

New Mexico

The Semi-annual Publication of the
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

Spring/Summer 2019

WILD!

CELEBRATING OUR NEW WILDERNESS

**ALSO INSIDE:
A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM
SENATOR HEINRICH**



Mount Riley Wilderness in Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument

New Mexico WILD!

The Semiannual Publication of the
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance
VOLUME 16, NUMBER 1
SPRING 2019

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ON THE COVER:
The newly designated Mount Riley Wilderness within Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument. Just 45 minutes from El Paso and Las Cruces, it is one of the largest relatively undisturbed stretches of Chihuahuan Desert landscape in the state. Photo: David Soules

LET'S CELEBRATE OUR NEW WILDERNESS!

BY MARK ALLISON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is with immense excitement, gratitude and pride for New Mexico that I share this latest edition of our newsletter and celebrate some historic news with you. On March 12, the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act was signed into law. This package of public lands legislation established 13 NEW WILDERNESS areas and expanded another in New Mexico totaling approximately 272,586 acres. It's not every day that we get to celebrate something like this – it's not even every decade. This represents the most new acreage of Wilderness designated in New Mexico in a single year in over a generation, going all the way back to 1980. (Think the introduction of the fax machine, Pac-Man, the Empire Strikes Back and ABBA. If you prefer not to think of ABBA, that is fine too.)



As New Mexico Wild supporters know, Wilderness area designation is the conservation gold standard and the highest level of protection for federal public lands. It literally takes an act of Congress to create "Big W" Wilderness. Not an easy thing to do at any time, let alone in today's political environment. Yet, this legislation passed the U.S. Senate by a vote of 92-8 and the House by a count of 363-62. This was a bipartisan and bicameral effort. This is where people found literal and common ground and perhaps provides us with a model for a path forward for other important issues. And all with the recent backdrop of the longest government shutdown during an administration which has directed the largest rollback of federal land protections ever. It is truly remarkable.

These designations bring the total amount of protected Wilderness in New Mexico to approximately 1,972,507 acres, or about 2.5 percent of our total land area.

But this isn't really about the number of acres. It's about these very particular wild and special places that are now permanently protected from roads, mineral extraction and development. Not just today, but for forever. It's also about the story of New Mexicans from every walk of life coming together and working shoulder to shoulder for years, building a groundswell of support based on their love of these places that simply, respectfully, demanded action. Our collective persistence practically guaranteed success. After all, when would you stop fighting for something you loved?

At the same time, this couldn't have happened without the farsightedness, perseverance and legislative talent of our federal congressional delegation. Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich co-sponsored the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Conservation Act, which was absorbed into the public lands package. Legislation to safeguard the Wilderness in Doña Ana County was first introduced by former Sen. Jeff Bingaman in 2009. And Udall and Heinrich sponsored the Cerros del Norte Conservation Act to protect Wilderness in Taos County. The original version of this legislation was also first introduced by Sen. Bingaman in 2009.

All three of the currently serving New Mexico representatives, Ben Ray Lujan, Deb Haaland and Xochitl Torres Small supported the bill. Assistant Speaker Lujan sponsored the Rio Grande del Norte companion legislation in the House in the last congress (with former representative and current governor Michelle Lujan Grisham cosponsoring).

Altogether, this legislation created 10 new Wilderness areas in Doña Ana County and two new Wilderness areas in Taos County. It also created the Ah-Shi-Sle-Pah Wilderness Area and expanded the existing Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness Area, both near the Chaco Culture National Historical Park. All of these new Wilderness areas are managed by the Bureau of Land Management. (Interesting note – the Bisti was the first ever BLM Wilderness area.) We’ve highlighted all these areas within this newsletter, including maps and photographs. Of course, to really appreciate their beauty, wildness and ecological importance, you should experience them for yourself. This newsletter, our other publications and our website will help you do this. (Along with helpful tips – such as midday in summer is perhaps not the best time to visit the southern areas!)

The legislation also reauthorized the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which has provided funding for public lands and open spaces in all 33 New Mexico counties since its creation. Sens. Udall and Heinrich have been two of the fund’s most ardent supporters.

Our partners in this journey are too numerous to mention though The Wilderness Society and New Mexico Wildlife Federation deserve special recognition. And while everything we do here at New Mexico Wild we do as a team, special praise is due to Jeff Steinborn, our southern director; Nathan Small (who was until December our “conservation wrangler”); and board member David Soules; who together led the way for the southern Wilderness areas. Our traditional community organizer John Olivas and former board member (and former mayor of Questa) Esther Garcia were critical leaders for the Taos County wilderness areas. Thanks to everyone who played a part large and small, and especially to those who came before us with the vision that now is reality. Thanks particularly to those of you who make up our thousands of members and supporters, for your generosity, patience, encouragement and inspiration. Raise a glass – you deserve it.

As highlighted in the following pages, we won’t be resting on our laurels. There are other sensitive areas and wildlife that need protections. Read about the Chaco Cultural Heritage Area bill, the Mexican gray wolf, a call to introduce legislation to protect Cerro de la Olla and community support to designate the Gila River as Wild and Scenic. Included is a special message from Sen. Heinrich, profiles of some of New Mexico’s leading women conservation officials, some tough farewells to old friends and introductions of new staff. (That includes the doubling of our legal department – from one attorney to two!)

I hope you enjoy exploring these pages and the new wild places they showcase. If you’re not already a supporter, check us out. We have fun and get things done.

Happy trails.



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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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NORTHERN NEW MEXICO REPORT

Chaco Update

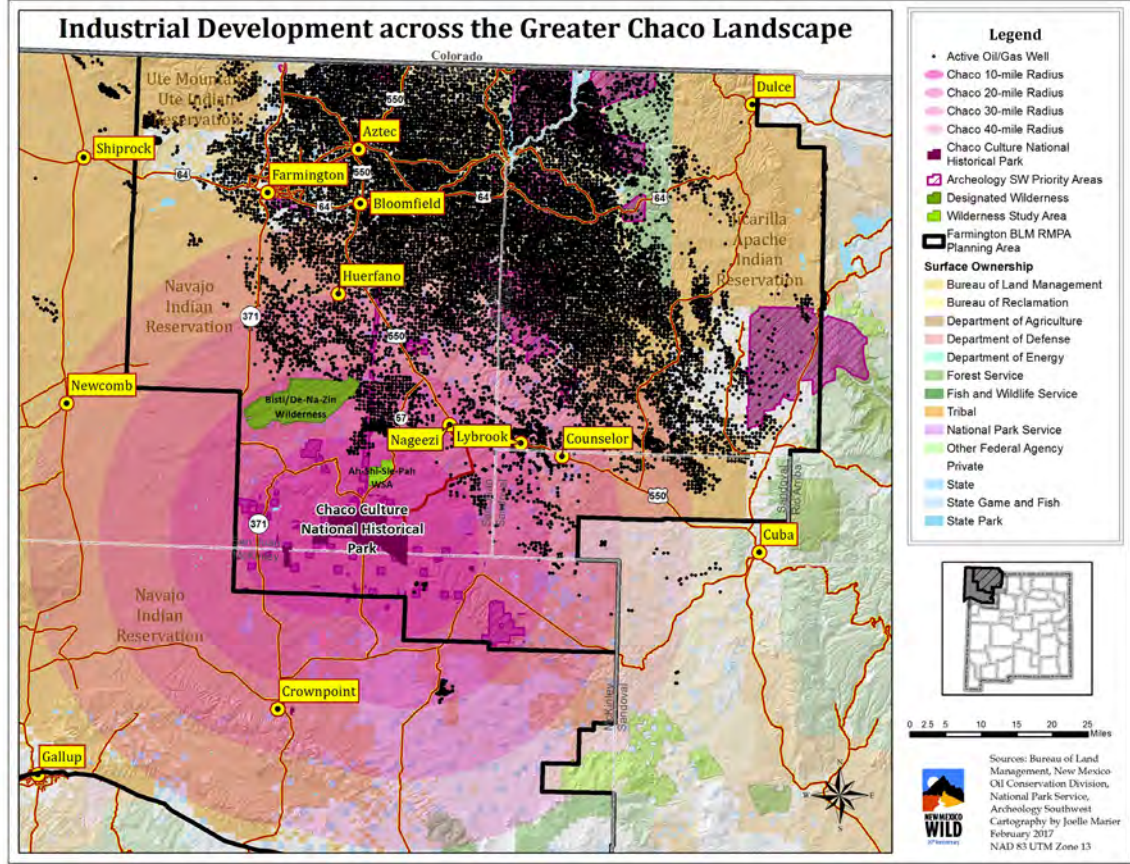
STAFF REPORT

Chaco Culture National Historical Park and the surrounding areas face constant threats from oil and gas developers. In February of this year, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) removed parcels of land near Chaco from an upcoming oil and gas lease sale – but only after the agency was overwhelmed by the intense public backlash it faced for offering the parcels for sale in the first place.

A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the park and adjacent lands are cultural wonders, home to fragile Native American artifacts, and sacred sites not found anywhere else. Nearby communities struggle with health impacts associated with the concentration of industrial development. But that has not stopped BLM and oil and gas companies from constantly targeting it for resource extraction.

