TEN YEARS OF KEEPIN’ IT WILD!

The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance 10th Anniversary Issue
Our beginnings were humble. We were fueled not by money, but by passion and determination. It was a determination to protect the wildest landscapes our state had left and to call attention to little known places like Otero Mesa that were threatened by the oil and gas industry. Our goal was to make wilderness preservation part of the language of our elected officials and the general public. We had an office, we were collecting lots of maps, and we were getting out on the ground finding where the truly wild places were. We put together (this sounds a bit dated) a great slideshow presentation and began to meet with civic groups around the state. Our board meetings lasted a weekend, not 4 to 5 hours, and the nights were long and full of good, wonderful camaraderie with lots of talk of old campaigns and the heroes of our movement. Most of the staff was in their early twenties. I was the old man, in my forties. It was only 6 or 7 years ago, but now it seems like a lifetime.

We dreamed wilderness. Blank spaces on the map put smiles on our faces. Scial and a slew of volunteers traveled the state searching and documenting our roadless lands. We bucked hay with ranchers in Cabezon, we designed our first brochures, and an early NMWA logo was a gift of the Patagonia Company. We sent out press releases, asked for editorial board meetings and soon the press came calling. Every Thursday was volunteer night and we stuffed envelopes, made calls, ate pizza and drank cold beer, and slowly began to build a conservation organization.

One of the group’s first actions was in 1999, when the BLM considered opening the Bisti/De-Na-Zin wilderness area in northwest New Mexico, just north of Chaco Canyon. NMWA was able to generate more than 500 public comments on proposed drilling. In the end, the oil company, Speerex, reconsidered their options and settled with the BLM for fair rate compensation for their leases.

Our first Activist’s Workshop was held in May 1999 in conjunction with the Southwest Forest Alliance and The Wilderness Society. More than 150 people came out to support wilderness and get involved.

We began to organize people for the Mexican Wolf Reintroduction hearings and transported people to speak out in support of the lobo. We rented vans and drove across the state to speak in support of then-President Clinton’s National Forest Roadless Rule. In fact, the very first thing I did for NMWA was to get in a van with 12 other people and drive to Cloudcroft to speak at a hearing on the Roadless Rule. I had just moved to New Mexico three days earlier. Driving back that night I got my first look at a New Mexico summer monsoon. Lightning filled the sky and rain fell in buckets every 20 miles or so on the highway home.

In 2003, we finished our massive inventory of New Mexico’s wild Bureau of Land Management lands. This inventory covered roughly four million acres. It involved more than 10,000 volunteer hours and the efforts of six paid field staff. It was the most comprehensive inventory ever undertaken on New Mexico public lands, and to date its photo documentation and GIS accuracy has been essential in our comments to agencies and in our wilderness proposals before Congress.

In 2002, while working as the Media director for NMWA, I was told by then Board Member Greta Baldarama about a special grassland known as Otero Mesa. After some map
searching and talks with our GIS people, we began to investigate. We sent our inventory people back into the field and what they reported surprised and excited us. Otero Mesa held the largest swath of roadless lands remaining in New Mexico. Not only that, but it was a grassland, filled with pronghorn, burrowing owls, prairie dogs, coyotes and aplomado falcons as of late. Little did we know that this land would come to define the maturation of NMWA as an organization. It was a landscape that stole our hearts. The fight to protect Otero Mesa continues today, but the hundreds of thousands of acres of land once leased to development have been reduced to about 11,000 acres. The talk of pipeline construction and multinational companies is gone, the investors have left. But the pronghorn, rattlesnakes, petroglyphs, breathtaking skies and endless winds are still solidly in control.

Which reminds me of another great moment. It was 2004; the Bush Administration's attack on our western public lands was going strong. That winter, on short notice, we pulled together our first Public Lands Rally at the Kimo Theater in Albuquerque. At that time, the push of the oil and gas industry was seemingly unstoppable, as rigs were engulfing the Rocky Mountain West. After listening to many diverse speakers at the Rally, including rancher Tweeti Blanecc and writer Bill Dubois, the moment came for Governor Richardson to arrive. He hit the stage and demanded that Otero Mesa be protected, not drilled, and in dramatic fashion, signed an Executive Order to protect the area. The Governor signed the order as 700 people cheered wildly, and, for the first time in several years, we all remembered a simple thing called hope.

We began service projects to repair damage on our wild public lands. At the same time, we began the fight to keep the Clinton Roadless Rule in place for 58.5 million acres of our wild National Forests. We organized, and turned people out for important hearings. We wrote countless editorials, visited papers across the state to explain the issue, and made sure that a voice for wildlife, a voice for wilderness, and a voice that opposed the turning over of our National Forests to off-road vehicles was being heard loud and clear in Washington. We also worked closely with the Governor’s office to ensure that New Mexico forests were protected. Today, the Roadless Rule has survived countless attempts to eliminate it.

Meanwhile, we have completed more than forty projects in these forests, repairing trails, restoring streams, blocking access to wilderness areas by off-road vehicles and closing illegal roads. We are doing much of the work needed to maintain the integrity of these special lands. And we are allowing our members some real “hands-on” time to help heal the wounds that man has inflicted on these wonderful places. The Forest Service’s budget has been cut to the bone, and what used to be routine maintenance is now a luxury. But this new reality has given us an opportunity to help and allowed us time for hard work and great fun. With Dutch oven cooking, cold beer and fifteen or twenty people, the results can be impressive. In fact, the Forest Service has told us in countless thank-yous that our (your) efforts are making a difference!

In 2004, we became seriously involved in efforts to protect the Valle Vidal from oil and gas development. From fundraising to media development to lobbying in Washington, we worked with a diverse and potent coalition of sportsmen, businesses and elected officials to gain strong bi-partisan support for the Vidal. Those efforts were rewarded with passage of the Vidal Stewardship Act, ensuring that the Vidal be protected for not only the future but also today.

We also worked closely with the Governor’s office to ensure that New Mexico forests were protected. Today, the Roadless Rule has survived countless attempts to eliminate it. As you can see, the staff of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is committed to creating better communities here in the Land of Enchantment.

NMWA Staffers Much More than Nine-to-Fivers

Besides our important work on wilderness and public lands protection, New Mexico Wilderness Alliance staff is involved in many facets of our communities.

In Las Cruces, Jeff Steinborn was elected as State Representative this past year. During his time at the roundhouse, Jeff did a tremendous job of fighting for conservation and working to improve the quality of life for people in his district. Also in our Las Cruces office, Nate Small was appointed to the Doña Ana County Planning and Zoning Commission.

In our Albuquerque office, Nathan Newcomer was appointed to the Open Space Advisory Board and Stephen Capra was appointed to the board of the Albuquerque Zoo, Aquarium and Bio-park. Tripp Killin, the Alliance’s Associate Director, is a member of the New Mexico Association of Grant Makers and has a Donor Advised Fund at the Albuquerque Community Foundation. Michael Scialdone uses his field expertise to serve on the State Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Board and is a member of the Cibola working group. Trisha London has represented New Mexico Wilderness Alliance at public hearings for Reintroduction of the River Otter and to oppose trapping on public lands. She has supported the Dine (Navajo) people fighting for a clean environment as of late. Arturo Sandoval, the Albuquerque office Coordinator, is a recipient of the 2006 KTAO Environmental Stewardship Award, and the 2007 recipient of the Simple Change Stewardship Award. Jim has recently completed his first book, based on his 5 month backpacking trip across Finland.

In our new Carlsbad Office, Steve West, was appointed by the governor to be on the board of directors of the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science and also serves on the local Carlsbad Museum Board. In addition he serves on the local Crimestoppers Board and is currently president of the Chihuahuan Desert Conservation Alliance and on the Board of the Carlsbad Caverns-Guadalupe Mountains Association.

As you can see, the staff of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is committed to creating better communities here in the Land of Enchantment.
for the permanent protection of what many call the Yellowstone of New Mexico.

In 2005, we opened our first Student Chapter of NMWA on the campus of the University of New Mexico. There students have made the protection of the Mexican wolf a focal point of their efforts. The fact that UNM has a lobo as their mascot makes University support of the Mexican Wolf that much more powerful.

We hope to open our second Student Chapter this fall on the campus of New Mexico State University.

In 2006, we released our first annual Hiking Guide and began in earnest leading hikes across the state, often to areas we have been working to protect. These hikes have been both fun and challenging. We look forward to many more miles and to getting more people out in our new Taos, Santa Fe and Carlsbad locations.

Over the years, our staff has grown from a starting pair to our current dozen. Some have left our ranks and gone on to work in the political arena or to advance their education. Some have gone to Washington to work for other conservation organizations. But for the past three years or so, no one has left and as I mentioned, we have continued to grow, opening new offices in Santa Fe, Taos and most recently adding staff in Carlsbad.

In recent years, our wilderness preservation proposals have expanded. We are working on a 330,000-acre proposal in Doña Ana County, and the community support for this has been, frankly, overwhelming. More than 180 businesses signed on in support, along with multiple sportsman groups and the Hispano Chamber of Commerce. Five city and county commissions voted in support of our proposal, and the list goes on. But this is southern New Mexico, and it will remain a very tough fight. In the Taos Area, we are working hard on a 303,000 acre proposal for a wilderness/National Conservation Area that encompasses parts of the Rio Grande Gorge and Ute Mountain. This proposal, once again, has tremendous local support from elected officials and businesses, and we are continuing to work this effort towards the introduction of legislation. In June, Congressman Udall introduced legislation to protect more than 20,000 acres of land in eastern New Mexico on the Great Plains. The area is known as Sabino. We have worked to lay a solid foundation of support for this proposal and we thank the Congressman for his strong support, and hope to see this bill move through committee soon.

We are actively looking at areas in the Kiowa Grasslands for future wilderness proposals, and are working hard to protect the wilderness qualities of our National parks in New Mexico and West Texas. Our recent hiring of Steve West in Carlsbad is designed to maintain our solid science foundation as we grow as an organization. Steve will work on issues as diverse as endangered species, protecting certain oil and gas development, or the planned construction of roads or pipelines across biologically sensitive areas. Steve will help keep our federal agencies focused on a conservation agenda. As a teacher for more than thirty years, Steve will help us in developing a conservation curriculum for students across the state.

Last December, we moved into a new "green building", one that reflects our commitment to a sustainable and better future. We have a staff of wonderful, committed people and a membership that has grown from 250 to close to 6,000, a membership that we all feel is second to none. You have helped us grow and we have matured before your eyes. Your support has opened the door to landscape protection across the state and has literally stopped oil and gas fields from destroying some of our wildest grasslands. Our annual membership meetings are like a homecoming; as old friends meet new members and keep us going strong.

We are ten years old. Actually, we are ten years young. Yet New Mexico remains second to last in the West in the percentage of its land area protected as wilderness. We've even behind Florida, Hawaii and New Hampshire. The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is working hard to change that. Ironically, New Mexico is the birthplace of both Wilderness and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Acts.

For the past seven years, this has been my home. It has been, and remains, a great pleasure and a responsibility. It is a responsibility that the entire staff of NMWA takes very seriously. We work for you, and we demand of ourselves-results. "Losing" in this line of work does not mean a smaller paycheck or a reprimand; it means a loss of land, water and wildlife. That is simply unacceptable.

In Edward Sullivan's article, he mentions a moment that I feel embodies our work and what makes it so special.

Six years ago, on a cold December day, I was out in Otero Mesa. It was my third visit to the area, and as I crossed the grasslands with a friend, we were suddenly startled by the presence of a mountain lion. It ran slowly, and we watched in awe as it cut across the grass miles from any mountain. Later that afternoon, I climbed a small peak for cell phone service and called Edward, who was preparing to speak at our annual Christmas party. My message (which I screamed into the phone as the cold wind blasted me) was that I had seen a mountain lion a few hours earlier, in the heart of Otero Mesa. Barely containing my excitement I said we must protect this place, for it has a wild spirit. As I climbed down that peak, with the sun setting out in Otero Mesa. It was my third visit to the area.

Controlling our operations, we are fully supported by the community. Five city and county commissions voted in support of our proposal, and the list goes on. But this is southern New Mexico, and it will remain a very tough fight. In the Taos Area, we are working hard on a 303,000 acre proposal for a wilderness/National Conservation Area that encompasses parts of the Rio Grande Gorge and Ute Mountain. This proposal, once again, has tremendous local support from elected officials and businesses, and we are continuing to work this effort towards the introduction of legislation. In June, Congressman Udall introduced legislation to protect more than 20,000 acres of land in eastern New Mexico on the Great Plains. The area is known as Sabino. We have worked to lay a solid foundation of support for this proposal and we thank the Congressman for his strong support, and hope to see this bill move through committee soon.

