

New Mexico

The Semi-annual Publication of the
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

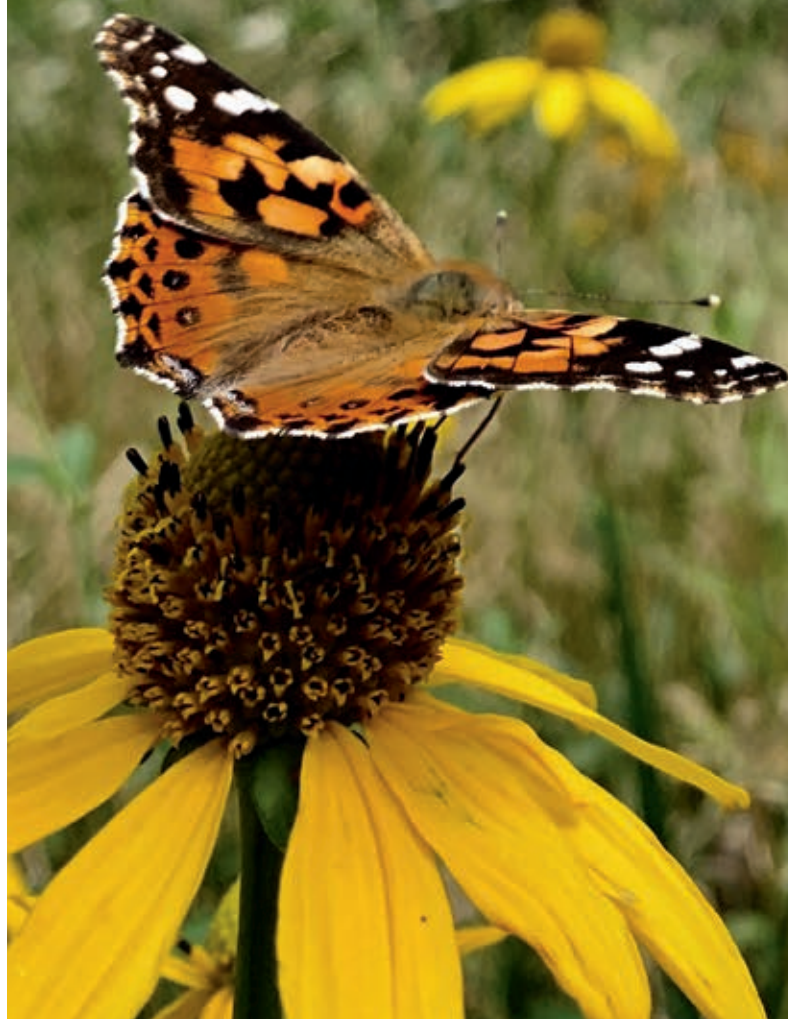
Fall/Winter 2019

WILD!

NEW MINING THREAT to the PECOS



**Exclusive Interview:
Senator Tom Udall**



New Mexico WILD!

The Semiannual Publication of the
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance
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ON THE COVER:
Proposed exploratory mining operations north of the community of Pecos and on the doorstep of the Pecos Wilderness could open a Pandora's Box of toxic impact in Tererro, a place that suffered similar mining contamination years before. We are actively engaging with local groups and individuals to fight any attempts to mine in this sensitive area. Photo by Garrett VeneKlasen. Inset photo of Senator Tom Udall courtesy of Senator Udall's staff.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF NEW MEXICO WILD

BY MARK ALLISON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The state of our natural world has never been more dire, nor the prognosis more grim. You'd be forgiven if the news about the constant onslaught against our wilderness, wildlife and water (and our air, rule of law and democratic processes...) causes you at times to become cynical, depressed or outraged. If you can pick just one, at least pick outraged.



We at New Mexico Wild see the threats every day – too numerous and disheartening to list here. We believe that the best thing you can do individually, and that we can do collectively, is to not give up, to not be silent. It is normal and necessary to fret about our children's future on Earth. By no means are we sporting rose-colored glasses. We know that the only hope for the planet, and the best medicine for despair, is to engage, to get involved, to do what you can large and small, to join forces with like-minded allies to speak for the voiceless – the trees, the wildlife and future generations.

We also know that people have busy lives and that most can't work full time on behalf of conservation and the environment. That's where New Mexico Wild comes in. We have the privilege and responsibility of working on your behalf. Twenty-five professional staff members are working with passion and urgency from Farmington to Carlsbad, from Taos County to Silver City and all points in between, focused on defending against emerging threats, advancing proactive place-based protections and stewarding our public lands. Our volunteer board of directors has immense experience, expertise and long-standing ties to their respective communities, as do our dedicated employees.

I thought I'd share with you a typical day in the life of New Mexico Wild to give you a sense of what your support and involvement mean to us as an organization, New Mexico's public lands and, yes, planet Earth. It would be typical, that is, if we ever had typical days. I hope it puts a smile on your face.

Sept. 30, 2019

- All the national forests have been closed to "timber harvesting" as a result of a recent court action from a lawsuit regarding the Endangered Species Act. While not a party to this lawsuit, we believe it was properly brought and that the ruling was a correct one. However, communities that rely on fuelwood collection for home heating are caught in the middle. New Mexico Wild reaches out to affected communities, disseminating information about alternative sources and securing resources to disburse emergency fuelwood throughout the state, starting with the elderly, single mothers and disabled veterans.
- Upon learning of a proposal by a foreign-owned mining company to begin exploratory drilling for minerals in a sensitive watershed near Tererro, north of Pecos, New Mexico Wild immediately convenes and helps facilitate the formalization of a formidable – and to some, unlikely – coalition of pueblos, watershed associations, businesses, acequias, land grant organizations, and sportsman's groups to fight this threat to nearby communities, public lands and clean water.
- Staff are busy finalizing arrangements for speakers, the program and logistics for the Outdoor Economic Conference in Silver City, making the connection that protected public lands are good for business. Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, State Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard, and

Senator Martin Heinrich will be joined by approximately 250 attendees. We are fielding concerns that there are no hotel rooms left in the area.

- Staff are watching the weather today to see if a planned overflight with policy makers and the media of the greater Chaco area is a go, or not. The trip is planned to highlight the encroachment of extractive development near the park and the need to pass pending legislation to permanently withdraw nearby BLM lands from further mineral development.
- A debrief with our wilderness rangers notes team highlights this season that include stumbling upon a mountain lion at a recent kill site in the Pecos, watching a tree combust into fire from a lightning strike in the Sangre de Cristos, avoiding a flash flood in the Withington, sharing stories with elk hunters who offered to pack out collected trash, enjoying the night sky in the White Mountains, flat tires near the San Mateos; numerous “ambassador” chats with the public; and hail. Lots of hail. Plus 400 miles of trails covered in four of our national forests, 160 volunteers and 2,000 hours of public volunteer time donated to help monitor and improve wilderness areas.
- Staff continue to reach out to community members to thank them for their help securing a historic Grant County Commission resolution in support of Wild and Scenic designation for New Mexico’s last free-flowing river. Lots of kitchen tables, lots of conversations, lots of coffee!
- Our attorneys are researching and writing technical comments to encourage the Forest Supervisors in New Mexico to include more recommended wilderness, wild and scenic rivers and special management areas for wildlife corridors in their management plans. They’ve been distracted from that this morning, as we’ve just learned of a new proposal for a hydroelectric pumped storage project on the Lower San Francisco River. It appears it would impact one of the proposed wild and scenic segments and negatively impact a designated wilderness study area. Calling partners and the federal delegation...
- Staff are debating what kind of furniture is needed in the new Silver City office.
- Staff are coordinating with the Bosque School program to take students rafting down the Chama River to survey invasive plants in two weeks.
- Our Presbyterian Church intern reports on his recent participation at the climate rally and his presentations to middle school students in Albuquerque’s South Valley.
- We continue conversations with potential funders about identifying resources to help ensure that our local partners are strong.
- Staff are placing an order for 1,500 more copies of our updated Wild Guide, which needed to be revised to reflect New Mexico’s 13 new wilderness areas.
- And an article from the Taos News crosses my desk that says two hunters saw aliens and a spaceship in Cerro de la Olla within the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument, an area we are proposing for wilderness designation. An internal debate ensues about whether the spacecraft had any moving parts or if, more likely, it was motorized/mechanized, in which case it wouldn’t be allowed in designated wilderness.

When you are feeling down, know that we are on the job. We are in this together. Your support, encouragement and confidence inspires us. We find strength in knowing that you and our thousands of other supporters throughout the state and beyond are with us. These are hard times, but leaving work at the end of the day, knowing we did all we could, and that we’ll do it again tomorrow, is heartening and rewarding. To be part of something bigger than ourselves is humbling, worth it, and needed now more than ever. Thank you for being part of it – we couldn’t be here without you.

With gratitude and hope,



New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

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The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is dedicated to the protection, restoration, and continued respect of New Mexico’s wildlands and Wilderness areas.

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What is Wilderness?

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



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A WIN FOR THE GILA RIVER IN GRANT COUNTY

STAFF REPORT

In September, the Grant County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution in support of a Wild and Scenic designation for the Gila River, the San Francisco River and their main tributaries.

The resolution – which was co-sponsored by Commission Chairman Chris Ponce and Commissioner Javier Salas – passed on a 4-1 vote. The county commissioners and the constituents they serve are now calling on New Mexico Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich, both Democrats, to introduce Wild and Scenic legislation in the Senate. Both senators have expressed interest in preserving the traditional uses of the Gila by adding the river to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, so we expect the senators to introduce the necessary legislation soon.

Commissioners Harry Browne and Alicia Edwards joined Commissioners Ponce and Salas in voting to pass the Wild and Scenic resolution. Commissioner Billy Billings cast the sole vote in opposition.