Fortunately, New Mexico’s entire federal delegation has joined forces to protect the greater Chaco region. On April 9, U.S. Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich and U.S. Representatives Ben Ray Lujan, Deb Haaland, and Xochitl Torres Small introduced the *Chaco Cultural Heritage Area Protection Act*, S. 1079, a bill to withdraw the federal lands around Chaco Canyon from further mineral development. The bill would help ensure the protection of Chaco ruins and the greater landscape surrounding the Chaco Culture National Historical Park by preventing any future leasing or development of minerals owned by the U.S. government that are located within an approximately 10-mile protected radius around Chaco.

The legislation is supported by Native voices, including the Navajo Nation and the All Pueblo Council of Governors, which called



for the bill’s reintroduction at a historic summit held at Acoma on March 21, 2019. New Mexico Wild is also backing the legislation.

Meanwhile, new state Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard has taken steps of her own to protect the region at the state level. In February Garcia Richard announced that she plans to introduce a moratorium on any new oil and gas leases sales on state trust lands located within the 10-mile buffer zone surrounding Chaco Culture National Historical Park.

Of the approximately 900,000 acres of land within the zone, about ten percent belongs

to the state. The moratorium would offer an extra layer of protection to the restrictions proposed in the legislation introduced by Sens. Udall and Heinrich.

The greater Chaco region is unique and irreplaceable. It is irresponsible for BLM to repeatedly place these lands in the crosshairs of out-of-state corporations in the extractive industries. We thank New Mexico’s elected officials, at both the federal and state levels, for their leadership and encourage them to do everything in their power to preserve the cultural, historical and natural wonders found in this special place. 🦕

Bisti and Ah-shi-sle-pah Updates

The Greater Chaco region of northwestern New Mexico is home to almost 10,000 acres of new Wilderness, thanks to S. 47, the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, signed into law on March 12. These include the new Ah-Shi-Sle-Pah Wilderness and the expansion of the Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness Area. New Mexico boasts the first Bureau of Land Management Wilderness ever designated – the Bisti.

AH-SHI-SLE-PAH WILDERNESS (approximately 7,242 acres)

Formerly a Wilderness Study Area, this region features scenic, multicolored badlands, as well as low, sparsely vegetated hills and mesas containing highly significant fossil remains.

Ah-shi-sle-pah is southeast of Farmington and just north of Chaco Culture National Historical Park.

Ah-shi-sle-pah is one part of New Mexico’s Colorado Plateau badlands Wilderness complex that also includes the Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness. All are located around broad washes flanked by hills and mesas eroded into unusual formations. The nearly complete skeleton of a dinosaur was found here along with fossils of other dinosaurs and early mammals.

The Ah-shi-sle-pah lacks marked or maintained trails, but the terrain readily allows for cross-country travel. Old roads and livestock trails, ridges, and drainages offer routes for exploration, but the topography can be very complex and confusing.

EXPANSION OF BISTI/DE-NA-ZIN WILDERNESS (by approximately 2,250 acres for a total of 43,420 acres)

This Wilderness area between Farmington and Crownpoint showcases a diverse environment of rolling grasslands and broken rugged badlands cut by broad washes and gently sloping mesas.

The Bisti (pronounced Bis-tie), a name derived from a Navajo word meaning “badlands,” is a strange, otherworldly sort of place. Stone trunks of ancient trees protrude from the lifeless soil, where calcite crystals glitter in the intense sun, and the land is contorted like an amoeba with weathered formations known as hoodoos and toadstools. To geologists, however, the Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness exhibits



The new Ah-shi-sle-pah Wilderness is known for fascinating rock formations known as hoodoos. Photo: Mike Richie

a different richness. Here chapters of Earth’s history are laid bare in interbedded layers of shale, sandstone and coal.

When the two Wildernesses were designated in 1984, it was at least in part to preempt strip-mining. The two areas remained separate (Bisti, 3,946 acres, and De-Na-Zin, 22,454 acres) until 1996 when the BLM completed a land exchange with the Navajo Nation that created a Wilderness corridor linking the two.

Hikers who want to explore the Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness face special challenges, including the lack of marked trails and confusing topography. But following a preset route is contrary to the entire spirit of this area, which invites random venturing. This also is an extremely fragile Wilderness. The landforms here often have no vegetation to stabilize them, and the soil is highly subject to erosion. Furthermore, the area’s geological treasures such as calcite crystals and petrified wood fragments are everywhere — the temptation is great to grab a chunk as a souvenir, but please resist. 🏜️

PETROGLYPH CLEAN-UP DAY



Rep. Deb Haaland speaks to volunteers at a work day co-hosted by New Mexico Wild at Petroglyph National Monument during the federal government shutdown in January. Sen. Martin Heinrich and Albuquerque Mayor Tim Keller also participated in the work day. Photo: Mark Allison



New Mexico Wild Executive Director Mark Allison and Deputy Director Tisha Broska present a thank-you card to federal employees affected by the federal government shutdown at the Albuquerque office of the U.S. Forest Service. Photo: Joey Keefe

WILDERNESS CELEBRATIONS



Sen. Tom Udall poses for a photo with New Mexico Wild board member David Soules and former staff member Nathan Small at a celebration of New Mexico’s new Wilderness areas within the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument on March 21, 2019. The event was co-hosted by New Mexico Wild. Photo: Grecia Nuñez



Sen. Martin Heinrich speaks at a celebration of New Mexico’s new Wilderness areas in Albuquerque on March 21. The event was hosted by New Mexico Wild.

New Gray Wolf

ABQ BioPark Zoo “Boosts” Its Wolf Recovery & Reintroduction Program

BY LANE KIRKPATRICK

The ABQ Biopark Zoo recently added a new lobo to its pack as part of its program to help support the Mexican gray wolf. In December 2018, the zoo received Ryder, a 4-year-old male wolf who came from the Binder Park Zoo in Michigan. Ryder will hopefully be a mate to Kawi, the zoo’s 4-year-old female wolf. As part of this program, the zoo also said goodbye to male wolf Apache, who moved to Brookfield Zoo in Chicago. The 7-year-old wolf had been at the ABQ BioPark since 2015. Last year, cubs from Brookfield Zoo were successfully introduced to a wild wolf pack in Arizona, where a mother

The ABQ BioPark has been an integral part of the Mexican gray wolf breeding program, producing 69 Mexican wolf pups over the years.

accepted them as her own. The relocation of both Ryder and Apache was aided by LightHawk, a group of volunteer pilots



Ryder has a new home at the ABQ BioPark Zoo.

who shuttle the animals on direct flights and in temperature-controlled cabins to minimize stress on the animals.

This story about breeding wolves at the ABQ BioPark is part of a continuing story about the Mexican gray wolf, a species once on the brink of extinction and the recovery and reintroduction program that followed.

The Mexican gray wolf is the smallest of the gray wolves. An estimated 4,000 or more of these wolves once roamed across Texas, New Mexico and Arizona and were equally as abundant in Mexico. (See figure entitled, “Historic Range of the Mexican Gray Wolf.”)

Story continued on page 22

WOLF UPDATE

Mexican wolves had a rough 2018. Seventeen wolves were found dead, including several killed by traps, setting a record for a single year. In late October, the program suffered a serious blow when we lost our McKittrick case at the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.

In the case, we sought to eliminate a barrier the Department of Justice placed on itself many years ago, making it almost impossible for the department to prosecute people for illegally killing wolves. The court determined we did not prove the policy was responsible for more wolves being killed.

This means it remains extremely difficult for any charges to be brought against poachers, but also that opponents of wolf reintroduction know there is almost no possibility they will be punished for criminal action, leading to a near-complete lack of legal deterrence.

But the news in 2018 wasn’t all bad. The Forest Service took unprecedented action by revoking the grazing permit of a rancher convicted of trapping and killing a Mexican wolf. Craig Thiessen pled guilty to the charge, incurring a penalty of several thousand dollars. Had the Forest Service not revoked his grazing permit, he could have continued using the forest (and its animal inhabitants) undisturbed. The agency’s decision sent a strong and important statement to forest users that



Map of the historic range of the Mexican gray wolf

endangered species are its highest priority.

This year, the Mexican wolf program got a new director. Brian McGee has so far been very willing to talk with conservation groups, and we are hopeful this will mean more releases of wolves into both New Mexico and Arizona, as well as more collaboration with both wolf advocates and the Gila National Forest.

Meanwhile, two court challenges — one to the 2015 Mexican wolf management rule and one to the 2017 Mexican wolf recovery rule — continue in federal court. New Mexico Wild is a party to both cases. We do not believe either of these plans was based on the best available science, nor that they achieved the goal of furthering Mexican wolf survival. 🐾

TAOS COUNTY WILDERNESS AREAS

Cerro de la Olla

While we are absolutely thrilled at the two new Wilderness areas within the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument, the Cerro del Yuta Wilderness and the Rio San Antonio Wilderness, our work isn't completely done.

The volcanic mountain Cerro de la Olla rises to 9,500 feet in elevation and is among a triune of giant volcanoes that rise above the sage-covered Taos Plateau. San Antonio Mountain is 10 miles north and west from Cerro de la Olla, and Ute Mountain is ten miles north and east of Cerro de La Olla. Cerro de la Olla lies toward the center of Rio Grande del Norte National Monument about four miles west of the Rio Grande Gorge. It is remotely located and provides exceptional opportunities for solitude.

