

# New Mexico WILD!

The Newsletter of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

## Special Wildlife Issue

The Importance of Wilderness to Wildlife

Volume 12, Number 2—Fall/Winter 2015



New Mexico  
Wilderness Alliance  
[www.nmwild.org](http://www.nmwild.org)



# New Mexico **WILD!**

The Newsletter of the  
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance  
**FALL/WINTER 2015**

## Inside This Issue:

From the Executive Director – Wildlife Needs  
Wild Lands.....2-3

The Walking Dead – Mass Extinction Under  
Way.....4-5

You Know You Want to Go – Valles Caldera  
National Preserve.....6

Members Steamed Over Proposal – Geothermal  
Leasing Proposal.....7

Little Untrammelled Left – The Human Footprint  
on New Mexico.....8

The Importance of Roadless Areas to Wildlife ....9

On the Auction Block – Public Lands Transfer  
.....10-11

Where the Wild Ones Are.....12-13

Birds and Habitat.....13

Public Testimonials.....14

Rio Grande del Norte – Finishing the Job.....15

Roping in Protections – Let's Keep Carlsbad Wild  
for Life.....16

Organ Mountains Desert Peaks – Final Ascent  
.....16

From First to Last – New Mexico Wilderness  
.....17-18

Shelter from the Storm – Wilderness and  
Climate Change.....19

Pecos Campaign Update.....20

Mining Law Reform Resurfaces.....20

Gila Campaign Update.....21

Wolves Belong.....22

Special Feature – Panthera onca.....23

Welcome New Board Members and Staff.....24

Let's Get Wild – Volunteer Opportunities in the  
Sandia Mountain Wilderness.....25

Membership – Join Us for a Wild Time .....26

Community Partners – Stone Age Climbs for  
Wilderness..... 27

COVER: Cover Image by Karen Carr, titled "White  
Sands by Moonlight", reprinted with permission from  
National Park Service

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### Wildlife Needs Wild Lands by Mark Allison, Executive Director



Mark Allison

**W**elcome and thank you for picking up "NM Wild!" the newsletter of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance. In this edition, you can read about:

- The lesson of the recent geothermal development proposal in the Jemez and how quickly threats can emerge--yet another example of why we don't only play defense; we work to

protect roadless areas proactively, even when there isn't an immediate identifiable threat.

- The Gold King Mine spill on the Animas River as a reminder that the legacy of bad public policy choices about how we use our nation's public lands can last for generations.
- The latest attempts to transfer our nation's public lands--our birthright as Americans--to the state to own and manage. We spell out why this is such a bad idea and why we can't afford to ignore this threat.
- That while New Mexico is the birthplace of Wilderness, we've unfortunately fallen behind other Western states in the amount of land currently protected.
- As always, we highlight some of the areas we are working to protect and let you know some ways you can become involved, including through our field trips and service projects.

But this edition is devoted to New Mexico's wildlife, in particular, the relationship between our work to conserve land, and therefore essential habitat, and the wild creatures that call those places home. We also review why roadless areas and wilderness are so critical and in the face of climate change they are increasingly important to wildlife, biodiversity, and ecosystems.

I'm frequently asked why we aren't directly involved in protecting species. There is certainly a need, which we see, for example, from sanctioned coyote killing contests and the New Mexico State Game Commission's recent vote to allow mountain lion trapping on private land without a permit and on 9 million acres of state trust land.

And certainly our members, staff, and board



San Francisco River Bighorn Sheep; Photo: Nathan Newcomer



# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Wolf; Photo: James Broska

have strong, if not unanimous, feelings on wildlife issues, and it is oftentimes difficult not to jump into the fray.

However, as the state's only homegrown, statewide group organized exclusively for the purpose of protecting wilderness, we have concluded that we add the most value by keeping laser-focused on land conservation and the protection of roadless and Wilderness areas.

The designation of a new Wilderness area requires an act of Congress. To be successful, we must generate the broadest level of public support possible. The coalitions that we work within—and frequently help assemble—are composed of groups and individuals with diverse perspectives. Sometimes the only real common ground is the common ground we are working together to protect.

If we allow ourselves to become distracted by any number of the admittedly deserving issues related to broader environmentalism or species work, we risk limiting our appeal and our credibility as honest brokers for land conservation. Allowing ourselves to become directly involved in issues beyond our core mission also strains our limited resources.

And yet, we know it is not true Wilderness without wildlife. We know efforts to protect species are essential. That is why we work with and rely on our partners to use their expertise to more directly protect species. We believe that the way we can best serve species issues is to protect habitat and that our expertise, our special role and niche in New Mexico, is land conservation and Wilderness protection. We think we do this better than anyone else.

"Fair enough," you say, "But why are you so involved in Mexican gray wolf recovery efforts? Why the Lobo and not others?"

Just as habitat is critical to protecting species, this species is critical to protecting the habitat of the Gila that so many animals depend upon. By helping to protect the Lobo, we are helping to protect the values that make the Gila Wilderness the special—and wild—place it is.

The Mexican gray wolf is a keystone species, a top predator that, at healthy populations, would help maintain healthy herds of elk, deer, and other native ungulates, in addition to positively impacting all levels of the food chain within its ecosystem.

The Mexican gray wolf also is emblematic of the wild Southwest. A century ago, wild wolves had a profound impact on Aldo Leopold's thinking about our relationship to the land. Leopold

is responsible for the creation of the world's first administratively protected Wilderness area, the Gila Wilderness, where he began to formulate his land ethic.

Leopold articulated, for the first time, an ethic dealing with human's relation "to land and to the animals and plants which grow upon it." An ethic that "affirm[ed] their right to continued existence, and, at least in spots, their continued existence in a natural state." A relationship characterized by interdependence, interconnectedness, cooperation, living communities and humility. A recognition that the lands and the animals have intrinsic worth apart from any economic value. His philosophy ultimately resulted in a profound change in how Americans thought about our nation's public lands.

The Gila occupies a special space, literally and figuratively, in the Wilderness protection movement. Already New Mexico's largest Wilderness area, the Gila has nearly millions of acres of additional roadless and wilderness quality lands that deserve protection. It is the area in the state large enough to have the best chance of functioning as an intact, self-willed ecosystem.

The Mexican wolf is the most endangered mammal in North America, and the most endangered subspecies of wolf in the world. With only 109 Mexican wolves in the wild, protection of each individual is critical. Without our help, we believe there is a real risk that recovery efforts could fail and that the Lobo could be gone from the wild forever. We also believe we add real value to the fight, particularly through our legal and technical expertise. For example, our challenge of the U.S. Department of Justice's McKittrick policy, if successful, could mean the difference between recovery and extinction and could fundamentally transform how the Endangered Species Act is administered and enforced nationwide.

We know that it isn't truly wild without wildlife. And we know that nothing is more wild than the howl of the wolf.

As this newsletter issue illustrates, we feel that we can best protect wildlife by staying true to our core mission of land conservation and Wilderness protection. But for us, for now, the Mexican gray wolf is different. 🐺

Enjoy!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Allison".

Mark Allison

## New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

### MAIN OFFICE

505-843-8696 Fax 505-843-8697  
nmwa@nmwild.org, www.nmwild.org  
P.O. Box 25464, Albuquerque, NM 87125

### SANTA FE FIELD OFFICE

341 E. Alameda St.  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
505-216-9719

### LAS CRUCES FIELD OFFICE

275 N. Downtown Mall  
Las Cruces, NM 88001  
Nathan Small: 575-496-9540

### MISSION STATEMENT

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

### NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS ALLIANCE STAFF

#### Albuquerque Office

Mark Allison, Executive Director  
Tisha Broska, Associate Director  
Judy Calman, Staff Attorney  
Alma Castro, Membership Coordinator  
Laticia Edmonds, Office Manager  
Dave Foreman, Senior Conservation Advisor to the Executive Director  
Joelle Marier, Grassroots Organizer  
Roxanne Pacheco, Finance Manager

#### Northern New Mexico

John Olivas, Traditional Community Organizer

#### Las Cruces Office

Jeff Steinborn, Southern NM Director  
Nathan Small, Wilderness Protection Coordinator

#### Santa Fe Office

Alicia Johnson, Development Director

#### Gila Region

Nathan Newcomer, Grassroots Coordinator

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kenneth Cole, Chairman  
Todd Schulke, Deputy Chairman  
Nancy Morton, Secretary  
Hamish Thomson, Treasurer  
Joe Alcock  
Rick Aster  
Ernie Atencio  
Wendy Brown  
Sam DesGeorges  
Carol Johnson  
Roberta Salazar-Henry  
David Soules  
Bob Tapanelli

### NEWSLETTER STAFF

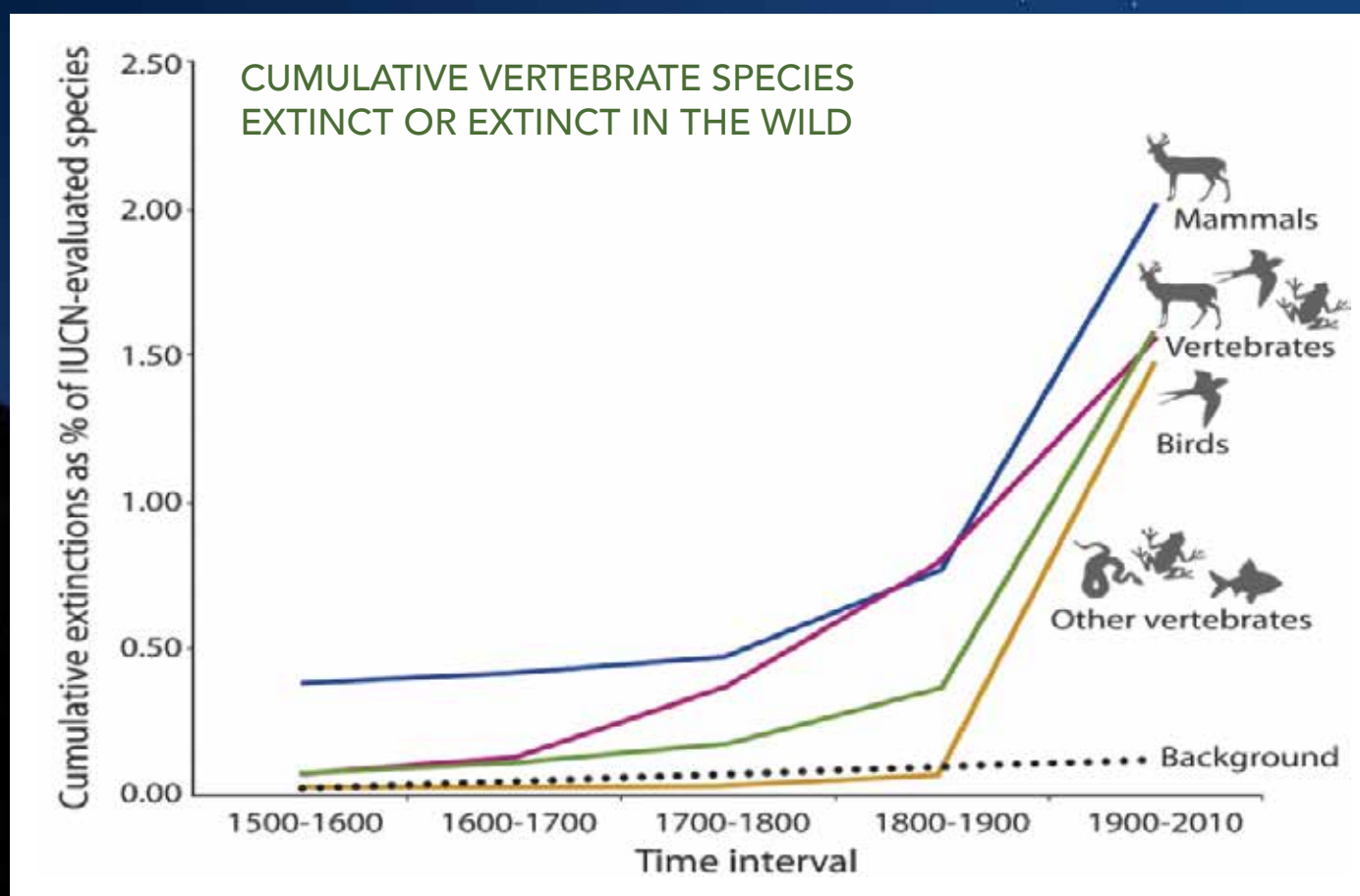
Jeanne Lambert, Art Director/Designer  
www.magicintheeveryday.com  
Laticia Edmonds, Managing Editor  
Tania Soussan, Copy Editor

### 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.



# Mass Extinction Under Way



IUCN (2012) (conservative estimate) Credit: Gerardo Ceballos et al./Science Advances

**T**he evidence is mounting and most scientists now agree that the world is going through the sixth mass extinction, an extinction that ironically is both caused by human-induced species loss and threatens human survival.

Over the last century, vertebrate species have been lost at a rate up to 100 times higher than the “background” rates prevailing between the five previous mass extinctions. That’s the conclusion of a team of scientists, including Paul Ehrlich, the Bing Professor of Population Studies in biology and a senior fellow at the Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment, who published their findings in June in *Science Advances*, a journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The team focused on vertebrates, the group for which the most reliable modern and fossil data exist, and used what they call “extremely conservative assumptions” to reach their conclusions and determine whether human activities are causing a mass extinction.

“These estimates reveal an exceptionally rapid loss of biodiversity over the last few centuries, indicating that a sixth mass extinction is

already under way,” Ehrlich and his co-authors wrote. “Averting a dramatic decay of biodiversity and the subsequent loss of ecosystem services is still possible through intensified conservation efforts, but that window of opportunity is rapidly closing.”

Lead author Gerardo Ceballos of the Universidad Autónoma de México told KurzweilAI News that if the trend is allowed to continue, “life would take many millions of years to recover, and our species itself would likely disappear early on.”

The specter of extinction hangs over about 41 percent of all amphibian species and 26 percent of all mammals, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, which maintains an authoritative list of threatened and extinct species, KurzweilAI reported.

As species disappear, so do crucial ecosystem services such as honeybees’ crop pollination and wetlands’ water purification. At the current rate of species loss, people will lose many biodiversity benefits within three generations, the study’s authors write. In the meantime, the researchers hope their work will inform conservation efforts, the maintenance of ecosystem services, and public policy, according to KurzweilAI.