At a Sept. 12 meeting of the Grant County Board of Commissioners, Chairman Chris Ponce asked members of the public to raise their hands if they support a Wild and Scenic designation for the Gila River. Photo: Joey Keefe

New Mexico Wild is proud to be part of a growing coalition of local residents, business owners, religious leaders, tribes, civic organizations, governments, sportsmen and sportswomen, nonprofits and many more who are advocating for a Wild and Scenic designation to protect the state’s last free-flowing river. 🏞️

THANK YOU!

Thank you to our elected leaders for supporting a Wild and Scenic Gila River:

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham
State Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard
Grant County Commission Chairman Chris Ponce
Grant County Commissioner Harry Browne
Grant County Commissioner Alicia Edwards
Grant County Commissioner Javier Salas
Town of Hurley
Town of Silver City
City of Bayard
New Mexico Rep. Rudy Martinez
New Mexico Sen. Gabe Ramos
And Nearly 50 State Legislators!

We urge U.S. Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich to introduce legislation to designate the Gila River as Wild and Scenic.

Photo: Mason Cummings

A large, scenic photograph of a river flowing through a deep canyon. In the foreground, a waterfall cascades over dark rocks into the river. The canyon walls are steep and rocky, with some green vegetation on the slopes. The sky is clear and blue.

MAKING ROOM AT THE CONSERVATION TABLE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MARK ALLISON recently sat down with
GRECIA NUÑEZ, New Mexico Wild public lands fellow, and
SIMON SOTELO, Gila grassroots organizer, to talk about their work.

MARK: First question: How and when did you become passionate about public lands and conservation? Tell us about growing up and your family's relationship with the land or a love of place.

SIMON: A few years back there was an article, I believe it was in *Backpacker* magazine, and it was called "The Unlikely Hikers." It was basically focusing on people of color, overweight people, and LGBT people, but the article was framed in such a way and written in such a way that we were considered the "unlikely" hikers because we're not normally the ones that go out there. You know, like it's so odd to see people of color, so odd to see LGBT, so odd to see transgender women or heavier set people. It was framed in a way that almost was demeaning to us. And I took that very personally because I check a lot of those boxes, you know, and it's something that I do on a regular basis. It's not that I'm the unlikely hiker or that I'm not the person who's out in the wilderness or enjoying trails or camping or fishing. For me, it was, hey, we're a part of this, too. We're not unlikely. We're not the white guy with the \$5,000 worth of backpacking gear out there hiking. We're not the ones making it into the magazine. This is part of who we are. So, it's not really that unlikely. It's not that out-of-bounds to say that we are here, and this is something that we do on a regular basis. So that's what got me passionate about it. And when the Gila campaign started, it was like, "Hey, yeah, this is an awesome thing because this is what we do anyway." And now that I have the op-

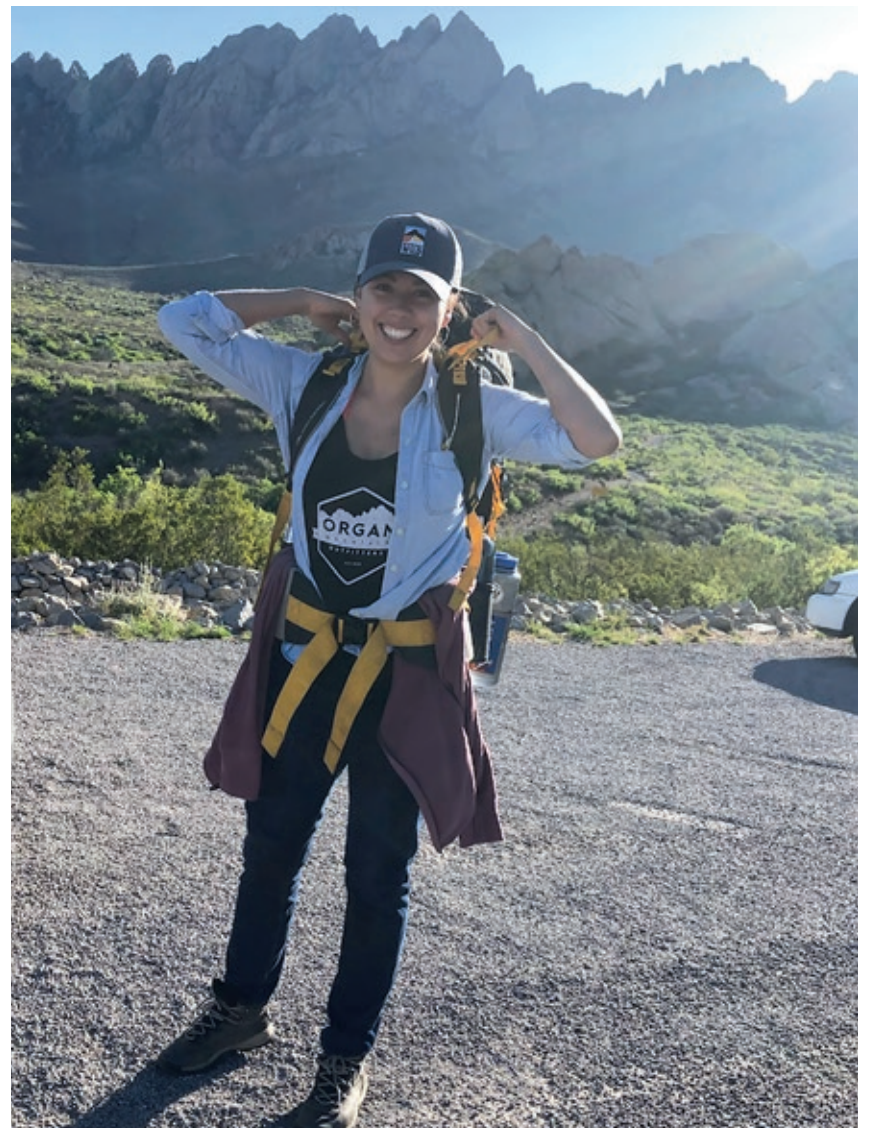
portunity to actually do something and to change that, of course, I am going to be on board with it.

GRECIA: For me, what I thought about was coming from a family where both parents come from huge families. My parents have either 12 or 13 siblings and they grew up in farming families in Mexico. And so, I wasn't exposed to outdoor recreation as such, but I was outside and I was doing things on the land. I feel like my love for the outdoors comes from that, from just growing up and living with the land and being exposed through the experience my parents had. Like Simon was saying, you don't normally see us or minority people out in these platforms for outdoor recreation, but we're definitely using and have a very strong connection to the land.

When I was able to travel to the Rocky Mountain National Park through a not-for-profit, I saw how immense it was and how my family hadn't been able to be exposed to that for economic and socioeconomic reasons. To me, the love that comes with working in conservation is a passion to connect minorities to the outdoors and continue to develop my experiences as a woman and as a person of color, trying to pull communities into advocacy and provide a platform for people to understand that public land advocacy doesn't look a certain way.

MARK: Was protecting God's creation part of what you talked about at the dinner table after church? Or was there any connection to your Catholic upbringing?

Interview continued on page 20



Gila Grassroots Organizer Simon Sotelo and Public Lands Fellow Grecia Nuñez.

PECOS-AREA WATERSHED THREATENED BY HARD ROCK MINING

A Colorado company has applied for exploratory drilling permits in the Jones Hill area of the Santa Fe National Forest north of Pecos.

Comexico LLC, a subsidiary of Australia-based New World Cobalt, is looking for base and precious metals including gold, silver, lead, copper and zinc in this potentially mineral-rich area. Just upstream sits the now-closed Tererro hard rock mine, which is now a site costing taxpayers millions of dollars and is still adversely impacting the Pecos River's water quality.

A hard rock mine in this area has the potential to forever damage water quality throughout the Pecos drainage and its complex aquifer systems all the way to Texas. The impacts to the traditional land users in and around Pecos, including Pecos and Tesuque pueblos and the local acequia and Land grant communities, are incalculable. These watersheds have sustained local communities since time immemorial.

Hard rock mining uses massive quantities of precious fresh water, ultimately poisoning it in the drilling and extraction process. Comexico will have to purchase vast water rights. One must ask what impacts the misdirection of these invaluable water resources will have on the local traditional agricultural communities throughout the Pecos drainage all along its expansive water course as well as the municipalities who rely on dependable drinking water.

Ground zero for the proposed mine site is the stunning sub-alpine Jones Hill area, which sits at the intersection of five headwater Pecos tributaries, including Indian, Macho, Sawyer, Dalton and Holy Ghost/Doctor creeks. Dalton, Indian, and Macho have thriving populations of our state fish, the beautiful and ethereal Rio Grande cutthroat trout. Living here since the Pleistocene, these fish teeter on the edge of being relisted as threatened or endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Jones Hill is also a designated spotted owl Protected Activity Center and is currently home to a nesting pair of spotted owls. Last but not least, the area is home to the beautiful and exceedingly rare Holy Ghost ipomopsis. Researchers suggest the flowering plant is at high risk for extinction. Black bear, elk, mule deer, turkey, cougar, bobcat, raptors and myriad other species thrive in the hundreds of thousands of acres that are contained within the five watersheds.