Cerro de la Olla is forested on its sides. The top of the mountain is primarily open

grassland interspersed with oak copse where bear, mountain lion, elk and deer like to feed and rest. From the summit, the 360-degree vista is extraordinary. On a clear day, one gazes down upon the vast volcanic plateau where the Rio Grande Gorge cuts deeply into the sage plains and beyond to distant ranges in every direction.

Humans have used Cerro de la Olla for thousands of years. Today, citizens visit this rugged mountain to enjoy solitude and unique vistas to hunt game, gather medicinal herbs and collect firewood. Many birds also use Cerro de la Olla, including a diversity of raptors such as the uncommon golden eagle, peregrine falcons, prairie falcons, great horned owls and long-eared owls.

The local community in Taos County overwhelmingly supports designating Cerro de

la Olla as a Wilderness area to see it permanently protected for the benefit of present and future generations. **New Mexico Wild and the Friends of the Rio Grande del Norte Coalition call on federal elected officials to introduce legislation to add Cerros del la Olla to the National Wilderness Preservation System.** 🏔️



RIO GRAND DEL NORTE UPDATE

Northern New Mexico gained two new Wilderness areas thanks to S. 47, the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, signed into law on March 12. New Mexico Wild and a broad coalition worked for more than a decade to permanently protect these special areas - Cerro del Yuta (Ute Mountain) and Río San Antonio, both within the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument.

Rio Grande del Norte boasts incredible wildlands and waters that sustain the surrounding communities and is home to elk, deer, bighorn sheep, golden eagles, sandhill cranes and other wildlife. The area is one of the most stunning and ecologically significant in the state and a destination for tourists and outdoor enthusiasts.

CERRO DEL YUTA WILDERNESS (approximately 13,420 acres)

The centerpiece of Cerro del Yuta is Ute Mountain – a 10,000-foot-high volcanic cone that rises more than 2,600 feet above the surrounding plain and overlooks the Taos Gorge. Ute is something you can't miss. Located about 10 miles west of Costilla, it is the dominant feature for those driving north from Taos along N.M. 522. Free of designated trails, the steep trek up Ute Mountain rewards hikers with sweeping views. The slopes of Ute are covered in piñon at the base and pockets of ponderosa, aspen, white pine and Douglas fir in the higher elevations. Looking down from grassy meadows of blue grama, western wheatgrass and Indian ricegrass where the trees thin, the gorge is a jagged, inky



slash dividing Ute from its sister cones to the west. Snow-capped Blanca rises to the north, just across the state line. The whole Sangre de Cristo range falls to the east, terminating, view-wise, at Wheeler Peak.

RÍO SAN ANTONIO WILDERNESS (approximately 8,120 acres)

People often assume from its name that this Wilderness Study Area includes 10,908-foot San Antonio Mountain, the dramatic long-extinct volcanic cone that is a familiar landmark in this part of New Mexico. In fact, the Wilderness is made up of the rolling grasslands to the north and west, including a portion of the Río San Antonio. For wildlife viewers, this is an advantage, for the terrain's openness allows better wildlife viewing than adjacent forested lands.

The Río San Antonio itself sits 200 feet below a plateau, creating a unique riparian area and offering recreational opportunities to boost the local economy.

Species found here include elk, mule deer, pronghorn, black bear, mountain lions, coyotes, prairie dogs, wild turkey and raptors, including bald eagles and peregrine falcons. While there are no designated trails, the terrain's open nature readily allows cross-country hiking and foot access from parking areas around San Antonio Mountain. 🌲

For more information go to
www.nmwild.org or
www.riograndedelnorte.org
or see our Wild Guide.

SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO REPORT Silver City to Host State's Premier Outdoor Conference on October 3 & 4, 2019

New Mexico Wild was proud to organize the first annual Outdoor Economics Conference, which took place in May 2018 in Las Cruces and was attended by representatives of 28 communities across New Mexico and featured speakers from eight Western states. The conference has become a pivotal event to help communities, small businesses, and citizens develop strategies for growing the state's \$9.9 billion outdoor recreation economy.

The conference plays a key role in educating policy makers about successful initiatives to expand outdoor tourism and economic development. The 2018 conference helped develop support for the establishment of a state Office of Outdoor Recreation. The upcoming 2019 Outdoor Economics Conference will provide a platform for communities across the state to learn about the New Mexico Office of Outdoor Recreation's potential programs and resources.

The 2019 Outdoor Economics Conference will feature panel discussions related to community and private sector strategies for promoting nearby public lands to create jobs and tourism. Conference topics will highlight tourism opportunities connected to recre-

ation on New Mexico's trails and rivers. Located near the historic Gila Wilderness and Continental Divide Trail, the conference will also offer guided trips to the Wilderness and the Gila River as well as a reception on the historic Silver City MainStreet. 🏔️

More information:

Register online at www.outdooreconomicsnm.com. The registration fee is \$40.

The Conference will be held at the Grant County Veterans Memorial Business & Conference Center at 3031 Highway 180 East in Silver City, New Mexico.

In addition to New Mexico Wild, current sponsors of the 2019 **New Mexico Outdoor Economics Conference** include the town of Silver City, Grant County, Western New Mexico University, Silver City MainStreet Project and the Silver City Grant County Chamber of Commerce. Let us know if your town or business would like to learn more about sponsorship opportunities.



Gila angler. Photo: Tisha Broska



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GILA UPDATE Wild and Scenic

Support for Gila Wild and Scenic Rivers legislation continues to build momentum and attract diverse voices from across southwestern New Mexico.

With more than 150 local small businesses; 60 private property owners in Grant and Catron counties who own land near the river; 43 sportsmen, outdoor recreation, veterans and conservation organizations; and 37 faith-based organizations on board, there is a growing chorus of support from communities

in the Gila calling for the permanent protection of our Wild and Scenic rivers.

Furthermore, the town of Silver City, the All Pueblo Council of Governors, Copper Country Senior Olympics, NAACP Doña Ana County Chapter and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) have called on our senators to introduce legislation to protect the Gila and San Francisco rivers and their main tributaries. The city of Bayard passed a unanimous resolution, stat-

ing in part: “Bayard desires to allow our children and future generations the opportunity to experience the last free flowing river in Southern New Mexico and benefit from its life providing water as it has always been.”

New Mexico Wild is committed to continuing to broaden and deepen support in southwestern New Mexico for our Wild and Scenic Rivers in the Gila. 🌲



“Strictly from my position as County Assessor, the property values of the area are affected positively by the presence of the Gila River as a major attraction and draw to relocate in southern NM. Personally, being a fourth-generation native, I am fortunate to live here near the Gila and feel we need to continue to preserve it for future generations. The Gila River is rare and valuable as one of the last free-flowing rivers in the United States, flowing from the first Wilderness area in the United States. Todos juntamos por la conservacion de nuestro rio Gila, se lo debemos a generaciones futuras.”

— Raul Turrieta, Grant County assessor, Grant County, NM



“The Gila Region is one of the most ecologically diverse areas of North America with over 1,500 vascular plant species and mammal diversity second only to the Sierras; the Gila River is the lifeblood of this magnificent diversity.”

— Dr. Kathy Whiteman, Western New Mexico University, Natural Sciences Department associate professor and Outdoor Program director



“I was born in Santa Rita, New Mexico, and have lived my entire life, 73 years, in Grant County. Some of my fondest memories are of hunting, fishing and camping with friends and family over the years. For many years, some of us would take the challenge of rafting down the Gila River in the spring when the runoff was the highest, from The Forks to Turkey Creek. We made our own rafts from large truck inner tubes and cut-off 55-gallon barrels, carried our own food and fishing supplies. It was always a thrilling adventure, filled with breathtaking scenery and wildlife. We frequently encountered the remains of other people’s attempts at rafting the Gila – canoes, rafts, etc. The Gila River is a jewel to be enjoyed for generations, to appreciate the beauty, enjoy the thrill.”

— Daniel C. Vasquez, Silver City LULAC member



“Supporting designations such as Wild & Scenic is important to help maintain and preserve our waterways.”

— Polly Cook, owner, Javalina Coffee Shop



“Designations such as Wild & Scenic are a benefit to our community because they help to draw ecotourism to our community.”

— Left to right, Bob Ingalls, Tasha Cooper and Diana Leyba of Leyba & Ingalls Arts



“It is important that we call for the protection of the Gila River because we have been going there to fish, hunt and picnic with our families for many years and we want to continue to do so while securing it for future generations.”

— Chon Fierro, Mayor of Bayard

Story continued on page 20





KID-FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES

BY TANIA SOUSSAN



A kid-friendly hike in Rio Grande del Norte National Monument.

From hiking and river rafting to exploring historic sites and earning a junior range badge, there's plenty to engage kids at New Mexico's Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks and Rio Grande del Norte national monuments.

The monuments near Las Cruces and Taos, which are administered by the Bureau of Land Management, might soon be home to new Wilderness areas. Legislation passed overwhelmingly by the Senate in February would create a dozen permanent Wilderness areas.

The Dripping Springs Visitor Center on the east side of Las Cruces is a good place to kick off a visit to the Organ Mountains and the starting point for two kid-friendly hikes. Families can borrow a backpack stuffed with binoculars, books and other essentials to take out on the trail and pick up a junior ranger activity booklet. Children who answer the questions about animals and plants can earn a junior ranger badge.