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Ten Years of Keeping It Wild

continued from page 3

David Ehrman is our new Santa Fe staff member. He lived in Denver, Colorado and participated in the successful campaign to stop the proposal to explode nuclear weapons underground to stimulate natural gas production in western Colorado. Ehrman worked for former U.S. Senator Floyd Haskell of Colorado in his Denver office with responsibilities for Rocky Flats, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plan (WIPP) and Veterans health issues. David will expand volunteer action on a variety of issues affecting wilderness, including the restriction of oil and gas drilling in sensitive wilderness areas and protection of the Mexican Wolf. He believes Santa Feans are taking a leadership role in New Mexico and Washington, D.C. on wilderness protection and new wilderness legislation. David will be recruiting existing and new Alliance members to become a powerful group for the restoration and protection of wilderness.

Nature, Hiking Enthusiast Joins NMWA to Aid in Marketing, Event Promotion

Craig Chapman is the newest member of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance. He comes to the environmental community after 25 years in sales and marketing in the banking industry. Born in Hot Springs, Arkansas, he spent his early years as a military brat following his father around the world. Craig has lived in New Mexico for over 20 years settling down in New Mexico because of his love of the Mountains. He is an active Ski Patrol member and also has a passion for mountain biking, which he does to stay in shape for skiing. Craig has brought a new perspective to NMWA coming from the private sector. He plans to utilize his sales and marketing experience to promote Wilderness.

Activist Helps Wilderness Alliance Establish Santa Fe Membership Presence

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When it was created on March 11, 1907, few could have predicted that one hundred years later, this magnificent park, once at the center of Puebloan culture, would be threatened by a myriad of development schemes and plagued by consistent government under-funding and neglect. As we look at Chaco Canyon today, it remains a land that is both fantastic and a place of great promise, but it is a landscape in serious need of our help.

State Lands

Like so many parts of New Mexico, one of Chaco’s greatest threats is oil and gas development on state lands. Even the seismic testing for oil and gas creates a great threat for the thousands of fragile ruins in and around the park’s boundaries. The oil company Cimarex currently holds leases on state land near the park, close enough to be visible from the park’s visitor center if developed. In 2006, State Land Commissioner Patrick Lyons stated that he does not want these lands developed. For the past one hundred years, the one thing that has helped protect Chaco Canyon is its remote nature and the fact that there has been an absence of roads on its periphery. But with increased seismic and/or drilling activities, roads will be built making it easier to access parts of Chaco that to-date have been inaccessible. This will most likely result in the destruction of the very treasures that lead to the park’s creation.

Wilderness

On the positive side, more than 20,000 acres of land inside the park qualifies as wilderness. The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is working to see that these wild and culturally important lands are given full wilderness protection. We are also looking at lands on the periphery of the park to see if any could be included in a wilderness proposal. These periphery lands would create a buffer for the park and halt the development of any new roads that would open remote parts of the park to vandalism. Creating wilderness in area alone, the system has completely failed and campground waste is being pumped and hauled by truck up to the current sewage treatment system. The result is that capacity for overnight camping has been reduced by 50%.

Desert Rock

As if all of this was not enough, the park now has a new threat: the potential construction of Desert Rock Power Plant, less than 40 miles from Chaco Canyon. If constructed, air quality in the park is projected to further degrade and visibility, according to NPS studies, would drop by more than 55% on bad air days. The power plant remains a contentious issue, with the outcome far from certain.

Park Boundaries

Finally, and perhaps most unbelievably, is the fact that many years ago a separate unit of the park, the Pueblo Pintado Outlier was created to protect significant archeological sites outside the main park boundaries. In 1993, a Cadastral survey revealed that the important ruins actually lie just outside the park’s boundaries, falling between Tribal Trust Lands and Bureau of Land Management lands. The park is now working to get this previous surveying error corrected to protect this irreplaceable resource.

What can be done?

Chaco Canyon needs our help. Fixing its many problems will take time, but it can be done. New Mexico Wilderness Alliance suggests all the following:

Stopping any oil and gas development on adjacent State Lands.

It is important for the long-term protection of the park to stop the paving of County Road 7950. This project is guaranteed to overwhelm the park’s limited resources.

Gaining the support of Congressman Udall on a wilderness proposal for Chaco Canyon will ensure the long-term protection of the park’s unique landscape and cultural treasures.
Almost 200 people from Alamogordo, water experts. The forum brought together a broad coalition of New Mexicans. The Otero Mesa Public Informational Forum in Alamogordo, NM. This public forum brought together a broad coalition of New Mexicans from Alamogordo, Truth or Consequences, and Las Cruces to discuss water and energy issues for the Salt Basin Aquifer. The story of the graybow began on April 15, 2007, when a single gray rainbow, perched high above Otero Mesa's landscape and its large, freshwater aquifer. In April, Wilson introduced the New Mexico Aquifer Assessment Act of 2007. This bill, which calls on Interior to study several aquifers in New Mexico, including the Salt Basin Aquifer under Otero Mesa, seeks to study aquifer recharge rates, the relationship between surface and subsurface water flow, and the vulnerability of aquifers to contamination.

Domenici and Bingaman have introduced a similar bill in the Senate. Their version of the bill has already passed out of committee, whereas Wilson's bill has yet to be heard in the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power. This situation gives Wilson a chance to make a real difference in preserving the valuable aquifer under Otero Mesa.

As our newest staff member, based out of Carlsbad, NM, Steve West is a veteran, former mayor and public school teacher. Beyond visiting the wildest grassland left in America, I was excited to connect with a dear friend: Steve West. Mr. West is a veteran, former mayor and public school teacher, and comes to the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance as our newest staff member, based out of Carlsbad, NM.

On our first night of camping near Alamo Mountain, we both witnessed a spectacle that few have experienced. A full-moon rose and shed its light against a storm moving westward. Amidst the darkness on the slopes of Otero Mesa stood a graybow, or rainbow that lacked the sunlight to illuminate its colorful proie. We stared at this tall, thick, gray rainbow for nearly thirty minutes; immersed in its symbolism, in its rarity. This single gray rainbow, perched high above Otero Mesa is a symbol of hope and perseverance. For nearly ten years, Otero Mesa has remained a wild landscape free from oil and gas development thanks in large part to the dedication of our members and volunteers across the state.

The story of the graybow began on April 19th, when the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance organized the Otero Mesa Public Forum in Alamogordo, NM. This public forum brought together a broad coalition of ranchers, hunters, conservationists and water experts.

Almost 200 people from Alamogordo, including teachers, parents, ranchers, sportsmen, seniors, and students attended this groundbreaking event. The message was clear: Otero Mesa’s fresh water aquifer, abundant wildlife and expansive grasslands are much more valuable than a few days worth of oil and gas.

Communities such as Alamogordo, Ruidoso, Truth or Consequences, and Las Cruces have recognized that 90 percent of the state depends on groundwater for drinking water, and that wild public lands are a boon for bringing in billions of dollars to the state economy. The Outdoor Industry Association recently issued a report that found that $3.8 billion is contributed annually to the local economy specifically from active outdoor recreation. Furthermore, active outdoor recreation supports 47,000 jobs statewide, produces $184 million in annual sales tax revenue, and generates $2.75 billion in retail sales and services.

Following the success of the Alamogordo Public Forum, New Mexico's two federal senators, Pete Domenici (R-NM), and Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), along with Democratic Rep. Tom Udall of Santa Fe, wrote letters to the Department of Interior (Interior) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) requesting that the agencies halt all oil and gas leasing and drilling in Otero Mesa.

This bipartisan call for a drilling moratorium in America's wildest grassland would allow for a thorough study of the area's Salt Basin Aquifer to be completed. Preliminary reports by the U.S. Geological Survey, Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque and the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission have found that Otero Mesa's salt basin aquifer potentially holds a 156-year water supply. These studies also documented that recharge for the Salt Basin Aquifer comes in large part from surface water runoff in Otero Mesa and that recharge areas are generally vulnerable to contamination. Additionally, the basin contains areas of rapid groundwater movement, which can make the entire system vulnerable to the rapid spread of pollution.

However, less than a month after the congressional delegation made their bipartisan call for common sense to further study this precious water resource, the Department of Interior and BLM rejected their request.

The moratorium rejection by Interior and BLM signifies the agencies' failure to guarantee the safety of Otero Mesa's water resources and thus the quality of life for New Mexicans. Act of 2007 recognizes the need to study our groundwater, it does absolutely nothing to ensure that the BLM will halt oil and gas leasing and drilling in Otero Mesa while the study of the Salt Basin Aquifer moves forward. It would be utterly foolish to begin studying the basin while allowing drilling at the same time, for industry could be contaminating the water just as we're starting to understand it.

We have a moral obligation to ourselves and future generations not to risk destroying Otero Mesa's water, land and wildlife for a few days' worth of oil and gas. A drilling moratorium amendment to the New Mexico Aquifer Assessment Act of 2007 is the best next step to ensure the preservation of a wild landscape and its large, freshwater aquifer.

http://nmwild.org/action
The monsoon season is sweeping through southern New Mexico. Combined with last summer’s late rains and wet winter, the new moisture means the wild places in Doña Ana County, like Broad Canyon, are awash in green. Seeing far greater changes ahead, Doña Ana County citizens recently reached historic agreement, and are now working together to bring protected wilderness to a county with none.

Local citizens recognize the impending, region-shifting development. Drive north of Las Cruces and you find a world where space travel for tourists at Spaceport America is being planned alongside family ranching operations. Drive south and you advance toward the Verde Realty Group’s planned development, close to Pete Domenici Highway. As reported by writer Laura Paskus of High Country News, the Verde Group intends the development to eventually house 100,000 new residents. Based upon the border maquiladora industry, the community will rise from desert dunes near the West Potrillo Mountains Wilderness Study Area, which at nearly 150,000 acres is New Mexico’s largest. Near the Organ Mountains, the controversial Vistas at Presidio Planned Development, which has raised public questions about State Land Commissioner Patrick Lyon’s conduct, could double the size of Las Cruces adding nearly 90,000 new residents.

Alongside such large development projects, the Citizen’s Proposed Wilderness and National Conservation Area stands alone in seeking to protect the area’s rich natural heritage. Passage of the proposal would mean permanent protection for the county’s natural crown jewels, from the Organ Mountains, east to Broad Canyon and the Robledos/Sierra de Las Uvas, and then south to the Potrillo Mountains complex.

Four community leaders from Las Cruces and Doña Ana County recently visited Washington, D.C., carrying with them impressive credentials and the backing of a broad, diverse community coalition. They climbed Capitol Hill to deliver a simple message to our Congressional delegation: introduce wilderness legislation and protect our natural heritage, NOW! The four were: Jim Bates, lifelong outdoorsman, hunter, and current New Mexico State President of the National Wild Turkey Federation; Dr. Paul Deason, High Tech Consortium of Southern New Mexico board member, longtime military analyst, and Boy Scout Leader; Raul Garcia, President of the Hispano Chamber of Commerce de Las Cruces; and District 1 County Commissioner Oscar Vásquez Butler. New Mexico Wilderness Alliance’s Grassroots Organizer, Nathan Small, also went.

Bates, a New Mexico State University graduate in Wildlife Science and owner of Castle Construction Company says, “Protecting wilderness is truly in the best interests of the places and people of Southern New Mexico”. After exploring these areas for years with family and friends, he feels strongly that protecting the Broad Canyon complex is critical. “Most people do not realize just how spectacular and wild the Broad Canyon area is. Looking at it from the highways that pass by, it is relatively nondescript. It is not until you actually get back into that country that you realize just how impressive and unique it is. The wilderness proposal allows for some of the key roads in the area to be left open so people can actually drive to locations that offer fantastic views of the area and access to excellent recreational opportunities such as hiking, camping, photography, wildlife viewing, and hunting. Yet the large, still roadless portions of the complex will remain intact and be protected.”

Bates is familiar with the debate and compromise process that has taken place over the last year regarding the wilderness proposals for these areas. He concludes, “Every effort has been made to address the concerns of the various entities involved in the process, and I think the compromises that have been made in an effort to protect these areas, and yet protect the rights and privileges of the various user groups, have been good ones. It is a good proposal, and the citizens of this area should support it.”

