gray wolves to kill their cattle.

I think this whole thing is a bunch of boloney and the next idea will be to take private land from people that has worked and paid for it.

-ANONYMOUS

There’s several misconceptions we need to clear up here, Anonymous. Our only goal is to preserve New Mexico’s wild places for the people, not to keep it from the people. We want our children and our children’s children to en-

joy the same New Mexico you have. Ranchers are sometimes our best allies in this struggle. They want the land kept free of oil and gas wells, too. If a Mexican Gray Wolf should happen to harvest a Heifer, the ranchers are reimbursed at market rate for the lost little doggie(s). We don’t want control of the land wrested from the people, we ensure it remains in the control of the people—and not the oil and gas companies. Are you sure you don’t want to join us?

-NMWA

NOT WORTH THE WAIT

NMWA-

Sorry, I’ve stopped donating to environmental causes until after the warmongering totalitarians in Washington DC are voted out of power.

Dale L. Berry
Grants, NM

Dale, in a political climate like this, we need you now more than ever! When the voices of conservation are drowned out by so-called “conservatives,” (Teddy Roosevelt is rolling over in his grave,) it becomes more vital than ever that our message be heard. Sweeping changes have already been made that benefit no one but profiteers. Those changes will take years of effort to reverse... just to return us to where we were before the Bush Regime took power. -NMWA

Love NMWA? Hate us? Love nature, but can’t stand conservationists? We want to hear from you! Drop us a note today:
email - nmwa@nmwild.org or
NMWA, PO Box 25464
Albuquerque, NM 87125-0464
I remember sitting at the Albuquerque airport trying to have a conversation with Jack Loeffler. We didn't get very far. Every two minutes we were interrupted by someone who knew Jack. It seemed Jack was acquainted with everyone in the teeming airport. Jack has been a fixture in New Mexico for over 40 years. He is a writer, radio documentary producer, musician (jazz trumpet and baroque recorders), adventurer, ethnographer, and was Ed Abbey's compañero and partner in deviltry and mischief. Jack read more than a few of Abbey's works before a publisher took them. Abbey gave Jack his type-written manuscript of “The Monkey Wrench Gang.” We recently sat down again, this time at Castro's Restaurante in Santa Fe. We were interrupted only a half dozen times. Everyone, say hello to Jack Loeffler.

—Jim Scarantino

Let’s start this like we’re sharing a secret handshake. I carry with me every day powerful memories of wilderness experiences. How about you? I’m a hunter-gatherer. I hunt down sounds and gather them with microphones and recorders. Once when I was camping in the Kuakatch Wash in the Sonoran, I had something of an epiphany. I had set out a pair of microphones in a stereo configuration. I’d cranked up the gain so that I was hearing around six hundred percent better than humans normally hear. I heard different species of birds sounding alarm signals from south to north through my field of hearing. I got out my binoculars and spotted a low flying eagle. That experience was an aural glimpse into the workings of the biotic community that has evolved there since the end of the Pleistocene. For a time, I left my own language behind and was celebrating in wilderness lingo.

You probably have far more wilderness stories to tell than most of us. What have you learned from your years pushing into the remaining wild lands of North America?

We are rooted in nature. We are a member species of the Animal Kingdom. And while we have developed the technology to considerably re-shape our respective habitats in accordance with our cultural fantasies, we as a species still rely upon wilderness for survival.

Indeed wilderness is home to our gene pool, that sacred elixir that has fomented life into consciousness. We are connected to the wild, as through an umbilical cord, by the double helix at the core of our being. And we must rely upon the geography of the wild to provide the coordinates with which to plot a true azimuth back home to balance and sanity. We are presently coursing through a meander that we'll best abandon. Otherwise, we'll be trapped in an eddy at the heart of an erroneous paradigm founded on turning paradise into money.

You have just related Wilderness to mankind, or the other way around. And you have defined, at least in part, Wilderness as a benefit to people.

No matter where you wander in desert country, you find human spoor that may go back a thousand years. Long ago, a friend and I were poking around in the Plains of San Augustine. We'd camped near Bat Cave, a place continuously inhabited by humans for several thousand years. There was evidence of corn, as well as many bone fragments in the midden. I found a perfect arrowhead made by someone whose personal molecules had long since been scattered throughout the habitat. Here was evidence of a human community inhabiting wilderness, being part of wilderness, the people themselves wild in a way that was commensurate with the Spirit of Place. Their purview included far more than I could imagine, just as mine would have been utterly alien to them.

That would go without saying…

Another time I was camping with a friend, but hiking solo in a beautiful side canyon in the Chinle Wash watershed. I had left the trail, and while traipsing through the red rock wilderness, I found a human jawbone. I picked it up, examined it and discovered that it was still fresh, only recently de-fleshed. I had heard that an acquaintance who had lived in the area had disappeared within the last year. Could this be what remained? That night curled up in my sleeping bag, the only light remaining cast by the stars, I seemed to sense the presence of chindi’i, or ghosts of departed atahbascons and ancestral puebloans whose lives had preceded my own in this wilderness canyon country.

Great story, but what…

Patience. Yet another time, while running part of the Green River, a friend and I hiked a side canyon and found a skeletal human forearm protruding from beneath a fallen boulder. Could this be where Everett Reuss zagged instead of zigged? Some fellow human had met his fate wandering this remote wilderness.

To me, one condition that characterizes wilderness is that a single human is on one with the rest of the bioregion. One may not be at the top of the food chain. One must dance within the play of the elements. One must harmonize with the flow of Nature. And if one is lucky, one’s intuitions will burst with recognition of the genesis of our species within our wilderness homeland and know that we would be bereft without the wild.

You are almost a living legend for your experiences with indig-
Mardy Murie, Heart and Soul of the Modern Wilderness Movement, Has Died at 101

by Stephen Capra

Having lived a life full of adventure and accomplishment, Mardy Murie died peacefully on October 19, 2003 in her cabin on the Murie Ranch in Moose, Wyoming. Murie had a passion for wild places that she expressed vividly in her writings, her speeches and her testimony at public hearings. Her intense personal resolve to protect wilderness, stood in contrast to her warm and welcoming personality, that drew an unending stream of visitors to her home. From conservationists to scientists, from Presidents to schoolchildren, the door was always open and the chance to learn and be inspired almost routine.