The half-mile La Cueva trail is "a great hike for small children – easy, short, with interesting vegetation, a cave, and even a murder mystery," writes local outdoorsman Bob Julyan in his book, "Best Hikes with Children in New Mexico." The hike leads to a low cave where in the late 1860s a gentle hermit once lived and was killed. Julyan's book offers details so you can share the story with your kids as you walk.

For a longer hike, try the easy 3-mile roundtrip to Dripping Springs, a shaded canyon with a waterfall that was once the site of a resort for people escaping the heat of the city below. The ruins of some buildings remain. Picnic in this area or back near the visitor center.

Julyan also recommends camping at the Aguirre Spring Campground on the east side of the mountains. "It has some interesting trails, and if you camp overnight you have a good chance of seeing ringtails," he said. The Baylor Pass Trail with its stunning scenery and interesting vegetation is a family favorite.

Near Taos, the Rio Grande del Norte offers a different kind of adventure. Families can camp, hike, fish for trout or sign up with a local outfitter for a whitewater rafting adventure.

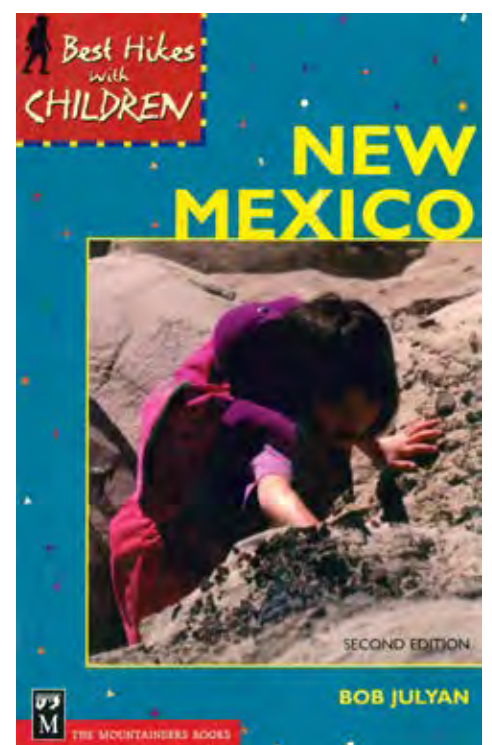
The Wild Rivers Recreation Area near Questa offers a couple of options for hiking. You could walk (or mountain bike) all or part of the 6.2-mile Rinconada Loop Trail for an easy walk through piñons, oaks and sagebrush on the mesa top with great views from the La Junta Overlook of the confluence of the Rio Grande and Red River 800 feet below. The trail passes picnic areas, campgrounds and the BLM's Wild Rivers Visitor Center, which offers guided hikes and campfire talks during the summer months.

If your family is up for a more strenuous hike, take the 0.4-mile Chiflo Trail. It's a steep and rocky 320-foot drop down through the river gorge to the Rio Grande itself -- an adult should lead and watch small children carefully. The Big Arsenic and Little Arsenic trails are less steep and offer access to a trail along the river, but the descent – and the climb back up – is about 800 feet. 🏔️

More information:

Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks:
www.blm.gov/visit/omdp
or (575) 522-1219

Rio Grande del Norte:
www.blm.gov/visit/rgdnm
or (575) 586-1150



Climate Change

Conversations about the dangers of climate change often focus on global implications, and for good reason. Rising temperatures and sea levels threaten wildlife, ecosystems, communities, food supplies and infrastructure in every corner of the world.

But what is often overlooked are the dangers of climate change at the local level, how it impacts our daily lives right here in New Mexico.

For starters, New Mexico is drying up. According to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, New Mexico's spring precipitation is projected to decrease by up to 20 percent in some parts of the state by the middle of the 21st century as compared to the 20th century. Meanwhile, the state's annual temperature has increased by 2 degrees since the 1970s. The combination of increased temperatures and decreased precipitation leads to lower snowpack, which in turn leads to less water for our rivers, streams and overall water supply.

New Mexico is also one of the nation's top producers of oil and gas. While most of us still depend on fossil fuels to some extent, that dependence comes at a cost. Aggressive oil and gas drilling practices leave our soil and groundwater vulnerable, not to mention that they put cultural resources at risk in places like the greater Chaco region. Beyond drilling, the practices of venting or flaring methane compromise air quality and threaten the overall public health of nearby communities. Methane – the primary component of natural gas – is 84 times more harmful than carbon dioxide.

While the threats of climate change in our own backyard must be taken seriously, New Mexico is equipped with a valuable tool for battling its effects – Wilderness.

Wilderness areas are roadless and are only accessible by foot or on horseback, keeping ecosystems natural and intact. These natural ecosystems have numerous benefits, particularly for wildlife. Wilderness areas allow wildlife to roam freely, unencumbered by the human developments that often cut off access to food sources and migratory routes. These undisturbed ecosystems make it easier for wildlife to adapt to climate change.

The trees in forested Wilderness areas – which cannot be cut down for logging purposes – trap carbon dioxide, reducing greenhouse gas levels. As an added benefit, trees and other plants act as a reference guide for scientists, helping to advance our knowledge of how the planet's climate has changed over time. Much of what researchers know about climate change comes from the clues living within trees, wood and pollen cores that increasingly can be found only in protected Wilderness.

Understanding that the global crisis of climate change is also a backyard reality is the first step to reversing its trends. The next step is to utilize the tools of conservation that are available to us, such as a Wild and Scenic River designation

for the Gila River, the last free-flowing river in New Mexico. Such a step would preserve the Gila in its natural state, removing the threat of human activities that could reduce water supplies for humans and wildlife living nearby.

Protecting our wild places is not only good for the spiritual and mental health of humanity, but for the physical health of our changing planet as well. 🌲



Oil and gas impacts. Photo: L. Hagen



Views of the same area of the Jemez Mountains in 2002 and 2004 show Piñon tree die-off. Photo: Dr. Craig Allen, U.S. Geological Survey

OMDP WILDERNESS



Photo: David Soules

Some of New Mexico's most special places have a new level of protection thanks to a sweeping public lands conservation bill that created 1.3 million acres of Wilderness across the country, including 272,586 acres in New Mexico, the majority in Doña Ana County. Ten new Wilderness areas within the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument were part of S. 47, the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019.

For more than a decade, New Mexico Wild and a broad coalition of Native Americans, sportsmen, small business owners, faith leaders, conservationists and local elected officials worked to protect the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks. New Mexico Wild began hiring Las Cruces based grassroots organizers for the effort in 2005. In 2014, President Obama made the beautifully rugged landscape with its rich natural and cultural resources a national monument.

In the heart of the monument were eight Wilderness Study Areas and two additional areas we proposed for Wilderness designation. (Much of the land has been managed as Wilderness Study Areas since the 1980s when it was provided interim protected status. Other areas in the Organ Mountains were given Wilderness Study Area status in 1993.) They have the highest quality habitat, boast the healthiest plant and animal populations and are critical components of healthy watersheds. These areas boast sky island mountains, native Chihuahuan Desert grasslands, caves, unique lava flows, limestone cliffs and winding canyons that draw visitors to Doña Ana County. To complete the community's original vision, Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich introduced Wilderness legislation for these areas.

At 179,846 acres, a complex of six Wilderness areas centered on the Potrillo Mountains southwest of Las Cruces now represents the fourth-largest Wilderness complex in New Mexico, after the Gila (559,311 acres), the Aldo Leopold (203,548 acres) and the Pecos Wilderness areas (221,806 acres).

ADEN LAVA FLOW WILDERNESS (27,673 acres)

This area offers one of the best opportunities in the continental United States to view lava flows and the many unique shapes and structures created by them. Basalt flows, volcanic craters and sand dunes characterize the landscape 20 miles southwest of Las Cruces where a shield volcano of Aden Crater produced extensive lava flows more than 10,000 years ago. The Aden Lava Flow contains pressure ridges, lava tubes and crevices up to five feet wide and 20 to 30 feet deep. These features provide cover for wildlife and excellent opportunities for photography and geological sightseeing.

POTRILLO MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS (105,085 acres)

Extinct volcanoes, black lava fields and mile after mile of desert grassland combine to give the West Potrillo Mountains qualities found nowhere else in New Mexico. Just 45 minutes from El Paso and Las Cruces is one of the largest relatively undisturbed stretches of Chihuahuan Desert landscape in the state. In one of the large basins in the center of the mountains, a unique "cholla savannah" features eight- to 10-foot-tall cholla cactus. Ephemeral lakes in Indian Basin provide seasonal ponds for ducks, and an abundance of small mammals attracts raptors in the winter months. Several undisturbed structures dating from 1300 to 1400 AD also have been found here. Most hiking focuses on gaining the tops of the summits for spectacular desert vistas.

CINDER CONE WILDERNESS (16,935 acres)

This area features an extremely high concentration of undisturbed cinder cone mountains and rich wildlife habitat prized by hunters and non-hunters alike.

EAST POTRILLO MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS (12,155 acres)

The East Potrillos ("colt" in Spanish) can be generally described as an uplifted west-tilted fault-block. The basal rocks in the range are sedimentary, and consist of limestone, dolomites, and silty beds of Middle Permian age. No perennial streams originate in the range, and none flow nearby. Plant communities can be generally characterized as Chihuahuan desert scrublands, creosote bush desert, and desert grasslands. The East Potrillo Mountains receive few visitors, due to the rugged topography and the lack of water or shade. The range is long and narrow, with an orientation trending NNW to SSE. The maximum elevation of the range is approximately 5,300 feet, which provides a relief of nearly 1000 feet above the flats to the east. Access to the general vicinity is through New Mexico State Road 9, and several unpaved county roads.