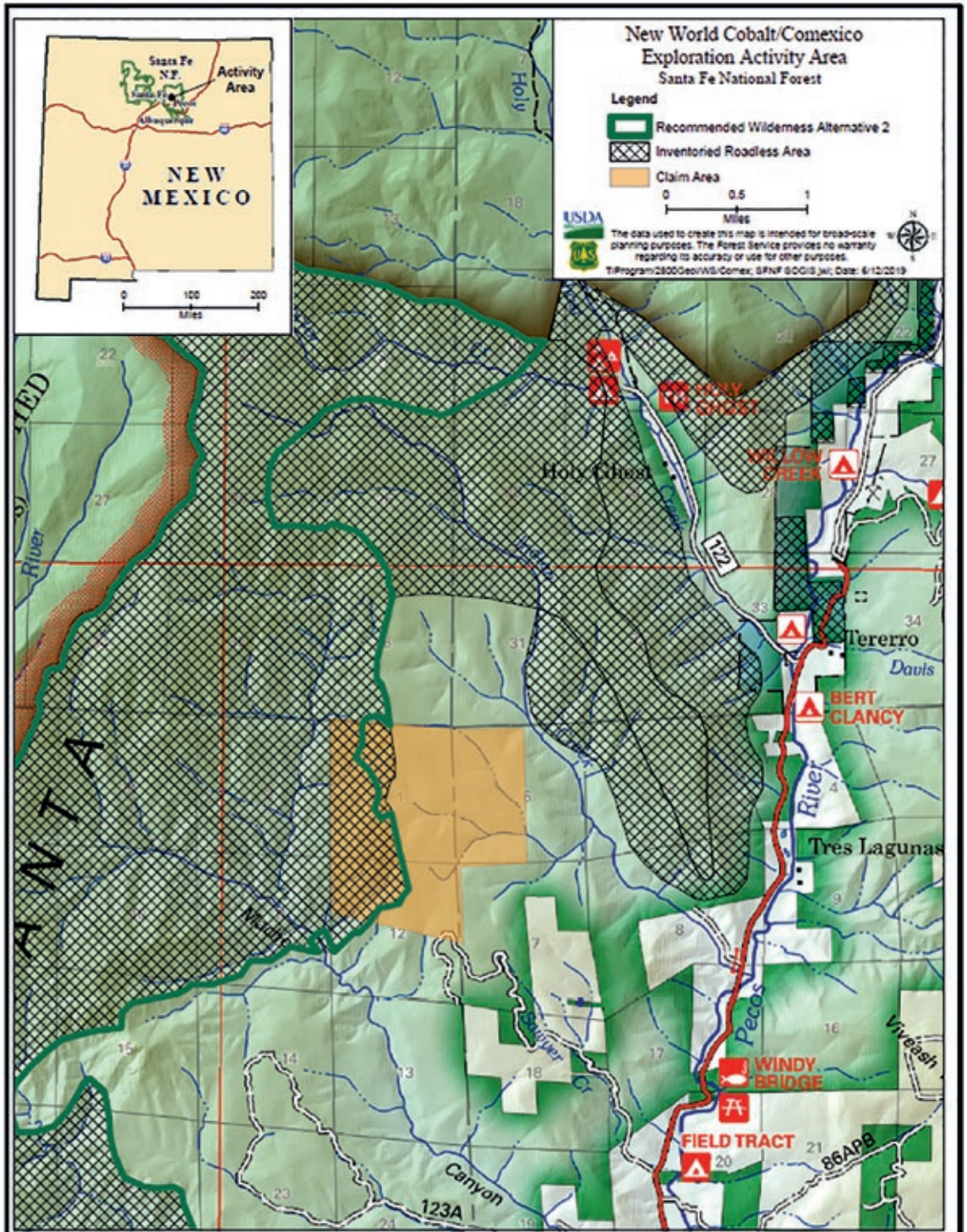
New Mexico Wild helped bring together a formidable coalition of local concerned citizens and traditional land users including Pecos and Tesuque pueblos, watershed associations, the Acequia Commission and Association, business groups, land grant heirs, private landowners, sportsmen/women, conservationists, environmentalists, outdoor recreation enthusiasts and local elected

officials. A broad coalition of organizations (led by the local Upper Pecos Watershed Association) is working to stop the mine development in its tracks.

Comexico has applied for exploration permits with the national forest and the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural

Resources Department. The corporation wants to drill approximately 30 separate exploratory boreholes. Each hole requires a drilling rig, water trucks and service vehicles and will theoretically be confined to a 60- by 40-foot drill pad. Additional road disturbance in and around the pad sites is likely to be considerable, not to mention

Story continued on page 18



Map of Tererro Mine claim area (tan block). Courtesy of Santa Fe National Forest.; Top: Truchas Ridge above Trampas Lakes.

Federal Legislation and Policy Updates



BY JOEY KEEFE, COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

White Sands National Monument. Photo: Macadelic10, Wikimedia Commons.

As always, New Mexico Wild keeps a close watch on the federal agencies and officials whose actions impact the state's wilderness, wildlife and water. Our goal is always to hold those in power accountable and ensure that our public lands and wild places are protected for the enjoyment of current and future generations of Americans. Read below for some select updates on the federal policies and legislation that play a role in keeping New Mexico wild.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT UNDER ATTACK

In August, the Trump administration announced changes to the Endangered Species Act that would severely weaken the nation's signature wildlife protection law. The policy shift at the Department of the Interior cynically puts business interests at odds with wildlife, allowing federal regulators to weigh corporate profits against wildlife conservation. The changes also will make it more difficult for regulators to consider the impacts of climate change on species, while simultaneously making it easier for them to remove protected species from the endangered list. A coalition of environmental groups is suing the Trump administration over the changes.

NEPA CHANGES

In another bit of disturbing news, the U.S. Forest Service is seeking to weaken federal environmental reviews and reduce public input. The changes come from a proposed rule issued by the agency in June that weakens the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process of environmental reviews. The changes would make it easier for the agency to fast-track mineral extraction and other development projects that could have an adverse impact on wilderness, wildlife and water. New Mexico Wild's members submitted hundreds of written comments to the Forest Service to urge the agency to perform full, federally mandated environmental reviews and to include the public on all proposed changes to the forest planning process.

BLM RELOCATION

This summer, the Trump administration's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced plans to move the majority of its Washington, D.C., headquarters staff to Western states. While the administration claims the move is intended to place BLM workers closer to the lands they are paid to manage, the plan follows the administration's trend of downsizing and weakening the federal agencies that count environmental stewardship as part of their mission. Many experts fear that the high-level, career administrators who are being asked to relocate will simply resign instead of uprooting their lives and families to move across the country. Overall, the relocation appears to be another example of the Trump administration devaluing the professionals who have made a commitment to protect the nation's public lands.

HOBO RANCH ADDITION TO SABINOSO WILDERNESS

The Sabinoso Wilderness in northern New Mexico is growing! Hobo Ranch, an approximately 9,000-acre property that borders the western edge of Sabinoso, will be added to the wilderness as part of a private-to-public land transfer. The new addition will bring the total acreage of Sabinoso to almost 30,000 acres.

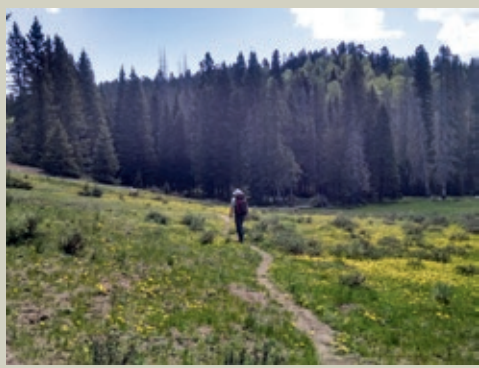
WHITE SANDS

Sen. Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., has introduced legislation that would reclassify White Sands National Monument as a national park. National parks are generally recognized for a wider range of qualities than are national monuments. The change in designation would elevate White Sands to a premiere tourist destination, attracting new visitors to adjacent communities and boosting the revenues of local small businesses. The legislation is co-sponsored by Rep. Xochitl Torres Small, D-N.M., in the House of Representatives. 🐾



Mexican Gray Wolf in the snow. Photo: Rebacca Bose, Wolf Conservation Center

SANTA FE NF-WEST



Trail assessments in San Pedro Parks Wilderness Area



Santa Fe West Rangers using crosscut to clear trail-way access

2019
WILDERNESS
RANGERS

The 2019 Wilderness Rangers had an incredible season of stewardship, monitoring, education, and volunteer engagement. They worked in partnership with the Forest Service to complete management tasks and were the boots on the ground in our New Mexico Wilderness areas. Thank you to our Forest Service partners and all the volunteers who made this season a success! To learn more about our rangers season, visit our blog at: nmwildernessrangers.home.blog/

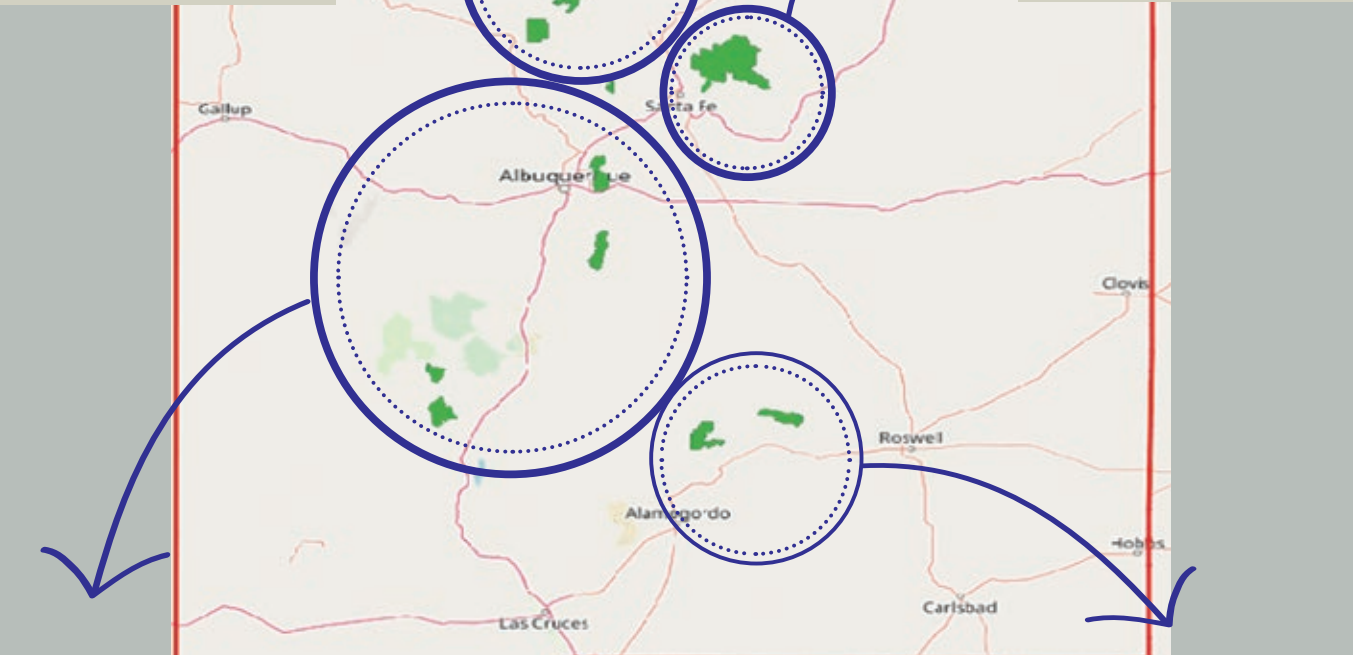
SANTA FE NF-PEGOS



Rangers pointing out features near Beatty's Flats in the Pecos Wilderness



Santa Fe Pecos rangers working with Backcountry Horsemen on a service project in the Pecos Wilderness



CIBOLA NF



Cibola Ranger Walker Martin in the Apache Kid Wilderness



Cibola Rangers used "the Beast" to access remote areas of the Magdalena Wilderness Areas.