Mike and Kathy Groves recently visited the Broad Canyon proposed wilderness for the first time. They too were impressed, writing, “The views from the ridgeline walk were spectacular. We saw mountain ranges in three directions, all from one viewpoint. This area is still an unspoiled treasure that should be preserved for the enjoyment of future generations.” A renowned photographer, Groves’ panoramic photo is on New Mexico Wild’s back page so you can see some of Broad Canyon’s beauty for yourself.

With over 180 businesses, 30 organizations, and people like Jim Bates, Raul Garcia, Paul Deason and Oscar Butler, the Citizen’s Proposal enjoys strong support. Recent meetings with the offices of Senators Pete Domenici and Jeff Bingaman in Washington, D.C. confirmed that both are committed to working together and with the community in crafting a strong conservation measure. Also, both Senators have distinguished records for protecting New Mexico’s natural treasures. Senator Bingaman just helped end a dubious Wilderness drought, introducing and shepherding through the 2005 Ojito Wilderness Act, New Mexico’s new wilderness in 18 years. Senator Domenici’s
Taos County National Conservation Area Proposal Gains Support of Local Officials
NMWA Aims to See Legislation This Fall
By Jim O’Donnell

On July 16, eighteen Taos County elected officials and Chamber of Commerce members joined NMWA staff and Lighthawk volunteers on a fly-over of the proposed Taos County National Conservation Area. State Senators, Representatives, County Commissioners and area Mayors flew from Taos Regional Airport up the Rio Grande Gorge and over the sprawling 303,000 acres proposed for protection. Most of those on the flight had crossed this land by foot, horse or car for most of their lives, but this was the first time they’d seen it from the air. The response was overwhelmingly supportive. In fact, several Taos County Commissioners expressed disappointment that the proposal was not bigger. And why is it not bigger? In the early 1990s, then-Representative Bill Richardson proposed a Conservation Area for Taos and Rio Arriba Counties that was double the size of the current proposal. That’s right, over 600,000 acres stretching from the Colorado border to Ojo Caliente. In the intervening years, tens of thousands of acres of public land were sold off since the first NCA proposal was made in 1991. So the answer to the question of ‘why not bigger?’ is that it can’t be. There isn’t enough Federal land left.

The lesson is that this legislation needs to move now. No more missed opportunities and no more loss of our incredible wildlands. To that end, NMWA staff are working with local and statewide organizations and with area volunteers to move this proposal forward. On top of the flight mentioned above, working with the New Mexico Wildlife Federation and other sportsmen’s organizations, we took fifteen Taos area sportsmen on a flight over the area. We will host another flight in mid-September for community members who were not able to attend the July 16th flight. An aggressive business canvass is under way with the help of the Latino Sustainability Institute. We aim to gain the support of more than 100 local businesses for the NCA proposal by the end of August. We have also begun working with local elected officials to pass resolutions supporting the initiative, all the while assuring active local input on the crafting of the legislation. Our goal is to support Senator Bingaman’s proposal while demonstrating to Senator Domenici that there is wide-spread and powerful passion for this initiative across the county.

Two New Mexico wilderness delegations have likewise visited DC on behalf of this proposal and, in late June, Governor Richardson sent a letter to Senator Bingaman expressing his support for the NCA proposal. The Governor urged swift introduction and passage of the NCA legislation. The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance wants to see legislation creating a National Conservation Area in Taos County introduced early this fall. Your continued communication with Senators Bingaman and Domenici on this issue will help meet that goal. Let’s not miss another huge opportunity.

http://nmwild.org/action

WANT TO HELP?
Taos County NCA Needs Your Help

Few voters ever visit with members of Congress or Congressional Staff. Those that do, make a large impression and an even larger impact on the legislation that is both being considered and already introduced. We are looking for NMWA members who would be willing to take 15-30 minutes to meet with Congressional staff in Santa Fe to express support for the proposed Taos County National Conservation Area. If you would like to help, please contact Jim O’Donnell, Northern Director, NMWA at 505-751-7309.

Valle Vidal Champion Joins NMWA Fight for Northern NM Land

Jim O’Donnell was one of New Mexico Wilderness Alliance’s original employees back in the late 1990s. A native of southern Colorado and a twenty-year New Mexico resident, Jim most recently headed up the Coalition for the Valle Vidal’s successful efforts to prevent coalbed methane development. Jim is a former archaeologist and holds a masters degree in Community and Regional Planning from the University of New Mexico. He has long been active in our state’s conservation community. Based in Taos, he leads the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance’s efforts to achieve Wilderness protection for some of the most dramatic landscapes in the state.
Calling Sabinoso one of New Mexico’s “most precious gems”, Representative Tom Udall requested a hearing for the Sabinoso Wilderness Act of 2007 (HR2632). The Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands, chaired by Wilderness champion Raul Grijalva of Arizona, has yet to respond but is expected to hear HR2632 sometime this summer. The bill will next be heard by the full Committee on Natural Resources before moving to the floor of the House for a full vote. Udall’s staff has expressed thanks and enthusiasm for the “hundreds” of letters they have received from New Mexico Wilderness Alliance members in support of HR2632. If you haven’t written your letter of thanks to Rep. Udall, please do so as soon as possible.

On the ground, New Mexico Wilderness Alliance board member Arturo Sandoval and local volunteers continue to work on access to the area. Sabinoso has long been “land locked” by the private lands that surround it. NMWA has been negotiating with rancher Jesse Esquivel, and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish seeks to make Sabinoso accessible to the public through the department’s Open Gate program. Funds have been set aside to get an appraisal of the access route in August 2007. The purchase will take place later this year.

We will keep you posted on the latest developments regarding this bill and how you can help.

“New Mexico is filled with extraordinary landscapes, complex and diverse ecosystems, and some of the most breathtaking natural environments in the country. One of New Mexico’s most precious gems is the Sabinoso Wilderness Area which is located forty miles east of Las Vegas, New Mexico and twenty-five miles northwest of Conchas Dam State park. The Sabinoso Wilderness Study Area encompasses approximately 20,000 acres of sweeping native lands and overlays a thick section of colorful sedimentary rocks typical of desert rock formations throughout the West. The area’s scenic and densely vegetated landscape is also home to a rich diversity of wildlife such as red-tailed hawks, western scrub jays, broad-tailed hummingbirds, mule deer, bobcats and grey foxes. All of these natural resources will provide outstanding natural opportunities to hunt, hike, horseback ride, take photographs and simply experience the unspoiled lands of our ancestors.”


Udall Introduces The Sabinoso Wilderness Act

On June 7, 2007, U.S. Representative Tom Udall, D-N.M. introduced legislation in the House to designate as wilderness the Sabinoso BLM land unit. Under Udall’s proposal, approximately 20,000 acres of land situated in San Miguel County, 40 miles east of Las Vegas and 25 miles northwest of Conchas Dam State park, would assume official wilderness status. The proposed wilderness area will permanently protect lands in and around what is now known as the Sabinoso Wilderness Study Area.

“Last spring, I took the opportunity to explore the Sabinoso area on horseback,” Udall said. “Traveling through the area, which has exceptional scenery and deep canyons abundant with wildlife, it became evident that the unique area deserves to be protected so that it can be explored and enjoyed by everyone for many generations.”

Udall’s bill is supported by the New Mexico State Legislature. Last session, led by State Representative Thomas Garcia, the legislature unanimously passed Memorial 53 which calls on the N.M. Congressional delegation to support the establishment of the Sabinoso Wilderness Area.

“New Mexico is filled with extraordinary landscapes, and as your representative, it is my honor and duty to help preserve these beautiful and historical areas for future generations,” Udall concluded.
New Mexico has a rich conservation heritage starting with Aldo Leopold who was responsible for the creation of the nation’s first designated wilderness - the Gila in 1924. This tradition continued through the work of Senator Clinton P. Anderson, one of the Senators most responsible for passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964. Five wilderness areas were established in New Mexico by the 1964 Act. There are now 24 wilderness areas in the state, each of which has its own story of how it was established. None would have been created, however, without the tireless efforts of local conservationists.

The work of these local conservationists has been focused through several statewide organizations starting with the old New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee in the 1970’s. Other organizations included the New Mexico BLM Wilderness Coalition and the New Mexico Wilderness Coalition which continued the work started by the Study Committee a decade earlier. Volunteers from the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club were also important players in New Mexico’s conservation history - especially in the 1980’s and early 1990’s. It became apparent in the late 1990’s, however, that the New Mexico conservation movement needed a boost and a new direction. Pointing to this was the fact that there had been no new wilderness legislation in the state since the creation of the West Malpais and Cebolla Wilderness areas in 1987. Responding to the challenge, a group of New Mexico conservationists came together in 1997 to start a new organization that would consolidate gains made earlier but, more importantly, would move aggressively to ensure that all wild places in the state would be protected. That organization, of course, was the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance (NMWA).

The group that started NMWA and became its first board of directors included individuals who were already “giants” in New Mexico conservation, as well as others who would become the future of conservation in the state. Among the giants who had been working for decades were Bob Howard, Dave Foreman, Bob Langsenkamp, Bob Tafanelli, Tom Wootten and Wesley Leonard. Others on the original board were Rick Astar, professor at New Mexico Tech; Jim Baca, former National BLM Director, State Land Commissioner and Mayor of Albuquerque; Pam Eaton, Deputy Vice President of the Wilderness Society; Kathy Love, Albuquerque Attorney; Greg Magee, Las Cruces Landscape Architect; Nancy Morton, Nursing Professor at UNM, Jeff Regenold, Los Alamos Police Officer, Joe Rodriguez, El Paso CPA; and Jack Humphrey, Conservation Activist.

Bob Howard, M.D., PhD, a retired medical doctor and consultant was the first Chair of the NMWA Board. Bob had been active in the Study Committee in the 1970’s and had served as Chair of the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club. He was also active at the national level, having been Treasurer and Vice Chair of the Sierra Club. Bob and his wife, Phillenore, essentially were NMWA in the early days. They raised money, put out the newsletter, held meetings, and fought the conservation battle. All of this was done from their home near Santa Fe. Without the efforts of Bob and Phillenore, it is doubtful that NMWA could have become what it is today. After Bob Howard, Martin Heinrich, Randy Gray and Dave Parsons each served time as the NMWA Board Chair.

Another couple who was instrumental in getting NMWA established was Nancy Morton and Dave Foreman. Nancy was NMWA’s first Secretary and was responsible for recording the history of the organization’s early days. Dave, one of the most original conservation thinkers of our times, provided many, if not most, of the philosophical underpinnings that guide the work of NMWA. Dave’s insistence that NMWA base its actions on science has been critical to virtually all of its activities.

It could be said that the late Bob Langsenkamp was the soul of NMWA. Bob also had been involved in the old Study Committee and had been the New Mexico representative for the Wilderness Society in the late 1970’s. Later, he served for 14 years in the State Land Office, where he rose to the position of Deputy Commissioner. Bob’s guidance, wisdom and wit have been greatly missed since his untimely death in 2002. Bob’s straight thinking and good humor has left a lasting imprint on NMWA that will not fade.

Bob Tafanelli, PhD and Tom Wootten, long time activists representing the southern part of the state, have helped to keep us involved in the more arid, but never the less, critical wild places in New Mexico. One result is that NMWA’s biggest conservation efforts to date have been in the Chihuahuan desert near Las Cruces and the grasslands of Otero Mesa. Bob, a wildlife biologist, and Tom, a native plant expert, have helped us, like Dave Foreman, keep our efforts grounded in science.

Finally, Wesley Leonard, current NMWA Chair, is another founding board member who has been active for more than three decades in New Mexico conservation. Wesley was involved in the Study Committee and served several terms as Chair of the El Paso Regional Group of the Sierra Club. In 2006, he was honored by the Wilderness Society with its Environmental Hero Award and by the Campaign for America’s Wilderness with its Wilderness Hero Award. Wesley, a retired Research Center Director at University of Texas, El Paso, has worked to ensure that NMWA never strays from its primary mission to protect the wild places of New Mexico.

Since its inception in 1997, thirty-five individuals have served on the NMWA Board, and each has made a contribution to the success of the organization. Of the current 12 members of the board, 4 were founding members and 3 have served continuously since 1997.

The current board includes Wesley Leonard (Chair), Bob Howard, Bob Tafanelli, and Pam Eaton. Others are Randy Gray (Vice-Chair), retired chief biologist for the USDA Natural Resource Service; Dave Parsons (Treasurer), former head of the Mexican Gray Wolf Re-introduction program for the FWS; Rick Weidenmann, Biology professor, NMSU Carlsbad; Tom Mouck, Ph.D., Accounting professor UNM; Glen Banks Educational Sales, Macintosh Computers; Arturo Sandoval, consultant and organizer of the original Earth Day; Todd Schulke, founder and Vice President of the Center for Biological Diversity; and Christianne Hinks, Director of the Confluence Project.