MOUNT RILEY WILDERNESS (8,382 acres)

Mount Riley is the highest point in the area, rising abruptly more than 1,700 feet above the surrounding desert plain to an elevation of nearly 6,000 feet. The Wilderness, on the east side of the Potrillo Mountains section of the monument, is comprised of three volcanic cinder cones. There are no maintained trails to the summits, but hikers who find a route to the top are rewarded with fine views.



WHITETHORN
WILDERNESS (9,616 acres)

The whitethorn acacia, prevalent here, is the area’s namesake. The native shrub is a key year-round food source for quail and a summer food source for desert mule deer. Weathered lava invites in small and large wildlife, and views stretch hundreds of miles. In addition to the Potrillo Mountains complex, the act created four other Wilderness areas:

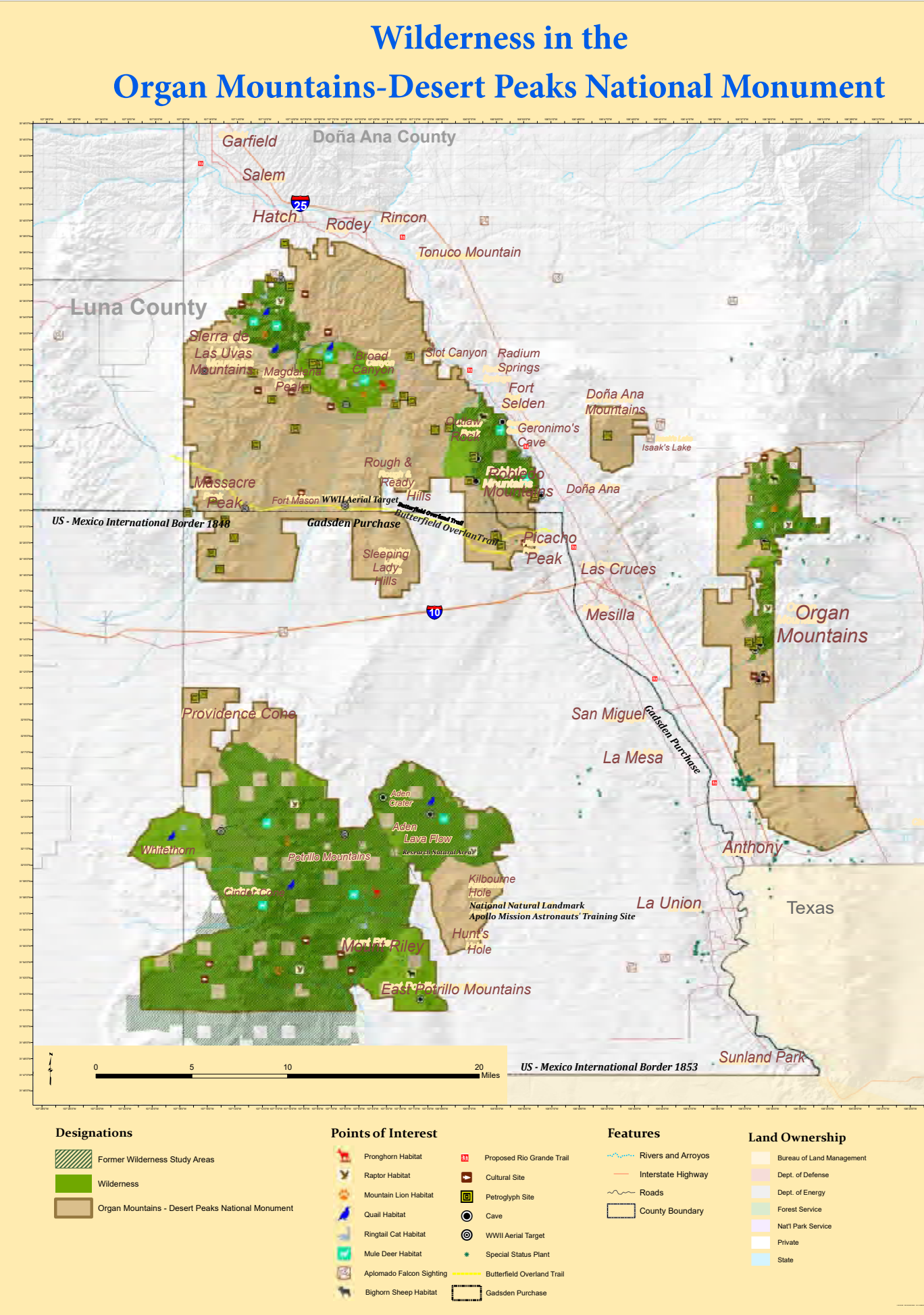
SIERRA DE LAS UVAS
WILDERNESS (11,114 acres)

These volcanic mountains support outstanding high desert grasslands and sustain thriving populations of quail, deer, javelina and other wildlife. In addition, three different Native American cultures left their marks in various sites throughout these scenic mountains; you might be fortunate to find petroglyphs made by peoples of the Jornada Mogollon Culture.

BROAD CANYON
WILDERNESS (13,902 acres)

A secluded gem, the Broad Canyon area shelters hidden winding canyons, water pools, flat topped mountains and dozens of rich cultural sites. Only 45 minutes from Las Cruces, this area has beautiful views that stretch across southern New Mexico and into Mexico and is a vital watershed draining more than 75 square miles of land. It is home to countless archeological sites and the

Story continued on page 19



More information: www.nmwild.org or www.organmountains.org or see our *Wild Guide: Passport to New Mexico Wilderness*.

www.scribd.com/lists/16880564/Organ-Mountains-Desert-Peaks-Conservation-Act-Maps



FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION ROUNDUP



A forested lava dome in the Valle Grande, the largest meadow in the Valles Caldera National Preserve. The preserve is just one of many sites in New Mexico funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund; Inset: New Mexico State Capitol Building.

In February, U.S. Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.) and U.S. Representative Deb Haaland (D-N.M.) led a group of more than 100 Democratic members of Congress in re-introducing legislation to protect America's treasured national monuments against the Trump administration's attacks on public lands. U.S. Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) and Assistant Speaker Ben Ray Luján (D-N.M.) are co-sponsors. **The America's Natural Treasures of Immeasurable Quality Unite, Inspire, and Together Improve the Economies of States (ANTIQUITIES) Act of 2019** reinforces Congress' clear intent in the Antiquities Act of 1906: Only Congress has the authority to modify a national monument designation.

The Fiscal Year 2019 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, was signed into law in February. The funding bill was authored by the Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies, where Sen. Udall serves as ranking member. This bill provides critical funding for New Mexico's public lands, infrastructure, environmental protection and stewardship, and programs for Indian Country. Highlights include:

- **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)**—The bill provides \$435 million for federal land acquisition and conservation grants provided through the LWCF. LWCF is deeply important to New Mexico, allowing for the protection of places like Valle de Oro, Brazos Cliffs and Rio Grande del Norte.
- **Gold King Mine Spill**—Sen. Udall secured \$4 million for the EPA to continue monitoring water quality in areas affected by the Gold King Mine Spill.
- **Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund**—The bill provides \$10 million for tribal reclamation of abandoned mine lands that support economic development.
- **Chaco Canyon**—The bill includes language to express Congress' support for the delay of the oil and gas leasing around Chaco Culture National Historical Park until robust tribal consultation and historic preservation studies can be completed.
- **National Landscape Conservation System**—The bill provides \$39.8 million to effectively manage national monuments and special management areas, including Rio Grande del Norte and Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks.

Also in February, Sens. Heinrich and Udall reintroduced the **Buffalo Tract Protection Act** to withdraw four parcels of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands in southern Sandoval County, including the Buffalo Tract and the Crest of Montezuma, from any mineral development, including gravel mining.

SELECT STATE LEGISLATIVE SESSION ROUNDUP: In this exciting session featuring a new governor and an energized Legislature, many bills were introduced with the potential to benefit New Mexico's land, wildlife and water. Here are some highlights:

OFFICE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION SB 462 (Steinborn, Small, Rubio, Johnson): The bill to create an Office of Outdoor Recreation was signed into law Gov. Lujan Grisham. Outdoor recreation already contributes billions of dollars to the state. This office will increase tourism for outdoor recreation, focusing on increasing revenues and diversifying New Mexico's economy by attracting outdoor recreation industry and business, and by increasing economic development and jobs. While the bill was passed with only a fraction of its original appropriation, it also creates an Outdoor Equity Fund, which will be used for special projects and small grants. The fund can receive donations and future appropriations, as well as capital outlay money.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW ACT HB 206 (Chasey): The Environmental Review Act would have required environmental analysis and public involvement for large projects permitted by state agencies. There are no uniform requirements in New Mexico to ensure potential impacts to air, water, endangered species, cultural sites or public health are considered before development occurs. Sixteen other states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico do have these laws. HB 206 would have helped communities around the state avoid impacts from industrial projects in their neighborhoods and would have allowed taxpayers to see more clearly how state trust lands are being used.

HB 206 was introduced this year after year-long stakeholder meetings (led by New Mexico Wild), which included industry, tribes, legislators, conservation groups and others. Unfortunately, HB 206 got halfway through its second committee hearing before

being halted for the year. While we're disappointed, the bill got further than previous iterations, and we made good progress. We remain deeply committed to passing this bill and will be championing future legislation.