# THE WALKING DEAD

A separate analysis released in September 2014, found that the number of vertebrate species on Earth has declined 52 percent over the past 40 years.

The Guardian, an international newspaper based in London, reported on the World Wildlife Fund's Living Planet report: "Creatures across land, rivers and the seas are being decimated as humans kill them for food in unsustainable numbers, while polluting or destroying their habitats, the research by scientists at WWF and the Zoological Society of London found."

Those scientists analyzed 3,000 species in 10,000 different populations and used the data to create a first-of-its-kind "Living Planet Index" to measure the state of all 45,000 known vertebrates.

Those studies are not a surprise to Dave Foreman, who wrote in his 2004 book, "Rewilding North America, A Vision for Conservation in the 21st Century," that field biologists have been worried about population declines in thousands of species and by the loss of ecosystems of all kinds around the world since the 1970s.

He cited a calculation by Harvard University's famed E. O. Wilson and his colleagues that the current rate of extinction is 1,000 to 10,000 times the background rate of extinction in the fossil record.

"That discovery hit with all the subtlety of an asteroid striking Earth: Right now, today, life faces the sixth great extinction event in Earth history," Foreman wrote. "The crisis we face is biological meltdown. ... Considering the biological catastrophe we are in, it is gut-wrenching to find that only a small percentage of people are aware of the crisis and our responsibility for it. The mere thought that we are causing a mass

extinction is so soul-shattering that most people who hear of it refuse to even consider it."

Wilson warns that the proportion of species driven to extinction could easily reach 20 percent by 2022 and rise as high as 50 percent or more after that.

"The grim truth is that we humans are the cause of modern extinctions. How do we do it? Extinction expert David Wilcove and his colleagues list five anthropogenic causes of extinction in the United States, in order of current importance: habitat destruction, nonnative (alien) species, pollution, overexploitation, and disease," Foreman wrote.

Here are just a few examples Foreman gives of human-caused habitat destruction:

"We reduce, modify, degrade, or transform natural habitat upon which species depend by burning, agricultural clearing, logging, mining, grazing by domestic animals, preventing natural fire, damming rivers, dewatering rivers through irrigation diversion, drying up springs and streams through groundwater pumping, eliminating keystone species like beaver and prairie dogs whose activities create habitat for other species, and urban and suburban development. Furthermore, we fragment habitat – thereby disrupting necessary patterns of movement of many species – through the above activities and by building roads, clearing power-line rights-of-way, and driving vehicles."

Something has to change. 🐾

Foreman's highly regarded book, *Rewilding North America*, is available from [rewilding.org](http://rewilding.org).



Low Resolution Field Camera Shot: Mountain lion in the Gila Middle Box



**OVERHEARD:** *State trust land is not 'public land' and is not accessible by the general public unless permitted by my office. Given the State Land Office's wholly different mission from federal land management agencies...lessees [should] manage their leased lands in a manner that is in the best interest of the trust.*

— State Land Commissioner Aubrey Dunn, quoted in an Albuquerque Journal article June 21, 2015. So why exactly should we turn over our national public lands for him to own and manage?



Dasynda Rosenbarger  
Wolf Stamp Entry  
2015 Honorable Mention



# YOU KNOW YOU WANT TO GO

## Valles Caldera National Preserve

### For information:

Visitor center (505) 670-1612

Web site [www.vallescaldera.gov](http://www.vallescaldera.gov)

**W**ith a new management system in place, access rules for the Valles Caldera National Preserve have changed.

Congress established the preserve as a unit of the National Park System on Dec. 19, 2014, and the Valles Caldera Trust turned over management of the Jemez Mountains' jewel to the National Park Service (NPS) on Sept. 30, 2015.

### PUBLIC ACCESS

Recreation access expanded over the summer, and the NPS is working with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish to plan future recreational activities, which will include hunting and fishing.

Entrance fees can be paid at the preserve's Valle Grande Visitor Center or the Banco Bonito Contact Station, both off N.M. 4. However, backcountry vehicle permits are only available at the visitor center.

A seven-day entry pass costs \$20 a vehicle for a non-commercial car, van, pickup truck, motorcycle or RV (no per-person fee). If you are entering the preserve on foot, bicycle, horse, or non-commercial bus, the fee is \$10 per person aged 16 and older.

Also available is the Valles Caldera Pass, a \$40 annual free entrance pass. In addition, the preserve has offered free entry on certain holidays such as Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Presidents Day weekend, and Preserve Days in late July. The preserve will waive admission fees on Nov. 11 for Veterans Day. Check the website at: [www.vallescaldera.gov/plan/plan\\_fees.aspx](http://www.vallescaldera.gov/plan/plan_fees.aspx) for any free days in 2016.

### BACKCOUNTRY ACCESS

Some of the best adventures take place in the Valles Caldera backcountry. Visitors will find ample opportunities to hike, mountain bike, fish, cross-country ski, snowshoe, and view wildlife.



Valles Caldera Fence Removal September 2015; Photo: Raymond Watt

Visitors can access the backcountry by foot, mountain bike, or personal vehicle. To drive your own vehicle beyond the visitor center you will need a backcountry vehicle permit.

### BACKCOUNTRY VEHICLE PERMIT

A total of 24 backcountry vehicle permits are available each day during the spring and summer seasons. Reservations are accepted for 12 vehicles by calling the visitor center, while 12 permits are reserved for walk-ins on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no additional fee for the backcountry vehicle permit, which is valid between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. on the date of access. Permit holders must leave the backcountry by 5 p.m. to leave the preserve before the main gate closes at 6 p.m.

### CAMPING

Currently, camping within the Valles Caldera is very limited. There are 10 primitive campsites near the Banco Bonito Contact Station available on Saturday nights only. There is one vault toilet and dumpster in the area, but no water or electricity. Camping permits are available on a first-come, first-served basis at the Banco Bonito Contact Station for \$10 per vehicle. If you would like to camp extra nights at Banco Bonito or if you wish to camp elsewhere in the preserve, you can apply for a special use permit by calling (505) 661-3333. The last weekend for camping this year was August 29. Stay tuned for camping dates in 2016.

### FISHING

The San Antonio Creek and the East Fork of the Jemez River run through the heart of the Valles Caldera and provide some great fly fishing for beginners and experts. As the rivers meander through lush mountain meadows, they create miles of pools and overhanging banks, which are home to thousands of trout. The views and quiet serenity are also well worth the fishing trip.

All anglers regardless of age must obtain a free Valles Caldera National Preserve Fishing Permit at the visitor center the day fishing will take place. Reservations are no longer accepted. A maximum of 20 fishing permits for East Fork and 30 permits for San Antonio will be issued each day. All anglers also must

have in their possession a valid state Game and Fish fishing license and Habitat Management and Access Validation.

To drive a personal vehicle to San Antonio Creek, a free backcountry vehicle permit also is necessary. It's possible to access the East Fork or San Antonio by foot, bike or horse.

### WINTER ACTIVITIES

Snow volume varies from year to year; call the visitor center for current conditions. The ski and snowshoe season usually lasts from mid-November to mid-March, but trails are open all year to hiking.

Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are available based on conditions. The preserve has miles of trails to explore, with some groomed trails. Track is set only on a few trails. All unplowed roads and trails are open to cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Talk with park rangers before you leave on any trip and get specific information on conditions. Some preserve areas could be closed to skiing or snowshoeing to protect wildlife.

### VOLUNTEER SERVICE PROJECTS

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is working in partnership with the preserve to undertake an extensive fence removal project. This work provides the opportunity to introduce members of the community to this special land and complete a prioritized service project that will benefit wildlife and recreational use. 🐾



San Antonio Creek, September 2015; Inset: Senator Tom Udall fly fishing the East Fork of the Jemez River in the Valles Caldera; Photo: Mark Allison



# MEMBERS STEAMED OVER PROPOSAL

## Geothermal Leasing Proposal Gets Lovers of the Jemez Steamed by Judy Calman, Staff

In May, the Santa Fe National Forest (SFNF) began formal scoping for a proposal to lease approximately 195,000 acres of the Jemez Ranger District for geothermal production. The proposal area is immediately adjacent to the Valles Caldera National Preserve and contains portions of nine Inventoried Roadless Areas, as well as many of the most visited recreation sites in the state, including cherished hot springs. The proposal stemmed from an Expression of Interest submitted by out-of-state company, Ormat Technologies. Geothermal production, while considered a renewable source of energy, often comes with substantial environmental consequences. Significant surface disturbance is required for well pads and pumps (similar to those used in oil and gas operations), roads, and pipelines. Additionally, fresh water is required, and fracking is often used. Contamination by heavy metals is a real concern.

The area in question is arguably one of the most beautiful and well-loved places in the state. In addition to the roadless areas, it contains several endangered species, including the Mexican spotted owl, the Jemez Mountains salamander, and the New Mexico meadow jumping mouse.

The proposal does not unequivocally close the roadless areas to potential development, which we believe is in conflict with the Roadless Rule; nor does it provide sufficient protections for surface water or endangered species.

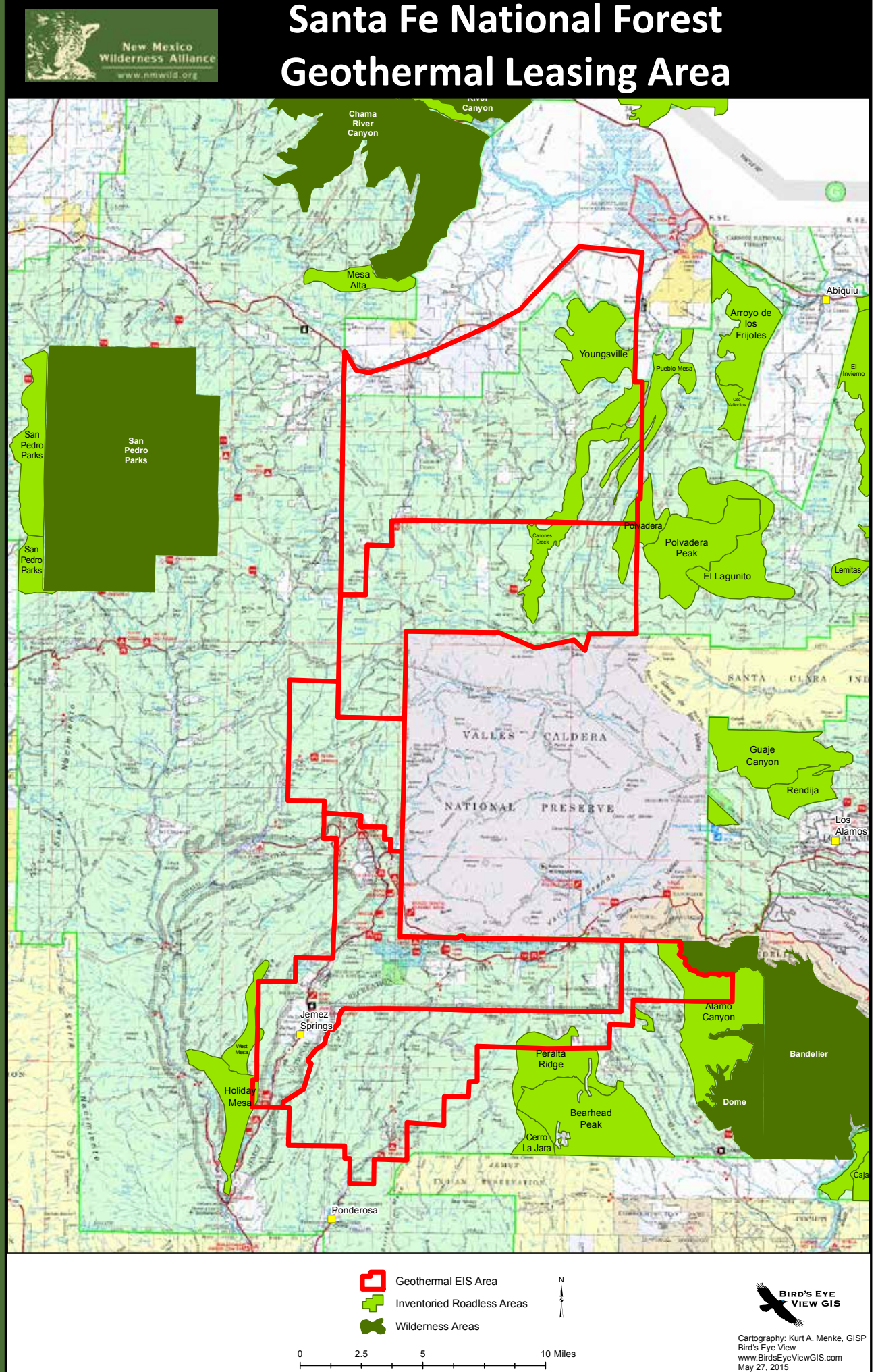
While we do not universally oppose energy development on all public land, we are adamant that these activities must be sited in appropriate places and must include enough safeguards to effectively mitigate potential harm. In some cases, this will mean choosing not to allow development.

Siting large industrial energy development in wilderness-quality lands, in a place with highly sensitive water resources, endangered critters, and stunning natural beauty, is not good public policy and not something we can allow. We are committed to ensuring this treasured area remains for generations to come.

Our comments to the Forest Service are available on our website at [http://www.nmwild.org/2015/news/geothermal\\_leasing/](http://www.nmwild.org/2015/news/geothermal_leasing/).

While formal scoping on the project closed on June 26, SFNF will still accept comments, which can be sent to Larry Gore at [ldgore@fs.fed.us](mailto:ldgore@fs.fed.us).