The board serves without pay and has the primary responsibility of setting the goals and policies that guide NMWA. Final authority for all of NMWA’s activities resides with the board under New Mexico non-profit corporate law. While the dedicated and talented staff works tirelessly on a daily basis to move NMWA’s campaigns forward, the board is NMWA’s link to New Mexico’s rich volunteer conservation heritage that began many decades ago.
New Mexico WILD!

By Edward Sullivan

Two geeky guys in their 20’s, one computer, two desks (one on loan), a file cabinet, and an oil heater that Scial used to stay warm in the basement of our subleased office around the corner from Padilla’s in Albuquerque… Those were the total assets of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance when I started in March of 1999. When I look back now on all the organization has accomplished since its humble beginnings, I can only admire and appreciate the tireless dedication of those staff that have stayed involved for the long haul.

In those days, a mailing to our membership list of 300 individuals mostly inherited from the defunct New Mexico Wilderness Coalition would fit in my two hands. And with less than $10,000 in the bank, survival and growth was task number one. Board Chair Bob Howard told me on my first day about our “priority” list of 53 tasks, but at the top of that list was “Raise enough money to pay Edward and Scial.”

Scial was the other out of towner the board had hired in 1999. He was a Wildernut of the highest caliber and actually broke out in hives if he went more than five nights without sleeping out under the stars. Along with a recent college grad, Matt Clark, Scial engineered the massive effort to catalogue every road, two-track, and burro path in the state of New Mexico. I admired their ability to spend hours pouring over maps and aerial photographs, and took my lessons well when Scial had to correct my fieldwork.

We made a strategic decision early on to focus on promotion and growth. We staged press conferences, involved local leaders, raised money, and tried as best we could to make Wilderness a household idea in New Mexico. At the same time, organizations like the Wilderness Support Center and the Pew Wilderness Center did the real heavy lifting for us. As the unsung heroes of those early years, Brian O’Donnell, Melyssa Watson, and Michael Carroll made everything seem easy. It was like having a personal team of consultants at the ready 24 hours a day. Their contribution to NMWA in those early years was invaluable, and my gratitude to them remains immeasurable.

And as the “new thing” in the conservation community in New Mexico, we enjoyed great success in the press. Our membership grew, as did our ability to affect policy. I spent more and more time on the road raising money and lobbying, and we quickly realized we needed more help. I met Tisha with her then still boyfriend James on a hike near Cabezon. A thunderstorm struck as we were about to set off, and we all clamored into the back of their pick-up and began to talk. Within a few months, she was hired as our newsletter and membership coordinator, and our membership numbers took off. In fact, if you joined NMWA since 2000, it was probably Tisha’s doing.

One of the last people to join the roster before I left was none other than Mr. Stephen Capra. Steve has a potent combination of passion for Wilderness and the gift of gab that made him the perfect person to run our press operation. On his first trip to Otero Mesa, Steve saw a mountain lion. He recounted the story with a fanatical energy; I could tell he was a changed man. He has since made protecting Otero Mesa his personal priority and I’d say he’s done more than anyone thought was possible. As Executive Director, Steve has turned the political capital we slowly built over those early years into real victories for Wilderness not only in Otero Mesa, but across New Mexico.

For all of us in those days the line between our work life and private life was blurred – everything we did seven days a week was in some way related to NMWA. Our vacations were river trips with Board members. Our friends were other staff and volunteers. And our nights were spent plotting over microbrews at the old Kelly’s. Life was good, and I look back on those times fondly.

While I am proud of what we accomplished building the organization in the early days, I am even more admirable of those staff members that have stuck with NMWA over the years and the victories they have won in the name of Wilderness since then. Here’s to the 10th Anniversary of NMWA and to many more victories for Wilderness in New Mexico in the next 10!

Edward Sullivan was director of the NMWA from 1999 to 2002. Since then he has worked as a travel writer and a political consultant for progressive and pro-democracy candidates in Europe, Latin America, and Africa. He can be reached at EdwardLSullivan@gmail.com.

Photos by Michael Berman
Ghosts of the Guadalupes

By Steve West

Guadalupe Mountains National park is an amazing place. To someone driving by it looks just like another series of hills and canyons, terminating in a pretty impressive series of cliffs at the south end. But, to a biologist (and to geologists, hikers, and cavers), the Guadalupe Mountains are a remarkable place with about 1,000 species of plants, 350 species of birds, thousands of species of moths, and more. There is even a species of tiger beetle whose worldwide range is the size of a few football fields. The largest native snail in North America is found only in the Guadalupes. In reality, the Guadalupes hold many unknowns. Sadly, there were no doubt many species that disappeared over the past century or two that were never catalogued, collected, or even enjoyed just for their own existence.

The high part of the Guadalupes holds relict forests that are more typical of northern New Mexico and states further north. Aspens occur and large stands of old conifers are found across the top. One of the more interesting sites is “The Bowl”, a forested depression on top of this ancient reef with good stands of grass and much of this relict forest. Several species of birds breed there and no place else in Texas. The Guadalupe Vole is also restricted to The Bowl. But there is an intriguing little mammal also found there that poses questions that relate to our understanding of the world around us and provokes a call to action.

In 1909, a biologist by the name of Nelson examined specimens from The Bowl and decided that the cottontail population there was distinct enough to be regarded as a separate species, Sylvilagus robustus. Previously, the population there had been considered part of the Eastern Cottontail (Sylvilagus floridanus) complex. This thinking continued until 1951 when the classic Hall and Kelson treatment of mammals of North America came out where they again moved it back into being a well-marked race of the Eastern Cottontail. Other authors have instead decided that the population at the top of the Guadalupes and the Davis Mountains should be considered as a separate species.

Confused? Well, obviously so are the specialists.

What we do know is that this population is very small. Work done in the early 1970’s showed two things: the population was confined to The Bowl; and it had less than 50 individuals. Whether a race of the Eastern Cottontail or a race of the species also found in the Davis Mountains, or one unique to The Bowl, no one knows.

What we do know is that this mammal population is one of the smallest in the nation, and if it is a species restricted to The Bowl, it would have to be the rarest endemic mammal in the United States.

Everyone likes cottontails (or should). They are cute, tied in with our own culture and play a vital role in the ecosystem on several layers. What needs to happen with this population in The Bowl? National park Service (NPS) management plans need to make sure that habitat exists for this species. Fires may be necessary at times to promote new growth but above all else, any NPS actions dealing with The Bowl need to take this (and numerous other species) into account. Surveys and searches need to continue for this species elsewhere in the high country of the Guadalupes and in adjacent highlands in southern New Mexico. The taxonomic question needs to be answered. Does Guadalupe Mountains National park indeed have the rarest mammal on the continent existing in a relict pine forest?

So many life forms have blinked out of the Guadalupe Mountains (wolves, Grizzly Bear, White-tailed Deer) and so many other forms are extremely rare and about to disappear (Black Bear, Zone-tailed Hawk, Montezuma Quail, etc.). Here is a chance to study one of those life forms that have existed on top of the mountain for thousands of years but may be gone within our lifetime. Habitat deterioration, global warming, disease in a small population and other things may doom it. I am of course interested in finding out if this is a specific species but more important than that, that this small population which saw the demise of the mammoths and the Grizzly Bears does not join those ghosts of the Guadalupes.

Carlsbad, NM—Steve West, the former Mayor of Loving, NM, a former Army officer, and former science teacher at Carlsbad High School has joined the staff of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance.

With offices and staff in Albuquerque, Las Cruces, Santa Fe, Taos, and now Carlsbad, the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is one of the largest and most effective conservation groups in the state.

“I am very excited to join the excellent and dedicated staff of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance after working 31 years in the public school system,” said Mr. West, who has been active in conservation work for nearly 45 years.

Mr. West has a Masters in Science from New Mexico Tech and comes to the organization as its Staff Scientist. Mr. West is also an accomplished author with more than 50 articles and reports published in science journals and other periodicals. Additionally, he has been studying grassland bird species in southern New Mexico for several decades, including extensive bird surveys on Otero Mesa. As part of his work on the Chihuahuan desert, Mr. West wrote and published a book entitled: “Northern Chihuahuan Desert Wildflowers: A Field Guide to Wildflowers and Other Plants of the Desert and its parklands.”

Veteran, Former Mayor, Teacher and Long-Time Activist Joins Wilderness Alliance Staff
In 1972, President Richard Nixon signed Executive Order 11644, which stated:

"An estimated 5 million off-road recreational vehicles—motorcycles, minibikes, trail bikes, snowmobiles, dune-buggies, all-terrain vehicles, and others—are in use in the United States today, and their popularity continues to increase rapidly. The widespread use of such vehicles on the public lands—often for legitimate purposes but also in frequent conflict with wise land and resource management practices, environmental values, and other types of recreational activity—has demonstrated the need for a unified Federal policy toward the use of such vehicles on the public lands."

In 1977, President Carter amended the Order to try to keep up with the growing conflict and degradation that these machines created. The Order laid out the conditions where ORV use was inappropriate and directed our land management agencies to develop and enforce rules to protect resources. Most agencies were slow to respond to the ORV problem or, worse yet, encouraged their use while ignoring the displacement of other public land users.

Today, there are over 40 MILLION ORVs ready to tear up our public lands. The scale of the problem is only beginning to be understood, while those that see nature only as a playground continue to be enticed by slick advertising campaigns. Some ORV problems are obvious: the visual blight on a scarred hillside, the endless noise that ruins the experience of quiet recreationists, or the litter that proliferates wherever ORVs are common. Some are less obvious: the invasive weeds spreading along ORV trails or the increased erosion of sediments into streams. Studies are showing that ORVs can affect wildlife in many ways, including disruption of breeding patterns.

At its core, ORV abuse is yet another example of corporations not taking responsibility for the products they create. They are quick to point to programs like TREAD Lightly (www.treadlightly.org) and other education programs aimed at reducing ORV impacts. These programs pale in comparison to the scale of the problem they are attempting to address. These are corporations that can afford multiple advertisements during major sporting events yet they rely on already cash-strapped public agencies to deal with the problem they have created.

The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is expanding its efforts to deal with the ORV menace. As always, we are working on getting areas designated as Wilderness under the Wilderness Act. This clearly makes an area off-limits to ORVs. As the Forest Service and BLM update their Resource Management Plans, we are pushing them to include analyses of where ORV use is inappropriate and to clearly lay out maps that show this. We are heavily involved with the Forest Service Travel Management rule which directs each National Forest to designate where motorized travel can occur.

And we are reaching out to our members and other citizens concerned about wildlife and wild places with a clear message: that the best way to reign in ORV abuses and excesses is to get involved. By writing letters and showing up to meetings, you really can make a difference.

We discuss the problem of ORVs in almost every newsletter, but we thought it was time to give it more focus. In this special ORV section is a story from Kevin Stillman, a private land-owner in the Jemez Mountains, about dealing with the noise and damage of ORVs. Greg McReynolds of Trout Unlimited talks about the negative effects of ORVs on wildlife habitat and the experience of hunters and fishers. An article by Craig Chapman of NMWA emphasizes why it is important to get involved in the Forest Service Travel Management Rule. Our hope is to educate the public about the true scale of the ORV problem. We also want to unite those that are dealing with ORVs directly due to where they live, work, or play, as well as those that care about wildlife and wild places who want to do what they can to help.

If you have questions or would like to get involved, please call our office at 505-843-8469 and talk to Craig Chapman or Michael Scialdone. You can email them at craig@nmwild.org or scial@nmwild.org. May your next outing to the wilds of New Mexico be quiet and safe!
The Forest Service Travel Management Rule

Preserve your right to the quiet use of your National Forest

What is it?
Why is it important to me?
How do I get involved?

Off-road vehicle (ORV) use has exploded over the last 30 or so years. ORVs include motorcycles, ATVs (also called “quads” or “four-wheelers”), jeeps and other vehicles. In 1972 there were approximately 3 million ORVs. Now there are over 40 million. This increased popularity coincides with technological advances that enable ORVs to penetrate areas that, a generation ago, were beyond reach. Pristine and wild areas are suddenly at risk. User conflicts are commonplace. Wildlife is being adversely affected. Water quality is being degraded and hills and meadows have ruts and scars.