GAME COMMISSION REFORM HB 263 (McQueen): The New Mexico Game Commission is an appointed seven-member board responsible for hiring the director of the Game and Fish Department, as well as setting general wildlife policy. HB 263 moves four appointments from the governor to a bi-partisan group of legislative leadership. It creates specific positions for those four appointments: a scientist, a sportsman, a conservation representative and a farmer/rancher. The purpose of the bill is to reduce politicization, increase the commission's emphasis on science-based decision making, broaden representation and lead to a more consistent application of wildlife policy.

HB 263 passed the House of Representatives on a bipartisan vote of 45-20, but stalled in the Senate. We will continue to work within a coalition of sportsman, conservation, and animal protection organizations to introduce this bill in future sessions.

WILDLIFE CORRIDORS ACT SB 228 (Stewart): Wildlife migrates through established corridors, following food, water, weather and easy passage. Those corridors sometimes follow highways, where wildlife can be struck by vehicles, injuring themselves and often drivers. Overpasses built for wildlife at strategic points can reduce those collisions and allow safer passage for migrating species. SB 228 directs that a study be conducted on migration corridors in the state, and plans for implementation of several safe passage

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Ancient ruins in Chaco Culture National Historical Park. Photo: Tisha Broska

NEW MEXICO'S WOMEN LEADING ON CONSERVATION

DEB HAALAND



Deb Haaland was an advocate for New Mexico's public lands and natural resources long before being elected to represent the state's 1st Congressional District last fall. That lifelong advocacy has not gone unnoticed by Haaland's peers, as the freshman representative has been named vice chair of the House Committee on Natural Resources and the chair of the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands. A member of the Laguna Pueblo, Rep. Haaland is also a member of the Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States and recently participated in a cleanup of the Petroglyph National Monument co-hosted by New Mexico Wild. Rep. Haaland is a co-sponsor of the Antiquities Act of 2019 to protect America's national monuments from unlawful attacks by the President of the United States.

XOCHITL TORRES SMALL



Rep. Xochitl Torres Small was elected to represent New Mexico's 2nd Congressional District in the southern part of the state, home to the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument. During the campaign, Torres Small – who is a water attorney by trade – frequently touted the importance of the monument to the people, culture and economy of southern New Mexico. At one point, Torres Small sent a letter to former Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke that highlighted the monument's importance and urged Zinke to leave it alone at a time when national monuments across the country were coming under attack by the Trump administration.

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM



Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham gave up her seat representing New Mexico's 1st Congressional District to launch her campaign for governor. Since taking office, Lujan Grisham has committed New Mexico to the U.S. Climate Alliance, a coalition of states seeking to combat the adverse impacts of climate change. As part of the pact, Lujan Grisham has committed New Mexico

to cutting emissions by at least 45 percent of the state's 2005 levels over the next 12 years. Additionally, Lujan Grisham has signaled her support for environmentally responsible state legislation, including a bill that would commit New Mexico to transitioning to 50 percent renewable energy by 2030 and 80 percent renewable energy by 2040.

STEPHANIE GARCIA RICHARD



Stephanie Garcia Richard pulled off a trifecta of "firsts" when she was elected State Land Commissioner. She is the first woman, the first Latina and the first educator to be elected to the office. As the head of the agency that administers the 9 million acres of surface and 13 million acres of subsurface estate that benefit the state's schools and universities – in addition to other institutions – Garcia Richard's experience as an educator is invaluable. Garcia Richard has hit the ground running her first few months in office, advocating for legislation that would raise the cap on oil and gas royalties and announcing plans for a moratorium on new oil and gas leases on state land near the greater Chaco region.

SARAH COTTRELL PROPST



Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham nominated Sarah Cottrell Propst to serve as Cabinet Secretary of the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) in January. Secretary Cottrell Propst comes to the role with high-level government experience, having served as Deputy Cabinet Secretary of the Environment Department in the administration of former Gov. Bill Richardson. Upon taking the helm at EMNRD, Secretary Cottrell Propst has been tasked with leading Gov. Lujan Grisham's Climate Change Task Force.

MIMI STEWART



State Sen. Mimi Stewart has long been a conservation champion in New Mexico's legislature, serving as a representative or senator since 1995. This year, Stewart sponsored a bill New Mexico Wild emphatically endorsed – the Wildlife Corridors Act. The legislation calls for a study on migratory

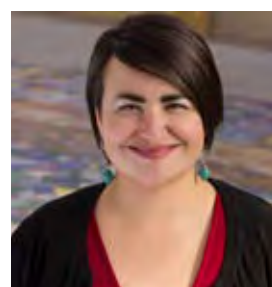
wildlife corridors and would explore potential overpass projects in sensitive corridors across New Mexico. Stewart is also an avid supporter of a Wild and Scenic designation for the Gila River.

GAIL CHASEY



State Rep. Gail Chasey is another longtime advocate for New Mexico's public lands and wild places, serving in the state Legislature since 1997. This year, Chasey helped New Mexico Wild advance an ambitious legislative agenda by sponsoring House Bill 228, also known as the Environmental Review Act (ERA). The ERA, which died in committee, would have brought New Mexico up to speed with 18 other states that require state agencies to consider the environmental impacts of developmental projects.

ANGELICA RUBIO



State Rep. Angelica Rubio of Las Cruces is a longtime supporter of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument and the economic benefits of protecting New Mexico's public lands. In the 2019 Legislative session, Rubio co-sponsored legislation to create an Office of Outdoor Recreation in New Mexico to promote and enhance the state's robust outdoor economy, which brings in \$9.9 billion in consumer spending annually. Rubio was also the driving force behind the inclusion of the Outdoor Equity Fund in the legislation to fund the initiative.



MELANIE STANSBURY

In 2018, Melanie Stansbury was elected to serve in State House District 28, defeating a longtime incumbent. Since

taking office, Rep. Stansbury has taken bold steps to address climate change in New Mexico, sponsoring legislation to create a sustainability and resilience council. The bill, which passed the House but failed in the Senate, would have created a council responsible for developing a plan to prepare New Mexico's state government to deal with the growing threat of climate change. ▲

HISTORIC LEGISLATION for OUR PUBLIC LANDS

BY U.S. SENATOR MARTIN HEINRICH

Nearly 100 years ago, a forester working in New Mexico named Aldo Leopold recognized the beauty and irreplaceable value of protecting the untrammeled landscapes that we have grown to treasure as wilderness. More than 50 years ago, New Mexico's Senator Clinton Anderson led the effort to pass the Wilderness Act into law.

I am so proud to announce that we have successfully passed a



I am pleased that we have found a way forward on these measures. And I am so thankful to New Mexico Wild, your members, and all the New Mexicans who played a role in getting these conservation victories over the finish line.

landmark package of bipartisan legislation that I championed to build on that legacy. The public lands package that just passed in Congress establishes 13 new wilderness areas in New Mexico on a scale we have not seen since the New Mexico Wilderness Act of 1980.

We advanced community-driven conservation visions for New Mexico's two newest national monuments: the Río Grande del Norte and Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks. These two monuments

protect places New Mexicans have long recognized as national treasures. We are now protecting the most rugged and unique habitats in each monument as wilderness. We also established the Ah-shi-shle-pah Wilderness and added to the Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness in northwestern New Mexico.

The public lands package also includes my bipartisan bill, the Every Kid Outdoors Act, which will allow every fourth-grader in America to visit our nation's parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and public lands free of charge-and bring their families along with them. I am so excited that we are encouraging a new generation of youth to explore the rich natural and cultural history on display in our parks, forests, and monuments.

We also permanently reauthorized what I believe has been one of America's most successful conservation programs: the Land and Water Conservation Fund. In New Mexico, LWCF has protected iconic landscapes like the Valles Caldera, Ute Mountain, and Valle de Oro, without costing taxpayers a single dime. It has also provided for community projects like baseball and soccer fields, playgrounds, and picnic areas. Now we will no longer need to worry year after year about renewing this clearly successful program.

In a state that proudly calls itself the Land of Enchantment, we all know how much our public lands mean to us. These are the places where generations of families have gone to explore our natural wonders and learn about our rich history and culture. They also fuel a thriving outdoor recreation economy that supports nearly 100,000 jobs in our state. That's why this legislation is so important.

In a frustrating political time in Washington, when it can be difficult to find any areas of agreement, I am pleased that we have found a way forward on these measures. And I am so thankful to New Mexico Wild, your members, and all the New Mexicans who played a role in getting these conservation victories over the finish line. I have no doubt that these measures will go a long way toward ensuring that the outdoor places we all treasure will be protected for future generations of Americans to enjoy. 🌲

Federal and State Legislation Roundup continued from page 14

projects along highways. SB 228 passed the legislature and was sent to the Governor.

WILDLIFE PROTECTION AND PUBLIC SAFETY ACT HB 366 (McQueen, Chandler, Gonzales): Similar to previous iterations of the bill, HB 366 bans traps on public lands. It passed two House committees but did not get a vote on the House floor. This bill will be reintroduced in 2021.

ENERGY TRANSITION ACT SB 489 (Candelaria, Small, Stewart, Roybal-Caballero, Egolf): This bill provides a mechanism for closing the San Juan Generating Station and requires New Mexico to be 100% carbon-free by 2045! Arguably the biggest piece of environmental legislation this session, SB 489 passed the legislature, making New Mexico the third state to pass carbon-free legislation, and is a huge step towards combating climate change.