The next step in the process will be the issuance of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement, which should occur within the next two years. Stay tuned for ways you can help. 🐾



**OVERHEARD:** *In my estimation, there's very few places for the wolf on this earth. Let's say perhaps Alaska, Canada, a zoo or two, Grimm's Fairy Tales, or hanging on the wall. Thank you.*

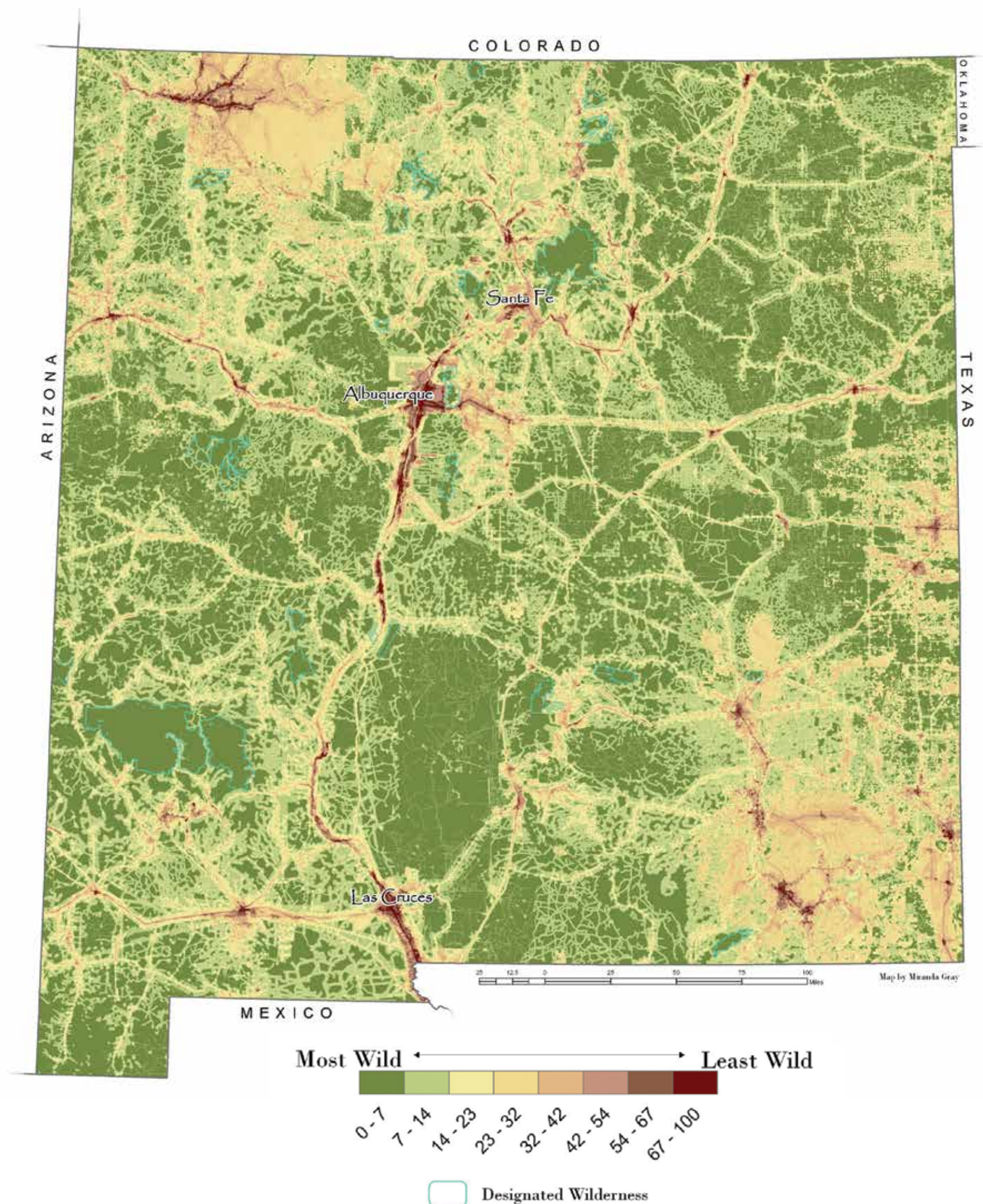
WOLF HEARING, public testimony, Aug. 13, 2014  
Truth or Consequences



Kelsey  
McAfee  
Wolf Stamp  
Entry  
2015  
Honorable  
Mention



# The Human Footprint On New Mexico



The United States has about 4 million miles of public roads. According to federal highway statistics, 97 percent of the continental U.S. is less than three miles away from a road.



# The Importance of Roadless Areas to Wildlife

In our joint publication with the Wildlands Project, the “New Mexico Highlands Wildlands Network Vision” (NMHWNV), we noted seven major wounds to the land: loss and decline of species, loss and degradation of ecosystems, loss and decline of natural processes, pollution, climate change, invasion by exotic species and diseases, and fragmentation of habitat. (1)

One of these wounds, fragmentation of habitat, is caused by dams, irrigation diversions, power lines, fences, and, most importantly, roads.

Roadless areas are important for numerous reasons, including watershed protection, clean air, providing a baseline for scientific research, recreation, scenic beauty, preservation of our cultural heritage and traditions, and the human spirit itself. Roadless areas are, of course, also critical because they are home to wildlife.

Kurt Menke, noted GIS specialist and frequent New Mexico Wilderness Alliance collaborator, writes in a paper on cougar corridors: Habitat fragmentation is now widely recognized as one of the leading causes of species extinction. The four million-mile network of roads we have constructed in America ... and the developments associated with them, have negatively affected the mobility and survival of wildlife by creating “fracture zones” between suitable habitats. Animals following their instinctual movement patterns often encounter human infrastructure as they seek food, water, mates and territory. The environmental impact of roadways extends far beyond the edge of the pavement. This “road-effect zone” is estimated to be 15 to 20 times as large as the actual paved right of way itself. Habitat fragmentation ... creates smaller, more isolated habitat patches and wildlife populations. Isolated populations are demographically vulnerable, less resilient to natural disturbances, and thus have a higher probability of local extinction. Species with large home ranges, seasonal migration requirements, sensitivities to human disturbance, or those with small population sizes and limited distribution are particularly vulnerable to habitat conversion and fragmentation. (2)

Our friends at The Wilderness Society Nada Culver and Juli Slivka have also noted research conclusively demonstrating that the loss of core habitat and connectivity pose the greatest threats to species and overall biodiversity and that increased fragmentation from roads, among other factors, substantially decreases the amount of ecologically intact core habitat available for wildlife species. (3)

Habitat fragmentation consists of two different processes that simultaneously and negatively affect wildlife species: a reduction in the overall habitat available, known as habitat loss, and the creation of isolated patches of habitat separated from what was once a contiguous landscape. Culver and Slivka note six main adverse effects that may occur as a result of habitat fragmentation:

1. Increased isolation leading to detrimental genetic and demographic effects;
2. changes in species richness or composition;
3. modification of energy flow, nutrient cycling, and hydrological regimes;
4. declines in populations of individual species or their geographic extent across the landscape;
5. edge-effect problems that can lead to the introduction of exotic invasive species as well as increases in predation and competition among different wildlife species; and
6. increased human disturbance and associated direct and indirect mortality.

Perhaps the most obvious way that roads hurt wildlife is mortality due to collisions with automobiles.

For example, in 2011 and 2012, the two most recent years with data available, there were 2,126 documented vehicular accidents with wild animals, such as deer, elk, antelope, bear, and mountain lion in New Mexico. (4)

Fourteen percent (or 15 wolves) of the 111 documented Mexican wolf deaths from reintroduction in 1998 to 2014 were the result of automobile collisions. (5)

Many accidents, of course, go unreported and this data does not include the many thousands of smaller animals such as raccoons, skunks, turtles, snakes, etc. that are killed each year.

According to a literature review compiled by Mark L. Watson at the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (2005), another primary adverse impact of roads and highways on wildlife is the reduction of useable habitat near roads. (6)

For example, it has been documented that deer and elk not only avoid roads but also reduce their use of adjacent habitat. The presence of nearby roads disrupts historic winter ranges, changes feeding patterns, and can reduce the number of offspring produced. Proximity to roads leads to increased disturbance and harassment of big game populations leading to changes in behavior, increased predation, reduced access to resources, and increased energy expenditures necessary for survival. Higher road densities can cause a reduction in the length and quality of the hunting season, over-harvesting, and population decline.

Roads are also directly responsible for wildlife mortality in other ways, including opportunistic poaching. For example, at least 60 released Mexican wolves have been killed illegally since reintroduction in 1998. Many were near roads when killed.

Watson cites a disturbing study showing the relationship between roads and increased illegal killing of deer and elk by “road hunting” in Arizona. Eleven of 19 archery elk and deer hunters and 41 of 53 firearms hunters committed violations by attempting illegal take after observing a decoy from their vehicle.

Dave Foreman has written that “the army of wilderness destruction travels by road and motorized vehicle.” Foreman notes that the U.S. Forest Service is the largest road-managing agency in the world, with an official 386,000 miles in the national forest system, enough to circle the equator 15 times. The road density of national forests averages 1.6 miles of road for every square mile of land. This does not include the hundreds of thousands of miles of roads on land managed by the Bureau of Land Management or the thousands of miles of unofficial roads and vehicle routes on national public lands. (7)

- Nationwide, 71 million acres of habitat have been lost to primary highways.
- The actual surface area of roads accounts for seven million acres of national forest land.
- New Mexico has over 206,000 miles of major and minor roads.

In “Why Keep Areas Road-Free? The Importance of Roadless Areas,” the authors outline their concept of the “contagious” development effect “where roads provide access to previously remote areas, thus opening them up for more roads and developments, and triggering land use changes, resource extraction and human disturbance. In this context, the importance of keeping the large un-fragmented lands road-free becomes an urgent task.” This paper notes that only 3 percent of the conterminous U.S. is more than 5 kilometers away from a road. (8)

The Wildlands Project notes that the best way to protect wildlife is to maintain large areas. “Bigness” is important for a number of reasons. “The larger the area, the more habitats and species it will contain.” Bigness is even more important when areas – like much of New Mexico – are effectively isolated from other areas with similar habitats. This is especially true for species with large home ranges and/or low population densities – such as carnivores.

“A larger block of suitable habitat will usually support a larger population. All else being equal, large populations are less vulnerable than small populations to extinction,” according to the Wildlands Project.

In addition to large core areas of habitat, connectivity between them is critical and those “corridors” are significantly compromised and made more challenging by the presence of roads.

“Experience on every continent has shown that only in strictly protected areas are the full fauna and flora of a region likely to persist for a long period of time. What are these strictly protected areas? A distinguishing characteristic is ... low road density or, ideally, roadlessness.”

“Wilderness Area designation is the tried and true way to protect roadless areas,” Foreman concludes. 🐾



Low Resolution Field Camera Shot: Black Bear in the Gila Wilderness

1. New Mexico Highlands Wildlands Network Vision, 2003, Wildlands Project
2. Locating Potential Cougar Corridors in New Mexico Using a Least-Cost Path Corridor GIS Analysis, Kurt Menke, 2008
3. Designating Wildlife Corridors on the Public Lands: Protection through BLM's Land Use Planning Process, Nada Culver and Juli Slivka
4. N.M. Department of Transportation
5. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2015
6. Habitat Fragmentation and the Effects of Roads on Wildlife and Habitats, Background and Literature Review, Mark L. Watson, N.M. Department of Game and Fish, 2005
7. Rewilding North America, A Vision for Conservation in the 21st Century, Dave Foreman, 2003
8. “Why Keep Areas Road-Free? The Importance of Roadless Areas” (N. Selva et. al.)



# ON THE AUCTION BLOCK?



Lower Box Canyon at Sunrise, Gila River, New Mexico; Photos: Gary Cascio; right: Tisha Broska

For the past four years, the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance has joined other conservation organizations in defeating bills at the state Legislature which attempt to force the federal government to transfer public lands to the state. The bills have varied over the years, sometimes written to demand immediate transfer of the land, and sometimes focused on creating a “study” which would look into the feasibility of such a transfer.

We don’t need to waste our time or taxpayer money studying an idea that is unconstitutional, prohibitively expensive, impractical, and wildly unpopular (see graphic). Behind these efforts are out-of-state industry interests, just itching for the chance to gain greater access—or even ownership—to these lands. What they are after is nothing less than the severing of our birthright as Americans to own, manage, and enjoy our national public lands.

In addition to the disqualifying factors noted above, transferring our national lands to the state would have serious implications for our relationship to some of our favorite places.

In New Mexico, state trust land is not open to

the public like our national land is. To use state land, members of the public are required to pay for and obtain a permit for access, and some basic activities aren’t allowed at all. State Land Commissioner Aubrey Dunn put it succinctly in an article earlier this year when he said, “state trust land is not ‘public land’ and is not accessible by the general public unless permitted by my office” and articulated the State Land Office’s “wholly different mission from federal land management agencies.” Camping, nope. Going for a hike, not so fast. Fishing – maybe some places, sometimes, with some extra paperwork and permission. Backpacking—uh uh. Rock climbing, not so much.

Even worse, state land can be and is sold outright to private interests. (When New Mexico became a state, it had over 13 million acres of state land. It currently has nine million.) The rhetoric of the legislators who put forward transfer bills has evolved, and they now tell us that they have no desire to privatize these lands, however nothing would prevent the state from selling land to the highest bidder (imagine how tempting that would be during a future state budget crisis).

And, oh, the state land commissioner has the discretion to do this on his or her own, with essentially no oversight or public involvement.

Even if the state didn’t sell land, New Mexico lacks the environmental regulations and public oversight which applies to our national public land. Unlike the federal government, the state is not required to analyze the potential environmental impacts of its actions, to take and respond to public input, to consider alternatives to the proposal, or to justify its decisions. Should the state take over public lands, the public would have far less input into the government’s decisions, not more, as the proponents of these bills suggest.

This horrible idea is spreading. We take it seriously and hope you will too.

We anticipate seeing these efforts again in the 2016 legislative session, and we are committed to defeating them once again. You can help by contacting your state representatives and state senators and encouraging them to vote against these bills. Your legislators can be found by inputting your address at the following link: [http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/legislator\\_lookup.aspx](http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/legislator_lookup.aspx).

## IT’S UNCONSTITUTIONAL

Article 4, Section 3 of the U.S. Consitution gives Congress exclusive authority over federal property, “without limitation.”

New Mexico’s Enabling Act states:

“That the people inhabiting said proposed state do agree and declare that they forever disclaim all right and title to the unappropriated and ungranted public lands lying within the boundaries thereof.”

Despite its questionable Constitutionality, states have spent massive sums of taxpayer money studying land transfer legality.

- Utah spent **\$450,000** on a study which concluded that a transfer would cost the state **\$280 million** annually.
- An Idaho legislative committee: **“Pursuing any type of litigation at this time would not be beneficial.”**
- University of Utah’s Wallace Stegner Center: **“If states take over land management, fiscal realities will force more development.”**

“The campaign to transfer to the states or even sell off our shared lands should not be mistaken for the mainstream values of Westerners whose way of life depends on the region’s land and water....  
**America’s forests, wildlife refuges and conservation lands are part of the fabric of our democracy.”**  
— New York Times Op-ed  
Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-NM), 12.16.2014

## IT’S EXPENSIVE

In 2013, the federal government spent \$3.5 billion on fire suppression and prevention.