In response to the growing ORV problem, the Forest Service established the Travel Management Rule (TMR). The Rule directs each National Forest to take a careful look at all the routes on their lands and determine which routes will remain open to motorized travel. For quiet recreationists and wildlife enthusiasts, this is a huge opportunity to reign in ORV abuse while leaving open a sensible transportation network.

Why is this important to you? Because now is your chance to have a say on which routes and trails will have motorized access and which trails will be reserved for hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, and other forms of quiet recreation. As part of their analysis of routes and trails, the Forest Service is asking for your input. It is vitally important for you to submit comments and attend meetings. The following are two examples of where public input has already made a difference.

The Sandia Ranger District (Cibola National Forest) has been the first to move forward with the TMR process. Much of the Sandia Mountains are Wilderness, thank goodness, but two areas of significance are going to be affected – La Madera and Cedro Peak.

La Madera is a little gem hidden on the northeast side of the Sandia Mountains. It is a seldom-visited, beautiful, secluded retreat. It is a viable wildlife corridor to the Ortiz and San Pedro Mountains, one of only a few corridors left in a developing region. Additionally, NMWA is concerned about the fate of two canyons in La Madera: Canyon Tejon, which has a natural running spring, and Gonzales Canyon, which is dry but ripe for restoration. Why were we concerned? The canyons were being proposed for motorized usage. Appropriately, motorized folks as places for rock crawling. (Rock crawling is where the 4-wheelers put on huge tires and make their way over obstacles.) The good news is we stopped them cold. By organizing a diverse group opposed to this type of use, La Madera is no longer proposed for motorized usage.

Cedro Peak is a heavily-used area just east of Albuquerque and south of I-40. Conflicts are already occurring between homeowners, hikers, mountain bikers, horsemen and those using ATVs, motorcycles, and full-sized 4-wheel drive vehicles. The Forest Service proposal is to allow motorcycles access to all trails and to detail usage of the other trails. They are also proposing to expand and develop a major trailhead in the Tablazon Subdivision to allow motorized users to park and unload their trailers. The local residents had many issues with this plan, with safety and fire danger being the most important. The good news is that the residents mobilized. At previous Travel Management Plan meetings, the motorized folks outnumbered quiet recreationists 5 to 1. Then the Sandia Ranger District held two meetings in early July. The first was in Albuquerque where motorized users were outnumbered 4 to 1. They were in shock. They went home and mobilized. The next meeting was held in Tijeras. The motorized folks showed up in force – they had doubled their numbers. However, they were now outnumbered 10 to 1. Newspaper articles were published in local media. We do not know for sure, but due to the large number of comments and heavy meeting attendance, there is a good chance the Tablazon trailhead will be taken out of the plan.

The point is, your voice does matter. These stories are good examples of how you can protect access to your favorite trails without conflict from motorized users. This also protects the area from further resource damage. The Forest Service is moving in the right direction with the TMR and with strong public involvement they will make better decisions.

The five national forests within New Mexico are at different stages in the TMR process. Go to the National Forest websites; pick those forests that are of interest to you. Send them a simple e-mail or letter saying you want to be kept informed about the Travel Management Plan. You will be put on a list to alert you as to their progress, updates of maps, and meetings. Then attend the meetings and send in your comments. You can also get involved by organizing around a favorite location or region. You can help at the NMWA office by making calls, analyzing Forest Service maps, or getting the word out to local media.

For more info call Craig Chapman or Michael Scialdone at 505-843-8696 or e-mail at craig@nmwild.org or scial@nmwild.org.
A Jemez Mountains Land Owner’s Perspective

The U.S. Forest Service has issued an order mandating all districts nationwide to formulate plans designating which areas within the National Forest System can be used by ATVs and other motorized vehicles. However, there are already areas in the Santa Fe National Forest that have been designated as “non-motorized”. Motorcycle riders and four-wheelers have ignored these designations and the Forest Service has not enforced the rules, making the situation worse.

In the Jemez Ranger District, a local motorcycle club and other off-road ATV users have created a huge system of illegal trails through the forest with no regard to forest regulations or private property. Every weekend, when there is no snow on the ground, hordes of motorcycles and off-road vehicles invade this once peaceful and serene area and fill the woods with the sound of screaming motors. Their trails go through grassy meadows and wooded hills and up steep grades. The high traction tires on their machines dig into the forest’s soft soils and loosen them. Summer monsoons wash this loose soil away and soon the trails are deeply rutted scars across once beautiful areas.

Ask the motorcycle riders about the damage to the trails and they blame the mountain bike riders, if they even acknowledge the fact that there is any damage. Ask them about the trails and they freely claim that they have put them in, even though it is illegal. They show no respect for other people or the woods themselves. As a resident, since 1986, of a small community in the Jemez District of the Santa Fe National Forest, and an avid hiker and occasional mountain bike rider who sees the abuse on a daily basis, I can honestly say that I see at least 50 motorcycles to every mountain bike.

Light-weight human-powered bicycles can in no way match the destructive power of a heavy, powerful dirt bike with knobby tires. No matter how hard I pedal I can not spin my back tire and dig a two inch deep rut in a trail.

Motorcyclists also talk about the maintenance they do on the trails. Fifteen years ago, while riding my mountain bike, I came across three motorcycle riders clearing rocks off a trail and cleaning out water bars. There is another trail where they installed cinder blocks on the switchbacks to keep from tearing them up. This is the only evidence I have seen of motorcycle riders doing preventative maintenance for an inherently destructive sport. Mostly their idea of maintenance is cutting out trees that fall across the trails. Controlling the water that washes out trails and soils, or rerouting trails so they are not too steep just doesn’t seem important to them. Instead of fixing a washed-out portion of a trail, they create a trail right next to it. After a few years you have several washed out ruts side by side. I assist the Forest Service with trail maintenance as a volunteer. I figure that since I use the trails I should help maintain them. The Forest Service has invited a local motorcycle club to help work on trails. So far they have shown no interest in helping fix the damage they cause.

Dirt bikes and ATVs are a plague on the land. They can be heard for miles and the damage they cause is widespread. From doing donuts in the middle of the road to driving through creeks with small populations of endangered Rio Grande cutthroats, to rutting out meadows, their mark is ever-present and increasing. They are a minority user group in our National Forests, but the amount of damage that they do is way out of proportion to other user groups. There can be 50 people hiking, biking, fishing, horseback riding, or doing any number of outdoor activities in a small portion of forest and no one knows they are there. Throw in one dirt bike and everyone hears it for miles.

There is also the issue of drinking and driving on ATVs. I have no way to prove it other than the large amount of empty beer cans I find scattered around the trails and old logging roads, but it seems there is a lot of alcohol being consumed by the four-wheelers. During hunting season, ATV traffic increases dramatically and so do the beer cans. So not only do you have environmental damage, but the woods are full of drunken people driving around with loaded guns.

From environmental degradation, to compromising the safety and quality of experience for other forest users, to disruptions of wildlife, off-road vehicles are a huge problem which we must address. The Forest Service and other law enforcement entities, even though they are under-manned and under-funded, need to increase efforts to address these impacts. By ignoring it they have made the problem worse. The people that are destroying everyone’s forest think it is an accepted practice to put in trails wherever they choose with no regard for the consequences.

Kevin Stillman is a property owner in the Jemez Mountains.
SPORTSMAN’S PERSPECTIVE
How ORV’s Destroy Prime Game & Fish Habitat

By Greg McReynolds, Trout Unlimited

Standing on a hill near La Puebla, the only vegetation you can see is in small triangles surrounded by a spider web of ATV trails. A few hundred yards north, you can see the BLM barrier and a non-motorized sign that has been torn from the ground, while a pile of trash accumulates around them. A little further along, the Santa Cruz River runs brown with the silt kicked up by illegal off-road use.

Motorized recreation is the fastest growing use of the National Forest System, and that spells bad news for sportsmen who use public lands. All-terrain vehicles are more prevalent in the National Forests and BLM lands than ever before and they are taking noise, exhaust and rutted trails into the last few quiet and undisturbed places in New Mexico.

There are currently almost 40 million all-terrain vehicles in the U.S. and the industry is selling more than 1 million new machines annually.

Only a small percentage of these machines are going to privately-owned land. Most are on public land and many of them are headed right here to New Mexico. The good news is, the ongoing travel management process in New Mexico’s five national forests will designate a system of trails and eliminate cross-country travel. Unfortunately, the voices of hunter and anglers have been mostly absent in the debate.

In their stead, off-road groups like the Blue Ribbon Coalition are fighting to open more trails, talking about access and citing concerns about hunting and angling. Unfortunately, what they want is unlimited access that further fragments habitat with a criss-crossed network of user-created trails.

At a travel management meeting for the Cibola National Forest a few months ago, a representative for a local off-road group said he didn’t think there was a need for a wildlife corridor to allow mule deer to move from a wilderness area to lower elevations. “I don’t see why Bambi needs a corridor when they already have the wilderness area up there,” he said.

The idea that a small, high-elevation wilderness area might not sustain a mule deer herd through the winter had never crossed his mind.

For hunters, the biggest concern should be the growing recreational riding community that cares little about the hunting community. Hunters are not motorized reconstructionists. Some hunters use motorized vehicles while hunting, but at the end of the day most of them care about the long-term sustainability of the ecosystem.

True conservation groups have always risen above their own interests. When game populations were suffering in the 1930’s, it was hunters who pushed for game laws and eventually passed the Pittman Robertson act. Fishermen cultivated catch and release and groups like Trout Unlimited have worked to restore habitat and protect native species. Waterfowl hunters formed Ducks Unlimited and have saved millions of acres of wetlands.

If off-road groups like Blue Ribbon Coalition are so concerned about the rights of hunters and anglers, where are their efforts at protection of habitat? Mostly, they protect the right of a few unruly users to pillage and destroy our public lands.

If you don’t want your favorite places to hunt and fish to become an ATV playground, then it is time to get involved. It is time to stop letting the motorized recreation community lead us by the nose and to start putting conservation first. Unchecked illegal and reckless off-road riding result in fragmented habitat and a damaged landscape. That means less hunting opportunities in New Mexico.

This is not a debate about access. It is instead a debate about rational and reasonable use. If motorized recreation continues to run unchecked in our National Forests, hunters and anglers will suffer the consequences.

Greg McReynolds is the Public Lands Coordinator for Trout Unlimited and lives in Albuquerque. He can be reached at gmcreynolds@tu.org or (505) 803-4694.
by Michael Scialdone

In May of 1999, the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance held its first volunteer outing. The purpose of the outing was to document roads and human impacts on BLM lands. This information is used to determine potential Wilderness boundaries and let us know what issues we might face in going for designation. It wasn't exactly the rip-roaring start we were hoping for. The staff outnumbered the participants.

From these humble beginnings we went on to complete a Wilderness Inventory on nearly 4 million acres of BLM lands in New Mexico. Well over 10,000 volunteer hours went in to the process, mostly through participation on weekend outings. We regularly use the information gathered to support our comments to agencies and our wilderness proposals before Congress. The inventory wrapped up in 2003, but the opportunity for volunteers to join us in the field did not. We started hosting Service Projects, where volunteers help restore streams and riparian areas or close illegal roads to off-road vehicles (ORV).

The Service Projects have put us on the ‘front lines’, so to speak, in dealing with the ORV problem. Since it is clear that the industry that sells these machines isn't going to deal with the problem they have created, it is incumbent upon volunteers to do so. That doesn't make it easy. To demonstrate this, we'd like to have snapshots of the sneers and glares that we have gotten from ORV users while out closing off their illegal routes.

During one of our projects at Midnight Meadows (in the high country above Red River), we were blocking off a closed road and fencing off a meadow to prevent ATVs from using it as a playground. While we were working, a couple of ATVers came driving up and didn't hide their displeasure in our work. There was a certain sense of satisfaction among us as they childishlygunned their engines before they drove off. Later in the evening, as we sat around the campfire, the noise of ATVs wouldn't go away. A volunteer looked over the hill to find the same ATVers playing in the meadow (the fence hadn't been completed). Upon seeing him, they left.

A Forest Ranger that was camping with us quickly jumped in his truck and followed their dust trail. He found their camp and besides writing them a ticket, gave them a stern lecture on the importance of staying on legal routes.

As with any trip to the back-country, unintended vehicle adventures have been part of our outings. Two young women learned the importance of maintaining safe speeds on rural county roads when an unexpected cow forced them to swerve off the road. With all the cactus, they were lucky to only have two flat tires. It was a long walk back to camp.