Counterclockwise from top left: Zack Bumgarner, Irene Owsley, Brennan Davis, Jesse Furr, James Lautzenheiser, Doug Campbell, Becky Fitzpatrick, Tobias Nickel, Andrew Reville, Zack Bumgarner

LINCOLN NF



Lincoln Rangers teaching local groups about wilderness and Leave no Trace



Lincoln Rangers working with the Smokey Bear volunteer trail crew to clear trails

CHACO UPDATE:

Protecting the Greater Chaco Landscape

Efforts to permanently protect the natural, cultural and historical resources found in the Greater Chaco Region continue to progress.

In our spring 2019 newsletter, we were elated to report that New Mexico’s entire Congressional delegation – Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich, Assistant Speaker Ben Ray Luján and Reps. Deb Haaland and Xochitl Torres Small, all Democrats—had introduced legislation that would permanently remove all federal lands within 10 miles of Chaco Culture National Historical Park from future mineral development lease sales.

In April, Luján and Haaland joined several of their colleagues on the House Committee on Natural Resources for a tour of Chaco to observe the impacts of oil and gas development in the region. Following the tour, the officials hosted a field hearing on the issue in front of a packed house of local stakeholders and special guests Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham and state Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard at the State Capitol.

Then in May, U.S. Interior Secretary David Bernhardt visited Chaco at the request of Sen. Heinrich to learn more about threats to the cultural resources found at the site. He announced immediately after his visit that the Bureau of Land Management would not approve oil and gas lease sales within 10 miles of the national historical park for the next calendar year, buying more time to push the Chaco protection bill through the legislative process. Heinrich also won a commitment from the secretary that the administration would lift its opposition to the legislation.



Chaco Canyon. Photo: Tisha Broska

Shortly after Bernhardt’s visit, Luján attached an amendment to an Interior Department spending bill that codifies the one-year moratorium on all mineral developments in the 10-mile buffer zone surrounding Chaco. The amended spending bill was approved by the House. Sen. Udall attached a similar provision the Senate version of the bill, which passed the full Senate in December.

Meanwhile, Udall moved to hold the administration accountable regarding protections for the Greater Chaco Landscape. At a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing in May, Udall pressed Secretary Bernhardt about his agency’s tendency to approve min-

eral development projects near Chaco despite community objections, saying, “We see this in the Department’s efforts to expand oil and gas development in the region surrounding Chaco Culture National Historical Park in New Mexico. The Department keeps pressing forward even though Native American Tribes and Congress have objected to the effect that this development will have on such a sacred landscape.”

New Mexico Wild thanks our federal delegation for their leadership and continues to encourage and support this legislation and numerous other actions to provide this important area the protections it deserves. 🌲

Get Your New Mexico Wild Swag Today!

Visit nmwild.org/support-us/shop to check out our new inventory and make your purchases today! From Boonie Bucket and Trucker hats to glass water bottles and crew neck tees, we have something for everyone.





Movement corridors are especially important for large herd animals like elk. Photo: Garrett VeneKlasen

THE WILDLIFE CORRIDORS ACT



BY GARRETT VENEKLASEN

With climate change having an ever-increasing impact on fish and wildlife populations, ecosystem health and watershed resiliency are paramount stewardship considerations. Protecting and restoring the critical pathways wildlife use to transition across landscapes and waterways – in their daily, monthly and seasonal movements – is vital.

Songbirds, raptors and waterfowl often travel thousands of miles in their annual intercontinental movements. Elk, deer, bighorn sheep and antelope often cover hundreds of miles during their winter and summer migrations, crossing state and even international borders. Predators like Mexican gray wolves, cougar, bear and jaguar often roam vast hunting and breeding territories. And native trout and other fish species often navigate considerable expanses of multi-tributary watersheds during times of extreme drought.

Roads, fences, urban expansion, utility lines, power infrastructure, mineral extraction and human-caused habitat degradation have exponential impacts on critical wildlife corridors. Not only are wildlife populations suffering, but public safety is at risk when wildlife is forced to cross highways, causing serious collision hazards with motorists. Though many wildlife-related collisions go unreported, the New Mexico Department of Transportation reported 15,213 wildlife-related collisions from 2002 to 2016. In 2016 alone, collisions caused nearly \$20 million in damages.

Fortunately, new policies have New Mexico headed in the right direction. The Wildlife Corridors Act, Senate Bill 228, was passed in the last session and endeavors to identify and study critical state-wide wildlife corridors, remediate problem areas along these corridors, restore proper migration functionality and habitat connectivity, and reduce wildlife-related accidents.

The legislation encourages interstate and federal partnerships between land and wildlife management agencies, tribes, private landowners, counties, municipalities and the Department of Transportation. To ensure a long-term, sustainable future for New Mexico’s wildlife, the Wildlife Corridors Act directs New Mexico Game and Fish and the Department of Transportation to develop a plan to identify crucial wildlife migratory routes, human-caused barriers and future projects to limit risks to wildlife and humans alike.

Corridors deserving immediate protections include the Valle Vidal Special Management Area and the San Antonio Management Area in the Carson National Forest and the Caja del Rio Wildlife and Cultural Interpretive Management Area in the Santa Fe National Forest. Of course, securing as much recommended wilderness as possible through the ongoing Forest Service planning processes is of critical importance. ▲



MEXICAN GRAY WOLVES UPDATE

BY JUDY CALMAN, SENIOR ATTORNEY

Mexican wolves have had some ups and downs over the last year. The official count of wolves in the wild is higher than it has ever been (131), but 2018 also saw the highest number of illegal killings in a single year (21). Seven additional illegal killings have been reported in 2019. This means the general trend of population growth continues, although it is making very slow progress toward the 750 wolves scientists say are needed for a stable population.

Last year, a federal judge ruled that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s 2015 wolf management rule failed to follow best available science and did not adequately conserve the species. The service was given 25 months to come up with a new rule that fixes the problems. Scoping for that new rule is expected to be announced in the coming months, and the public will have an opportunity to participate in the process.

In a bit of good news, the Gila National Forest supervisor revoked the grazing permit of a person who illegally killed a wolf, and the decision was upheld by the regional office of the Forest Service. Because the Department of Justice’s McKittrick Policy does not provide real criminal liability for killing endangered species, punishments like graz-



Mexican Gray Wolf cub. Photo: Rebecca Bose, Wolf Conservation

ing lease revocations become essential for Mexican wolf recovery efforts. We appreciate the Forest Service weighing the evidence and making this decision.

In all, while wolves are still subjected to

violence by people who oppose their presence, the population is making slow but steady improvements. With your help, New Mexico Wild will continue to do everything we can to see this trend continue in the years to come. 🐾

THE DIVISION OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

Thanks to the creation of the Division of Outdoor Recreation, New Mexico has a remarkable opportunity to significantly increase the growth and productivity of its burgeoning outdoor recreation and ecotourism industry in the coming years.

The legislative framework for the division, which is part of the Economic Development Department, was created by Senate Bill 462 (sponsored by Sen. Jeff Steinborn, Rep. Angelica Rubio, both D-Las Cruces, and a bipartisan group of co-sponsors). The bill passed in this year’s legislative session sets the stage for this exciting transformation.

With 27 million acres of public lands (encompassing some of the nation’s most ecologically and topographically diverse landscapes), opportunities for year-round use and a unique cultural overlay, there is no reason why New Mexico can’t substantially expand its outdoor recreation revenue and job numbers. Outdoor recreation is currently tied to \$9.9 billion in annual consumer spending and 99,000 direct full-time jobs.

One of the most exciting elements of SB 462 is the Outdoor Equity Fund, the first of its



Fly fishing on the Gila River. Photo: Mason Cummings

kind in the country. It will provide microgrants to low-income and traditional cultural communities and to communities of color (through public schools, nonprofit organizations, municipalities and tribes) to help youth get outdoors. The legislation also states that tribes and acequia and land grant communities must be involved in long-range outdoor recreation and ecotourism processes from the standpoint of economic development; equity, inclusion

and diversity; public health; cultural affairs; and public lands conservation planning. SB 462 also requires the creation of a long-range conservation plan inclusive of traditional land use communities.

A separate Projects Fund has remarkable potential to help cities, counties, schools, tribes and nonprofits implement substantive projects, including improvements to sections of the Rio Grande Trail, expan-

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A CONVERSATION WITH SENATOR TOM UDALL

INTERVIEW BY MARK ALLISON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Senator Tom Udall addresses constituents at Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument. Photo courtesy Senator Udall staff. Photo: Staff of Senator Tom Udall

New Mexico Wild Executive Director Mark Allison gets Sen. Tom Udall's views on conservation in New Mexico, his career and the state of politics. Udall was first elected to the U.S. Senate in 2008 following five terms in the House of Representatives. He is not seeking re-election in 2020.