If New Mexico managed all of its public lands, it would have to cover this cost – to put it into perspective, the law enforcement budget for the entire state in 2011 was \$124 million.

State	FY11 USFS Suppression Costs	FY12 USFS Suppression Costs	FY11 State Law Enforcement Spending
AZ	\$230 million	\$64 million	\$229 million
ID	\$49 million	\$169 million	\$50 million
NM	\$155 million	\$86 million	\$124 million
MT	\$46 million	\$103 million	\$42 million



New Mexicans are against selling off or transferring their national public lands

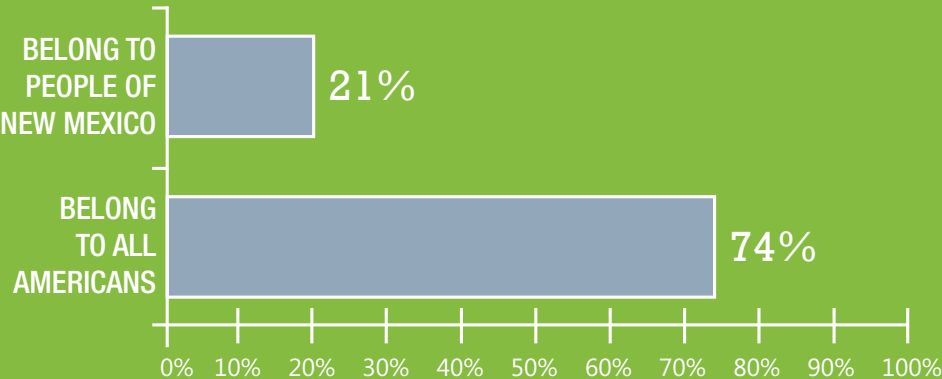
IT'S UNPOPULAR

New Mexicans love their federally managed land – but a few politicians want to assume state control.

Federal agencies manage approximately:  
**27** or **34.7%**  
million acres of New Mexico land

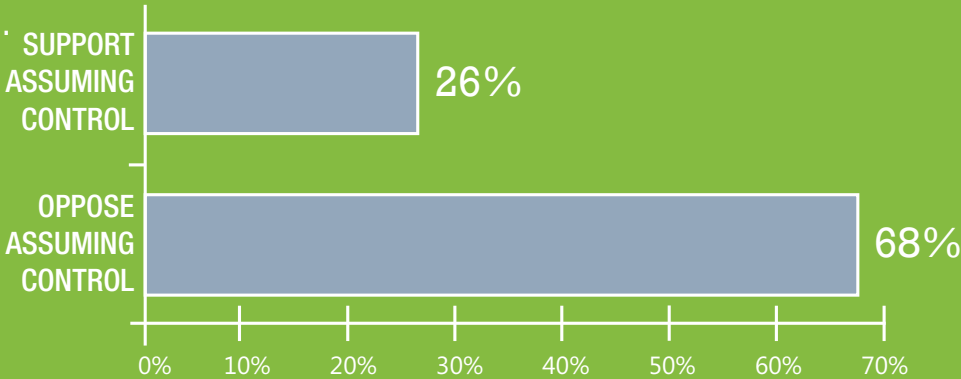
New Mexico voters agree: The national forests, parks, wildlife refuges, and other public lands in New Mexico belong to all Americans.

“Do you think of these public lands more as American places that belong to everyone in our country, or New Mexico places that belong more to the people of New Mexico?”



New Mexicans don't think it would be fiscally responsible to force New Mexico taxpayers to foot the bill for managing America's public lands.

“Please listen to two different viewpoints and tell me which one comes closer to your own even if neither matches what you think exactly.”



WHAT STANDS TO BE LOST

Land transfer is impractical economically. What's at stake?

From 2001-2013, counties with at least 30% protected national land saw **job growth 4x faster** than counties with no protected land.

New Mexicans recognize this — According to a 2013 poll:  
**84%** of New Mexicans believe that public lands are essential to the New Mexico economy.

NM OUTDOOR RECREATION GENERATES:

- \$6.1** billion in consumer spending
- \$1.7** billion in wages and salaries
- 68,000** jobs



# Where the Wild Ones Are

By Tisha Broska, Staff

**Critical habitat** is a term defined and used in the Endangered Species Act. It is a specific geographic area(s) that contains features essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and that may require special management and protection.

**Endangered Species** is any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

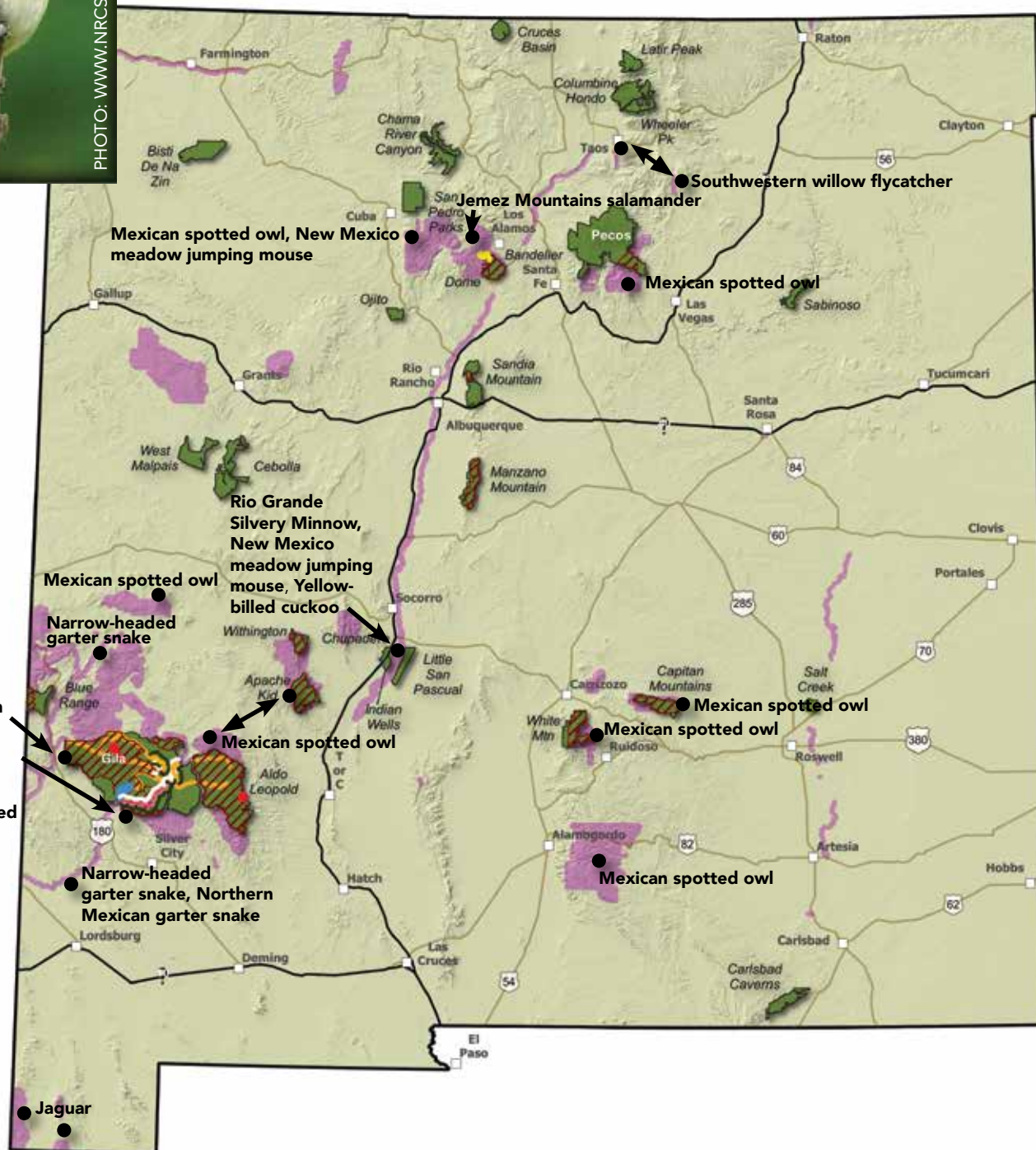
**Threatened Species** is any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.



PHOTO: WWW.NRCS.USDA.GOV

## CRITICAL HABITAT AND WILDERNESS

Clockwise: Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Mexican Spotted Owl, New Mexico Jumping Mouse, Jaguar, Jemez Mountain Salamander, Silvery Minnow



### Critical Habitat within Wilderness

— Chiricahua leopard frog  
— Loach minnow  
— Spike dace

■ Gila chub

■ Jemez Mountains salamander

■ Narrow-headed garter snake

■ Northern Mexican gartersnake

■ Mexican spotted owl

■ Designated Wilderness

■ Critical Habitat Outside of Wilderness



PHOTOS FROM LEFT: USFWS; GARY NAFIS/CALIFORNIAHERPS.COM; GARY M. STOLZ/USFWS; USFWS; NPS.GOV



THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES BELIEVED TO OR KNOWN TO OCCUR IN NEW MEXICO

ANIMAL SPECIES/LISTING NAME

- Noel's amphipod (*Gammarus desperatus*) – E  
Lesser long-nosed bat (*Leptonycteris curasoae yerbabuena*) – E  
Mexican long-nosed bat (*Leptonycteris nivalis*) – E  
Chihuahua chub (*Gila nigrescens*) – T  
Gila chub (*Gila intermedia*) – E  
Yellow-billed Western cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) – T  
Black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*) – E  
Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) – E  
Chiricahua leopard frog (*Rana chiricahuensis*) – T  
Pecos gambusia (*Gambusia nobilis*) – E  
Northern Mexican garter snake (*Thamnophis eques megalops*) – T  
Socorro isopod (*Thermosphaeroma thermophilus*) – E  
Jaguar (*Panthera onca*) – E  
Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) – T  
Loach minnow (*Tiaroga cobitis*) – E  
Rio Grande silvery minnow (*Hybognathus amarus*) – E  
New Mexico meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius luteus*) – E  
Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*) – T  
Colorado pikeminnow or squawfish (*Ptychocheilus lucius*) – E  
Piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) – T  
Lesser prairie chicken (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*) – T

- New Mexican ridge-nosed rattlesnake (*Crotalus willardi obscurus*) – T  
Jemez Mountains salamander (*Plethodon neomexicanus*) – E  
Arkansas River shiner (*Notropis girardi*) – T  
Beautiful shiner (*Cyprinella formosa*) – T  
Pecos bluntnose shiner (*Notropis simus pecosensis*) – T  
Pecos assiminea snail (*Assiminea pecos*) – E  
Narrow-headed garter snake (*Thamnophis rufipunctatus*) – T  
Spike dace (*Meda fulgida*) – E  
Alamosa springsnail (*Tryonia alamosae*) – E  
Chupadera springsnail (*Pyrgulopsis chupadera*) – E  
Koster's springsnail (*Juturnia kosteri*) – E  
Roswell springsnail (*Pyrgulopsis roswellensis*) – E  
Socorro springsnail (*Pyrgulopsis neomexicana*) – E  
Razorback sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*) – E  
Zuni bluehead sucker (*Catostomus discobolus yarrowi*) – E  
Least tern (*Sterna antillarum*) – E  
Gila topminnow (including Yaqui) (*Poeciliopsis occidentalis*) – E  
Gila trout (*Oncorhynchus gilae*) – T  
Gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) – E  
Mexican gray wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*) – E  
Woundfin (*Plagopterus argentissimus*) – E

PLANT SPECIES/LISTING NAME

- Knowlton's cactus (*Pediocactus knowltonii*) – E  
Kuenzler hedgehog cactus (*Echinocereus fendleri* var. *kuenzleri*) – E  
Lee pincushion cactus (*Coryphantha sneedii* var. *leei*) – T  
Mesa Verde cactus (*Sclerocactus mesae-verdae*) – T  
Sneed pincushion cactus (*Coryphantha sneedii* var. *sneedii*) – E  
Zuni fleabane (*Erigeron rhizomatus*) – T  
Holy Ghost ipomopsis (*Ipomopsis sancti-spiritus*) – E  
Mancos milk-vetch (*Astragalus humillimus*) – E  
Todsens pennyroyal (*Hedeoma todsenii*) – E  
Sacramento prickly poppy (*Argemone pleiacantha* ssp. *pinnatisecta*) – E  
Pecos sunflower or puzzle or paradox sunflower (*Helianthus paradoxus*) – T  
Sacramento Mountains thistle (*Cirsium vinaceum*) – T  
Gypsum wild-buckwheat (*Eriogonum gypsophilum*) – T

E – Endangered  
T – Threatened  
Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

BIRDS AND HABITAT

Notes by Ken Cole, Chairperson

I have been fortunate to travel around the world on birdwatching trips. In addition to seeing great birds and places, I have also seen many, many examples of habitat destruction. This includes mountainsides virtually denuded of vegetation, waterways contaminated to the point of being unusable, and piles of human waste and trash in once pristine areas. Among the many reasons I love New Mexico are the natural beauty and the good birding. The success the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance has had in securing more protection for New Mexico's public lands is very rewarding and, as a side-benefit, has allowed me to see some great birds in wonderful habitat. The best known place for birding in the state is probably Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge south of Socorro. The wintering populations of geese, cranes and other wildlife are a magnet for birders from all over the country, and the refuge is a must stop for some of the commercial bird tours that offer trips in the state. Bosque is also famed for visits by rare birds, such as the sungrebe a few years ago and the rufous-necked wood rail that appeared in 2013. Another well-known destination is Sandia Crest in wintertime. Feeders operate during the winter and attract all three species of rosy finch (plus a subspecies). At different times of year you might find three-toed woodpecker, Clark's nutcracker and typically unpredictable cross-bills. A couple of years ago, several subspecies

of red crossbill and a rare white-winged crossbill were present. With luck, you might find flammulated and northern saw-whet owls, primarily in springtime. One of my favorite places for a day trip is Water Canyon in the Magdalena Mountains. The habitat ranges from desert grassland to montane forest. Breeding red-faced warblers can be found in the summer months, along with a wide variety of passerines. At Dripping Springs near Las Cruces you can see some excellent birds; it may be that long-eared owls are still breeding nearby, and an Aplomado falcon has been sighted within the new Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument. In Southeast New Mexico, perhaps the best-known birding area is Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge near Roswell. This is excellent for shore birds in spring and fall, as well as for wintering waterfowl. Last year, common crane was recorded for the first time in New Mexico. The wonderfully named Rattlesnake Springs is an oasis that is part of Carlsbad Caverns National Park and is an excellent migrant trap in the springtime. Several oriole species might be found here, also painted buntings and many flycatchers, wrens, and sparrows. The Gila region has become a destination for serious birders. The area is of particular importance because both common black hawk and zone-tailed hawk can be found. Also, Mexican whip-poor-will, recently split from the com-

mon poorwill, summers in the area. You might also find Montezuma quail. The area is also gaining fame for the hummingbird species that come to visit, the endangered Southwest subspecies of the willow flycatcher, and breeding red-faced warblers. All of these places are national public lands where some degree of protection is in place and the assurance that habitat will be maintained in conditions conducive to the well-being of birds and other creatures. Needless to say, other birders will have other preferences and suggestions of their favorite spots. This is a rich state for both birds and great habitat: They go together, and we need to continue working to keep them together. 🦋



Sandhill Crane; Photo: Gary Cascio



# I Value Habitat Because...



Wilderness protection safeguards the natural lands where our indigenous heritage connects with wildlife and other cultures. Protecting wilderness will ensure that future families from all cultures have the opportunity to enjoy these special places.