Mardy Murie was born in Seattle in 1902, but raised in the frontier town of Fairbanks, Alaska. At an early age she learned how to deal with harsh winters and rough living while developing a love for the wild country beyond her doorstep. Shortly after becoming the first woman graduate of the University of Alaska, she met a young biologist, Olaus Murie, who was studying caribou for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Their life together was marked by wilderness adventure in northern Alaska and the Jackson Hole area and included taking their children with them into some of the most remote and wild country in America.

In 1956, Mardy traveled to the upper Sheenjek River on the south slope of the Brooks Range. It was this summer-long adventure that began the campaign to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Mardy chronicles the trip in the later chapters of Two in the Far North, one of the classic books dealing with the environment.

When the Wilderness Bill was passed in 1964, it was Mardy Murie that stood beside President Johnson as the Bill was signed.

For me personally, Mardy Murie was something special, perhaps a link to a time when environmentalists fought from the heart. Before focus groups, neo-conservatives and polling. She was also one of the last of a special class; her peers were Aldo Leopold, Bob Marshall and Sig Olsen.

Reading Two in the Far North, inspired me to adventure and made me think long and hard about the value of wild, unspoiled places. In 1990, when I began to walk from Mexico to Canada along the Continental Divide, I did so to raise awareness for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Before leaving, I wrote Mardy Murie and explained my plans. In early August that year I had made my way north to Jackson Hole. On a Friday evening I gave a talk to about 100 people in Jackson about protecting the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. In the crowd was Mardy Murie, along with her sister in law and two of her now grown children. After my talk she spent some time with me, sharing insights, telling stories of times past and encouraging a tired, but idealistic young man to keep speaking out and defending those wild places that she spent her life working so hard to protect.

Perhaps the greatest tribute to the life of Mardy Murie, would be the creation of the Mardy Murie Wilderness, on the coastal plane of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Luckily there remain a few million people, determined to make it a reality.

For more information, contact the Murie Center: www.muriecenter.org

Wild!
On September 24, Senator Jeff Bingaman and Rep. Tom Udall introduced the Ojito Wilderness Act (S. 1649/H.R. 3176), which would permanently protect the approximately 11,000-acre Ojito Wilderness northwest of Albuquerque. The bill is co-sponsored by Sen. Pete Domenici and Rep. Heather Wilson. If approved, the measure would create the first new Wilderness area in New Mexico since 1987.

The legislation allows the Pueblo of Zia to purchase abutting BLM (Bureau of Land Management) land—land which holds strong cultural and religious significance for the people of Zia. Lands purchased by the Pueblo of Zia will remain open to the public and will be managed as open space in perpetuity. This land will be protected from development, off road vehicle damage, mining and oil and gas exploration.

This historic bill would not have come about were it not for the strong partnership forged between NMWA, the Coalition for New Mexico Wilderness, the Pueblo of Zia, The Wilderness Society, numerous businesses, conservation organizations and many local and statewide elected officials. Thanks to all of you who worked hard to make this bill a reality.

Statement of Senator Jeff Bingaman, in the U.S. Senate, September 24, 2003:

“I am particularly pleased to introduce this legislation in celebration of the 40th anniversary of The Wilderness Act of 1964 and the eightieth anniversary of the Nation’s first administratively-designated wilderness. This celebration is particularly meaningful to my State of New Mexico, for it is both the proud birthplace of wilderness and the home to two of its fathers: Aldo Leopold, who worked from Albuquerque for 15 years to create in 1924 the Gila Wilderness near my home in southern New Mexico, and New Mexico Senator Clinton Anderson, who was instrumental in codifying Aldo Leopold’s wilderness ethic 40 years later.

“Forty years later still, the Ojito provides a unique wilderness area that is important not only to its local stewards, but also to the nearby residents of Albuquerque and Santa Fe… It is an outdoor geology laboratory, offering a spectacular and unique opportunity to view from a single location the juxtaposition of the southwestern margin of the Rocky Mountains, the Colorado Plateau, and the Rio Grande Rift, along with the volcanic necks of the Rio Puerco Fault. Its rugged terrain offers a rewarding challenge to hikers, backpackers, and photographers. It shelters ancient Puebloan ruins and an endemic endangered plant, solitude and inspiration.

The words of Leopold and Senator Anderson are fitting for the Ojito, for it is ‘what the land was, what it is and what it ought to be’; let the ‘Ojito Wilderness Act’ be a demonstration by our people that we can put aside a portion of this which we have as a tribute to the Maker and say this we will leave as we found it.’”

Please thank our Senators and Representative for introducing the Ojito Wilderness Act.
Introduced in Congress

Ojito, Seeds of Inspiration

By Melinda Morrison, Colorado Artist

Being an artist, my love affair for Ojito started with great ambivalence. I saw Ojito for the first time in deep winter last February. The vast, harsh environment seemed to leap out and shout “go away!” It was as if there was an unsaid tale in the air, a tale that spoke of sacred places where possibly few had survived to tell the story. Overwhelming compositions of cliffs and rocks with every square inch laced with sagebrush challenged my artistic senses. Deeply eroded creek beds cut their way through heavy groves of sagebrush pushing aside spindly cactus with seemingless effort. Huge rocky cliffs pressed their way up through the sandy ground competing with each other for the viewer’s attention. Who had lived in this land? Who had survived to tell their stories of survival, I wondered?

At first, my heart seemed resistant to the song that Ojito was singing to me that February. It was a strange language that I never heard in the mountains of Colorado. That day in Ojito, I let my eyes roam the rugged countryside looking for colors beneath the winter barrenness. This was an honest land, I felt. It made no pretenses. It was ancient, serene and held many lost stories. It seemed to have a song of its own in hopes that others could hear its ancient tale. I heard faint notes of that ancient song and the tune begin wooing my heart the longer I stayed. My heart felt penetrated with inspiration.