INTERSTATE STREAM COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP SB 5 (Wirth): SB 5 changes the Interstate Stream Commission makeup in a similar way to the Game Commission reform bill. The Interstate Stream Commission is a board responsible for water management throughout New Mexico and has some control over what happens to rivers like the Gila. It passed the legislature but was pocket vetoed by the Governor.

OIL CONSERVATION DIVISION POWERS AND DUTIES SB 186 (Martinez): This bill would have allowed the Oil Conservation Division to impose fines when companies violate state laws. The agency used to have this power, but it was rescinded during Gov. Susana Martinez's administration, and fines now have to go through a court process to be implemented. It passed Senate Conservation and Senate Judiciary before dying in Senate Finance. However, in the last moments of the session the ability of OCD to assess some fines (with

caps on the amount) was incorporated into HB 546 (Small, Montoya, Egolf) which did pass and was signed by the Governor.

SOUTHWEST WATER PROJECTS HB 417 (McQueen/Martinez): Similar to bills in previous years, HB 417 would have directed money from the Arizona Water Settlement Act to local and conservation-oriented Gila water projects as an alternative to the Gila diversion proposal. It passed House Energy and Natural Resources and stalled in the House Agriculture and Water Committee.

HB 28 (Stansbury): This bill would have required state agencies to plan for climate change and passed the House, but died in the Senate Finance Committee.

HB 651 (Stansbury, Armstrong, Sedillo-Lopez): This bill improves water-data integration, transparency, and tools for state water planning. It passed the legislature and was signed by the Governor. 🌲

WELCOME NEW STAFF



Wilderness Rangers with Volunteers



Joey Keefe



Simon Sotello



Will Ribbans



Logan Glasenapp

Welcome to Our New Wilderness Rangers

The 2019 Wilderness Rangers are: Zack Bumgarner, Doug Campbell, Brennan Davis, Becky Fitzpatrick, Jesse Furr, James Lautzenheiser, Tobias Nickel, Irene Owsley, and Andrew Reville. These rangers will be responsible for providing a range of important services including Wilderness character monitoring, trails assessment, trail clearing, campsite rehabilitation, public outreach, volunteer coordination and Wilderness education. This year's Wilderness Ranger program will cover Cibola National Forest, Lincoln National Forest, Santa Fe National Forest – Pecos, and Santa Fe National Forest – West. Welcome, Wilderness Rangers!

Joey Keefe, Communications Coordinator

As a lifelong New Mexican who grew up camping and hiking all across the state, Joey Keefe views protecting our public lands as a necessity. Most recently the communications director at the New Mexico Secretary of State's Office, Joey has served in communications roles for various private companies, government agencies and nonprofit organizations. Joey is responsible for helping to advance the mission and goals of New Mexico Wild through effective communication to the public and media.

Simon Sotelo, Gila Community Organizer

Originally from Mimbres, New Mexico, Simon Sotelo III is now an artist in Silver City working in mediums ranging from ceramics to oil and acrylic on canvas to traditional beadwork. He has also worked in the field of food sustainability nonprofit organizations and advocated in various ways for the long-term sustainability of his community, running the local mission and food pantry and volunteering on projects like Wilderness designation campaigns. Simon is now a grassroots community organizer with New Mexico Wild for the Gila Wild & Scenic Campaign in southwestern New Mexico.

Will Ribbans, Wilderness Stewardship and Outreach Manager

Will's passion for the outdoors began as a young kid playing by the river in his hometown of Corrales. His passion for conservation grew at Bosque School through programs like BEMP (Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program) and he went forward to pursue a degree in environmental studies at Eckerd College on the Gulf Coast of Florida. Upon graduation he returned home to Albuquerque to continue his passion for conservation work and environmental stewardship. He worked for Rocky Mountain Youth Corps for five seasons, doing a variety of conservation projects such as conservation outreach, backcountry trail maintenance, volunteer coordination, invasive species removal and more. He loves hiking mountains and experiencing New Mexico's beautiful Wilderness areas.

Logan Glasenapp, Staff Attorney

Logan has called New Mexico home since 2015, when he moved to Albuquerque to pursue his law degree at the University of New Mexico School of Law. Entering law school with a background in grassroots organizing, Logan set his academic and professional sights on environmental law and policy, securing a position on the editorial board of the Natural Resources Journal and internships with the New Mexico Environment Department, the Environmental Protection Agency and several environmental and conservation organizations. Logan completed his law degree in May 2018 and spent a year clerking at the New Mexico Court of Appeals. Logan is originally from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and will always have a soft spot in his heart for a good cheese curd.

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 1,695,598 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 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.



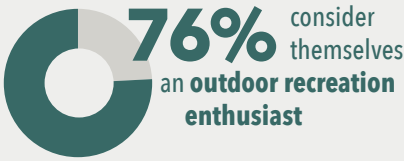
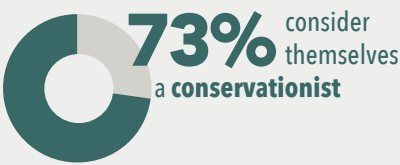
HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT WILDERNESS?

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. 📬

Colorado College's 2019 State of the Rockies
Conservation in the West Poll

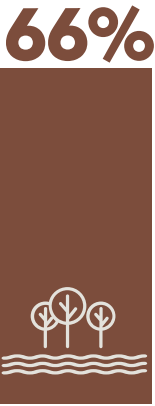
NEW MEXICO

A CONSERVATION MINDSET

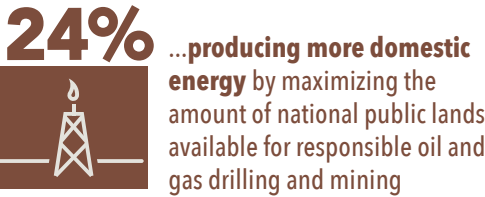
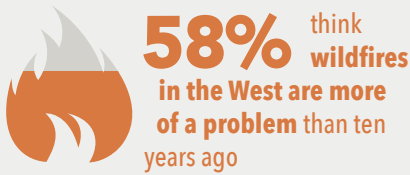


WOULD YOU PREFER THE NEW CONGRESS PLACE MORE EMPHASIS ON...

...**protecting sources of clean water, our air quality and wildlife habitat** while providing opportunities to visit and recreate on our national public lands



THE IMPACT OF WILDFIRE



THE OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY



62% say the ability to live near, recreate on, and enjoy public lands like national forests, parks, or trails was a **significant reason they live in the West**



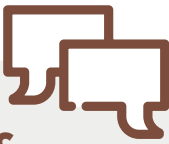
84% believe the **outdoor recreation economy** is **important** for the future of their state and the Western U.S.

PROTECTING LAND, WATER, AND WILDLIFE

86% believe it is important for states to use funds to **protect and restore the health of rivers, lakes, and streams**

71% believe it is important for states to use funds to **conserve wildlife corridors** used by wildlife for migration

PUBLIC INPUT INTO PUBLIC LAND DECISIONS



18% think it was a good decision to **reduce the amount of time the public can comment** on changes to public lands, such as oil and gas leasing

55% think it was a **bad decision**

coloradocollege.edu/stateoftherockies/conservationinthewest/



Nathan Small

Farewell to Nathan Small, Conservation Wrangler

Nathan Small joined New Mexico Wild in 2006 and began by educating people all over the country about threats to Otero Mesa. We called it the Otero Mesa Road Show, and it was just the beginning of Nathan's work on the range to connect people with landscapes. If you have ever met Nathan, you know he has a way with people and that he can really spur others to take action. His down-home approach and enthusiasm for wild places is part of his charm and stable personality. Born and raised in New Mexico, Nathan's passion for the outdoors began early, fueled by hunting, woodcutting, horseback riding and fishing trips with his grandfather in the Cibola National Forest.

After building support for protection of Otero Mesa and taking the reins to develop a tabling outreach program, Nathan moved from our Albuquerque office to help lead organizing efforts in southern New Mexico from our Las Cruces office. Nathan was always in the saddle when representing New Mexico Wild, organizing hikes, horse packing trips and service projects in areas that were potential Wilderness in Doña Ana County. This laid the foundation for our Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks campaign, which resulted in protection of 496,330 acres as a national monument in 2014 and 241,554 acres of Wilderness designated in 2019. We will miss Nathan's great dedication and persistence, but know that he will always be part of the landscapes of New Mexico.

OMDP Wilderness continued from page 13

most extensive record of previous Native American habitation within the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks region.

ROBLEDO MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS (16,776 acres)

The Robledo Mountains house the internationally significant Prehistoric Trackways National Monument, a small section of which is within the new Wilderness area. Named after Spanish colonist Pedro Robledo, these mountains sheltered Billy the Kid in the late 19th century and are potential habitat for desert bighorn sheep reintroduction.

ORGAN MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS (19,916 acres)

This Wilderness is the focal point of the Organ Mountains section of the monument and provides great recreation opportunities, important wildlife habitat and critical watershed protection. A wide variety of vegetation types are found here, and the presence of seasonal springs and streams makes the area critically important to wildlife, including golden eagles, hawks, owls and mule deer. The jagged, high spires of the Organ Mountains define the Mesilla Valley and form one of the steepest mountain ranges in the Western United States. The Organs were mentioned in the earliest Spanish journals, and now are popular with hikers and rock climbers.