MARK ALLISON: Thank you very much Sen. Udall for making time to speak to me today. Throughout your entire career in public service, you've led the way protecting New Mexico's wilderness, water and wildlife. As you reflect on your time in office, are there specific victories for New Mexico's public lands of which you are particularly proud?

TOM UDALL: We've had a lot of successes during my 20 years in Congress. Although none would have come about without advocates like New Mexico Wilderness Alliance pounding on Congress's doors.

We've greatly expanded New Mexico wilderness areas. My bills resulted in designating Ojito, Sabinoso and Columbine-Hondo wilderness areas. And this year, we secured a monumental victory by adding over 270,000 acres in 13 new wilderness areas that include Cerro del Yuta and Rio San Antonio wildernesses, Ah-Shi-Sle-Pah Wilderness and 10 areas within Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument. The legislation also expanded the Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness. This is the biggest gain of wilderness in New Mexico in four decades.

Thanks to grassroots support, we secured Organ Mountains-Deserts Peaks and Rio Grande del Norte national monuments under President Obama. And we fended off their reduction by the current administration as it's taken aim at national monuments.

We secured long-term protection of Valles Caldera National Preserve through transferring management responsibility to the National Park Service.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is one of the nation's oldest and most successful conservation programs and has strong bipartisan support. In New Mexico, over 1,200 local projects have been supported by the LWCF. Yet, the future of the LWCF always hung in the balance with each new reauthorization. I was so proud to help carry on my father's (Stewart Udall) legacy in fight-

ing for permanent reauthorization of LWCF in this year's public lands omnibus – a huge win for New Mexico.

We've staved off energy development around Chaco Culture National Historical Park – again with the support of advocates. The Trump administration proposed drilling in that area twice and was forced to pull back each time. That area is starkly beautiful, sacred and filled with archeologically significant native artifacts. Our bill to establish a 10-mile buffer zone is gaining traction. I'll push as hard as I can to get it over the finish line.

As lead Democrat on the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee the last three years, I helped increase funding for conservation, environmental protection and tribal and cultural programs by 18%. We boosted spending for the LWCF by 42% and for the National Park Service by nearly one-quarter, including significant investments toward the \$12 billion backlog for deferred maintenance at national parks. I played a lead role in getting long-sought firefighting disaster cap legislation to end the practice of "fire borrowing" and allow Congress to pay for the escalating costs of catastrophic wildfires without sacrificing other conservation priorities.

MA: That is a truly a tremendous record of accomplishment. Why have these conservation issues been so important to you during your time in office?

TU: Conserving our natural resources and protecting our most precious outdoor spaces are truly Udall family legacies, and I'm proud to carry that work forward in Congress. One of America's greatest traditions is the preservation of our iconic landscapes and protection of our natural history. During my father's time as Secretary of the Interior, he always said that we hold land in trust – a sentiment that has guided my work. In New Mexico, we know the value of our natural resources and our unique landscapes. These most treasured places are central to our way of life as New Mexicans and Americans – and we must protect them for future generations.

MA: You are planning to introduce legislation to designate segments of the Gila River as wild and scenic. Why is introducing this legislation important to you?

TU: The last free-flowing river in the Southwest, the Gila, is a jewel and deserves protection for future generations. The community has worked toward wild and scenic designation to permanently protect the Gila's traditional uses such as hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, floating, gathering with family, and advancing scientific research — all while benefiting the economy, preserving existing water rights and avoiding restrictions on private lands. I look forward to working with all stakeholders on legislation so we can continue to enjoy all that the Gila has to offer.

MA: What other conservation-related legislation are you working on before you leave office?

TU: I introduced the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act in May. Plant and animal species in the United States and across the globe are at a crossroads, at risk of mass extinction. Habitat loss and fragmentation is a major cause. Connecting habitat and migration patterns through wildlife corridors is one of the most effective strategies to preserve species and promote biodiversity.

My bill directs federal agencies to establish national wildlife corridors on federal lands. It also sets up a collaborative process for establishing wildlife corridors on state and tribal lands and with voluntary private landowners throughout the country. It's a

bicameral, bipartisan bill, and I hope by using a collaborative, science-based approach we gain greater bipartisan support.

Our 150-year old hard-rock mining laws are antiquated and must be reformed. The Mining Act of 1872 puts most public lands at constant risk of new mining, lets industry off the hook for toxic mine cleanup, and robs the American people of royalties from mining.

I introduced the Hardrock Mining and Reclamation Act to require companies to finally pay royalties for the right to extract mineral resources from public lands, help ensure that taxpayers aren't on the hook for cleaning up abandoned mines and try to prevent another toxic spill like the 2015 Gold King Mine disaster.

Climate change is an existential threat, risking the vitality of our lands and wildlife. I introduced an updated Renewable Electricity Standard to meet global targets for greenhouse gas emissions. The bill aims to achieve at least 50% renewable electricity nationwide in 15 years and decarbonize the power sector by 2050. The U.S. needs to lead again on climate change. Rolling back virtually all climate change initiatives by the current administration is unconscionable and will be judged harshly by history.

The low snowpack in the Rocky Mountains as a result of climate change portends

things to come — a drought that tree rings suggest is the most severe in 1,200 years. As Colorado River and Rio Grande flows diminish, water users will increasingly turn to groundwater pumping — a source itself that is diminishing. We must lay the groundwork for long-term adaptation strategies. I will be introducing legislation to improve water management in the West through investments in water infrastructure, increased focus on conservation and environmental restoration, and funds for groundwater assessment and storage.

All of these bills are important to the future of New Mexico families, our nation and the world. Congress must work for all Americans not just the 1%. Time is running out and we must act now.

MA: You are leading the way on legislation to create a permanent 10-mile buffer zone around Chaco Culture National Historical Park. Can you say a little more about why this legislation is necessary and what it means for the cultural and historical values found in the region?

TU: Chaco Canyon is near and dear to my heart. Growing up, my family visited Chaco during vacations across the Southwest. As the ranking member of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, I know how deeply meaningful the greater Chaco area is to the tribes and pueblos that trace their ancestry

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FOREST PLANNING UPDATE

BY LOGAN GLASENAPP, STAFF ATTORNEY

New Mexico is home to over 9 million acres of national forest system lands, managed in five regions by separate forest service offices. These are places to hike, hunt, fish, find solitude, gather firewood, camp, ride horses and backpack. These rugged lands also are critical for our state’s water, food and economy, and they deserve our care and affection.

All national forests across the country operate under what is called a forest plan. These documents provide strict, detailed management guidelines and standards, as well as broader, big-picture objectives. New Mexico’s national forests have been operating for almost 40 years under the same forest plans, initially published in the 1980s.

But at long last these forests find themselves at some stage in the revision process. The Carson, Cibola and Santa Fe national forests have each published their draft environmental impact statements, and the comment periods are open until Nov. 7. The Lincoln National Forest is in the very early stages of this process, just recently closing its scoping period, and is taking comments on its wilderness inventory and evaluation criteria. The Gila National Forest is somewhere in between, having completed the preliminary proposed draft plan in 2018 and currently developing its draft environmental impact statement, which we expect to be available to the public in January.

During these processes, New Mexico Wild is committed to advocating for the utmost protections of our roadless, wild and untramed lands, as well as for management considerations for wildlife corridors. These processes allow for robust public involvement. We encourage anyone reading this newsletter to visit our website at www.nmwild.org to find out more about how you can get involved and help us protect these lands for our ancestors, ourselves and our descendants. You can also contact staff attorney Logan Glasenapp at Logan@nmwild.org.

Each forest is required to conduct an inventory of lands under its jurisdiction to determine which areas contain wilderness characteristics, and then to make a management decision in the plan about whether to preserve those characteristics for possible future wilderness designation by Congress. Despite a tremendous amount of land with high wilderness values throughout the forest system in New Mexico, the Carson is likely to propose fewer than 10,000 acres for wilderness designation. The Santa Fe and Cibola are likely to propose merely around 25,000 acres, or about 5% of the total lands eligible across

the two forests. The table below shows the acres of wilderness-quality land New Mexico Wild has proposed for protection, compared with the acres in the individual forests’ preferred plans and the acres in the individual forests’ “wilderness alternatives,” which are the alternatives with the highest amount of recommended land.

We are in the process of drafting comments regarding the inadequacy of each forest’s wilderness recommendations and are encouraging the forests to include more lands. While the Forest Service can’t designate wilderness – only Congress can do that – these plans are an important opportunity to influence how our forests are managed for the next several decades.

Your voice is critical to ensure these forest plans work for New Mexico’s wilderness, wildlife and water. Submit a written comment to forest officials to let them know these draft management plans aren’t strong enough. Tell them you want to see more recommended wilderness and consideration for wildlife corridors in their preferred alternatives. Wild places deserve to be managed in a way that preserves and values their wilderness character. 🌲

FOREST	Acres of land with wilderness characteristics	Wilderness acres in the forest’s preferred alternative	Wilderness acres in the forest’s “wilderness alternative”
Carson	67,996 acres	9,189 acres	67,996 acres
Cibola	398,620 acres	24,265 acres	224,143 acres
Santa Fe	540,967 acres	25,793 acres	177,037 acres



Cibola National Forest. Photo: New Mexico Wild Wilderness Rangers

Monuments To Main Street



BY GRECIA NUÑEZ
PUBLIC LANDS FELLOW

This September as temperatures cooled, it was a great time to explore everything that makes the Las Cruces region of southern New Mexico special. Once again, New Mexico Wild was proud to help organize Monuments to Main Street (M2M), a monthlong celebration of the national monuments, people, history and culture of Las Cruces, Mesilla and beyond. This year, the celebration included the Hatch Chile Festival and Harvest Wine Festival, hikes, aerial tours, river rafting, yoga at Dripping Springs and the first ever Picacho Mountain Outdoor Festival.