Months later, I had just finished my first art show of New Mexico wilderness paintings. I wanted to go back to revisit Ojito, to see if its mood had changed and to hear that song one more time. As I drove in the washboard road in my car with other artist friends, I remembered my first moments of ambivalence last February. How would Ojito greet me now?

I stepped out of the car welcomed by yellow and red cactus blooms, the deep golden glow of blooming chamisa and the sweet fragrance of fall. If ever I had doubts over the worthiness of my new found love, they quickly faded away as the morning mist touched the ground and the tall bold cliffs turned bright orange in the early dawn. Ojito’s song had wooed my heart and its song had become my song. I recognized it as a voice crying out to remain free and wild, to be respected and lay in rest as part of America’s last untouched frontier. I now sing Ojito’s song in my paintings. I sing it in hopes that others can hear the faint note of freedom. That people hear and protect Ojito so that its untold stories get told to new generations and seeds of inspiration can grow in others hearts.

Coalition Update

By Martin Heinrich

The Coalition for New Mexico Wilderness now has 380 businesses and organizations as members. We expect to reach 400 before the end of the year. This broad-based coalition of large and small businesses, sportsmen’s organizations, and conservation groups has become a powerful advocate for the creation of new wilderness in New Mexico. The Coalition played a critical role in building the support necessary for the Ojito Wilderness Act to be introduced in September with bipartisan support.

Coalition activist Arturo Sandoval of Voces, Inc. has been working closely with many rural communities in New Mexico to build support for additional wilderness protection beyond Ojito. As a result the Cities of Gallup and Grants, the Village of Milan, and the County of McKinley have passed resolutions supporting more wilderness protection in Northwestern New Mexico. These communities see the direct connection between land conservation, quality of life, and the sustainable economic opportunities of the next century.

If your business or organization would like to support wilderness protection by joining the Coalition for New Mexico Wilderness, please send your business or organization name and contact information to:

Coalition for New Mexico Wilderness
Attn. Martin Heinrich
P.O. Box 27528
Albuquerque, NM 87125
(505) 242-1522

Many thanks go to Martin Heinrich for all his hard work on the Ojito Wilderness Act. Martin was instrumental in getting support for Ojito.

We’d also like to congratulate Martin on his recent election to Albuquerque City Council (District 6). Martin was endorsed by WildPAC, a political action committee devoted to Wilderness and public lands protection.
The Fight Is Still On
For Otero Mesa

by Nathan Newcomer,
NMWA Staff

In the two years the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance has worked to protect Otero Mesa, great progress has been made. We have successfully delayed full-scale oil and gas development of this national treasure. Governor Bill Richardson has provided strong and important support for protecting the Greater Otero Mesa Area. Recently, Senator Jeff Bingaman met with several staff from the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance and local ranchers from Otero Mesa. The Senator has been helpful in our efforts and shares our concerns about protecting the significant environmental, ecological, scenic, historical, cultural, and recreational values of Otero Mesa.

It is clear, however, that any legislative effort will not succeed unless our senior Senator Pete Domenici hears a strong and impassioned outcry from his New Mexico constituency.

We are asking today in the strongest terms possible for you to call, write, and fax Senator Pete Domenici and ask him to stop plans to turn Otero Mesa into an industrial development for the benefit of a few oil and gas companies. As the Chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Senator Domenici is in a unique position to influence protection for areas like Otero Mesa. Although the Senator in recent years has generally sided with the Bush Administration on many conservation issues, he has a long history of working to protect lands here in New Mexico. Wilderness areas like the Sandias, Manzanos, White Mountains and the Bisti Badlands all have been created with the Senator’s help. Most recently, Senator Domenici is playing an important role in the creation of the Ojito Wilderness Act.

It is important that Senator Domenici receives both a phone call and a letter or fax! E-mails are simply disregarded. We are asking you to take a few minutes of your valuable time to help protect this important part of New Mexico’s conservation heritage.

These few points are important to incorporate into your letter and phone call:

—Otero Mesa should be protected as a National Conservation Area.

—There is enough fresh, high-quality water in the aquifer beneath Otero Mesa to supply 800,000 people annually or half of New Mexico’s current population. This ground water could be contaminated forever, for a few days or weeks worth of oil and gas.

—The BLM does not have the manpower or the will to enforce real regulations on industry, thus the concept of “environmentally sound oil and gas development” is simply a false promise.

—95% of our public lands are open to oil & gas development. New Mexico already contributes its fair share to our National Energy Policy.

—Otero Mesa is the largest remaining Chihuahuan desert grassland on our public lands in America. It is home to many important native species. It has historical and cultural ties for many Americans. It is also home to ranching families that have worked this area for over five generations, but whose way of life would end abruptly with large-scale oil and gas development.

The Bureau of Land Management has now scheduled the second week of December for the release of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Otero Mesa.

Time is running short to make a difference on this important issue!

Here is the information you need to be heard by the man who can make the difference:

Senator Pete Domenici
328 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-3101
202-224-6621
Fax-202-228-0900

Otero Mesa Source of Solace for Longtime NM Resident

Dear Senator Domenici,

I am a long time resident of this state and have appreciated your many years of service to New Mexico. I am writing today to urge you to look again at Otero Mesa and see if it doesn’t warrant being left alone. I have hunted down there for years and it is way too beautiful to be chopped up with roads and oil rigs. The antelope herd there is real special and would not benefit from oil drilling. There is so little land left down there that is fairly wild and good for hunting. I was taught that hunting meant getting off your duff and going for a hike. Otero Mesa is that kind of place. The ranchers I’ve talked to that run cattle there don’t like the idea of oil & gas development either.

I went through some very dark times after my first daughter died. Prayer and being able to walk the open country on Otero Mesa were about the only things that kept me going. That was a long time ago and lots of things have changed since then.

