I’m sure many of you have seen the numerous articles and television news pieces on the illegal tree cutting recently discovered in the Santa Fe National Forest near the Santa Fe ski basin.

Hundreds of trees have been illegally felled, some as tall as 50 feet. Surveying the area recently with my dog Jed, I personally measured one with a circumference of 36 inches. A dozen or so different trails have been created, the largest 40 feet across and a half mile long running from the top of Raven’s Ridge to the ski area parking lot. Some trails encroach into the Wilderness. The best guess is that they were created by rogue skiers/snowboarders wanting to “glade” through the trees on their own private runs.

The hitch? It’s not private land, but public.

No doubt, the damage is significant. The selfishness breathtaking. The audacity impressive.

This has also underscored how under-resourced the Forest Service is—with a single enforcement officer for the entire SFNF, they need good private partners like us (along with a bigger budget). This seems to have shocked our collective conscious. I have to ask, why? With all of the threats to our public lands that we deal with every day, this truly is well down on the list. Has the negative reaction been disproportionate to the offense? After all, the felled trees will eventually rot and recycle, the scar will disappear. The forest will certainly survive.

My sense is that people are outraged in part because the issue is small enough and close enough to feel. It feels like an assault on what is collectively ours—because that is exactly what it is. It assails the awe and reverence many of us feel when we enter a wild place. **This crime feels so personal because it is such a flagrant attack on the pact we have—between us and wild things and with each other.**

And while our public lands are great for recreating—I’ve personally skied, snowshoed, hiked and backpacked this area—wild places are about much more than a couple minute thrill ride down a mountainside. It is this lack of respect or even understanding for other users and the land itself that is so galling. (…and the fact that it is literally in sight of an area developed specifically for that kind of use.)

If it’s perhaps indicative that the very notion of the commons is under threat, it is also a reminder that humans are wild places’ biggest threat. And with people like you, the wild’s staunchest defenders, we will faithfully keep watch.

Thank you for your support. And I wish you and yours a happy holiday season.

Mark Allison
Executive Director
Howling in New Mexico & Around the World

Take note of David Blagg’s photo of our “Wolves Belong” bumper sticker displayed on a utility vehicle within the Exclusion Zone at Chernobyl, where wolf recovery is strong.

Are you sporting your “Wolves Belong!” bumper sticker proudly? Have you purchased your 2015 collectible Wolf Stamp? Shop NMWild.org for yourself and others who want the Mexican Gray Wolf to survive and thrive in the Wild.

In case you haven’t heard—we are thrilled, gratified and relieved to see the US Fish and Wildlife Service doing the right thing for Mexican wolves and reversing the New Mexico Game Commission’s attempts to abort wolf recovery efforts!

Thank you to our US senators, Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich, Secretary of Interior Sally Jewell and US Fish and Wildlife Director Dan Ashe for their courage and vision making this critical decision.

And THANK YOU for taking the time to join the hundreds of other concerned citizens who signed our petition. Your voice made a difference and the agency knows its science based decision is also backed up with tremendous public support.

Stay tuned for more information on the re-introduction of this endangered animal. There is much more to do to ensure success.

What We Do

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

Each day, you and resourceful NM Wild staff members fight for your wild public lands. We...

- Monitor and “watchdog” New Mexico’s federal public lands and Wilderness Areas to hold management agencies accountable for following the law and minimizing abuses
- Conduct field research to identify and document lands with wilderness characteristics that are currently unprotected and under threat from off-road vehicles, oil and gas, timber harvesting and development
- Train and coordinate volunteers for service projects on public lands
- Build broad community support for wilderness protection and cultivate new stewards through education, outreach and service projects
- Advocate for the permanent protection of our dwindling special wild places in New Mexico by building grassroots campaigns and working with our federal congressional delegation and the executive branch
- Fight, fight, fight for the places we all hold dear!

Give a gift of a New Mexico Wilderness Alliance membership this holiday!

YES! I want to purchase a gift membership(s) to New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

$15-Student/Senior  $25-Individual  $45-Household  $100-Premium*  $500-Lifetime

Visa  Mastercard  Check (Please make checks payable to the NM Wilderness Alliance or go to nmwild.org)

Card #: ___________ Expiration: ___________

Name: ____________________________

Email: ____________________________

Address: _________________________________________________________________________

Phone __________________________ Email _____________________________________________

Name of person you are gifting to: ______________________________________________________

Card #___________________________________________ Expiration ___________________________

Mail a tax-deductible gift membership to:

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

70 Box 25464

Albuquerque, NM 87125

Questions? 505.843.8696 ext 104 nmwild.org

* $100 and Lifetime levels receive a complimentary signed copy of Dave Foreman’s The Great Conservation Divide

Clearing the Forest

My father’s first forefather in the New World was Robert Tyler, who died in 1674 in Calvert County, Maryland. I wonder how he saw this fresh new world. What did he think about the wealth of the Bay—the foot-long oysters stretching in beds for miles, the fish so thick they could be scooped out in baskets, the ducks blotting out a full sun?