— Rafael Gomez of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo



PHOTO: EARTH WAVES MEDIA

Safe, dense forests in mountains and foothills are my New Mexico home, though I sometimes wander to find the food I need. I'm not one for confrontation, but conflicts can arise when this requires travel across roads or through populated areas. Some might call me an opportunistic eater—when the opportunity arises, I eat! Believe it or not, plants and ants form the majority of my diet but I also scavenge and hunt. How's my figure? I'm starving! It's time to pack on some pounds for the cold winter season and a good, long nap.

— Black Bear



PHOTO: EARTH WAVES MEDIA

Even though you hardly ever see me, I see you, though I try to avoid civilization whenever possible. Large, wild areas are my favorite places to dwell ... even better if they include corridors to other expanses of wild country and plenty of prey. Contrary to popular belief, most of my diet consists of small prey animals, though I do like to have my mule deer friends over for dinner when I can. — Mountain Lion



Having lived and worked in the Gila for most of my life, I have learned that it's not until you leave that you start to realize what public land and wilderness means. I have worked in Texas and Northern Mexico in some beautiful country, but in those areas, you can't go anywhere without permission from the landowners. The Gila (and all U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands) belongs to all of us as U.S. citizens. It is a refuge from email, phones, and the stress of living in cities as well as a refuge for wildlife and their habitat. Nowhere else can you fish for a Gila trout, hear a Mexican wolf howl or an elk bugle, see mountain lion tracks, and observe an unbroken sky of stars—perhaps all in one day! — Nick Smith

Nick is a former Arizona Game & Fish employee, worked on the Mexican Gray wolf recovery program, and now runs his own outfitting company. He lives in Quemado, NM and is the Owner of Mulesnhounds, LLC, an outfitter/guide company.



Fishing in Northern New Mexico is an experience next to none! I spend many hours on the water, and catching trout in our high mountain streams is an experience that I look to pass on to my children and grandchildren. The only way to preserve these opportunities is to make sure habitat is protected from major development that impacts both fisheries and wildlife. The pure mountain water found in our pristine headwaters is only available due to protection of our land and water. Northern New Mexico is filled with protected areas that include the Valle Vidal, Latir Wilderness, Columbine Hondo Wilderness, Wheeler Peak Wilderness, and the Pecos Wilderness. Continuing to protect these landscapes benefits all wildlife and fisheries that include mule deer, elk, bighorn sheep, and our prized Rio Grande cutthroat trout!

— Nick Steit, Taos County



PHOTO: JUDY CALMAN

Wow, it's great to be back in New Mexico! Large territory with an abundance of prey is what I need to thrive. Let me tell you, New Mexico's got it! My pack is my family. We work as a sophisticated team to survive. Our home is a large, defined territory (apart from other packs) that supplies the resources we need. Unfortunately, our superior hunting abilities have given us a bad rap across the West when all we're really trying to do is survive. We don't mean any trouble, but with development expanding into our traditional range, conflict is not always easy to avoid. Despite a decrease in habitat, we are happily settling back into our native home. Most folks will never see us, and that's the way we like it. — Mexican Grey Wolf



I love the access we have to such a vast array of wildlife and landscapes here in New Mexico, and it's something I've always missed when I've lived in a big city. The connection to nature is a life-enhancing, even spiritual, experience that I would hate to see endangered by what seems

to be a lack of respect for nature and a higher priority on technical advancement, growth, and expansion at any and all costs. That way isn't sustainable to me, and I want my children to grow up in a community that respects our natural resources as well as the natural order in a way that promotes healthy ecosystems and allows nature to run its course.

— Siddeeq Shabazz, Las Cruces



It's essential to have landscapes on which human development is not the dominant feature. Those landscapes are becoming more and more difficult to find. Wild species need wild places where they can survive and thrive away from the growing intrusions of people,

and it's up to us to save and conserve these wild places for future generations of both people and wildlife.

— Story Warren, [www.facebook.com/Kids4Wolves](http://www.facebook.com/Kids4Wolves)



# Rio Grande del Norte - Finishing the Job

By John Olivas, Staff



PHOTO: JIM O'DONNELL

Efforts to designate two Wilderness areas within the new Río Grande del Norte National Monument northwest of Taos are once again moving in the halls of Congress.

The Cerros del Norte Conservation Act (S.1240), which would create the Ute Mountain (Cerros del Yuta) and San Antonio Wilderness Areas totaling more than 21,000 acres, was marked up by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources in July. The legislation can now move to a vote on the Senate floor.

Grassroots campaigns to protect the area have been going on since the late 1980s. President Barack Obama created the 242,500-acre Río Grande del Norte National Monument under the 1906 Antiquities Act in 2013, but an act of Congress is needed to create new Wilderness.

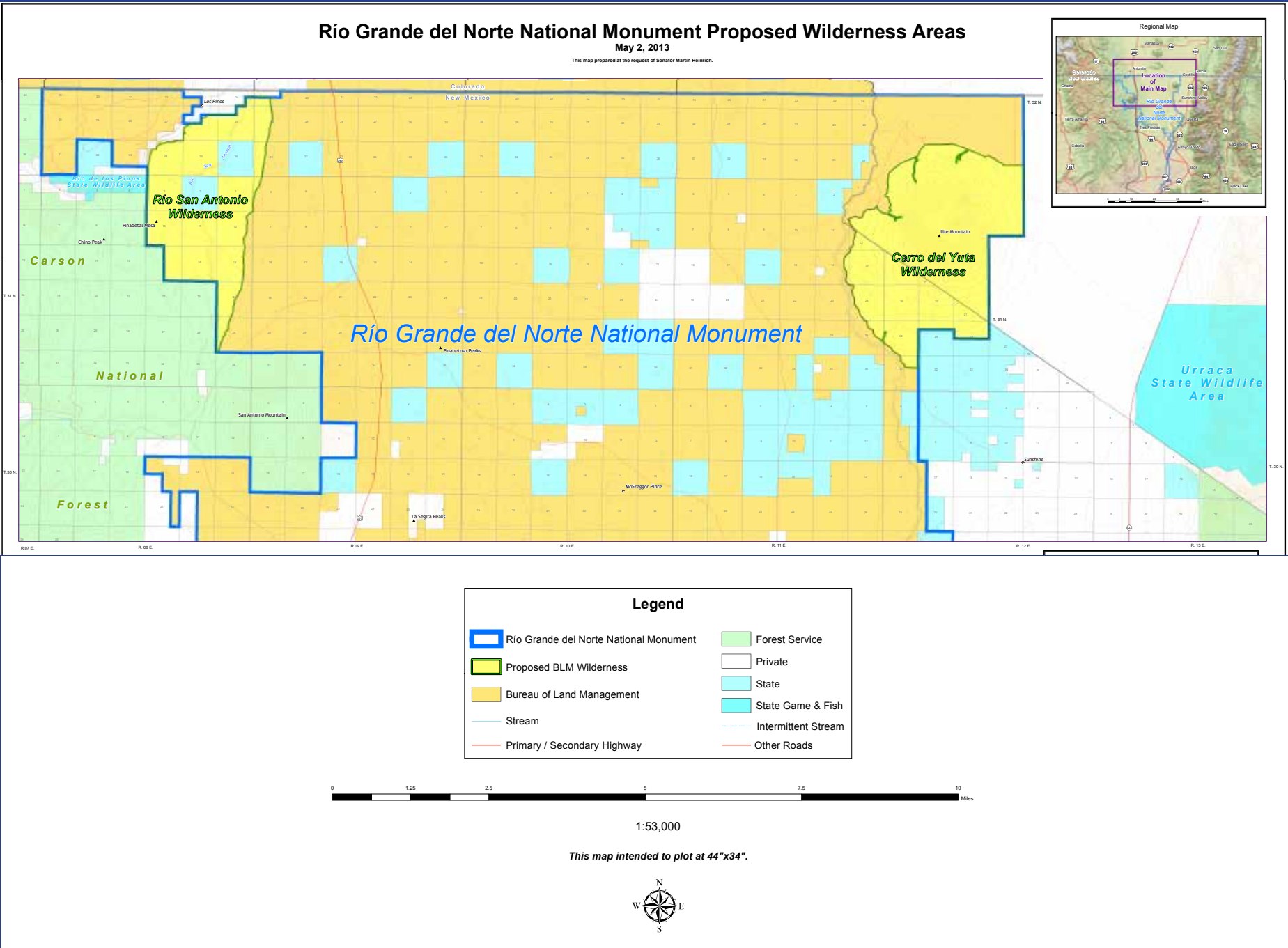
“We’re happy to be able to continue working with the broad coalition of enthusiastic supporters that led to the creation of the Río Grande del Norte National Monument,” said Wilderness Alliance Executive Director Mark Allison. “We thank our senators for their leadership and

are eager to finish the job to protect these two special places forever as designated Wilderness.”

The legislation, sponsored by Sen. Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., and Tom Udall, D-N.M., would ensure extra protection for two areas within Río Grande del Norte that provide important wildlife habitat and contribute to one of the world’s great avian migratory routes.

The current 8,000-acre San Antonio Wilderness Study Area is dissected by a 100-foot deep gorge carved by the Río San Antonio. The dramatic shield volcano of Ute Mountain, a 13,420-acre area, provides excellent habitat for mule deer, pronghorn, and elk with food and rearing grounds for offspring. Rich in botanical diversity, the areas boast meadows of blue grama, western wheatgrass, and Indian ricegrass. Piñon, ponderosa, aspen, white pine, and Douglas fir are also found here.

Río Grande del Norte National Monument was supported by a broad coalition of business owners, sportsmen, tribal leaders, local and federal elected officials, and grazing permittees. ▲





## ROPING IN PROTECTIONS



# Let's Keep Carlsbad Wild for Life

by Joelle Marier, Staff

**D**id you know the deserts of the Southwest are some of the most wildlife-rich areas in the United States? The wild lands outside of Carlsbad are no exception. Despite extensive oil and gas development, a unique combination of desert rivers, salt playas, desert grasslands, caves, canyons, and forests supplies a surprising abundance of habitat for an astonishing diversity of life.

### DESERT RIVERS

Desert rivers serve as literal oases for local wildlife amid a predominantly arid landscape. Riparian areas along the Pecos River, Black River, and Delaware River support a wide array of species ranging from fish, mollusks, and butterflies to amphibians, mammals, and birds. The Delaware River alone houses more than 20 Bureau of Land Management (BLM) sensitive species and has been designated an Important Bird Area by the Audubon Society for the vast number of resident and migratory birds it sustains. For endangered, threatened, and special status species such as the Texas hornshell mussel, Bell's vireo, and plainbelly watersnake, these desert rivers offer crucial habitat necessary for their productivity and, at times, survival.

### CHIHUAHUAN DESERT

Don't let its sparse facade fool you, the Chihuahuan Desert is bursting with life! A plethora of reptiles, like the western diamondback rattlesnake, mottled rock rattlesnake, and dunes sagebrush lizard call the Chihuahuan Desert home. Predator species, such as the endangered Aplomado falcon and kit fox, also find prime hunting grounds in desert open space. In the microclimate of desert springs, endangered reptiles and amphibians--such as the Pecos western ribbon snake and eastern barking frog--share habitat with rare birds like the green heron and varied bunting.

### CAVES

Cave and karst resources provide an integral habitat link for many wildlife species here. Migratory species like the cave swallow and Mexican free-tailed bat utilize the natural protection of the cave environment to raise their young. During the winter months the temperature-controlled cave environment offers would-be surface dwellers a necessary refuge. Over 350 species of birds and 17 species of bats have been documented around the caverns of southeastern New Mexico.

### GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS

Habitat extremes in the Guadalupe Mountains contribute a necessary contrast for area wildlife. Rugged topography and winding, steep-walled canyons offer protection and habitat for game species such as mule deer, elk, javalina, and Barbary sheep, while adjacent rolling grasslands supply an abundance of grass species for forage. Carnivores such as cougar, bear, and desert coyote also call the Guadalupe home. At last count, the Guadalupe system provided habitat for 60 species of mammals, 289 species of birds, and 55 species of reptiles.

### KEEPING CARLSBAD WILD FOR WILDLIFE

The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is currently working to gain protection for important wildlife habitat in the Carlsbad area through the Carlsbad BLM Field Office Resource Management Plan revision process. Successful protection of these areas through recognition of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics and designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern will help support area wildlife and preserve the unique natural and cultural resources found here. For more information about how you can be involved in saving space for southeast New Mexico wildlife, contact Joelle Marier at [joelle@nmwild.org](mailto:joelle@nmwild.org).

Mexican free-tailed bats, photo: Ann Froschauer, USFWS; Inset: Aplomado falcon

## ORGAN MOUNTAINS DESERT PEAKS...FINAL ASCENT by Nathan Small, Staff



**A** recent Las Cruces Sun-News headline heralded, "Abundance of Rain Turning Southern New Mexico Green." Throughout the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument, native grasses are abundant and tall, ocotillos send forth shimmering green leaves, and Sotol stalks stand stark on steep slopes. From the bottom of Kilbourne Hole to the tops of the Organ Mountains' forested peaks, our rich Chihuahuan Desert is celebrating the rain we have received.