Otero Mesa though is as quiet and dark at night as it always has been. I urge you strongly to do what you can to say NO to oil & gas development on Otero Mesa. Let’s leave some wild country for the next generation.

Kevin Holladay
Santa Fe, NM
**Laughing Lizard**

by Nathan Newcomer, NMWA Staff

From the beginning of Summer until the Balloon Fiesta ends over the skies of Albuquerque, tiny Jemez Springs sees over two million visi-
tors. Tucked away in the spectacular red rock canyon carved by the Jemez River, Elsie Mackinnon’s Laughing Lizard Inn and Café serves up great coffee, deserts, and one of a kind dishes like their piping hot spinach burrito stuffed with black beans, mushrooms, sweet potatoes, and jack cheese (fantastic!). Elsie’s colorful café is also an outpost for Wilderness lovers.

Elsie does not keep her love of wild lands to herself. She has been vocal supporter of the proposal to protect the rugged lands of nearby Cabezon Country as Wilderness. She has let the Jemez Village Council know that the business community sees Wilderness not only as necessary in its own right, but also as a key ingredient in the economic picture of her scenic valley. (Mind you, tourism brings in over 3.9 billion dollars a year to New Mexico’s economy and produces more jobs than any other sector, surpassing by far the oil and gas industry).

“Having a business and mindset like ours,” Mackinnon says from the patio outside her café, “allows us to be available to the community, and to provide a place for public education.” In Mackinnon’s mind, what’s lacking in the movement to inspire and activate the general public to care about Wilderness, is, simply put, motivation.

“Of course,” she adds as she looks out over the Jemez valley, “education is also very important.

When it comes to Mackinnon’s thoughts on how the environmental community functions, she has mixed emotions. “There are a lot of people out there who can define the problem and complain about it but they don’t follow through with a solution. But I believe that the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is one group that stands out above the rest. You guys have a defined solution to defeat the problem: More Wilderness!”

Mackinnon and the Laughing Lizard certainly see their fair share of guests during this active season. Yet, to Mackinnon and her staff, it’s not only about serving great, alternative food, it’s also about working to promote Wilderness values in the great state of New Mexico.

Jemez Springs, so close to Albuquerque, Los Alamos and Santa Fe is a terrific base for exploring the Jemez Mountains, discovering ancient ruins, mountain biking on forest roads, and fly fishing. In any season, there are endless opportunities for muscle-powered outdoor recreation. After your outing, when you seek nourishment and a comfortable friendly place to relax, please stop by the Laughing Lizard. Say “hello” to Elsie Mackinnon, a great friend of New Mexico’s wild places. Please remember to patronize businesses that support Wilderness. Vote for Wilderness with your buying decisions. And try those one-of-a-kind burritos.

**Wilderness Makes Good Scents**

**Ruidoso’s Herb Stop**

by Greta Balderrama, NMWA Staff

**Wilderness Makes Good Scents**

When you walk into Ruidoso’s The Herb Stop, your senses are suddenly both soothed and excited by the pleasant fragrance of fresh herbs. It is like stepping into a flower garden and spice shop at the same time.

Rosemary Cascio and her husband Gerald Sinclair have made the Herb Stop an inviting, aromatic place since purchasing the franchise seven years ago. Rosemary learned about herbs from her grandparents. She describes her grandfather, of Blackfeet heritage, as the original “horse whisperer.” He taught her to be gentle with animals and how to treat them with natural plants and herbs. Her Swiss grandmother imparted great respect for nature and knowledge of how to gather plants in a responsible way to ensure survival of each species.

Rosemary’s love of the Southwest began during childhood visits to her uncle’s ranch in west Texas. She and Gerald were feeling smothered by city life. The vastness of the area around Ruidoso drew them to a new home. They have been an active part of Ruidoso’s economy and community ever since.

Rosemary and Gerald have been very supportive of the work of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance to protect our state’s threatened wild lands. Rosemary believes that every living thing is special and should be honored. “We’re losing the greatest gift that we have, our land, and wilderness is what needs to be protected.” Gerald has a similar message. He is concerned that urban sprawl, industrial exploitation, and population expansion are invading wild areas and destroying healing herbs and medicines that are not even yet recognized. “They may be lost before we can ever discover their powers and benefits for mankind.”

The Herb Stop offers Chinese, Ayurvedic, Western and homeopathic herbs as well as essential oils, flower essences, seasonings, teas, and books. You can find Herb Stop stores in Arizona and New Mexico. They sell only fresh, bulk certified organic products. Each store offers level I, II, and III Herbology courses. Individual shop owners teach additional classes and Rosemary shares her expertise in treating animals with herbs. She gives community talks, teaches Herbology classes at Eastern New Mexico Uni-

**New Mexico WILD!**

**Businesses for Wilderness**

**New Mexico WILD!**

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Mexican Gray Wolves Struggle to Survive Poachers and Federal Mismanagement

by Michael J. Robinson, Center for Biological Diversity

The number of radio-collared and monitored Mexican gray wolves in the wild declined to 24 animals at the end of September in the latest iteration of a familiar routine: The population increases in the spring with new births, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) proclaims recovery proceeding expeditiously, then the agency captures a pack or two (often with accompanying mortalities), and poachers slaughter more wolves.

Fourteen wolves are known to have been shot and three killed in hit-and-run incidents since the reintroduction began in March 1998. Other collared wolves have disappeared suspiciously and their fate is not known. In September, four additional wolves were found dead. Although the causes have not been reported, it is likely they will all be confirmed as victims of illegal killings.

Poaching is the second largest cause of declines in the population. Fish and Wildlife Service “control” actions are the greatest threat to the lobos. Nine wolves have died accidentally due to capture, one was shot by FWS, and additional dozens have been removed and either sentenced to life imprisonment or released after being so traumatized that their chances for survival diminish appreciably.