In total, these 10 new Wilderness areas comprise 241,554 acres. All are managed by the Bureau of Land Management. 🏔️




“In this era of divisiveness in the nation and our state, the designation of part of the Gila River as Wild and Scenic is something that can bring New Mexicans together regardless of political affiliation, ethnicity or whether you are a native of the state or you came from elsewhere. Preserving the river in free-flowing condition is in the best interests of those who have been able to enjoy it as such in the past as well as those who will come to our state to experience it in the future. Let’s take care of our state by supporting efforts to preserve as much of it as we can.”

— Patricia Cano, Western New Mexico University, professor emerita

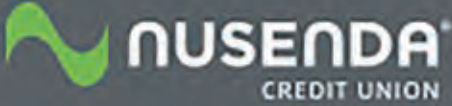


“While women of a certain age may no longer be designated scenic, we are most certainly still wild. There is no finer place than the unspoiled wilderness of New Mexico to really unwind, let our hair down and form lasting and meaningful relationships. One might say that this exceptional group of retired ladies is finally in their element.”

— Walkie Talkies, from front to back: Tina Oldknow, Brenda Smith, Rose Richards, Jane Spinti, Suzanne Bryant, Susi Brown and Shirley Parotti 🐾



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

 **nusenda.org**

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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2019 WOLF STAMP ARTIST ROBIN BULGER

During my years of living in New Mexico, I’ve spent many a day painting the state’s landscapes and creatures. As a wildlife technician I have been lucky enough to work with some of the state’s endangered wildlife, and conserving these vanishing species means a lot to me. This, along with my years of exploring so many of the state’s beautiful wild places, inspired me to paint the Mexican gray wolf.

— Robin Bulger, 2019 Wolf Stamp Contest Winner




New Mexico Wild issued its first Mexican Wolf Conservation Stamp in 2011. This collectible stamp is similar to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife’s duck stamp, which funds wetlands conservation – but the stamp is in no way related to hunting. All proceeds from sales of the wolf stamp directly benefit activities to support Mexican wolf conservation and education projects. The 4.5x5.5- inch, full-color self-adhesive stamp is sold exclusively through New Mexico Wilderness Alliance and is a framing-quality print for collectors.



Order your 2019 Wolf Stamp at www.nmwild.org/support-us/shop

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!

UNM WILDERNESS ALLIANCE – The Next Generation of Wilderness Protectors

BY ANDREW GUNN

I first moved to New Mexico from a suburb of Atlanta, Georgia, in the winter of 2016. Growing up in a family with an affinity for camping in the Appalachian foothills, I had always maintained an intrinsic respect and appreciation for the outdoors, but it wasn't until I experienced the Southwest firsthand that I truly understood the sheer breadth of the beauty and fragility that constitutes our natural world.

I didn't have to look far.

I joined the UNM Wilderness Alliance after the very first meeting. The group became my second family: a disparate band of biology, English, finance, pre-med and philosophy students, all with a conservation ethos and a youthful optimism — the environmental stewards of the future and, indeed, the present.

Education on pressing environmental concerns was a high priority for UNMWA during the fall term. Biweekly meetings regularly featured talks from experts in various conservation-related fields. Dr. Joseph Cook, professor of biology at UNM, was a regular presence, giving insight into the detrimental effects of the southern border wall on biological diversity. UNM alum and New Mexico Wild staff attorney Judy Calman gave a terrific presentation on her oversight work with the Bureau of Land Management and federal interference with the agency's Carlsbad Draft Resource Management Plan.

As vital as being informed on conservation issues in the lecture hall is, getting your hands dirty in the field is a worthy reminder



UNM Wild. Photo: Andrew Gunn

of why we care about our environment in the first place. UNMWA and conservation/restoration enthusiast Jan-Willem Jansens led a troop of roughly a dozen in spreading slash (tree branches) for soil cover and erosion control on a Glorieta Mesa ranch. A smaller crew installed new signs in the Manzano Mountains with the assistance of a New Mexico Wild Wilderness ranger. A bosque restoration project in Galisteo reaffirmed the importance of our riparian ecosystems.

Exciting and validating as those projects were, UNMWA recognizes the enduring threats posed to our natural heritage by a hostile and self-serving administration in Washington, D.C., and the necessity of sustaining our forward momentum. We plan to focus our efforts more intently on the legislative approach to conservation through con-

gressional outreach and activism. At the state level perhaps the most progressive and environmentally friendly legislature New Mexico has ever seen gives us a tremendous opportunity to ensure the continued protection of our Wilderness areas.

All the oil and gas riches in the world would be an inadequate substitute for the tears of ethereal reverence I shed after seeing the Milky Way for the first time from the Gila Wilderness on a bitterly cold New Mexico night. The stark beauty of Bisti/De-Na-Zin, the quiet magnificence of the Rio Grande Gorge and the solitude of the Ojito Wilderness instill in me and countless others a sense of truth and belonging that can be derived from nothing else. The very least we can do is fight to protect these wild places. 🌲

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.



After a century of wolf persecution, the Mexican gray wolf, *Canis lupus baileyi*, was on the brink of extinction. With only 13 individuals left in the world at one point, the Mexican wolf was listed by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service as an endangered species in May 1976 and was considered extinct in the wild up until their reintroduction in 1998.

For the past 30 years, the ABQ BioPark

has been collaborating with national efforts for the overall Mexican gray wolf recovery and reintroduction program. The BioPark has bred wolves on site, contributes wolves for breeding at other sites and serves as a holding facility for adult wolves.

The ABQ BioPark has been an integral part of the Mexican gray wolf breeding program, producing 69 Mexican wolf pups over the years. We are all hoping Ryder and Kawi hit it off to continue the effort to support a genetically diverse Mexican gray

wolf population.

At the end of 2017, there were a minimum of 114 wolves in the wild in Arizona and New Mexico, according to the agencies involved. The final goal for Mexican wolf recovery is a wild, self-sustaining population of at least 300 individuals. Releases continue every year. It should be noted that these wolves can also legally be killed by ranchers on private land if they are seen attacking livestock. Nevertheless, through these successful captive programs, the Mexican wolf once again



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.



Photos: Mark Allison

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.
- Your credit card is automatically billed each month, nothing to remember or mail.
- You set your donation amount—as little as \$10 a month makes a difference!
- 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)

**Become a Monthly Donor
by July 1 and your
entire year's
giving will be
matched dollar for
dollar by a fellow
member!**

I want to give a single gift:

- ☐ \$25
 - ☐ \$35
 - ☐ \$50
 - ☐ \$100
 - ☐ \$250
 - ☐ \$500
 - ☐ \$1,000
 - ☐ Other amount _____
- (gifts of any amount are appreciated)

Yes! I want to support Wilderness in New Mexico
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!

☐ YES! My donation amount qualifies me to receive a gift. Please send it.

PAYMENT OPTIONS: ☐ Enclosed is my check payable to New Mexico Wilderness Alliance. ☐ Please charge my credit card.

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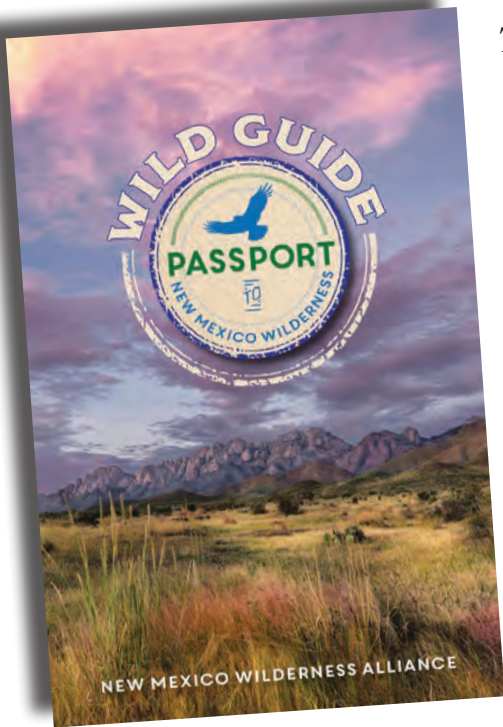
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This comprehensive guide to New Mexico's protected wildlands is the only book that features each of the state's designated wilderness areas and wilderness study areas as well as other treasures, such as the new Rio Grande del Norte National Monument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

UPCOMING EVENT

Yak Ranch Campout and Fundraiser August 30- September 1

Spend 3 days and 2 nights camping in beautiful Southern Colorado. This 148-acre yak ranch located near Crestone, Colorado offers a wonderful, shady location for camping. Special yak-based meals will be provided for breakfast and dinner. Campers will be free to explore the surrounding Wilderness areas during the day, with 4 near-by trailheads and close access to Great Sand Dunes National Park. All proceeds to benefit New Mexico Wild. Cost \$250 per adult; kids are free. Space is limited.

For more information on this event, or to view a full list of all upcoming New Mexico Wild events, please visit www.nmwild.org/events-outings.



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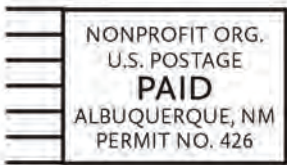


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New Mexico Wilderness Alliance
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Albuquerque, NM 87125
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Hiker at Bisti. Photo by Lois Manno