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is also celebrating. Nearly 18 months after the monument designation, visitation is up, stewardship planning is ongoing, and community opportunities abound. It's time to renew another celebration: Wilderness Wednesday. Beginning in September, we'll gather from 5:30-7 p.m. on the second Wednesday of every month to celebrate wild lands, great food, fantastic art, and the power of community.

Wilderness Walks will also return this fall. In years past, these walks explored special places throughout the Sierra de Las Uvas and Robledo mountains. Expect similar trips, this time around with special visits to the Potrillo Mountains complex. These trips will be offered directly to Wilderness Alliance members and those who have signed up for Wilderness Alliance information. Don't be left out—sign up today at [www.nmwild.org](http://www.nmwild.org).

It takes special people to protect and properly steward special places. While Wilderness Wednesday and Wilderness Walks are two

ways to connect special people and special places, you can also enjoy the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks in solitude. Member Wild Notes encourages you to post pictures, videos, testimonials, and questions tied to special places in the national monument, especially the Wilderness Study Areas.

Wilderness Study Areas form the backbone of the monument. Identified between 1984 and 1996, these are the crème de la crème of the region, encompassing remote grasslands and cinder cones in the Potrillo Mountains complex, highlands in the Robledo and Sierra de Las Uvas mountains, and much of the pristine and picturesque Organ Mountains. Being a Wilderness Study Area confers some significant interim protections. But the full benefits and lasting permanent protection of Wilderness can come only after congressional designation. That is why we will continue working with our community and elected officials to bring well deserved wilderness protections to deserving special places.



Coyote; Barrell Cactus; OMDP Petroglyph; Photos: Wayne Suggs



# FROM FIRST TO LAST

## New Mexico Wilderness: First Out of the Chute, but then an Also-ran by Dave Foreman, Staff



Hamilton Mesa; Photo: Nathan Newcomer

New Mexico is widely thought of as a leader in Wilderness area protection. This leadership was acknowledged when the 50th anniversary conference of the Wilderness Act was held in Albuquerque a year ago. However, when I worked up the numbers in the accompanying tables, I was somewhat taken aback when I reckoned how poorly New Mexico has done in Wilderness area protection since 1924.

1924. Wilderness protection began in this year in which Aldo Leopold talked the Southwest Regional Forester into setting aside about 750,000 acres of the headwaters of the Gila River as the first Wilderness area on U.S. public lands. At that time, New Mexico had 100 percent of the protected Wilderness in the United States.

So, how has New Mexico done in comparison to other states after having the first Wilderness area? In the 90 years since 1924, our Wilderness acreage has only slightly more than doubled, while the Wilderness System has gone up more than a hundred-fold. The graphs accompanying this article show how the Wilderness System has grown, first as a Forest Service administrative program and then as the congressionally overseen National Wilderness Preservation System, and how New Mexico went from first to nearly last.

Two years after the Gila Wilderness was established, in 1926, Leopold's friend and fellow wilderness thinker Arthur Carhart convinced the Superior National Forest in Minnesota to set aside an area of over 1 million acres, which came to be called the Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

In 1929, Chief of the Forest Service William B. Greeley looked upon these new protected areas and deemed them good. He suggested that other National Forest regions might consider New Mexico and Minnesota and go and do likewise—but not too much. He instituted the L-20 regulation to authorize such designations, now to be called Primitive Areas. However, the small print of L-20 didn't truly protect such areas—they were really only in a holding pattern of sorts.

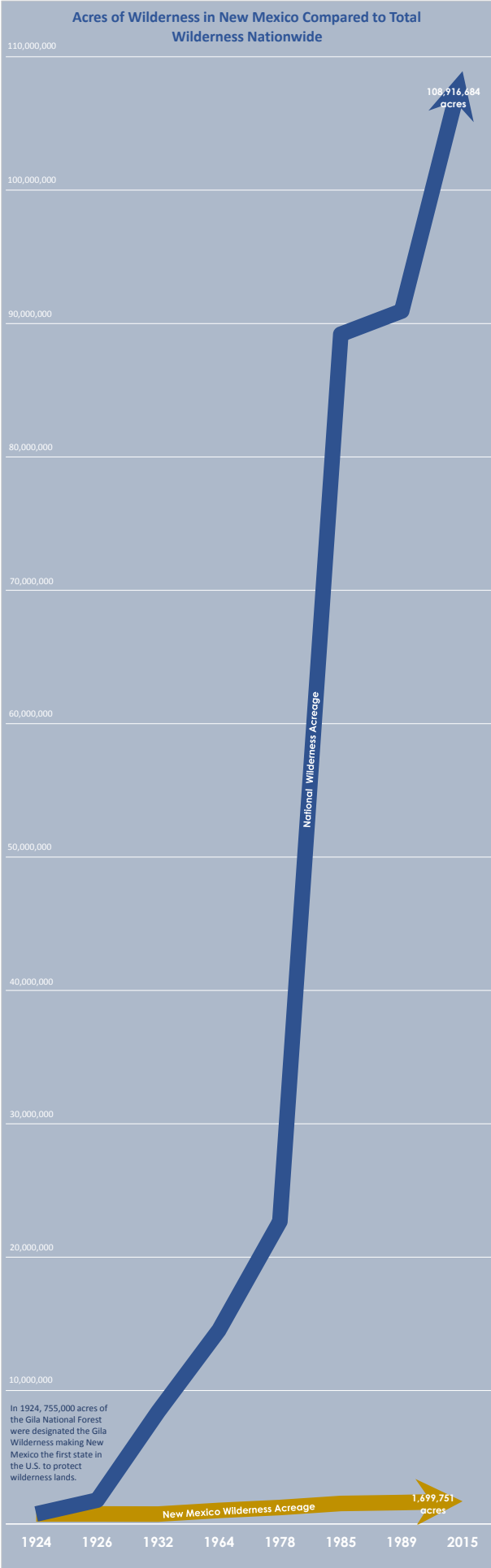
In 1931, the National Forest dam burst, and over a score of areas in California, Wyoming, Montana, Washington, and Oregon were designated as Primitive Areas, along with one area in

New Mexico—San Pedro Parks. By 1932, New Mexico's share of Primitive Areas was down to 9 percent—a reasonable percentage given how many other Western states had Primitive Areas by then. In New Mexico, the White Mountains and the Pecos Division (as it was called at that time) were among those designated in 1933. Another New Mexico area in the far southeastern corner of the Lincoln National Forest—the Guadalupe Mountains—was proposed but for some reason never made a Primitive Area. The Blue Range in Arizona and New Mexico came in 1933, as did the Black Range and Gila Primitive Areas. The creation of the North Star Road just a few years earlier split the Gila down the middle, dividing it into two Primitive Areas.

In 1939, real protection and some level of permanence finally came to the Forest Service's administrative system. Bob Marshall, who had been named head of recreation in 1936 by visionary Chief of the Forest Service Ferdinand Silcox, put together new regulations—U1, 2, and 3—to better protect the areas. Logging, roads, cottages, and such were banned. All Primitive Areas were to be studied for additions, deletions, and new, firm boundaries. After study, areas over 100,000 acres were to be called Wilderness Areas and those under 100,000 acres Wild Areas. Before 1964, 31 areas were studied and named Wilderness or Wild, 22 new areas (that had not been Primitive Areas) were made Wilderness or Wild (including New Mexico's Wheeler Peak), and 34 areas were left as Primitive Areas.

However, instead of expanding Primitive Areas for protection in the Primitive Area-to-Wilderness Area process, the Forest Service had begun hacking away at Primitive Areas and designating smaller areas as Wilderness or Wild Areas. This is what led conservationists to ask for a Wilderness Act for better permanent protection.

The Wilderness Act in 1964 put all National Forest Wilderness and Wild Areas into the new National Wilderness Preservation System and directed the Forest Service to protect the Primitive Areas as if they were Wilderness Areas and to study them and make recommendations to Congress for Wilderness designation by 1974.



Karen Evans  
Wolf Stamp  
Entry  
2015  
Honorable  
Mention

**OVERHEARD:** *An abstinence of a factual or logical foundation for fear does not make the personal impact any less real. Fear is a personal thing. Some people will fear wolves no matter what the facts are. But whether this goes true with the facts that people fear sexual predators. Because that's how I feel these wolves are.*

— WOLF HEARING, public testimony, Aug, 2014,  
Truth or Consequences



# FROM FIRST TO LAST

>Of all the Primitive Areas, only the Arizona portion of the Blue Range Primitive Area has not yet been designated as Wilderness by Congress.

New Mexico was still doing comparatively well—only California, Idaho, Minnesota, Montana, and Wyoming had bigger shares of the Wilderness System. New Mexico’s Wilderness Areas made up 7.4 percent of the total.

In the 20 years after the Wilderness Act, Wilderness Areas increased from 9.1 million acres to 89 million acres. More than half of this growth—56,484,668 acres—was in Alaska, most of it from the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Act (ANILCA), perhaps the greatest single land protection step worldwide. Taking Alaska out of the picture, the NWPS had grown to 32,534,197 acres—much of that from 1980 to 1984 in single-state National Forest Wilderness bills out of the Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) process.

By 1985, New Mexico was beginning its downward slide relative to the Wilderness acreage in other Western states and even some Eastern states. New Mexico doubled its Wilderness acreage between 1924 and 1985, but had only 1.72 percent of the National Wilderness Preservation System or 4.71 percent if the 52 million acres of Alaskan Wilderness was subtracted.

We had 1.97 percent of the state protected as Wilderness, less than every other Western state but for Nevada and Utah. Moreover, Florida, Hawaii, and Minnesota had larger percentages of their land area protected as Wilderness, and New Hampshire had almost the same percentage as New Mexico.

During the next 25 years, big statewide Wilderness bills for Bureau of Land Management lands in Arizona and California came into law, as did many regional bills in Nevada, thanks to Sen. Harry Reid. The upshot in 2010 was that of the Western states, only Utah had fewer acres designated as Wilderness than New Mexico (but a greater percentage of the state).

Between 1985 and 2015, New Mexico added a bit over 150,000 acres of Wilderness while California added 9 million acres; and Arizona, 2.5 million acres. During the same time, Nevada’s Wilderness acreage grew from a piddling 64,667 acres (the lonely Jarbidge Wilderness) to nearly 3.5 million acres.

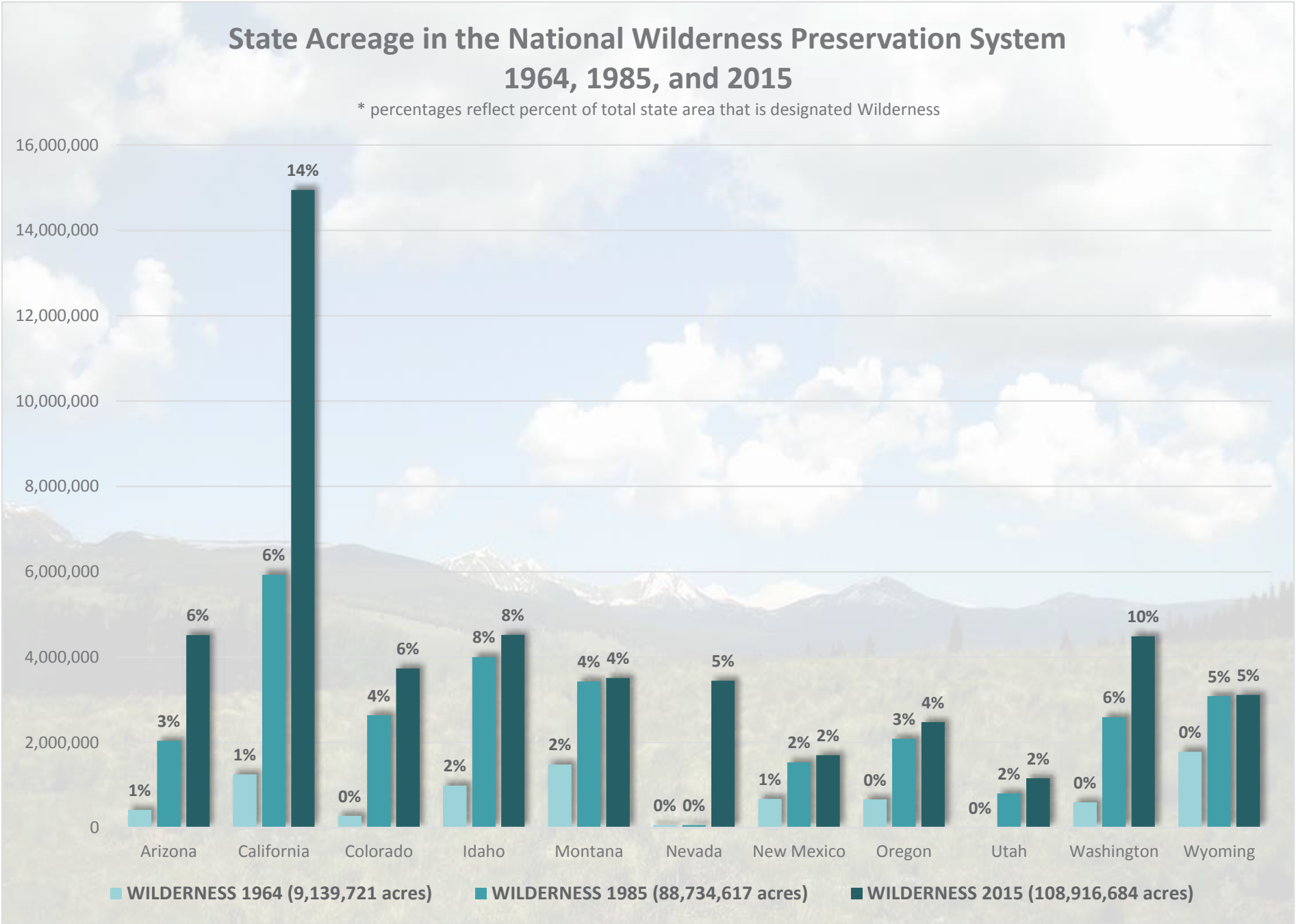
**After being the first state in the nation to have a Wilderness Area, by 2015, New Mexico had pitifully fallen behind** with a mere 1,699,751 acres of Wilderness (a little more than twice the original size of the Gila in 1924) or 2 percent of the whole National Wilderness Preservation System.