Last summer we headed out to the Datil Mountains for a fence removal project. A participant had traded her Subaru with a friend for a Buick Roadmaster. The campsite was 11 miles in, on a fairly rough road. Not wanting to wait for a shuttle, she decided to head in with the caravan. All went well as we drove in to the darkness for several miles until we hit that one spot (there's always that one darn spot). The heavy rains had rutted a hill climb and the ruts had been deepened by large trucks. Halfway up the hill, the Roadmaster was firmly embedded in the ruts. A crew of 6 worked diligently to jack up the car and throw debris under it, then watched as attempts were made to back down. After 2 tries, the car had moved 3 feet. The jack no longer worked. This extremely heavy vehicle, now being lovingly referred to as the RoadCrusher, had bent it beyond use. Another jack was found, more debris placed in the ruts, and with high hopes, the RoadCrusher was gunned once more. Hoots and hollers were let out as the car bounced in and out of the ruts. This time it had the momentum needed to get down the hill.

Fortunately, these types of adventures are few and far between. The real adventure of outings is in getting out to beautiful places and doing worthwhile work to heal the land. The reward is being part of a community of people that care about wild places and are willing to work to make them better. As a way to do important on-the-ground work while providing an avenue for our members and supporters to get involved, running these outings has been central to the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance’s Wilderness protection mission. We hope to see you on one soon.

To learn more about our Service Projects or to sign up for monthly updates, please send an email to Michael Scialdone, scial@nmwild.org.
Hildegard has been an activist since the Vietnam War in her high-school days and was a member of Students for a Democratic Society. She has been involved as a Human Rights activist for over 20 years. After college she worked for 26 years as a teacher in the Albuquerque Public School system and obtained a Gifted Teacher Certification. She had a great time working with gifted students and challenging them to learn from real life situations. It was in this classroom setting where Hildegard also learned a few things, as she challenged her students to choose issues they cared about.

With her experience as a Human Rights Activist, Hildegard empowered her students as citizen activists for real life issues. First, they tackled Saving the Whales and raised $1000 for the “Free Willy” campaign through bake sales and general lunch time fundraising. One class created the first recycling program for Taylor Middle School, after soliciting the Los Ranchos Town Council for help. Hildegard also sponsored an after school program called Earth Club, which was chosen to meet with President Bill Clinton during one of his trips to Albuquerque. Another class was concerned about the ethical treatment of animals and wrote a group letter to the zoo questioning some of their practices. This group of 12 year olds, now calling themselves the Taylor Wildlife Committee, earned 3 different visits to the zoo to learn about their practices. Hildegard remembers these days of teaching as “a life changing experience” and has been an animal rights activist ever since.

Hildegard has been a very dedicated volunteer and friend to all of us at NMWA, and we thank her for her commitment to wilderness, wildlife, human life, and relentless rabble-rousing.

Hildegard currently serves on the Board of the Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice and works part-time for the Animal Protection of New Mexico. She lives with her wonderful husband Rod, 2 cats, 2 dogs and 1 feral cat (available for adoption). (The feral cat, not Rod).

A Decade of Volunteering

Lady Bird’s Lasting Legacy

By Tisha Broska

Hildegard Adams has been a volunteer with New Mexico Wilderness Alliance from the beginning. She became a member at one of the first public events held for NMWA at the Harwood Art Center (featuring Michael Berman’s photography). Dave Foreman and Jim Baca both spoke at the event and successfully solicited Hildegard’s support for the organization.

When I started working as the Membership Coordinator for NMWA in 1999, Hildegard was the person I called to help with our first membership mailing. She was a constant at our Thursday volunteer nights, where we spent countless hours addressing and stuffing envelopes to solicit new members into our Wilderness family.

When I asked Hildegard why she got involved with NMWA, she said “from the beginning I was extremely impressed with NMWA and I am very proud of the organization and what we have accomplished over 10 years. To go from ground zero to over 5000 members in 10 years is completely awesome!”

So it was during these turbulent times that Lady Bird sought to heal a nation through nature. What makes this so remarkable was the depth of her effort. She is famous for her work on the “Highway Beautification Act,” a bill designed to end the visual pollution of billboards that mar our highway system. Although the bill passed, today only four states ban billboards and the industry continues its heavy handed approach to protecting their turf. In fact, funding for rebuilding billboards destroyed in Hurricane Katrina was passed by Congress as part of Iraq War spending bills.

More than 200 bills passed during the Johnson Administration related to the environment, and all had the First Lady’s stamp on them. Lady Bird is perhaps best remembered for her efforts to plant wildflowers along highways in America. Lady Bird loved the Hill Country of Texas, and today many of the highways are still lined with beautiful wildflowers. Sadly, many of the bird species that share that country and depend on the wildflowers, such as the loggerhead shrike, meadowlarks, and scissortail flycatcher, are in steep decline due to development, pesticides and corporate farming.

But it was her efforts on important legislation such as the Wilderness Act, the Wild and Scenic River bill, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and her strong and uncompromising efforts to protect and create Redwood National Park that really made a difference. She worked diligently to prevent the damming of the Grand Canyon. She was there to dedicate the opening of Point Reyes National Seashore, near San Francisco, in 1962 and she was there in 1968 when Redwood park was dedicated.

Today a hiking trail and a grove of trees in the park honor her enduring legacy.

With Lady Bird, conservationists had a friend in Washington and in the White House: someone who worked hand in hand with Interior Secretary Stewart Udall, and had the ear and the heart of the President.

The net result was something very positive for the land and for America.

A Real Friend of Wild Nature

by Stephen Capra

Earlier this month we learned of the passing of Lady Bird Johnson. What many may not remember is the former First Lady’s passion for wild nature. It’s worth remembering the America of early 1964: the nation was grieving and frankly still shocked by the assassination of John Kennedy; war was slowly percolating in Vietnam; and Lyndon Johnson was laying the groundwork for a “Great Society”. In this famous speech, Johnson called for a nation where “a man can renew contact with nature.”

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A Real Friend of Wild Nature

Lady Bird’s Lasting Legacy
It seems to happen with frustrating regularity. The people who really care and really understand what wilderness and wildlife mean to our lives often leave us far too soon. Such is the case of our dear friend, former NMWA Board Member, Tom Wootten. In early August, Tom died suddenly while hiking in his beloved Gila Country. His death is something that has come as a real blow not only to us, but to so many who care about wild nature in New Mexico.

To know Tom was to know a man free of ego or pretension, though Tom was a very successful Investment Banker for many years. Calling him was a pleasure and you prepared yourself to be complemented for your efforts. Tom was of Scottish ancestry, something he was both proud of, and well let's just say, he enjoyed the sound of bagpipes. Tom was well read on more subjects that can be discussed here and it was a challenge to engage him in conversation and try to keep up with him. Even jumping from topic to topic, Tom’s knowledge of seemingly everything was unbelievable.

When you were with Tom, there was rarely a moment without conversation. Even in reflective moments, you knew Tom’s mind was going a million miles an hour and winding up for the next discussion.

Tom did more than just talk about wild nature. He gave and gave to many New Mexico and Sky Island based conservation groups. He visited with the Bureau of Land Management and pushed for the creation of administratively designated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. Often in a time when people thought only of protecting mountaintops, Tom pressed to protect grasslands or areas that held rare cactus or other native plants. The rumor of a rare plant often caused him to head into the desert, searching for it and if finding it, then fighting to make sure it didn’t disappear.

Tom and his wife Eleanor formed T & E, Inc. to help graduate students, doctoral candidates and others who were studying rare plants and animals or ecological or taxonomic problems in the Chihuahuan Desert. Many people now have a career in science because of the dedication, concern and generosity of Tom and Eleanor Wootten. We understand these ecosystems better because of these two fine people. At sometime in the future, someone will be able to look back at the history of some rare plant or animal that is still with us and realize that the species is still here because of what Tom and Eleanor did, a generation ago.

Tom was so passionate about native plants that he opened, for a time, a native plant store in Las Cruces, growing many plants from seed. I spent many an hour asking Tom for advice as I struggled to start an agave or ocotillo from seed. In his usual jovial manner, Tom tried to reassure me that success was just around the corner. Even in these cynical times, Tom always tried to put a positive, though realistic spin on things. His smile was infectious and his enthusiasm could not be stopped.

Tom always smiled and had a warm spot for young people who cared about the environment. He pushed hard to make sure women had a strong voice in the conservation movement and for more than 45 year’s his wife Eleanor, was his true love, his confidante and outdoor companion.

About five years ago, Tom and Eleanor moved to Tucson where they lived on the edge of Saguaro National park. It was a spectacular location, but it was not New Mexico. I visited Tom several times and though he loved the view, it was clear he was homesick. Two years ago, Tom called and said that he and Eleanor had bought some land in the Gila and they were coming home.

Tom came home for the past two years to enjoy hiking and visiting with friends. He enjoyed spending time with local conservation groups and frequently lent his support. He also spent time on the banks of the Gila River, bird watching, hiking and sending an occasional e-mail to say “give’em hell” or “make sure Otero Mesa is protected!”

Tom was many things, but above all, he was a gentleman, with a warm soul and a big heart. He was a guide and a mentor to many of us and set a standard of excellence we should all strive for.

Wild nature and all of us in the conservation community have lost a dear friend. Tom, you are forever in our hearts.
by Dave Parsons

Ten years ago, when NMWA was founded, Mexican wolves (Lobos) were poised to make their second appearance in the wildlands of the Southwest. Private and, especially, government-sponsored programs to eradicate wolves (and other predators) were successful in extirpating Lobos from New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas by the mid-twentieth century, and from Mexico a couple decades later. In the late 1970s a last ditch effort to prevent extinction of the Lobo by live-trapping wild wolves in Mexico brought five wolves (1 pregnant female and 4 males) into captivity for an emergency breeding program. Those were the last Lobos known to exist in the wild prior to a reintroduction effort that began in 1998. These Lobos were eventually merged with two existing captive-bred lines of pure Mexican wolves to produce a captive population numbering about 300. All known Lobos alive today stem from just seven founders—a true brush with extinction!

In 1997, Bruce Babbitt, then Secretary of the Interior under the Clinton Administration, made the final decision to return the Lobos to their former haunts in the Southwest. During that decision briefing, Secretary Babbitt recounted the famous story of Aldo Leopold blasting into a family of wolves, killing one, and later reaching an epiphany regarding the ecological importance of wolves from having watched the “green fire” die from her eyes. Bruce told me that he knew where that fateful event took place in eastern Arizona—he is from Arizona. I did not doubt his knowledge. Mostly, I was elated that, after seven long years of Environmental Impact Statements and public hearings (not to mention being called everything imaginable, including the devil—I wore my hair long to conceal my horns), the Lobo would be getting a second chance in some of the best wolf habitat remaining in the Southwest—the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area. What we call the Blue Range area includes all of the Gila National Forest in New Mexico and the adjoining Apache National Forest in Arizona, an area of 7,000 square miles and about a million acres of designated wilderness. It seemed especially appropriate to be returning the Lobo to Leopold’s early twentieth century haunts and the world’s first wilderness area, the Gila Wilderness, which he helped to establish in 1924.

On March 29th, 1998, in the midst of a raging blizzard and under the potential threat of restraining order from the Federal District Court in Las Cruces (courtesy of the livestock industry), the first 11 Lobos, comprising 3 packs, were released. Dan Groebner (AZ Game and Fish Department) and I opened the pen housing the Hawks Nest Pack and spent a cold night in a tent about a mile away. The next morning there were fresh Lobo tracks in the snow for the first time in 50 years!

But the joy of the occasion would fade later that year under a cloud of wolf hatred, expressed in the shooting deaths of five of these Lobo pioneers. Before the end of the year, all remaining wolves were back in captivity, either for their own protection or to introduce widowed alpha wolves to new mates. To demonstrate his resolve to restore the Lobo, Secretary Babbitt returned for the second release of Lobos to the Blue Range area.

Sporadic illegal killings continued but progress toward population objectives tracked predictions through 2003 when about 55 wild Lobos were documented—slightly over halfway to the goal of at least 100 Lobos established in the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area.