M2M kicked off its fourth year Sept. 8 with a fiesta at Klein Park in Las Cruces’ Mesquite Historic District. The celebration featured live music by Nosotros, a performance by the Ballet Folklórico Corazon de Las Cruces, stagecoach rides, an Organ Mountains painting class, crafts, and desserts by La Reyna Michoacana.

The goal of M2M was to get people outside, enjoying the natural beauty of our desert Southwest, while introducing them to new activities and taking them to special places they might not explore on their own. The outings, tours and activities took participants to White Sands, Prehistoric Trackways and Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks (OMDP) national monuments, as well as to activities right on the main streets of Las Cruces and Mesilla.

This year, M2M offered even more excursions, including a bike-packing and stargazing campout, jeep tours into OMDP, a “Top of the World” hike, the Picacho Mountain Outdoor Festival and tours to Massacre Peak and the Butterfield Stagecoach Trail, along with returning favorites such as aerial tours of the Mesilla Valley and World War II bombardier training sites and inner tube rafting on the Rio Grande.

Monument tours were offered by a variety of groups, including New Mexico Wild, the Friends of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks, the Green Chamber of Commerce, the Sierra Club, the Mesilla Valley Audubon Society and local outfitting company Southwest Expeditions.

M2M hopes to keep growing in the coming years and invites people from all over New Mexico and the nation to come and enjoy the area’s natural landscape and culture. 🌵



WILDERNESS FAQs



Pecos Wilderness boundary sign. Photo: Vincent Franzen, www.ultrazona.com



WHAT IS A WILDERNESS AREA?

The Wilderness Act of 1964 defines wilderness as “an area where the earth and community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain” and “an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions.” There are currently 765 designated Wilderness areas, totaling 109,129,657 acres, or about 4.5 percent of the area of the United States.



WHAT QUALIFIES A PLACE TO BECOME WILDERNESS?

The following conditions must generally be present for an area to be included in the National Wilderness Preservation System: 1. the land is under federal ownership and management, 2. the area consists of at least 5,000 acres of land, 3. human influence is “substantially unnoticeable,” 4. there are opportunities for solitude and recreation, and 5. the area possesses “ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.”



WHO DECIDES WHAT PLACES ARE WILDERNESS?

Designated Wilderness is the highest level of conservation protection for federal lands. Only Congress may designate Wilderness or change the status of Wilderness areas. Wilderness areas are designated within existing federal public land. Congress has directed four federal land management agencies—the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service—to manage Wilderness areas to preserve and, where possible, to enhance their Wilderness character.



HOW MUCH WILDERNESS EXISTS IN NEW MEXICO?

Approximately 1,972,507 acres are protected as Wilderness in the state. Though this seems like a lot, New Mexico actually ranks next to last among Western states in the percentage of its land designated as Wilderness, at roughly 2.5 percent. On average, Western states (not including Alaska) have 5 percent of their land designated as Wilderness.



WHERE WAS THE FIRST WILDERNESS AREA ESTABLISHED?

The Gila Wilderness in southwestern New Mexico was the world’s first designated Wilderness area, created on June 3, 1924. It’s ironic that the state where Wilderness got its start now is lagging behind in total acres of Wilderness created.



WHY IS WILDERNESS IMPORTANT?

Through the Wilderness Act, Congress recognized the intrinsic value of wildlands. Some of the tangible and intangible values mentioned in the Wilderness Act include “solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation,” as well as “ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.” Wilderness areas provide habitat for wildlife and plants, including endangered and threatened species.



CAN I HUNT AND FISH IN A WILDERNESS AREA?

Hunting and fishing are allowed in Wilderness areas, subject to applicable state and federal laws.



IS GRAZING ALLOWED IN WILDERNESS?

Livestock grazing is permitted where it occurred prior to an area’s designation as Wilderness. On rare occasions, Congress prohibits grazing in Wilderness at the time of designation.



CAN I DRIVE IN A WILDERNESS AREA?

The Wilderness Act generally prohibits the use of motor vehicles in Wilderness. The law contains special provisions for motor vehicle use when required in emergencies or as necessary for the administration of the area. Motor vehicles may also be permitted for special uses such as to access a private inholding, to support grazing or to exercise valid existing rights.



CAN I BIKE IN A WILDERNESS AREA?

The 1964 Wilderness Act prohibits motorized or mechanized forms of recreation, and this includes bicycles. Instead, visitors are required to walk or ride horseback.



HOW DOES WILDERNESS HELP WILDLIFE?

Habitat fragmentation caused by roads, power lines, fences, dams and other structures seriously affects the ability of animals to move through their ranges. The roadless quality of Wilderness preserves large tracts of habitat needed for healthy populations of animals that need space to roam, like large predators, migratory species and herd animals.



DOES A WILDERNESS AREA INCREASE THE RISK OF FIRE?

Wilderness areas are to be primarily affected by the forces of nature, though the Wilderness Act does acknowledge the need to provide for human health and safety, protect private property, control insect infestations and fight fires within the area. Wilderness areas are managed under the direction of the Wilderness Act, subsequent legislation (such as the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act) and agency policy.



I LIVE IN THE CITY ... WHY DOES WILDERNESS MATTER?

Wilderness protects open space, watersheds, natural soundscapes, diverse ecosystems and biodiversity. The literature of Wilderness experience frequently cites the inspirational and spiritual values of Wilderness, including opportunities to reflect on the community of life and the human place on Earth. Most Wildernesses are also carbon sinks that help combat climate change. Wilderness provides a sense of wildness, which can be valuable to people whether or not those individuals actually visit Wilderness. Just knowing that Wilderness exists can produce a sense of curiosity, inspiration, renewal and hope.



HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT WILDERNESS?

Join the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance! We are your most complete resource for information about wildlands and Wilderness areas in the state. As a member you’ll get our newsletters, E-news, action alerts and notices about hikes, service projects and special events. You can help us Keep it Wild! Join on our website at www.nmwild.org or use the convenient mail-in form on page 23. 🐾

CONTEST ANNOUNCEMENT

HELP PROTECT THE CRITICALLY ENDANGERED MEXICAN GRAY WOLF WITH YOUR ARTWORK



New Mexico Wild invites submissions for the 2020 Mexican Wolf Conservation Stamp. Artists worldwide are invited to enter two-dimensional drawings, paintings, or photographs featuring the Mexican gray wolf. The winning artwork will be featured on the 2020 stamp that will be sold to raise funds to support Mexican wolf conservation and education projects. All artwork must be scalable to the size of the stamp, 4.5-inches wide by 5.5-inches tall.

Please submit electronic images of original artwork by January 31, 2020 to tisha@nmwild.org.

New Mexico Wild 2020 Wilderness Poetry Contest

ENTER YOUR POEM ABOUT WILDERNESS
FOR A CHANCE TO WIN

1ST PLACE: \$100 cash prize, 1-year membership to New Mexico Wild, and branded swag

2ND PLACE: \$50 cash prize, 1-year membership to New Mexico Wild, and branded swag

3RD PLACE: 1-year membership to New Mexico Wild, and branded swag

The top 5 poems will be published in the Spring edition of the 2020 New Mexico Wild Newsletter. Please note, by submitting your poem you grant New Mexico Wild the right to publish your work on our website, newsletter and on-line platforms

Complete the registration form at:

<http://bit.ly/NMWildPoetry2020> and you will receive a confirmation email with instructions on how to submit your poem. Before submitting your poem, please make sure you have read and adhered to the guidelines below:

1. Please submit only one poem per entry fee (\$5); however, you may enter as many times as you are inspired!
2. 30-line limit.
3. Be sure to proofread your poem for any grammatical errors.
4. Do not use "texting" lingo. Properly spell out all words.
5. Poems containing language that is vulgar, offensive, or wholly inappropriate will not be accepted.



OUR JUROR: Benjamin Green is the author of 11 books, including *THE FIELD NOTES OF A MADMAN* and *THE SOUND OF FISH DREAMING*. At 63 years old, he hopes his new work articulates a mature vision of the world with some integrity. A recent poem, "At Dusk" (published in *Sky Island Journal*) was nominated for Sundress Publications' 2019 BEST OF THE NET ANTHOLOGY.

All submission must be received no later than 5:00pm on **FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 2020.**

Thank you again for your participation and **GOOD LUCK!**



Tererro Mine Meeting

the poorly engineered five-mile roadbed into the mine site which is currently dumping sediment into Indian Creek every time it rains.

Before Comexio can develop a mine, its application must go through a rigorous NEPA (environmental review) process by the Santa Fe National Forest staff, but keep in mind that the Trump administration's directive to the Forest Service is to fast track the permitting process. Transparency and pub-

lic inclusivity are being discouraged by the Trump administration.

Comexico has hired SWCA Environmental Consultants to analyze the environmental impacts both a mine and the exploratory process will have on the area's watershed and ecology. According to a recent conversation with the Forest Service's lead on the project, the agency will not do its own independent environmental analysis of the potential impacts, meaning the only on-the-ground environmental assessment

is coming from Comexico's own consultants.

New Mexico Wild and our partners are pushing a variety of countermeasures to slow down the permitting process and are calling on the Forest Service to thoroughly review the adverse impacts of the project, including the initial exploratory process. We are also encouraging the state Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department and the Environment Department to help put the brakes on the permitting process.

The antiquated federal 1872 Mining Act gives Comexico considerable rights to pursue development of their claims, and ultimately the act itself is in urgent need of reform. In the meantime, New Mexico Wild will continue working with local communities to stop dangerous mining operations like the one proposed by Comexico.

Visit www.nmwild.org to learn more about the proposed Tererro mine and to purchase your "Stop Tererro Mine" sticker. 🐾

A Conversation with Senator Tom Udall continued from page 13

to Chaco and that consider the site sacred and a living part of their culture. And Chaco's value reaches beyond our state. It's one of only 23 UNESCO World Heritage sites in our nation.