Wolf 509, the patriarch of the Francisco Pack, was the most recent such victim. The pack was trapped and removed from the wild in Arizona this spring for leaving the boundaries of the Apache National Forest (which along with the Gila N.F., constitutes the lobos’ official recovery area). The Mexican gray wolf is the only endangered animal in the U.S. that the Fish and Wildlife Service is required to remove from the wild if they cross over arbitrary lines on the map—lines wolves can’t read.

At the time of their trapping, 509’s mate was pregnant, but after she gave birth in captivity her pups all died, possibly from stress due to the noise from a construction project near their cage. When the rest of the pack was re-released in New Mexico, they split apart (as has every other pack that has suffered this routine). Wolf 509 wandered the length of the Gila National Forest alone until he died right outside of Silver City in late September—perhaps of a bullet, perhaps from a car. Had he and his mate and pups been left alone in Arizona, where they were not even preying on livestock or otherwise causing any problems, he would likely be alive today.

Other Mexican wolves have suffered similar fates due to another provision of the special rule governing their species: Unlike the recovery program for wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains, ranchers in the Southwest are allowed to bait wolves with livestock carcasses. This leads to their habituation to eating stock, precipitates their preying on live domestic animals, and ultimately results in their removal from the wild.

The former Campbell Blue Pack is a case in point. Consisting of male wolf 166 (one of the first eleven animals released at the beginning of the program in 1998) and his mate 592, they were first trapped together in 2000 for leaving the recovery area; in captivity, 592 broke her leg trying to climb out of a chain link fence. After veterinary care and her recovery, they were released in the Gila but immediately split apart.

While separated, both animals separately scavenged on dead cattle that they did not kill. Wolf 166 fed on a bull that had died in an area that was supposed to be closed to grazing (the second such case of trespass cattle dying and habituating Mexican wolves to stock). In the case of both 166 and 592, the owners of the dead stock refused FWS requests and offers to remove the carcasses to prevent poachers slaughter more wolves.

In June 2001, FWS released the results of its three-year review of the Mexican wolf reintroduction program, an 86-page report written by four independent, non-governmental scientists. The principal author of the report was the world-renowned Paul C. Paquet, Ph.D., of the University of Calgary in Canada. Dr. Paquet and his colleagues recommended allowing wolves to roam outside the boundaries of the recovery area just like other wildlife are permitted, and addressing the problem of livestock carcasses. They warned that if reforms in the program do not take place, the population would likely decline.

In the almost two and a half intervening years, the Fish and Wildlife Service has not heeded this warning and has not changed the ground rules of the program. The biologists’ dire warnings are proving prescient.

The Mexican wolves, like their ancestors poisoned and trapped out of the U.S. and Mexico by the Fish and Wildlife Service, have proven savvy and wary of the dangers of humanity. But the agency today uses technology unavailable in its previous extermination campaign to make the wolves more vulnerable to capture: radio collars. The wolves could likely survive the current level of poaching or they could survive the current level of federal control, but they cannot survive both without endless supplementation. The control program, and the wolves’ legal designation as an “experimental, non-essential” species which authorizes the control, were explicitly intended to garner support from the livestock industry and prevent poaching. But no other endangered species has had as high a proportion of its population killed by poachers.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Write the Fish and Wildlife Service to request a rule change that would allow the wolves to roam outside of the recovery area boundaries and that would require ranchers clean up their dead livestock before wolves scavenge on them. Send a copy of your letter to Senator Bingaman and Governor Richardson.

H. Dale Hall
Southwest Regional Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
P.O. Box 1306
Albuquerque, NM 87103

Governor Bill Richardson
State Capitol
Room 400
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 476-2200

Senator Jeff Bingaman
703 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510
(505) 346-6601
by Jim Scarantino

During the past two years, we have seen patriotism exploited cynically to justify attacks on this nation’s natural heritage, including efforts to open our national forests to ruinous industrial activities. We thought it appropriate, therefore, to trace the affinity of great American patriots for the trees and forests of this nation.

It starts at the beginning, when the colonists threw off the yoke of the English King and launched the American democratic experiment. Massachusetts Minutemen adopted the pine tree as their banner to symbolize the virtues of hardiness and fortitude. Many tree flags were raised on the revolutionary side at Bunker Hill.

The Sons of Liberty rallied in Boston under a large elm which became known throughout the colonies as “The Liberty Tree.” Under this tree patriots read aloud their statements of resistance to tyranny. This elm became a symbol of American independence. George Washington’s

small navy flew Liberty Tree flags from its masts. The Liberty Tree flew above men freezing at Valley Forge.

The Culpepper Minutemen of Virginia assembled under a large oak tree. They adopted the tree as their original symbol. We will forever remember their motto: “Liberty or Death.” When the unit reorganized itself before the Civil War, its ranks mustered under the same mighty oak.

Theodore Roosevelt passionately loved trees. He quadrupled the acreage reserved in national forests. He created 18 Wildlife Refuges and took other steps to protect 230 million acres of America’s woods, mountains, deserts, and prairies. He was particularly fond of sequoias. He declared one of his 51 National Monuments to honor and protect them. He camped among these giants with John Muir and wrote afterwards of the experience, “It was like lying in a great solemn cathedral far vaster and more beautiful than any built by the hand of man.”

We have a friend in Grant County, recently retired from law enforcement, who adores the ponderosas—“the old yellowbellies,” he calls them—of the Gila backcountry. He fought in Vietnam. One time, he tells us, he was cut off from his company and stranded alone in a fox hole for several days. To keep his calm, he forced himself to think of getting back to the ponderosas parks on the shoulders of Mogollon Baldy. He made it.

Joyce Kilmer was born in New Brunswick, New Jersey in 1886. He was educated at Columbia University, graduating in 1908. In 1913 he became a member of the staff of “The New York Times.” When the U.S. declared war on Germany in 1917, Kilmer was a family man with a wife and children. He would not have been required to serve. Nevertheless he enlisted as a private in the New York National Guard. At this time he was considered the premiere American Catholic poet alive and was also recognized for his poetry about common, beautiful things in nature.