First in my mother’s line in the New World was Charles Dodson. Born in Scotland in 1649, he came to the tidewater of Virginia sometime before 1670 and farmed along the western bank of the Rappahannock River—only thirty or forty miles away from Tyler. What did he think about the big woods? The trees that rose and rose before their first branches? Trees so big that it took the linked arms of three or four men to reach about the trunks?

Scattered between early settlements (often found on Indian fields left after epidemic disease brought by Euro- pean seafarers setting foot on dry land in the Americas) and stretching west, my forebears found a temperate deciduous forest beyond their dreams and without a match in all the world. More species of trees grew in Virginia and Maryland than in Europe from Ireland to the Urals. The tulip poplar grew over 200 feet tall and more than twenty feet across. The American chestnut spread its great limbs over a quarter of an acre (think of four trees shading a whole football field). Sycamores were thick-trunked and rose high along rivers, mighty oaks climbed the Piedmont, western bank of the Rappahannock River—only thirty or forty miles away from Tyler. What did he think about the big woods? The trees that rose and rose before their first branches? Trees so big that it took the linked arms of three or four men to reach about the trunks?

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William Cronin writes, “New England lumbering used forests as if they would last forever.” As early as 1682, twenty-four sawmills were cutting boards in Maine. Grasping as logging was, though, Cronon warns us that “the lumberer was not the chief agent in destroying New England’s forests; the farmer was.” Steve Trombulak and Chris Rhyza of Middlebury College write that “the percentage of Vermont that is forested went from an estimated 95 percent in 1620, to 25 to 35 percent around 1850 to 1870…”

Historian Michael Williams believes that over 100 million acres of the Great Eastern Forest were chopped down before 1850. Between 1850 and 1859, however, another forty million acres were cut, “equivalent to roughly one-third of all clearing carried out during the previous two centuries. It was a decade of maximum impact on the forest.”

After the Civil War, big logging businesses took over the North Woods of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota, which gave the timber industry its age of heroic legend. From the 1870s on, the ransacking of the virgin White Pine forests in the North Woods set a new yardstick for land lust, and a mighty folk hero—Paul Bunyan—had to be crafted to match the deed.

Paul and the Blue Ox did their work well for the timber kings. The Northern Hardwoods and Great Lakes Pine forests were chopped to smithereens in a few short years. Lumbermen had run after the American forest from the Atlantic to the Great Plains over the millrace of the frontier’s scalping the whole of New England, stripping it bare in Pennsylvania, New York, and Michigan, and plundering it in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

All the while they told Americans not to worry—the trees were never ending.

And Americans, true children of the frontier, believed as frontiersmen always believed. And still believe.

Around the Campfire with Uncle Dave

Dave Foreman

Senior Campaign Advisor to the Executive Director – New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

Excerpted from Around the Campfire, March 2013 and reprinted with permission of the Rewilding Institute
Tree Hunting In All the Right Places

Great Family Outing—As you know, we oppose illegal tree cutting, but legally hand-cutting a Christmas tree for your holiday is a great outdoor family adventure.

Limited “Christmas Tree Permits” are available at Forest Service offices beginning mid-November. Permitted cutting areas open from Thanksgiving thru Christmas Eve. However not all offices offer permits—check first. In the Chiwilla National Forest, the Sandia Ranger District doesn’t offer permits, but the Magdalena and Mt. Taylor Districts do in specific areas. (Call ahead - info and contacts below for 5 Districts.)

A tree only a mother could love? While some tell me our family’s trees look like “Charlie Brown Christmas trees,” we love the not-so-perfect wild New Mexican trees. There are varieties you can choose from maybe you’ll get the perfect one!

We get White Fir with soft needles and a silver trunk. You may like Douglas Firs, Engelmann or Blue Spruce in elevations above 8,000 feet. If you are lower in elevation, Pinyon and Ponderosa Pine are options. One thing is for sure, your tree will smell great and last up to six weeks with watering.

Bring work gloves, a saw, and rope! My family and I cut our Christmas trees from Santa Fe National Forest. We stop at the Walsworth Visitor Center in the Pueblo of Jemez to get our permit, sold on Christmas trees from Santa Fe National Forest. We stop at the Wala Visitor Center in the Pueblo of Jemez.

For the $10 permit you get a tree up to five inches in diameter and 10 feet in height. For taller or bigger trees, you can purchase two permits for $20. Prices vary, in Jemez Springs.

In Memoriam

Susan Tiexier, founder of Great Old Broads for Wilderness, passed away in her sleep at the age of 73 this October. Susan was a remarkable woman, an environmental lawyer whose roles included Associate Executive Director of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, and first a founding, later Executive Director of Forest Guardians in Santa Fe. She helped founded the New Mexico Environmental Law Center and worked with the Land and Water Fund of the Rockies (now Western Resource Advocates), Susan directed the Colorado Environmental Coalition (Conservation Colorado) and was named Utah Environmental Woman of Action, 1995. We will miss her unalloyed spirit and inexpressible irreverence.