**What went wrong?** Why did the rest of the West and even some of the rest of the country surpass us? I won’t go into the manifold reasons for that here. Suffice it to say that New Mexico, with a strong statewide wilderness group (New Mexico Wilderness Alliance) and, arguably, the best conservation-oriented Congressional delegation in the West, has its work cut out for it.

It is past time for conservationists in New Mexico to aggressively protect the more than 5 million acres of potential Wilderness in our state. **Are we up for the task? Or are we content to dawdle while other states continue to protect more of their lands as Wilderness?** 🐾



Bobcat; Photo: Gary Cascio



1985 is after the large additions to the Wilderness system by the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Act, many state National Forest Wilderness bills following RARE II, and other legislation. This is the point where New Mexico truly fell behind most other Western states. Note how Washington, Oregon, Colorado, and Arizona have passed New Mexico in Wilderness acreage since 1964. Although not included on the graph, note also that in 1985 Florida, Hawaii, Minnesota, and New Hampshire (almost) have more of their land area designated as Wilderness than does New Mexico.



# Wilderness and Climate Change



Columbine; Photo: John Olivas

**T**oday, climate change is regarded by most, especially scientists, as the fundamental threat facing our species' continued life on earth. It is definitely a global topic of concern. But what is the connection to wilderness and what is its importance to climate change?

Wilderness areas, because they offer the least disturbed habitats, naturally mitigate known factors that affect the climate. The undisturbed habitat which wilderness offers also provides a way for wildlife in these ecosystems to adapt to changes in climate.

Human-caused climate change threatens the values for which wilderness areas were designated, such as clean air and water, and wildlife. It can also expand non-climate-related threats to wilderness, such as invasive species and habitat fragmentation. Wilderness does have a natural defense: its mere existence.

Wilderness, just by being wild and natural, provides a critical means for animals and plants to adapt to climate change by allowing them to move freely and by reducing the adverse effects of change on ecosystem services and values.

In the climate change lexicon, carbon dioxide is a "greenhouse" gas and a leading cause of global warming. Wilderness areas suppress naturally the release of carbon dioxide gas. The trees within forested wilderness

areas, aside from providing shade and cool, absorb and lock away carbon dioxide in the wood, roots and leaves. In total, a forest is a carbon storage area, or "sink," that stores carbon, keeping it from becoming available as a "greenhouse" gas.

Because water is the most limiting resource in arid ecosystems, changes in global and regional precipitation patterns in desert wilderness areas can result in substantial effects, such as increased soil erosion, shrinking vegetative cover, diminished productivity, invasion of exotics plants and the loss of native species.

In further research to help anticipate the advancing effects of climate change, scientists can look to the past. Much of our knowledge about past climates has come from old trees, wood, and pollen cores that increasingly can be found only in undisturbed wilderness lands.

Wilderness also protects and connects unfragmented natural areas, allowing wildlife to "adapt" to climate change. As climate change advances, some species of wildlife will migrate to more suitable environments. Species that are unsuccessful at finding suitable environments will suffer increasing extinction rates, resulting in an overall loss of biodiversity. 🐾

*Article adapted from the Wilderness Institute, University of Montana.*

Marta Anna Podolska  
Wolf Stamp Entry  
2015 Honorable Mention



**OVERHEARD:** *I don't plan on trying to ask the New Mexico Legislature for any money. ...We're very independent. We're independent thinkers. We're a conservative group of people who all know how to use a shovel.*

— Darr Shannon, newly elected chair of the CAP Entity, when asked by legislators her plans to identify the up to \$900 million of non-federal funds needed to pay for diversion of the Gila River at the Water and Natural Resources Committee meeting in Silver City on Aug. 31, 2015.



# PROTECT THE PECOS

By Andrew Varela / Pecos Native

**T**he Pecos is known for its trickling streams, incredible waterfalls, scenic views and abundant wildlife.

That is why I was so pleased to learn that the San Miguel County Commission recently passed a resolution to support safeguarding certain roadless areas surrounding the Pecos as wilderness and special management areas (SMAs).

The lands and waters surrounding the Pecos Wilderness provide nearby communities, like San Miguel County, with clean air, fresh water and great opportunities to experience New Mexico's wild places.

Without permanent protection, these places could be threatened by unchecked development that could gravely impact the watersheds protected within the Pecos Wilderness Area. Adding these areas to the Pecos would continue our state's proud conservation legacy.

The Pecos Wilderness is one of New Mexico's great treasures, and I know the wilderness and surrounding areas well. My family has lived in Pecos since the late 1800s, and I grew up in the same house as my father and have lived in Pecos and Rowe for 40 years.

I grew up hiking, hunting and riding horses here, and my children grew up loving the wil-

derness. Today when I go into the area, it is as it was when my family first settled here. That is the glory of wilderness, preserving special places like the Pecos for future generations.

Today, I work as a farrier, and my livelihood depends on protected public lands like the Pecos and surrounding areas. Like me, many people enjoy going up into the mountains on horseback, and that directly supports my business. I am not alone in benefitting from the Pecos Wilderness. Many people decided to move to New Mexico because of our great outdoors.

Whether they own a business that depends on tourism or outdoor recreation, run a company that services locals, or just want to live near the wild, the Pecos Wilderness and surrounding roadless areas are an economic driver for northern New Mexico. Together we all support local businesses and our growing outdoor recreation and tourism industries.

Of course, conserving the areas surrounding the Pecos Wilderness is about more than just dollars and cents. The Pecos Wilderness contains the headwaters to the Mora, Pecos and Gallinas Rivers, providing water to nearby communities and serving as a key source of irrigation for Acequias and farmers in New Mex-

ico. Traditional farming communities make our state unique and special, and it is critical that we safeguard their sources of clean, flowing water.

Protecting the Pecos will also preserve one of New Mexico's time-tested traditions: hunting and fishing. Deer, elk, bear, turkey and Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep can be found in the Pecos, along with Rainbow, brown and Rio Grande Cutthroat trout. Hunting and fishing can continue in the surrounding areas when they are designated as Wilderness and SMAs.

It is for all these reasons and more that I support expanding the Pecos and want to thank the San Miguel County Commission for supporting such an important effort. I am not alone in my support. A growing and diverse local coalition – including sportsmen, business owners and employers, Native American tribes, elected officials, mountain bikers and conservationists – has come together over the past four years to safeguard the surrounding roadless areas for future generations to enjoy.

I encourage everyone to get out to this majestic place and see why so many people want to expand the Pecos Wilderness. ▲

*Editor's Note: Next up: Taos County Commission*

## MINING LAW REFORM RESURFACES

**I**n August, at the peak of summer heat and river recreation, 3 million gallons of heavy metal-laden mining sludge were accidentally released from the Gold King Mine in Silverton, Colo., into Cement Creek, a tributary of the Animas River. This was a huge blow to those in Durango and others who rely on the river for drinking and irrigation water and to those who enjoy the river for recreation. Downstream, New Mexico and the Navajo Nation worried about drinking water, crops, fish, and wildlife as the contamination flowed into the San Juan River. While this spill drew national attention, contamination from mining is unfortunately part of the history of the West.

In the late 1800s, at a time when the country was expanding westward, President Ulysses S. Grant enacted the 1872 Mining Law to encourage citizens to stake claim to the land and move West. Now, 143 years later, the antiquated law still governs hard rock mining on national lands. This law allows mining companies to purchase public lands for \$5 an acre or less and contains no environmental protections, despite mining's impact on wild public lands, water, and wildlife.

Starting back in 2007 New Mexico Wilderness Alliance began working on this issue by building support for mining policy reform. In 2009, former Sen. Bingaman, D-N.M., introduced legislation to set royalties on hard-rock mining on federal lands for the first time, establish a fund to reclaim abandoned hard-rock mines and eliminate patenting — which has conveyed title to mining companies to develop mines on public land for as little as \$2.50 an acre. Sen. Tom Udall, D-N.M., co-sponsored Bingaman's bill, which did not pass.

Today, the recent Gold King Mine release has renewed political interest in mining law reform. After joining the San Juan Country Fire De-

partment in August to deliver water to local residents impacted by the spill, Sen. Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., pledged to introduce legislation that would change federal law to allow for the collection of royalties from mining companies to help clean up toxins like those that contaminated the Animas River.

"We have many, many abandoned mines that could do this again," Heinrich said.

Sen. Udall's spokesperson said Udall plans to introduce or co-sponsor mining law reform this fall as well. Udall helped author an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2014 budget resolution, which called for reform of the 1872 Mining Law to fund cleanup.

Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., Rep. Alan Lowenthal, D-Calif., and Rep. Raúl Grijalva, D-Ariz., introduced legislation (H.R. 963) to finally reform this antiquated law. This legislation would protect special places like Wilderness Study Areas, roadless areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, and lands in the Wild and Scenic River System from mineral exploration and development. The measure would also establish environmental standards for fish and wildlife protection, reclamation, and surface and groundwater protection, as well as facilitate clean up and implement fiscal reforms and enforcement.

With an estimated 500,000 abandoned mines throughout the country, including 15,000 right here in New Mexico, heart-wrenching disasters like this will continue to happen. Less dramatic but even more dangerous is the chronic leaching of heavy metals and toxins from these mines that pollutes our watersheds and jeopardizes our health.

Not only do we subsidize private, for-profit extractive activities on our public lands, we are left with a toxic brew contaminating our precious

water, and are now on the hook for the billions of dollars it will take to clean up this mess. Meanwhile, elected officials like Gov. Susana Martinez work to weaken our already inadequate state environmental laws and safeguards. At the same time some politicians advocate transferring our American public lands to the state to own and manage.

The Gold King Mine spill underscores the legacy of a Gold Rush-era law and how important it is to protect our nation's public lands from threats old and new. ▲



Animas River, August 2015; Photo: Jim O'Donnell



# GILA CAMPAIGN UPDATE

## Keeping the Gila Wild and Free by Nathan Newcomer, Staff



Gila Wilderness; Photo: Nathan Newcomer

When Aldo Leopold helped set aside the Gila Wilderness in 1924, not only was he thinking like a mountain, he was looking at conservation on a landscape-wide scale. Leopold understood that to protect a functioning ecosystem you had to first and foremost look at conserving large watersheds. The Gila itself is a vast watershed covering more than three million acres.

There are approximately 780,000 acres of protected Wilderness in the Gila National Forest, including the Gila, Aldo Leopold, and Blue Range Wildernesses. We estimate there are over one million acres of public lands eligible for Wilderness designation in the region, as well as over 500 miles of rivers and streams that merit protection under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. In addition, many other areas may be appropriate for other types of protections, including special management areas and areas for restoration. Threats to these areas include proposed river diversions, off-road vehicles, illegal user-created roads, mining, and illegal grazing.

Over the last two years, we have been conducting on-the-ground inventories in the Gila National Forest. To date, our staff and local volunteers have documented over 350,000 acres of potential new Wilderness and more than 150 miles of eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers. Many of these places overlap and intersect critical watersheds, including the San Francisco, Tularosa, and Gila river watersheds. We also continue to work with our partners on the Forest Service planning process and are using that process to recommend new Wilderness areas.

In November 2014, the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) declared its intent to construct a large-scale water diversion and storage project on the Gila River. We are working with local partners to oppose that project and other proposals to divert the Gila and San Francisco rivers. Due to the serious threats to the Upper Gila Box from Turkey Creek to the Mogollon Box and the areas around the proposed river diversion, we are calling for their immediate protection through Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers designation.

At a meeting in Silver City in August 2015, the New Mexico Legislature's Interim Water and Natural Resources Committee voiced overwhelming skepticism about the financial feasibility of the proposed \$1 billion Gila River diversion project. At that meeting, former ISC director Norm Gaume cited several fatal flaws that make the project infeasible. In part, Gaume stated, "The ISC and its consultants, acting as the State of New Mexico, have spent millions to define a workable project but have met failure at every turn. That's because a workable project is impossible, physically and financially. How long will the State of New Mexico continue to pretend otherwise?"

## CONSERVATION CHAMPION



Norm Gaume;  
Photo: gilawilddefensefund.org

If you care about preventing the proposed diversion of one of the Southwest's last free-flowing rivers, the Gila River, or about good governance or participatory democracy, please consider contributing to the Gila Wild Defense Fund. You can do so by going to Norm Gaume's website at [gilawilddefensefund.org](http://gilawilddefensefund.org) to make a tax-deductible donation or by designating your donation to the New Mexico Community Foundation at [nmcf.org](http://nmcf.org) for this fund.

The fund will help pay legal fees associated with Norm's lawsuit against the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission for violations of the Open Meetings Act and awarding Gila-related contracts illegally. The fund also will help Norm defend himself against the commission's highly aggressive responses.

We are all in debt to Norm, who took it upon himself at great personal financial risk to attempt to hold this appointed body accountable. His legal fees now exceed \$180,000. He has received about \$50,000 in donations and needs help.

The Interstate Stream Commission won't answer the most basic questions for the public. Norm's invited Aug. 31 testimony in Silver City before the state Legislature's water committee summarizes:

"The ISC, working with the Bureau of Reclamation, has spent over \$5 million since 2004 investigating a New Mexico Unit project, yet basic project attributes are still unknown. ... ISC and Reclamation have assiduously avoided the question of financial feasibility or the amount and reliability of the net new water that the project would develop. They have met with failure at every turn in defining a project that is technically feasible. They have never compiled the total costs of construction and financing of this billion-dollar project, nor estimated the cost of its water to users. ... Financial feasibility has been ignored."

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation estimates the development costs will exceed \$1 billion. This billion-dollar boondoggle is a poster child for backroom deals, a willful disregard for the public and transparency, and contempt for America's first wilderness river, the wildlife that call it home, and New Mexico taxpayers.

As a former director of the Interstate Stream Commission, a Deming native, an engineer, and an expert witness, Norm is perhaps an unlikely banner carrier for anti-diversion efforts. His highly reasoned expert critique of the proposal's feasibility and exposure of fatal flaws has been devastating and has gone unanswered by the ISC.

**The Wilderness Alliance considers Norm a conservation champion and we're proud to have the opportunity to get the word out about how you can help. Please go to Norm's website at [gilawilddefensefund.org](http://gilawilddefensefund.org) to make a tax-deductible donation. Please also visit [gilaconservation.org](http://gilaconservation.org) to learn more about the Gila diversion proposal.**

## "TWO BIRDS, TWO SNAKES, TWO FISH, AND A FROG..."



### Threatened and Endangered Species in the Gila Region

**ENDANGERED SOUTHWESTERN WILLOW FLYCATCHER** The Southwestern subspecies of the willow flycatcher has been federally listed as endangered since 1995, with critical habitat designated in 2005. While scattered historical breeding records in New Mexico include the Canadian, Chama, San Francisco, San Juan, and Zuni river drainages, breeding activity is now limited almost exclusively to the Gila and the Rio Grande drainages.