When he arrived in Europe, Joyce Kilmer quickly attained the rank of Sergeant and was attached to the Regimental Intelligence staff as an observer. He spent many nights on patrol in no-man’s land gathering information which would be of tactical importance. In his position on the Regiment’s Intelligence staff, Kilmer had no front line responsibilities during combat operations, but he would not be kept out of action while his comrades were at risk. On July 30th 1918, during the battle of the Ourcq, a sniper’s bullet ended the soldier-poet’s life. He died, at 31 years of age, facing the enemy.

Joyce Kilmer was awarded the French Croix de Guerre for bravery.

The Army’s Camp Kilmer in New Jersey, which handled more than 2.5 million troops during WWII, was named in his honor.

Later, Veterans of the Foreign Wars asked the government to set aside a fitting stand of trees to serve as a living memorial to Joyce Kilmer. An impressive remnant of virgin wilderness was chosen to honor this hero. A walk through Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest (now part of the Joyce Kilmer- Slickrock Wilderness) in North Carolina is a journey back in time through a magnificent forest with towering trees as old as 400 years. This beautiful, unmarred and natural setting was the uncharted hunting ground of the Cherokee Indians. Here there are virgin trees that reach more than 100 feet tall and 20 feet around the base.

I think that I shall never see
A poem as lovely as a tree.
A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth’s sweet flowing breast;
A tree that looks to God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;
A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;
Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.
Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

We rest our case. Patriots love trees. WILD!
The White House Roosevelt Room was ready for President Bush’s meeting. The furniture was dusted, the chairs set, and the podium was placed to exacting tolerances by the public relations team, ensuring that photographers would catch the oil portrait of Theodore Roosevelt’s countenance peering over Bush’s shoulder.

The meeting attendees rose as the president entered. “Good morning, please be seated,” Bush said. “Thanks for attending this important meeting about public lands policy. Our goal this morning is to—”

“Excuse me!” exclaimed a clipped, high-pitched voice with a Harvard accent. “Mr. President, I must have a word with you!”

Bush looked around the room, scowling at the insolence. “Who just spoke to me?” he asked with annoyance.

“It was I. No, not over there, look over here at the painting. That’s right. You do know who I am?” the visage of Theodore Roosevelt asked upon exiting the painting and landing in three-dimensional glory near his stupefied 21st century successor. The meeting attendees stared speechlessly at the translucent figure standing a yard away from President Bush.

“What the? What’s going on?” Bush demanded. “Karl, get Tom Ridge on the phone and tell him—”

But Roosevelt cut him off. “Calm down, Mr. President, I shan’t bite you,” Roosevelt interjected. “I know my appearance is rather irregular. The rumors are true, those of us who used to live here return occasionally to keep an eye on our successors. Cousin Franklin and I talk frequently about foreign policy and would be happy to share our ideas with you sometime,” the 26th president said.

“But that is not why I am here today,” TR continued. “I understand you are holding a meeting about public lands policy. I have come to offer—how do you 21st century people say it—my input. Baffling, what you people have done to the English language,” TR muttered. “But never mind that,” Roosevelt said, his voice rising and biting off each syllable. “I am here to protest your administration’s disgraceful treatment of national forests, parks and other lands that belong to all Americans, those alive today and those unborn. That is my legacy you are tampering with!”

Taken aback by the oratorical onslaught, Bush affected his best palsy-walsy manner. “Look, Teddy, I admire you a lot. You and I have a lot in common. I’m a real believer in that big stick stuff you used to talk about. We both ran cattle ranches. We both love visiting national parks and—”

“Yes, yes, I know a thing or two about wilderness,” Roosevelt replied impatiently. “Went camping at Yosemite with Muir in the spring of Ought Three. Woke up atop Glacier Point with my camp covered with snow. It was bully fun, you ought to try it sometime without a lot of bothersome reporters around,” TR reminisced.

“But let us not avoid the issue at hand, my friend,” Roosevelt continued. “You have much to answer for. Despoliating Yellowstone National Park with those infernal snow-riding machines. Putting land grabbers in charge of our public lands. Weakening the laws against noxious factory smoke. Allowing special interests to skin the land with mining wastes and oil drilling machines.”

Bush went on the counterattack. “Whoa there, Teddy, we need the energy,” the president said. “This isn’t 1903 anymore.”

“Rubbish!” Roosevelt replied sharply. “It is patently obvious that you never read any of my writings about national efficiency. In Ought Nine, I told Congress that conservation of our resources is the fundamental question before this nation, and that our first and greatest task is to set our house in order and begin to live within our means. Yet that vice president of yours refuses to take efficiency seriously.”

Bush countered again. “Look, Teddy, with all due respect, you have us all wrong. We’re for common sense and sound science. We want balance. We’re for healthy forests and clear skies. And we’ll deliver on all our promises, every Friday afternoon, at 5 p.m. sharp. And on holidays too!”

Roosevelt shook his head slightly and let out his breath. “Well, I must return across the veil. I leave you with this: We Republicans were the original conservationists.

“Poor Herbert Hoover, got flummoxed by the Depression, but he expanded our national park system. General Eisenhower turned a wonderful Arctic landscape into a wildlife refuge. Those refuges were my idea, by the way, created the first one back in Ought Three. Richard Nixon got the Clean Air Act passed. Mr. Nixon is a rather odd character, but I do try to say hello to him when we cross paths.

“So, Mr. 43rd President, that is the legacy in your charge. The people want public lands well managed for the future, not squandered to placate special interests. As an American patriot, I ask you to be a good steward of the legacy and, if I may borrow one of your 21st century phrases, try not to screw it up.”

With that, the translucent figure of Theodore Roosevelt vanished into the painting, his gaze fixed across time.

President Bush dismissed the meeting and exited silently from the Roosevelt Room.
by Tisha Broska, NMWA Staff

Wildlands Painted! opened October 3rd with a VIP Reception at the Harwood Art Center in Albuquerque. Over 80 paintings by 14 different artists were displayed for sale to benefit the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance. Celtic melodies played on harp and dulcimer, (thanks to former NMWA staff member Kathy Wimmer and friend George Miles,) and a slideshow of New Mexico’s wild landscapes completed the evening.