Although pueblos, tribes and the American public speak out with overwhelming support of this precious landscape, Chaco is being threatened by expanding energy development, as I talked about before. I'm proud to lead the delegation's bill – that's the result of listening to New Mexicans, and especially tribal communities, who have called for us to protect the integrity of the greater Chaco region. Some places are just too special to lose. And Chaco's one of them.

MA: The last few years have been fraught with political turmoil in Washington, yet you have still been able to get important pieces of legislation passed. How do you approach the legislative process during such a polarized period, and what advice do you have for young elected officials to navigate the current climate?

TU: We live in sharply partisan times. Nonetheless, there are opportunities for bipartisan environmental legislation – if the stars align. Three years ago, we passed major reform to the Toxic Substances Control Act – a 1976 act intended to protect the American public from harmful chemicals but that had been gutted by court decisions. Importantly, TSCA reform had the support of industry – their credibility was on the line. I worked with them, environmentalists, scientists and across the aisle to enact what is the most important environmental legislation passed in the last 25 years.

A major factor in the rise of partisanship is how our campaign finance system works. Or doesn't work. Under *Citizens United* and other U.S. Supreme Court decisions, the

super-wealthy try to buy elections with unlimited contributions and dark money. The people's representatives no longer represent the people. They represent the 1%.

I've been working for years on comprehensive reform. This year, I introduced the For the People Act to curb campaign spending abuse, strengthen voting rights and raise the ethical bar in government. And I introduced the Democracy for All Amendment to overturn *Citizens United*. The House already passed its For the People Act. While there is broad-based support for these initiatives, we have a big problem in the Republican-controlled Senate even getting a hearing on this type of reform legislation.

My advice to young elected officials is to always maintain one's civility, especially toward the opposition; build relationships across the aisle; and always be on the lookout for opportunities to gain consensus. Legislation has a better chance of enduring over time with broad-based support. It's important to stand by your principles and maintain your integrity, and as important to know when and where to compromise to get from point A to point B. The people elect us to get things done. All that said, the current president has tested the limits of decency with, for example, his divisive rhetoric and inhumane immigration policies, and there is no choice but to speak out firmly against that which is unacceptable.

MA: When you leave office in a little over a year, what do you hope people will remember about your conservation legacy?

TU: I often think about what we owe to future generations and what we will leave for them. I hope my work will help leave them with a cleaner, safer planet where the threat of climate change has been met, where a clean energy economy is thriving,

and where wildlife and our natural treasures are protected.

MA: You've noted that your commitment to conservation and the environment won't be done when you leave office. What are your plans for how you will continue to be involved and play a leadership role after office?

TU: I'm most certainly not retiring. I intend to find new ways to serve New Mexico and our country – including fighting to protect our public lands and meeting the existential challenge of climate change. There will be more chapters in my public service to do what needs to be done. I'm looking forward to partnering with conservation leaders across New Mexico and the country to accomplish so much more to preserve our planet for the next generations.

MA: On behalf of New Mexico Wild, thank you senator for your incredible public service and your leadership, and also for your decency. It's hard for many of us to imagine a time when you won't be representing us in Washington. I hope to be able to continue to work with you in whatever you decide to do next.

TU: Thanks, Mark.

And thanks to everyone at New Mexico Wild for all the work you do throughout the state helping bring people together, helping build those broad coalitions and showing those of us working in Washington the tremendous support there is in New Mexico for our truly enchanting public lands. 🐾

WELCOME NEW STAFF



Garrett VeneKlasen

GARRETT VENEKLASEN **Northern Conservation Director**

Garrett was a candidate for the New Mexico Commissioner of Public Lands in 2018 and then worked as a political advocacy strategist for Conservation Voters of New Mexico leading up to and during the New Mexico Legislative session. Before running for office, Garrett was Executive Director of the New Mexico Wildlife Federation. He was also the Southwest Director of Trout Unlimited’s Sportsmen’s Conservation Project (NM, AZ and CO) as well as Trout Unlimited’s New Mexico Public Lands Coordinator and also founded the New Mexico Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers. Garrett has been a tireless champion for the conservation and protection of public lands and native wildlife, fighting for everything from federal and state funding for native wildlife, stricter regulation of off highway vehicles on public lands, higher state water quality standards, stricter regulation on mineral development, to enhanced conservation and protection of threatened and endangered species.



Tristan Wall

TRISTAN WAL **Young Adult Volunteer**

Tristan is originally from Asheville, North Carolina and grew up with a strong connection to the outdoors, hiking, and witnessing the earth’s natural beauty. A recent graduate of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte with a degree in Religious Studies and a Spanish Minor, Tristan will be living in Albuquerque over the course of the next year serving New Mexico Wild through the Young Adult Volunteer Program through the Presbyterian Church (USA). Tristan has worked primarily in the youth ministry field over the past two years, serving as the Youth Ministry Intern for First Presbyterian Church of Charlotte, but has had a longing to jump into ecological justice and environmental conservation work for many years now! Tristan could not be more thrilled to embark on this new adventure with New Mexico Wild!

WELCOME NEW BOARD



Ken Jones

KEN JONES **Board Member**

Ken Jones is a retired commercial banker and has lived in New Mexico since 1994. He is married to Patty Jones, his wife of 38 years. He has three grown children and two grandchildren. He resides in Sandia Park, NM. Ken’s passions have always included wild places. His love for the natural world started while hunting birds with his father and fishing with his mother in the central valley of California. Today, he is an avid hunter, fisherman, hiker, birder and cyclist. In addition to his new service with New Mexico Wild, Ken currently serves at La Mesa Presbyterian Church in Albuquerque as finance chair and leads their Environmental Stewardship initiative. Ken believes that wild places must exist and be protected. One of his core beliefs is that access to diverse and pristine public lands are among our Nation’s most valuable freedoms.

GRECIA: Whatever your spiritual path is, being outside is super spiritual. But in terms of connecting that to the Catholic faith that I grew up with in my family and my community, I think there is a disconnect. We should figure it out because there's so much potential there to protect those places through that lens that we don't use.

MARK: Simon, tell us a little about what your work is focused on right now and maybe, looking back over the past year, what's been the most rewarding or the toughest. Have there been any surprises about your organizing work in communities talking about the Gila River?

SIMON: My main goal, what I'm focused on, is to utilize New Mexico Wild to get Hispanics involved in the conversation of conservation. I definitely think this is something I contribute to my community, particularly with Wild and Scenic. But what I'm focused on in doing this work is saying, "Hey, this is part of who we are, this is part of our culture, our heritage in southern New Mexico, and we need to have a voice in how it's taken care of and we need to have a voice on the stewardship of these areas that we enjoy, that have been part of our community and our lives." I think one of the best rewards that I get out of it is when we can actually get families out there. The response that I generally get is, "Oh, this is a cool idea, we're here, we should be a part of this." When you have people who write letters to the editor or have a conversation with a friend about what New Mexico Wild is trying to accomplish through this outreach, when you have people saying, "Hey, this is cool, you know, how can I help?" that's rewarding.

One of the biggest challenges I face is, hey, if we want to be represented, we have to show up. You can't complain about things not changing, if you're not willing to show up, if you're not willing to take a seat at the table. With that being said, sometimes the space at the table is very limited. Everybody wants the Latino-Hispanic younger generation, they want us involved. But they don't want to scoot over. They don't want to give up their seat at the table and they don't want to make room for it. So how do you create a conversation when half of your population isn't even welcome at the table sometimes?

That's a challenge I face. And a lot of times you look at boards or you look at civic organizations or community outreach organizations, and it's usually the same 10 or 20 people in every single one of them and that demographic never changes. And yet everybody's saying how can we change this? But that's something that New Mexico Wild is doing in communities in New Mexico, we're hiring people from those communities. Grecia is from Las Cruces. I'm from Silver City. Nathan is from Silver City, southern New Mexico. Those are things that are important because you don't want to have someone who's not a part of it, who doesn't understand it, saying this is the idea that we have, this is what we want you to support. I think New Mexico Wild is on the right path by doing that, by saying, "Hey, we want to engage this community or this demographic so we're going to hire the people that we want to reach."

MARK: Grecia, how about you? You've been doing work around conservation and public lands for a long time, especially considering how young you are. Maybe tell folks what you're focused on right now and what you've been most pleased or proud about this last year.


Grecia: I'm really proud to be able to work with communities that aren't regularly at the table and to be able to model a different way of organizing in minority communities. Organizing doesn't look the same in every community. From being in the Peace Corps and learning about organizing on the ground, I've been able to take that and bring it to New Mexico. It brings me joy to talk about breaking bread and sit in people's houses and build personal relationships and learn from all these beautiful community members who have a lot of investment because it is their place of living, where they grew up and where their history is. Part of my job right now is to protect the land and wildlife, to protect the river for the area's sake, but also for the people around them. Just being able to work and learn from these people has been beyond gratifying. I hope that our organization and our partners continue to meet the people where they are.

To read the full interview, please visit www.nmwild.org. 🐾


sion of river restoration projects in Questa and on the San Juan River below Navajo Dam, and improvements to a parking lot and access points in the White Peak area.

The two funds will work in concert with one another. For example, a nonprofit organization, school or tribe can use a mini grant from the Equity Fund to get a group of kids outdoors while simultaneously applying for a project grant to restore a stream bottom, build a trail or improve habitat for a small ecosystem close to home.

With the help of the new Division of Outdoor Recreation, the outdoor recreation and ecotourism industry has the potential to be one of our state's largest sustainable economic drivers, while at the same time enhancing New Mexico's cultural and ecological attributes and addressing the state's lack of economic diversity. The industry also has the potential to champion the responsible and sustainable use of our public lands through the lens of science-driven ecological protection, restoration and conservation. 🐾




If you are a New Mexico Wilderness Alliance Member, you are eligible to join **The Power of WE®**.

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Citizen Eyes and Ears Needed: Protecting New Mexico's public land is a big job, and we need your help!



New Mexico Wilderness Alliance does its best to ensure that federal agencies are managing our public lands in accordance with the law and to let them know when there are problems on the ground.