Then came the AMOC (Adaptive Management Oversight Committee; pronounced by some as “amuck”), a multi-agency management decision-making body established by a formal memorandum of understanding. Bowing to political pressure from Congressman Pearce and his anti-wolf constituents, the AMOC established Standard Operating Procedure 13. SOP 13 is an inflexible punitive management protocol that requires the killing or permanent removal of any wolf that is determined to have killed three head of livestock within a year, regardless of circumstances. Although continued illegal killing has claimed the lives of 27 Lobos to date, now most of the killing and permanent removal (which has the same effect to the wild population as killing) of wild Lobos is being done by the government, just like the old days. This procedure is discriminatory and has no bounds. Lobo mothers have been yanked away from their wild-born pups and genetically important Lobos have been killed. It is not surprising that an analysis conducted by Jean Osorio and I, and presented at the 2007 North American Wolf Conference, revealed that the wild population of Lobos has been stagnant or declining since the end of 2003. We also discovered that the population is being propped up by the continued releases of new Lobos far beyond the release numbers predicted to be necessary—99 releases through 2006 versus a predicted 66 releases through 2002.

Clearly the agencies’ approach of “killing their way to Lobo recovery” is on a path that could lead to the second extinction of Lobos in the wild if not reversed. The official theory behind killing or removal of wolves that kill cows is that such a policy will generate a level of tolerance for wolves among livestock producers and their supporters that will result in more wolves surviving in the long run. So far, the Lobo population is tanking and the tolerance, if their ever was any, has eroded into fervent anti-wolf sentiment aimed at killing the Lobo reintroduction project.

Thanks to the unwavering support of NMWA members and others, there is positive news to report. Recently, Congressman Pearce introduced an amendment on the floor of the House of Representatives to strike all funding for Lobo recovery from the Interior Appropriations Bill. Your calls, letters, and e-mails resulted in the defeat of this amendment, but not before Congressman Pearce called for a repeated vote that was officially recorded. This procedural move by Pearce allowed us to discover that Congresswoman Heather Wilson voted with Pearce to kill funding for Lobo recovery. Continued pressure on government officials by Lobo conservation advocates recently convinced Governor Richardson to issue a statement that he would advocate for suspension of SOP 13 until adequate recovery progress could be demonstrated. Congresswoman Wilson and Congressman Pearce deserve to be reminded of their constituents’ support for Lobo recovery and Governor Richardson deserves a big “THANK YOU” for his most recent show of support for Lobos in New Mexico.

Through our persistence we will not witness the second extinction of the Lobo. Thank you, all of you, for your continued support for wild Lobos in the Southwest!
Multiply Your Power

What a great time I had!

No, I wasn’t out in Otero Mesa, hiking through that beautiful and wild Chihuahuan grassland. I did something almost as fun and a lot more important, I met with my Representatives to explain why Otero Mesa needs to be preserved for generations to come.

If you haven't tried it before, a visit to your Senator or Representative may seem intimidating at first. There's nothing that can be further from the truth! Democrat or Republican, I was welcomed in with a smile and a warm handshake. Meetings were casual and lasted about 20 minutes.

You Can Make a Difference

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is organizing our members, all across the state to meet with our congressional delegation's staff right here in New Mexico. Members of the delegation have offices in the following cities: Albuquerque, Clovis, Farmington, Gallup, Las Cruces, Las Vegas, Rio Rancho, Roswell, Santa Fe and Socorro.

Do you have time to meet with our delegation's staff? We will work with you to set up the meeting, provide talking points, and give you training so that you are prepared and comfortable. In some cases you may go into the meeting by yourself, but we can also organize group meetings. Every month is available, so there is no need to be confined to a certain date. Now is the time to act! This is an extremely important opportunity to make a difference in saving Otero Mesa and protecting Wilderness in Northern and Southern New Mexico.

Generally, these meetings only take 10 to 15 minutes but go a long way in terms of having an impact. If you are interested in doing more for New Mexico's wild and you want to set up a meeting with the staff of your representative or senator, please contact Nathan Newcomer at 843-8696 or nathan@nmwild.org. He will guide you through the process step-by-step and help you set up your meeting.

Meet with your Elected Officials for Otero Mesa

by Edmund McWilliams

Public opinion regarding the performance of the US Congress, according to national polls, is mostly negative. However, I suspect that most of those who are critical of Congress have never attempted to do anything about that poor performance. Over the past few years I have attempted to develop a dialogue with members of the Congressional staff on a variety of issues, including preservation and protection of Otero Mesa. In addition to contacting Washington offices of the New Mexico delegation, I recently drove to Roswell where I visited offices of Congressman Pearce and Senators Domenici and Bingaman. I also have established phone contact with Senator Domenici's office in Las Cruces. I have had good experiences in all offices, even those of Congressman Pearce and Senator Domenici. Congressional staff invariably treat constituents with courtesy and make careful note of their concerns to communicate to senior office staff and the representatives themselves. Most staff appear to genuinely appreciate timely, accurate informational material which aids their research of the issues.

In most cases, Congressional offices assign a specific staff member to monitor key issues and make recommendations. In contacting an office for the first time it is useful to determine who is charged with following the issue you are interested in (Otero Mesa). It is then relatively easy to develop a relationship with that staffer by providing him/her with timely updates of developments and, as the relationship develops, seeking insights regarding the thinking of the Senator or Representative and senior office staff. These insights can be helpful to the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance as it develops its strategy regarding an individual Senator or Congressperson.

It is also very important to take advantage of any opportunity to communicate directly with the Senator or Representative. Such meetings are usually brief, over a handshake, so it is necessary to make your points quickly. Essentially, it is helpful to let the Senator or Representative know your position and urge his/her support. If there is time, it is also useful to specifically mention the name of the staff member with whom you are in contact. Positive feedback is always welcome and often strengthens your relationship with the staffer who will be pleased to know that a constituent has offered compliments directly to his/her boss.

Finally, while it is natural to focus on those offices, particularly that of Representative Pearce, who have been the least helpful on Otero issues, there is also value in offering positive feedback to members, such as Senator Bingaman, to re-enforce their positive attitude.

Here's how the process works:

1. I called the environmental liaison of my Representative, told them what I would like to talk about, and set up a meeting date.
2. I researched my topic thoroughly, anticipated any questions that might be asked of me, and clarified in my mind what my goal was (in this case, to have them support a moratorium on drilling in Otero Mesa).
3. I stated the facts and asked them if that was their understanding too.
4. An enjoyable conversation then ensued as I used the facts to lead them on a logical path towards supporting my goal.
5. I asked what they would do to follow-up with my Representative.
6. I left knowing that this meeting was really effective and wrote a thank-you note the next day.

That's it!

It's also important to connect to your listener on a personal level. This puts a "human face" on the issue. At one meeting, we spoke of how I decided to move to New Mexico because of quality of life issues, and the liaison agreed how quality of life is a top desire for most New Mexicans, including herself and her family.

Stay positive throughout and you'll leave them with a positive image of yourself, which subconsciously translates into a positive image of your message!

Remember - They want to talk to us! They want to know what their constituents are thinking.

Know that one personal visit is looked at as being equal to the concerns of hundreds of constituents.

Multiply Your Power!
live simply

Natural, organic and recycled fibers are used to create classic children’s clothing with a modern twist. We work hard to produce in a fair-trade environment and to limit our waste. Our organic cotton collection is skal-certified; our sweaters are knit in a women’s cooperative in South America; our marketing material is all produced on recycled paper. We make an effort to protect this planet for the next generation.

We use only high quality fabric, reminiscent of an earlier time. Our clothing truly gets softer and softer with time. Wear it, wash it, pass it down from child to child. Our clothing is simply made to last a lifetime, through wild outdoor adventures, through a magical world of make-believe, through pure, natural fun.

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5850 eubank, ne, suite b22
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ph: 505.332.9090
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5850 eubank, ne, suite b22
albuquerque, nm 87111
ph: 505.332.9090
shop on line at: www.kiwiindustries.com

The Wilderness Sweater sets

Throughout the course of human history, people have had a strong connection to the land. It has only been recently that our families and towns have struggled to keep that connection intact. Today, more and more people are joining together to illustrate that a food system can be environmentally friendly, financially sustainable, and ethically just for everyone involved.

Los Poblanos Organics is a 12-acre farm located on the historic Los Poblanos Ranch in the beautiful Rio Grande River Valley in Los Ranchos de Albuquerque. They cultivate over 75 varieties of fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers without the use of any synthetic fertilizers or chemicals. How can you start enjoying produce from Los Poblanos Organics? The easiest way is right through their CSA Program. You can also catch them at several Farmers’ Markets.

Community Supported Agriculture, or CSA, is a special relationship that a farmer engages in with his or her local consumers. Members of the community sign up in advance for a “share” of all the fruits, vegetables, and flowers that a farmer will produce in a given season. Members of the CSA then either come to the farm once a week to pick up their “share” of the bounty, select to pick the box up at an area close to the member’s home, or can now select to have the produce delivered to their home or office.

SUPPORT GROUP

Okay, so you love fresh Organic produce. It is really nothing to be ashamed of. And luckily for you, you have come to the right spot. All of LPO’s members have made the step past denial and are now on to enjoying their lives again. Guilt free. At Los Poblanos Organics, you are among friends who understand the plight of trying to find good produce in an unforgiving world. Because of that, we look at LPO as much more than just a farm. We look at it much like a Support Group.

Los Poblanos Organics
4803 Rio Grande Boulevard, NW
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107
info@lospoblanosorganics.com
www.lospoblanosorganics.com

Gardening Group Supports Adaptive Behaviors

Urban gardeners in Albuquerque now have a great opportunity to conceive, design and maintain their plots or projects with smarter solutions at the Gardeners’Guild in Nob Hill. A garden supply shop and resource center, Gardeners’Guild is a membership supported non-profit designed for city circumstances. Their mission is to provide walk-in consultations and a convenient location for neighbors to find both basic supplies as well as decorative objects, bringing more people and more fun to gardening. This modest establishment focuses on accessibility, and hands-on assistance with questions from gardeners at all levels of experience. A simple but seductive concept, GG is a meeting point for members and provides ongoing opportunities to become acquainted with gardeners nearby. Gardeners’Guild supports an exchange of ideas, freedom of expression and creativity in our environment. Whether for fun, education or best of all both, this organization promotes improved living in Albuquerque and activities that raise the quality of life on a daily basis. Explore outer spaces with a group of like-minded urbanists, interested in modern and sustainable solution methods. Become a member and enjoy the benefits of an energized, caring community as well as a center of support to help you learn and save! Want to learn more and love your garden? Join, shop and swap. Contact Gardeners’Guild by email or visit. Hours of operation are Wednesday through Sunday, 11am-7pm.

You dig?
Gardeners’Guild Resource Center: Support for every city gardener! ...In Nob Hill
Open Wednesday - Saturday 11-7pm, Sun 11 to 5
3222c Central SE
505.268.2719
www.gardenersguild.org

easier seasons sprout for urban gardeners

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"green" celebrities join actor ed begley, jr. in new season of hgtv's "living with ed"

For Immediate Release - August 15, 2007 - The green room takes on a whole new meaning for the celebrity pals of Emmy-nominated actor and committed environmentalist Ed Begley, Jr. in the second season of HGTV's popular, critically-acclaimed, eco-friendly series Living With Ed. The series will kick off with two back-to-back airings on Sunday, August 26 at 10 p.m. EST and Monday, August 27 at 10:30 p.m. EST.

One of the first programs to debut in the growing “green” TV genre, the vanguard series returns bigger, better and greener than ever with 13 new episodes that will find Begley and wife Rachelle Carson dispensing more tips and practical ideas on how anyone can lead a greener lifestyle. In a special new twist this season, Ed ventures out beyond his own green acres to give viewers a peek inside the homes and properties of other Hollywood personalities who are either looking for advice from Begley or eager to share the innovative ways they are working toward environmentally-conscious living.

In one episode, Ed visits with musician Jackson Browne and tours his off-the-grid ranch, complete with an impressive solar and windmill system, as well as other installations and inventions that make the compound self-sufficient. Begley, inspired by his visit to Browne’s place, vows to install a form of wind-power in his own Studio City home.

Jay Leno, Bradley Whitford, Larry Hagman, Sharon Lawrence and Jackson Browne are among the celebrities who are expected to share their “green” journeys with Begley and HGTV viewers. In each half-hour episode, cameras will follow Ed as he gives and gets guidance and inspiration on how everyone can incorporate easy, attractive, practical and affordable “green” ideas into their daily lives.

“Rachelle and I are thrilled that Living With Ed has caught on with so many viewers across America," said Begley. "We are looking forward to having a lot of fun this next season while spreading the environmental message. The fact that the two of us have not killed each other and that we are still happily married amazes us daily. Perhaps with this next season, all of this will change," he added.