Over 100 people attended the Wildlands Painted! Reception. The show remained open to the public through Saturday October 4th before moving on to the Brody and White Fine Arts Gallery in Taos from October 10-25th. The show moves to the Abend Gallery in Denver in March 2004.

Artists calling themselves the Denver10 teamed up with three artists from New Mexico and one other guest artist from Colorado. They depicted three areas the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance has been working to protect permanently as Wilderness. The Rio Grande Gorge, Ojito and Columbine Hondo proved to be magnificent subjects. All the pieces were done en plein air, meaning on site in the open air. The artists captured these varied landscapes in styles ranging from modern abstract to more classical Taos School oils.

Thirty-three paintings sold during the 2-day Albuquerque show! So the artists are eager to get back out and paint more of New Mexico’s wild landscapes.

We plan to continue the Wildlands Painted! project as an on-going fund-raising event. We will soon be taking this group of artists to another of New Mexico’s endangered wild lands to capture our beautiful landscapes on canvas. Look for a special showing of miniature paintings at the annual NMWA Holiday Party and our house parties throughout 2004.

We would like to thank our sponsors of the Wildlands Painted! project for making this event a success:

The Harwood Art Center
Ink Media Group, Public Relations
Doublin’ Musicians
Kathy Wimmer and George Miles
Jack Loefler
Writer and Radio Producer
John Green

Green Media

Thank you, Participating Artists!
Jane Bunegar
Michelle Chrisman
Steve DeOrio
Jane Ford
Sharon Holsapple
Evelyn Martinez
Melinda Morrison
Marcy Nichols
Peggy Venable
Cassandra Cole
Libby Hart
Chris Morel
Randy Pijoan
Don Ward

Ever of the incomparable American landscape motivated the great men and women who launched the effort in the 19th century to conserve our nation’s ever-diminishing wilderness. Well before the science of conservation biology was conceived, Roosevelt saw in our vast, untrammeled landscape something superior, inspiring and profound.

Something worth fighting to save.

Out of love of the land, out of pure sensations of awe, wonder, reverence and joy, the wilderness movement was born. The great thinkers of Wilderness came later. The greatest of them all, Aldo Leopold, once lived in downtown Albuquerque. His time in the hills and canyons of New Mexico nurtured his thinking. He considered New Mexico’s landscape “close to the cream of creation.” The beauty of New Mexico touched and inspired him. It helped give his writing power, grace and poetry. It motivated him to act. In 1926, as the result of his eloquence and tireless efforts, the world’s first protected wilderness was created in the Gila National Forest.

Generations of New Mexicans have worked together to protect this wonderful place we call home. We are fortunate to have some of the finest and wildest lands in America. From the quiet ponderosa halls of primeval McKena Park deep in the Gila country, to the eerie badlands of the Bisti, the alpine peaks in Latir, Wheeler and the Sangre de Cristos, the rugged, remote terrain of the Apache Kid, the desert vastness of Otero Mesa, and the much loved slopes of the Sandias, New Mexicans have much to celebrate and enjoy.

But only a small fraction—2.2% of New Mexico’s surface—is protected as Wilderness. We have so much more to do. The threats are greater now than ever, and increasing every day. Wilderness, as Leopold said, is a resource which can only shrink, and never grow. Once it is lost, it is lost forever.

The paintings in the Wildlands Painted! exhibition highlight three diverse areas the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is working to protect for posterity: the Ojoito, northwest of Albuquerque, which has been described as a “badlands art gallery”; the classic Rocky Mountain splendor of the Columbine-Hondo area outside Taos; and the dramatic basaltic canyon carved by the Rio Grande as it moves south out of Colorado.

We cannot adequately express our thanks to these artists for giving their talent and time to this effort. Love for the beauty of Nature does not expire with the passage of time. It is as vibrant and vital now as it ever was. With brush and easel these artists have captured the beauty of the Wild with the same eloquence as Aldo Leopold employed timeless words to inspire generations to protect America’s threatened landscapes.
My parents moved us into a mobile home on a small piece of land nine miles south of Tijeras. That was 1983 and I was five years old. Our few neighbors were scattered about the canyon, often separated by great distances. The county wouldn’t plow or gravel the dirt road leading to our home because so few people used it. The weather was rough, our vehicles would get stuck in the mud, the lands were wild, and I thought life was absolutely great.

On Summer Saturdays my brother and I would wake early and trek over to our neighbors to fetch Lonnie, a boy close to our age. We would each stuff a pack full of water, lunch, and our toy weapons and head up the mountain across the street from our house. We frequently spotted deer, and tracks or scat of other shy animals such as bear, mountain lion, or coyote. We would almost always spot a horned lizard. We were quick to catch them. We always replaced the lizards exactly where we found them because our Uncle John always told us if we removed a lizard from its territory it would probably die.

Our days were filled with adventures. We were free to run and play and explore for miles and miles without worries of running into anyone's backyard. My deep respect for nature started to bloom when I was about seven. Curiosity drove me to take long walks through the woods, picking up and inspecting whatever I could. I learned quickly to appreciate each component of my surroundings and knew, even as a small child, that when I grew up I wanted to work in the outdoors.

These wide-open playing spaces did not last long. With each year came new driveways leading up to new, fancy houses. Each year the road leading to our driveway got better and better. Each year we had to be more and more careful to avoid our new neighbors’ private property.

I am older now, and living in the city. I still visit my parents’ home frequently. The road is paved. The once wild lands are dotted with houses. Whenever I get the chance I head up the mountain across the street, careful to follow fence lines to avoid landing in someone’s backyard. Dogs howl and yelp at my presence. There are no deer. There is no scat. I haven’t seen a horned lizard in years.

Growing up in the mountains helped mold the person I am today. For thirteen years I watched the wild lands around my home slowly disappearing. This sad story can be told about all too many places all over the United States. As population grows and sprawl continues to gobble up the wild lands outside our cities, wildlife suffers and is driven out.