You can help us by being our eyes and ears. When you see violations or abuse in New Mexico's designated Wilderness areas and other protected places, please let us know so we can report it to the responsible agency.

Some common problems are:

- ATVs or mountain bikes in designated Wilderness areas
- Broken fences
- Illegal wood cutting
- Cows in rivers and streams

To report a violation, please visit nmwild.org/violation. Thanks for helping us keep the Wild West wild!

INVESTING IN WILDERNESS



BY JOE ALCOCK, NEW MEXICO WILD BOARD MEMBER

I am a practicing emergency physician and a professor in the University of New Mexico Department of Emergency Medicine. I feel very lucky to have landed in New Mexico for my career in medicine, and I spend as much time as possible recreating in the state's wildlands when I am not in the hospital. Although wilderness is critically important for its own sake, it also offers physical, mental and public health benefits to our communities. Spending time in wildlands is absolutely a necessity for me, so much so that I have made it part of my career. I am a faculty member of the UNM International Mountain Medicine Center where students learn about wilderness and austere medicine. We depend on having nearby wilderness areas to do our teaching, and we don't take this amazing resource for granted.

Wilderness protection is also a key part of the fight against global climate change. I am deeply concerned about climate change and its harmful effects on wild places and biodiversity. In order to reduce our carbon footprint, we installed solar panels at our home and made some lifestyle changes. Air travel is a major source of carbon emissions that is harder to reduce, since few green options exist for long-distance travel. After I recently looked into different options to buy carbon credits to offset the impact of flights, it occurred to me that there is another, better, option. Protecting wild lands in New Mexico can help preserve carbon stored in forests and also protect wildlife that are threatened by a changing climate.

There are many good projects around the planet that help offset carbon, but I want to make an impact starting here in New Mexico. Investing in wilderness in New Mexico by donating to New Mexico Wild is an excellent option for those looking for alternatives to existing carbon offsets. Protecting wilderness helps en-

sure carbon remains "captured" in our forests and grasslands. According to the U.S. Forest Service, carbon dioxide uptake by forests in the contiguous United States offsets 10% to 20% of total U.S. carbon dioxide emissions each year. Forests lock away carbon dioxide in the wood, roots, and leaves found in wilderness; this "carbon capture" helps to reduce global carbon dioxide levels.

New Mexico Wild does more than lobby for wilderness protection. The staff also works to educate the public about the importance of protecting wildlife and water in efforts to adapt to climate change. New Mexico Wild's seasonal wilderness rangers are monitoring our national forests, providing baseline data and helping to measure the impacts of climate change.

A successful response to climate change in the Southwest also includes protection of our rivers and watersheds. Wilderness plays a vital role in protecting watersheds, and New Mexico Wild is working hard to protect vital watersheds across the state. The group is pushing to save the Pecos Watershed by fighting the proposed Tererro Mine. New Mexico Wild also is doing important work to ensure that the Gila River will remain free flowing by working with local stakeholders to call on New Mexico's Congressional leaders to permanently protect the river through a Wild and Scenic River designation.

With less than 3% of our state protected as wilderness, there is more work to be done. The undisturbed habitat which wilderness offers provides a way for wildlife to adapt to climate change. Investing in wilderness supports critical habitats and migratory routes for wildlife. In other words, an investment in wilderness is an investment in our planet's future. 🌲

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outperforms most charities in its Cause.

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Your Guide To Intelligent Giving



WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY CONSIDER A LEGACY GIFT TO NEW MEXICO WILD

If you'd like to help protect Wilderness for future generations but feel you cannot make a significant gift today, consider making a charitable contribution through your will in the form of a bequest. It is simple to designate New Mexico Wild for an estate gift and your contribution will help protect our public lands far into the future.

You can learn more about making a bequest through your will at:
<http://www.nmwild.org/support-us/legacy-giving-bequests>
or by contacting Tisha Broska at tisha@nmwild.org, 505-321-6131.



Looking to Volunteer in Wilderness?

Check out our website at
nmwild.org for upcoming
volunteer service projects.



Become a Wild One! Monthly giving is the most effective way to support our work.



PHOTO: MIKE GROVES, ORGAN MOUNTAINS, NM

- Your monthly donation helps us keep working all year long.
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- Change your donation amount or cancel at any time.
- Your membership in New Mexico Wild never expires—you are renewed automatically.
- Monthly donating saves administrative time and paper.
- Donate at a level of \$20 or more monthly to receive free gifts.
- As a Wild One monthly donor, you are the backbone of our membership!

Join now and you'll receive our quarterly newsletter, e-news and action updates, invitations to special events, member discounts, and more!

Help us speak with a louder, stronger voice in support of protecting New Mexico's Wilderness, Wildlife, and Water.

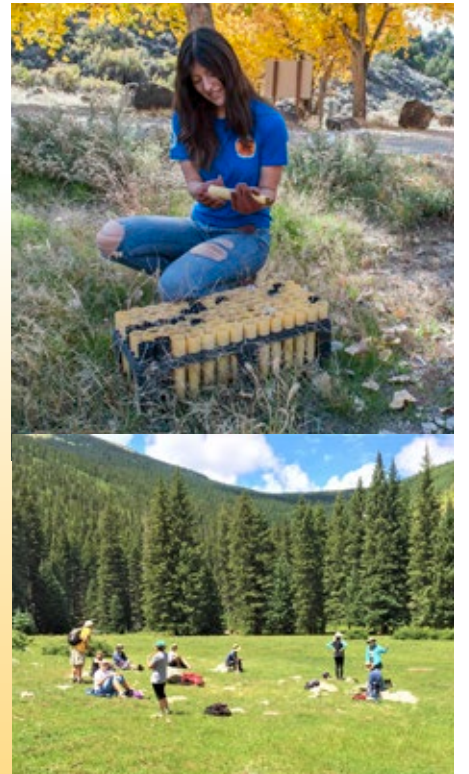


New Mexico Wild is the premier wilderness organization in New Mexico. Become a Wild One! Sign up at www.nmwild.org



If you ...

- Hike or backpack
- Camp or climb
- Hunt or fish
- Kayak or canoe
- Stargaze or study plants
- Photograph or paint
- Enjoy beauty outdoors
- Love clean water
- Want to breathe fresh air
- Crave wide open spaces



...then you belong in the
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance.

You can help keep New Mexico Wild!

We advocate for the protection of New Mexico's wildlands and wilderness areas. Education, service projects, public outreach, special events and grassroots support of citizen wilderness proposals are all ways the Wilderness Alliance strives to protect the rarest and most special of landscapes: those that remain relatively untrammelled by man.

As a member, you'll receive our quarterly newsletter, e-news and action updates, special advisory newsletters, invitations to members-only events, member discounts and more. Your support is vital to our work.



The Wilderness Alliance is the only nonprofit organization exclusively focused on protecting wilderness areas, wildlands and critical habitat in the state of New Mexico. We push hard for protection for the critically-endangered Mexican gray wolf, we hold land management agencies accountable for following the law, and we build broad grassroots community support for wilderness protection.

Please join us—together we will continue the fight to keep public lands in public hands.

www.nmwild.org

New Mexico WILD

I want to become a Monthly Donor.
Bill my credit card for the amount selected.

- ☐ Protector \$10 monthly (\$120 Annual)
- ☐ Advocate \$20 monthly (\$240 Annual)
- ☐ Defender \$40 monthly (\$480 Annual)
- ☐ Wilderness Warrior \$83 monthly (\$1,000 Annual)

Monthly Giving is the most helpful way to support an organization.

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 - ☐ \$100
 - ☐ \$250
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 - ☐ \$1,000
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Donate at a higher level and enjoy these great gifts!

Give \$100 or more to receive a Wolf Stamp from our collectible series.

Give \$240 or more to receive a Wolf Stamp and a copy of our book *Wild Guide: Passport to New Mexico Wilderness*.

Give \$480 or more to receive a Wolf Stamp, a *Wild Guide*, and a hat with our New Mexico Wild logo!

Give \$1,000 or more to receive a *Wild Guide*, a hat with our New Mexico Wild logo, AND a color logo water bottle!

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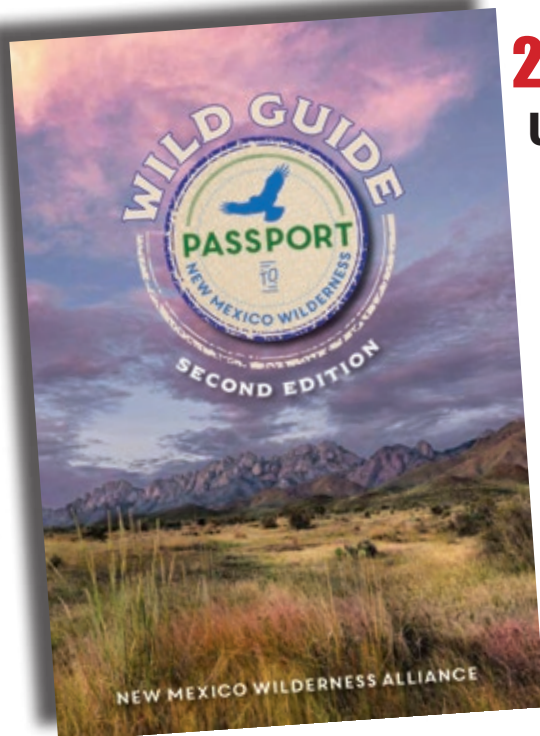
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This comprehensive guide to New Mexico's protected wildlands is the only book that features each of the state's designated wilderness areas and wilderness study areas as well as other treasures, such as the new Rio Grande del Norte National Monument and Organ Mountains–Desert Peaks National Monument.

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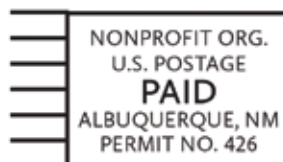


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Horseback riding along the Gila River.
Photo: Mason Cummings