Meet a team dedicated to the finest veterinary eye care for your pets, Eye Care for Animals. Board Certified Ophthalmologist Gavin Kennard and a well-trained staff work hard to give the highest level of care, education, and understanding…to clients, pets and referring veterinarians alike. We’re committed to providing state-of-the-art veterinary eye care in New Mexico. Visit their office at 8724 Alameda park Drive, Northeast Suite C. Whether it’s your dog, cat, lizard, horse, and rabbit—if it has an eye problem, turn to Eye Care for Animals. Call them at 505-292-3600 to schedule an appointment.

Eye Care for Animals
Caring for your pet's vision.

SustainableTravelInternational.org  Click on “Our Programs at top of web-page, then select “Eco-Diretory” to see trips they offer. Helps travelers and travel providers protect the cultures and environments they visit.

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NaturalBedStore.com  800.235.3433  Member “Organic Trade Assn.”
All-natural, organic sleep systems using wood, 100% pure Wool, cotton and latex.

dirtworks
Provides Products, Services and Advice for Eco-Friendly Living for Homes, Gardens & Farms alike. Everything from Organic Fertilizer, Natural Insect Repellents and Natural Pet Supplies!
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**Las Cruces / Carlsbad area hikes**

**September 8, 2007—Lost Peak Trail, Guadalupe Mountains National park, Texas**

Guadalupe Mountains National park has plenty of wilderness and plenty of trails. This trail provides only a small sample of the richness in this park. Leaving from the Dog Canyon Ranger Station we will walk to Lost Peak, an elevation rise of about 1000 feet. From there we will continue on a short distance if the group desires to the junction with the McKitrick Canyon trail. This is a great time to be in the park for migrating birds and wildflowers.

**NOTE:** The drive time for this hike is 2 hours each way from Carlsbad.

Maximum participants: 15

Contact: Steve West at 885-3636, or at wthrswift@carlsbadnm.com

Time: All day

Difficulty: Moderate

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**October 13, 2007—Yucca Canyon and Longview Spring overlook, Carlsbad Caverns National park**

Large portions of Carlsbad Caverns National park were declared wilderness in the 1970’s, a fact that most people don’t know. On this hike a small corner of that wilderness will be explored. The hike goes up a somewhat narrow canyon and then tops out on the Guadalupe escarpment. A bit further the trail leads down into Longview Spring and Upper Slaughter Canyon.

Maximum participants: 15

Contact: Steve West at 885-3636, or at wthrswift@carlsbadnm.com

Hiking Distance: 8-9 miles

Time: All day

Difficulty: Moderate

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**Albuquerque area hikes**

**September 8, 2007—San Lorenzo Canyon Day Hike**

San Lorenzo Canyon is on the southern boundary of the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge, about 10 miles north of Socorro. It is mostly known for its interesting geology, but also contains historical sites, cottonwood groves, springs and, sometimes, flowing water. We will hike up the canyon to the Sevilleta boundary and then head up and along some old roads to get an overview of the area.

Maximum participants: 12

Contact: Nathan Newcomer at 505-843-8696, nathan@nmwild.org for more info.

Hiking distance: 2 miles roundtrip

Time: 5 hours round trip

Difficulty: Easy

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**October 11 – 15, 2007—Great Old Broads for Wilderness Trip**

“Broaddness is A State of Mind” Join the Great Old Broads as they visit Doña Ana County to enjoy our common ground—wilderness! Whether it’s Broad Canyon or the Organ Mountains, keep an eye out for hikes and celebrations with Great Old Broads—and their reputation for fun and effective wilderness advocacy.

Maximum participants: Unlimited

Contact: Nathan Small at 505-527-9962, nathansmall@nmwild.org for more info.

Hiking distance: TBA

Time: TBA

Difficulty: Easy to Strenuous

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**September 21, 22, 23, 2007—Otero Mesa Outing**

Join us for autumn in Otero Mesa, where for the past two years the grasses have been 2 to 3 feet high! We will explore the expansive grasslands, plus Flat Top and Deer Mountain. If you’ve never been to Otero Mesa, this outing is the time to be there and experience the wilderness of America’s largest Chihuahuan desert grassland. Be prepared for hot and mild weather plus the chance of afternoon thunderstorms. Bring plenty of water, sunscreen and a camera to capture the moments of pronghorn herds, prairie dog towns, petroglyphs, desert blooms, and beautiful sunrises and sunsets. During the evenings there will be a social campfire. Bring musical instruments if you’ve got them. Let’s get together and have some fun in the desert!

Maximum participants: 50

Contact: Nathan Newcomer at 505-843-8696, nathan@nmwild.org to reserve your spot.

Driving distance: 6 hours from ABQ, 2.5 hours from Las Cruces

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**September 29, 2007—Pecos Wilderness, Holy Ghost Creek**

This hike offers stunning views of snow-capped mountain peaks, rushing water, deep canyons with groves of quaking aspens, ponderosa pines and sunny meadows dotted with wildflowers. Our destination will be an overview of Stewart Lake, with mountains rising from the lake basin on the far side and a clear mountain stream pouring from its mouth.

Maximum participants: 12

Contact: Nathan Newcomer at 505-843-8696, nathan@nmwild.org for more info.

Hiking distance: Approximately 4 miles round-trip

Time: 2-3 hours round-trip plus driving time

Elevation range: 6,000 to 6,261 feet

Difficulty: Easy

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**October 20, 2007—Volcano Hill Day Hike**

The Volcano Hill Wilderness Inventory Unit is just west of Albuquerque, with its namesake rising 500-feet from its surrounding basalt lava flow. Volcano Hill and its lava flow cap an escarpment that drops almost 1,000 feet to grassy plains below. Volcano Hill erupted around 3 million years ago, spewing out basaltic lava flows that capped the 240-million-year-old Chinle formation. Fairly easy cross-country travel. Expect to see red-rock country, tall prairie grasses, and signs of ancient civilization.

Maximum participants: 12

Contact: Nathan Newcomer at 505-843-8696, nathan@nmwild.org for more info.

Hiking distance: 6 – 7 miles round trip

Time: 3 hours plus driving time.

Elevation range: 5,800 to 6,607

Difficulty: Easy to Moderate

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**Service Projects**

**September 14, 15, 16, 2007—Wind River Ranch Service Project**

Albuquerque Wildlife Federation is hosting this project. The Wind River Ranch is located along the Mora River in northeast New Mexico and is managed as a nature preserve. Spring restoration will be the project. This is a rare opportunity to stay in the beautiful canyon carved by the Mora River. 2.5 hours northeast of ABQ.

Contact: Glenda Muirhead at 505-281-2925, g.muirhead@usfamily.net, for more info.

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**September 21, 22, 23, 2007—Valle Vidal Service Project**

One last opportunity to join in the restoration efforts taking place in the Valle Vidal. Comanche Creek on the east side will be the focus of this project. This could be a great time to see the aspen colors and hear elk bugling. 4.5 hours north of ABQ.

Contact: Jim O’Donnell at 505-751-7309, jim@nmwild.org, for more info.

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**November 10, 2007—Piedra Lisa North Trail Service Project**

Last project for 2007! Join us for a day of general trail maintenance on the north side of the Sandia Mountain Wilderness near Placitas. This beautiful remote section of trail rises from 6,030’, peaking at 8,150’ before diving down the south side ending along FR 333 near the La Luz Trailhead. 25 minutes north of ABQ.

Contact: Bill Velasquez at 505-881-0555, bvelasquez@gardnerzemke.com for more info.
NEW MEXICO WILD!

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New Mexico WILD!

SOUTHWEST NIGHT SKY CONFERENCE
September 13-15, 2007
Taos Convention Center, NM

Educational sessions will address topics ranging from cultural heritage of the night sky, storytelling and star lore, night sky tourism, lighting ordinance efforts, and the impact of artificial lighting upon wildlife and the natural world.

Featured and keynote speakers include: Anna Sofaer, Chaco Canyon “sun dagger” discoverer; Alan Hale, co-discoverer of Comet Hale-Bopp; and Robert L. Gent, President of the International Dark-Sky Association.

For the complete three-day conference brochure and on-line registration, please go to www.nmheritage.org or call 505.989.7745

Hosted by the Night Sky Program of the New Mexico Heritage Preservation Alliance (Santa Fe) along with co-sponsor The International Dark-Sky Association (Tucson)
New Mexico WILD!

**Dona Ana County UPDATE**

continued from page 7

wilderness legacy stretches back to 1974 with the creation of the Sandia Mountains Wilderness, and includes the Chama River Canyon Wilderness where ‘Saint Pete’ enlarged the Forest Service’s small proposal.

Despite overwhelming community support for wilderness, a group of off road vehicle (ORV) riders and some local ranchers has emerged, opposing wilderness. Apparently unconcerned that off road vehicle abuse was just named the single greatest threat to public lands across the west, they argue that “withdrawal” protections should be given to all Citizen Proposed lands, instead of wilderness. “Withdrawal” could mean an area is removed from consideration for disposal (selling), preventing some types of development. In the Valle Vidal “withdrawal” from mineral leasing protected against the immediate threat from oil and gas development. However, the Valle Vidal was a gift from Penzoil that came with covenants against wilderness designation.

Dona Ana County has no such covenants, only world class public lands. “Withdrawal” would mean stripping away the temporary wilderness protections enjoyed by eight current Wilderness Study Areas, (WSAs). Doing so would deny potential funding increases, decrease consequences for illegal ORV travel, undercut additional management presence, and open pristine areas to ORV devastation. Ironically, “withdrawal” would lack the specific provisions available in wilderness designations that safeguard ranching. The change from temporary WSA to designated wilderness offers communities the chance to build proposals that enhance the future for wilderness characteristics and ranching operations. Approached on a case by case basis, the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance and other coalition partners support this model, based on cooperation and common ground.

Wilderness has a proven level of protection with a long track record of protecting America’s natural treasures. Wilderness embraces multiple land uses while also recognizing the land’s intrinsic value. When areas are passed into BLM’s National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS), as Wilderness and National Conservation Area (NCA) designation does, increased funding becomes available for better management and land protection. The reasons for wilderness in Dona Ana County are many, and the time is NOW. Check out the back page to learn how YOU CAN HELP keep Dona Ana County WILD—people, places, and future generations depend on YOU!

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**Doña Ana County Action Alert!**

Doña Ana County has no designated wilderness—despite the iconic Organ Mountains and the Broad Canyon complex, offering natural riparian areas, spectacular desert mountains, and canyons with native grasses waving in the wind.

Off Road Vehicle abuse is on the rise and development marches on. These natural areas face grave threats.

YOU can help bring well deserved wilderness to special wild places in Doña Ana County. Tell Senator’s Bingaman and Domenici to protect New Mexico’s natural heritage.

Call, email, or fax the Senators to let them know that you support the Citizen’s Proposal for protecting Doña Ana County’s wild places. From the towering pinnacles of the Organ Mountains, south-west to the vast volcanic cones and grassland filled West Potrillo Mountains, north to Broad Canyon’s hidden treasures and spectacular vistas—these areas must be protected. We have a once in a lifetime chance today!

If you live in Doña Ana County, call, email, and/or stop by our office: 527-9962, nathansmall@nmwild.org, 275 North Downtown Mall, Las Cruces. Join us for a weekend wilderness walk to explore the Citizen Proposal areas. Join in and GET OUTSIDE! Learn more: www.DonaAnaWild.org, and go to nmwild.org/action to send a fax.

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**CALL TODAY!**

**Senator Pete Domenici:**
202-224-6621 (Phone)
202-228-3261 (Fax)
http://domenici.senate.gov

**Senator Jeff Bingaman:**
202-224-5521 (Phone)
800-443-8658 (Toll Free in NM)
http://bingaman.senate.gov

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HYATT TAMAYA
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Guest Speakers:

Gary Guller
Professional Motivational Speaker, Film Producer, Adventurer & Mt. Everest Summitter

Gary led the largest cross-disability group to reach Mt. Everest Base Camp at 17,500 feet, before setting another record, becoming the first person with one arm to summit Mt. Everest!

Craig Childs
Naturalist, Adventurer, Desert Ecologist, Author

Author of eleven books that combine science and wilderness travel, he is winner of the Colorado Book Award and the Spirit of the West Literary Achievement Award, given to a writer whose body of work captures the unique spirit of the American West.

Diane Denish
New Mexico Lieutenant Governor (Invited)

WILDERNESS WORKSHOPS:
Wilderness Medicine, Creative Writing, Wilderness Restoration, Wilderness Activism, Travel Management in Nat. Forests, and more.

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance
P.O. Box 25464
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