I believe designated wilderness areas are more crucial than ever. They are the few remaining places that many species can safely consider home. I strongly support efforts for protecting New Mexico’s open spaces, including protecting Otero Mesa from oil and gas development. Places like Otero Mesa are essential for protecting the amazing biodiversity of New Mexico.

Wilderness areas are not only important for wildlife, but also for human beings. These areas link us to our natural heritage and give us a place where we can admire and study natural surroundings, or simply enjoy a moment’s solitude and escape from the fast-paced, high stress city life. We can take our children to these wonderful places and teach them respect for the environment and the importance of each and every species we are lucky to find. Most of all, with wilderness designation comes a guarantee that these designated lands will remain untouched and will be there for generations to come.
Nancy Morton: a Lifetime of Caring for People and for Wilderness

by Tisha Broska, NMWA Staff

“Wilderness activism is just payback for all the natural world has given me,” says Nancy Morton, explaining her life long commitment to protecting America’s wild lands. When not fighting for Wilderness, Nancy teaches nursing students at the University of New Mexico how to care for the sick and injured. Nancy’s motivation to be a nurse parallels her motives to protect the Earth. Both commitments are simply her motives to protect the Earth.

Nancy is a founding member of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance and has served on the Board of Directors as the Secretary since the organization’s inception. She has worked as a nurse for over 28 years, mostly in critical care, before recently beginning her teaching career at the University of New Mexico.

Nancy grew up camping and backpacking with her family in California. Her first understanding of what a Wilderness activist is came in high school. While backpacking in the Desolation Wilderness, she came to a breathtaking view atop the Sierras looking down upon Lake Tahoe. From this viewpoint she saw a lot of new development occurring in Lake Tahoe. Nancy wondered, “What happens that protects this area from development and not the area around Lake Tahoe?”

The answer she received provided her incentive to become a Wilderness activist for life: “It doesn’t happen; people have to make it happen.”

Nancy became involved with the North State Wilderness Committee where she began fighting to protect the Ishi Wilderness and the Chips Creek Roadless Area in California. Nancy later volunteered for the Butte Environmental Council, also in California. She then became involved with the Sierra Club, where she led local and national outings. Nancy quickly learned how important outings are to enlist more allies in the cause to protect Wilderness. After a period of volunteering for Earth First!, Nancy moved to Albuquerque with her husband, Dave Foreman, and helped establish the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance.

Nancy recognizes the challenges that we face today in trying to protect Wilderness in New Mexico. Many of these same challenges were present back in the 1970s during her fight to protect the Ishi Wilderness. Nancy feels that perseverance, solid research, grassroots support (as well as National backing) and the willingness to find common cause with local land owners are the critical steps to achieving Wilderness designation.

Nancy has found in Wilderness the rejuvenation she needs to take on the hard, serious work of nursing. Nancy recently returned from a long canoe trip on the Thelon River in Northern British Columbia. She is an avid river runner. The thoroughness in her preparation for these trips, and the astounding gourmet meals she serves in the middle of nowhere, have become legend among friends and river mates.

Nancy will be leaving the Board of Directors in December to focus on her nursing work at UNM. She plans to return to the Alliance when she has more time to help foster volunteer activism. We cannot wait for the day when we have her all to ourselves. Nancy’s selfless dedication to serving Wilderness and mankind are an inspiration for all of us. Thank you, Nancy, for all you have done with your talent, energy and wisdom.

Join New Mexico Wilderness Alliance Today! You’ll not only help preserve New Mexico’s Wild Places for your own enjoyment… but you’ll help insure that future generations may enjoy them too.

YES! I want to be a member of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance!!! My contribution will go towards the continued protection and wilderness designation of New Mexico’s natural heritage.

- $20 – Individual
- $25 – Family
- $50 – Supporting
- $100 – Contributing
- $250 – Lifetime
- $10 – Student/Senior
- Other $__________

Name ___________________________ Phone___________________________
Street ___________________________ E-mail___________________________
City, State, Zip ________________________________

□ Enclosed is my check payable to New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

Please charge my □ Visa or □ Mastercard

Card# ___________________________ Expiration Date: ______________

Signature: ___________________________
Hikes leave from our office at Central and Broadway at 7:30am and we’ll figure out the car pool situation at that time (if you’re willing to drive, it is greatly appreciated). We’ll have you back to our office by 6:30pm. We’ll be hitting relatively lower elevations as we head into winter and will make our way upward as summer comes back around. Bring your own water, snacks, and lunch, and be prepared for all types of weather. Call Nathan Newcomer at the ABQ office at 843-8696 for more info.

November 22 – El Malpais region south of Grants.
January 24, 2004 – Ojito, northwest of ABQ
February 21, 2004 – The Quebradas region east of Socorro

You can reach her at 505-527-9962 or greta@nmwild.org.

Big White Gap, Sierra de las Uvas – December 13th

We’ll be hiking along old jeep trails on this 7-mile moderately strenuous hike. Expect about 550 feet of elevation gain. The Sierra de las Uvas are located 30 miles north of Las Cruces, and offer great views of the Black Range the northwest and the San Andres mountains to the east.

Mount Riley – January 17, 2004

We offer two choices on this trip. You can opt for the strenuous 7-mile climb of about 1600 feet elevation gain to the summit or you can explore the interesting vegetation and geology around the base. Those who climb to the top will be rewarded with excellent views of the surrounding desert and ranges. Mt. Riley is about 32 miles southwest of Las Cruces and belongs to the Potrillo Mountain group.

Achenback Canyon – February 2, 2004

This is a delightful, moderately difficult 4-mile hike very close to Las Cruces. We will walk among many types of vegetation and rock formations while enjoying beautiful views to the west.

Fire feeds fire, Breeds fire, And eats its young.
All tithe unto the flaming feast. Mountains kiss the beast: A suicide pact rapt In a pitiless shawl So keen to kill.


A Year, Two, Ten: From death life rends Its birth, and sears the grey slopes green.

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so, what’s WILD! this month?

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