Recommended Resources

Deadbeat Dan by Dan Beard

A rare and captivating inside view of a giant federal water project agency by its former commissioner. Beard’s convincing case should attract the support of many conservatives and liberals who want to get rid of government waste. Beard punctures the bubble of California water barons as he shows how they perpetually farm governments for subsidies. With growing concern about water supplies, Beard shows ways to scrap wasteful practices of the past and move to new approaches. This book has the potential to change the global approach to water. Beard shows the cost-effectiveness and environmental benefits of new approaches to water problems, especially the astonishing results achieved in the Western United States when these better approaches have been implemented.

Wild Guide Passport to New Mexico Wilderness

Get Ready, Get Set, Hike! In 2016, the all new BTO Guide! More information coming soon in January 2016. All new, updated content and enhanced usability. Includes newly protected areas since 2013.

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“Golden Freedom” Music is Heard in Wilderness

Alliance Member Profile Irene Walkiw

A “displaced person” for four-and-a-half years, Irene Walkiw knows firsthand how history wreaks havoc on individuals’ lives. And how the outdoors heals.

Carried by her parents, fleeing Soviet Russia’s domination of the Ukraine during WWII, Irene fled her rural village of Zolota Sloboda (translated “Golden Freedom”) in the Galicia region. Escaping certain persecution and death, they traveled to Germany and were placed in “Displaced Persons Camp” for over four years. Eventually, Irene, at age six, immigrated with her family and many other Ukrainians to Canada where they were welcomed with full citizenship.

World events today, causing families once again to seek refuge far away from ancestral homes, echoes strongly for Irene. How does one survive losing one’s home? For Irene, emotional survival is largely the gift of music and the outdoors.

As a small child, she was soothed with music sung to her in her original language, and was taught many Ukrainian folk songs, music illuminated with lyrics about nature, birds and animals. Once in Canada, she joined the Girl Scouts with other young Ukrainian immigrants, and across Canada their folk music became campfire songs. In the outdoors, merged with her tribal music, she was at home in the fullest sense.

Eventually arriving in the deserts of New Mexico in a life she describes as going “wherever the whim blows,” Irene became a U.S. citizen and continued her career in land reclamation work for the Forest Service work she did in Utah and Wyoming also (she received her biology degree from McGill University/Montreal). At first she clung to the Rio Grande and the mountains to understand this landscape. Eventually, the wildest deserts of this land enchanted her as well. Her first encounter with New Mexico Wilderness Alliance was more than ten years ago; “I signed up for a trip and I was impressed. The trip was affordable and I met interesting people. The canyon was really beautiful.” She’s been a partner ever since, volunteering and supporting the Wilderness campaigns.

In recent years, not allowing her natural shyness to get the better of her, Irene shares her Ukrainian folk songs, singing with them both professionals and amateurs. Sharing music with others, music born in nature, gives her purpose and peace. “The music brings out the emotion for both nature and home—they are both necessary for me.”

Irene’s wish is to return to the Ukraine someday, to let the “whim” blow her there, singing all the way.
Dear Friends,

Wherever you travel, with whomever you gather, we wish you peace this holiday season. THANK YOU for supporting the permanent protection of Wilderness in New Mexico. You make the ultimate gift possible - habitat for earthly friends both furry and feathered, all the friends who crawl or swim, the wild flowers, the trees, and the slow, unfettered, unfolding of the universe. May you be in, or dream of, the silence of Wilderness this season.

From the Staff and Board of Directors – New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

Give the Gift of Protecting Wilderness Together

Announcing the 100% Membership Match – good until December 23rd

Generous friends of New Mexico Wilderness Alliance will match your gift of a membership to someone in your life, for the benefit of Wilderness protection in New Mexico. (up to $100 per membership gift).

For Friends and Family - Give them a Gift Membership* to New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

(*tax deductible to you) Double the impact for Wilderness today - individual and household membership levels from $15 - $500.

Please go to NMWILD.org or fill out the membership form on Page 2 of this Wildology edition. THANKS!!!

We are grateful for ALL levels of support to New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, working with you to permanently protect our most beautiful and wildest public lands. 100% of your tax-deductible contribution, and its match, stays in New Mexico.

WE SEE YOU – CAN YOU SEE US?

A New Mexico Wilderness Alliance BLACK DIAMOND hiker’s headlamp will be given as a complimentary gift to anyone donating $150 or more before the end of 2015. Please send your donation with the remit slip provided on the inserted letter. Conservation citizens like you fund this effort to achieve and protect Wilderness in New Mexico. The need doesn’t go away, and it doesn’t happen without you – you are the single largest source of funding to protect the lands you love. Thank you for lighting the way at whatever level you can give to this effort. (Not applicable to membership dues).

HIP HIP HOORAY! Check this out!

Tractor Brewing Company
(2 locations in ABQ: Wells Park & Nob Hill) is offering a New Mexico Wilderness Alliance growler for $10. www.getplowed.com

Every time you fill the growler a donation goes to keeping Wilderness protected in New Mexico!

Thank you Tractor!