#### THREATENED YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO

The Western population of the yellow-billed cuckoo, an insect-eating bird found in riparian woodland habitats, winters in South America and breeds in western North America. In New Mexico, the yellow-billed cuckoo breeds on the Gila River and middle Rio Grande. Once abundant in the western United States, populations have declined for several decades, primarily due to the severe loss, degradation, and fragmentation of its riparian habitat as a result of conversion to agriculture, dam construction, river flow management, and riverbank protection. Overgrazing and invasive exotic plants have also contributed to declines.

#### ENDANGERED LOACH MINNOW

The loach minnow has been eliminated from at least 80 percent of its historic range. In the early to late 1980s, the loach minnow was moderately common and widespread in the Cliff-Gila Valley, but it now is rare in the lower half of the valley.

It is most common along the San Francisco River where water diversion and instream channel modifications do not occur and nonnative fish are absent. Maintenance of free-flowing, unaltered streams appears critical to conservation of loach minnow. Currently, it persists only where streamflow is unregulated and human-induced habitat modifications are minimal.

#### ENDANGERED SPIKE DACE

Spike dace currently occupies less than 10 percent of its historic range in Arizona and New Mexico. In the early 1980s, spiked dace was found in the East, Middle, and West forks of the Gila River, the Gila River in the Cliff-Gila Valley, and irregularly in the Gila River downstream of the Middle Gila Box. Abundance in the Cliff-Gila Valley reach of the Gila River has declined since the early 1990s, and it now is uncommon there. Conservation of remaining populations of spike dace requires reversing the increasing degradation of remaining habitats and cessation of nonnative fish stockings in habitats occupied by the species. Maintenance of natural flow regimes is critical to retaining habitat integrity and moderating the abundance of nonnative fishes.

#### Threatened Northern Mexican Garter Snake

In 2013, scientists were thrilled with the discovery in New Mexico of the rare Northern Mexican garter snake, which was thought to have been extirpated from the state. Its range has been reduced by more than 90 percent

due to water diversions, drought, overgrazing, and wildfires. Nonnative species also threaten young snakes.

**THREATENED NARROW-HEADED GARTER SNAKE** The narrow-headed garter snake is unique for having a long, narrow head that is believed to be an adaption to enhance its ability to hold its position in flowing water and reduce drag when the snake is striking prey. The snake forages along stream banks and among boulders within streams. It is typically found in well-lit, cool, clear, rocky streams and also uses upland areas adjacent to permanent water for hibernation, basking, and cover from predators. It persists at only about 40 sites throughout its range in the Gila Basin.

#### THREATENED CHIRICAHUA LEOPARD FROG

The Chiricahua leopard frog is found in the mountain streams and rivers of southwestern New Mexico, including waters of the Gila and San Francisco rivers and their tributaries. Once found in more than 400 aquatic sites in the Southwest, the frog is now found at fewer than 80. Chiricahua leopard frogs need permanent water for reproduction, but that's increasingly hard to come by, as Southwest riparian areas are often destroyed by overgrazing, groundwater pumping, and water diversion and dams.

Credit: Adapted from materials from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.



# WOLVES BELONG!

## Wilderness Alliance Continues to Fight for Mexican Gray Wolf

**F**or the past two years, we have participated in every step of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's changes to its wolf management rule. The changes were finalized in January 2015.

Despite expansion of the wolves' territory and the new ability for the agency to release wolves directly into New Mexico, the new rule greatly expanded the circumstances in which people can kill wolves and did not reconsider the wild population's classification as "non-essential," which prevents the wolves from having critical protections. We decided in June to challenge the Fish and Wildlife Service rule in court, along with our colleagues at WildEarth Guardians, Friends of Animals, and the Western Environmental Law Center.

The wolves' struggles have unfortunately been exacerbated by the New Mexico Game Commission. In addition to withdrawing the state from the group of cooperating agencies in wolf recovery several years ago, the commission also voted in the last several months against renewing the permit for Ted Turner's Ladder Ranch to house endangered predators for captive breeding, and also to deny the Fish and Wildlife Service's application to release captive-bred wolves into the state. Ladder Ranch and the Fish and Wildlife Service are each appealing the Game Commission's decisions.

The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance also continues its legal fight to overturn the U.S.

Department of Justice's so-called McKittrick policy, an internal agency policy that prevents DOJ from prosecuting anyone for Endangered Species Act violations unless it proves the person knew the exact biological identity of the species he or she killed. This policy is contrary to the act itself, and to over 20 years of case law. Additionally, the policy affects all endangered species and has led to an enormous decrease in Endangered Species Act prosecutions in the last 17 years since the policy was adopted.

This policy is especially troubling for Mexican wolves, which number only about 109 in the wild and whose highest cause of mortality is illegal shooting. Since Mexican wolves were reintroduced at least 60 wolves have been illegally shot. Many of the perpetrators who were caught claimed they thought they were shooting a coyote or dog, thereby avoiding prosecution under the policy.

We are very happy to report that on July 27, the Justice Department's motion to dismiss our challenge was denied by the U.S. District Court in Arizona. While this was technically not a decision on the merits of the case, the judge took the unusual step of addressing many of our substantive arguments.

"The Court finds that DOJ's actions, including the adoption of a formal discretionary non-enforcement policy, are subject to ESA guidelines. Choosing to not enforce ... is arguably an abdication of DOJ's duty under the ESA to en-

sure that it uses its authority in furtherance of the purposes of ESA, i.e. —to protect the Mexican gray wolf," the court wrote.

We are very encouraged in our efforts moving forward. If ultimately successful, this case would have far-reaching implications, not only for Mexican gray wolf recovery, but for how the Endangered Species Act is enforced nationwide. ▲



Mexican Grey Wolf; Above: Courtesy of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Below: Courtesy of the Mexican Wolf Interagency Field Team

## 2015 MEXICAN GRAY WOLF COLLECTOR'S STAMP

*This year's stamp—chosen from more than 50 entries  
—inspired by Albuquerque native wolf*

The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance has released its fifth international collector's stamp commemorating the Mexican gray wolf. Each year, artists from across the country submit their artwork to the Wilderness Alliance, which organizes the contest.

This year's stamp design, inspired by former Albuquerque resident Gypsy the wolf, was chosen from more than 50 entries.



Skie Bender; Wolf Stamp Entry 2015 Winner

Gypsy, a female Mexican gray wolf, was born in 2004 at the Rio Grande Zoo in Albuquerque as part of the Species Survival Plan and has been a resident of Wolf Haven International in Washington since 2005.

Says artist Skie Bender, "I've always been fond of Gypsy for her gregarious and curious energy."

The Mexican Wolf Conservation Stamp is a framing-quality conservation stamp. Native to the Southwest, the Mexican gray wolf—or the Lobo—was reintroduced to the wild more than 17 years ago through a captive breeding program, yet still struggles to survive with only 109 animals left in the wild. All proceeds from the stamp benefit Mexican gray wolf conservation and education efforts.

To purchase the 2015 stamp as well as previous years' stamps, visit [nmwild.org/purchasewolfstamp](http://nmwild.org/purchasewolfstamp)

**About the artist:** Skie Bender is an education outreach specialist at Wolf Haven International, a nonprofit sanctuary for captive-born wolves located in the small farming community of Tenino, Wash. Bender exhibits her artwork throughout the West and Pacific Northwest. She connects her love for animals with her passion for art by donating proceeds of her paintings to various animal rescue organizations.



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

**nusenda**  
CREDIT UNION

[nusenda.org](http://nusenda.org)

Federally insured by NCUA



# Special Feature: *Panthera onca*

by Michael J. Robinson

## MADE IN THE U.S.A., BUT NOW IMPORTED

The jaguar is the largest cat in the Americas and the third largest globally, after the tiger and lion. Its popular image as a beast of the jungle belies its origin in diverse landscapes in North America where the jaguar evolved before expanding its range to Central and South America.

Jaguars once were widely distributed across today's United States, including in New Mexico. There are many historic accounts: In 1540, a scribe for Spanish conquistador Francisco Vasquez de Coronado recorded sightings of "tigres" in today's Gila National Forest. In 1855, a member of a U.S. military expedition surveying the border with Mexico reported seeing a jaguar in the Peloncillo Mountains along New Mexico's line with Arizona in the Bootheel. In 1900, a jaguar was trapped in the Gila National Forest and its pelt sold in Magdalena. In 1902, one was poisoned further north in the Datil Mountains. In 1903, another was killed in the Peloncillos. And sometime before 1938, another was killed near Springer on the grasslands of northeastern New Mexico.

In 1963, the last known female jaguar in the U.S. was shot in the Apache National Forest in Arizona where Mexican gray wolves were later reintroduced. Her stomach contained elk. A male was killed nearby four months later. All subsequent jaguars known in the U.S. lived near the border and presumably came from Mexico.

During the past century, conditions for wildlife, including jaguars, have improved in the Gila and across the state line in Arizona, unlike the trend almost everywhere else in the world. The improvement is due to significant reductions in stocking of domestic livestock and rebounds in deer and elk numbers. Studies show that habitat and available prey in the Gila could support jaguars.

## OFFICIAL PERSECUTION MORPHS TO MALEDICTORY NEGLECT, THEN SMALL-SCALE HABITAT PROTECTION

Jaguars were eliminated from the U.S. due to clearing of forests, draining of wetlands, and hunting for pelts and livestock protection. But their destruction was not caused just by an expanding civilization and private

initiative. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and its agency antecedent trapped, hunted, and poisoned jaguars for livestock protection beginning in 1918.

Jaguars were placed on the U.S. list of foreign endangered species in 1972 because trophy hunters were killing thousands of them annually in Central and South America. (But after the listing, the service issued "hardship permits" to American hunters to continue to import jaguar pelts.) Then, in 1979, the service stated that, through an "oversight," jaguars in the U.S. were not protected under the 1973 Endangered Species Act because the listing only applied to foreign countries. The agency pledged to rectify its mistake, but failed to follow through until the Center for Biological Diversity sued, leading to a listing of jaguars in the U.S. in 1997.

Litigation by the Center for Biological Diversity also caused the service to designate 764,207 acres of critical habitat for jaguars in 2014. All the critical habitat, except 51,400 acres in the Peloncillo Mountains and 7,714 acres in the Sierra San Luis, is in Arizona. The designation prohibits the federal government from harming or destroying the habitat.

## SHALL WE FORGET IN DISHONOR, OR REMEMBER AND RESTORE?

The jaguar's future in the land of its origin is in doubt. The Fish and Wildlife Service opposes jaguar recovery in the Gila and broader Mogollon Rim, notwithstanding the excellent habitat which the presence of jaguars would improve—just as wolf reintroduction in the northern Rockies enhanced Yellowstone in ways that scientists hadn't predicted.

Jaguars are declining in Mexico, just as their range shrank centuries ago further north where their presence is now forgotten. Restoring jaguars as a breeding population in the Southwest would bolster the demographic and genetic status of the precarious jaguar population in northern Sonora. It would honor the memory, honor the future, of North America's grandest cat. 🐾

Michael Robinson represents the Center for Biological Diversity in Silver City, and is author of *Predatory Bureaucracy: The Extermination of Wolves and the Transformation of the West* (University Press of Colorado, 2005).



Manu River Jaguar; Photo: Andrea Santarsiere

## "YO! WHAT'S WITH THE SPOTTED PUSSYCAT LOGO?"

Well, that "spotted pussycat" is a jaguar. *Panthera onca*. And it's not an African import, but a native New Mexican. Or rather, jaguars called this place home before New Mexico became a state.



Jaguars have been here so long they probably know what happened at Chaco Canyon. Jaguars once ranged far north into New Mexico, and beyond even into southern Colorado and Utah. Then, they were essentially gone from New Mexico for 75 years.

Within the last 20 years or so, however, credible sightings started to occur in southwestern New Mexico. In 1997, a jaguar was even photographed south of Lordsburg in the Peloncillos. Those mountains don't get their reputation as a critical wildlife corridor for nothing! In 1998, a black jaguar—passing through what is called its melanistic phase—was recorded in the Black Range, west of Truth or Consequences.

Wilderness and roadless areas are the key to jaguars reclaiming their place in our state's landscape. Wilderness saves for them and for us important remnants of freedom and grandeur. Without Wilderness, New Mexico wouldn't be the home we love with such fierce passion.

Jaguars are rare, elusive, beautiful, important and wild. The knowledge that they are taking cautious exploratory steps back into a place they once called home encourages us about their resiliency and reminds us of the importance of large, intact, healthy roadless areas and corridors. The jaguar, to us, represents the hope and opportunity of conserving what we have left.

So, that's what's with the spotted pussycat. Thanks for asking.



# Welcome New Board Members

Please join us in welcoming our new board members, Ernie Atencio, Wendy Brown, and Sam DesGeorges. We are honored to bring these three into the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance family. The wealth of knowledge and experience they bring to the board of directors will make us even better advocates and defenders of wilderness.



ERNIE ATENCIO is a cultural anthropologist, conservationist, and writer with deep Indo-Hispano roots in Northern New Mexico. He is Rio Grande Water Fund Program Associate for The Nature Conservancy and works on other projects through his Land & Culture Consulting business from his home near Taos. He previously spent nine years as executive director of the Taos Land Trust, where he developed a number of innovative and fruitful community partnerships, permanently protected thousands of acres of land, worked on the public acquisition of Ute Mountain, and returned a sacred site to the legal ownership of the Taos Pueblo Tribe. Ernie has also been executive director of a national association of cabin owners, coordinated the Valles Caldera Coalition, and worked for other environmental organizations.

WENDY BROWN recently retired from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, where she managed the endangered species recovery program for the Southwest region. Her professional career spanned experiences from field research and project management for whooping cranes and Mexican wolves to briefing congressional representatives on various government actions. Wendy is a devoted conservationist with strong ties to New Mexico's varied landscapes.



SAM DESGEORGES also recently retired from a federal agency, having worked as a steward for public land resources with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for 36 years. Over this time, he held several positions within the Range, Lands, Fire and Wildlife programs. For the past 11 years, Sam was BLM's Taos field manager, overseeing about 650,000 acres of public land holdings in north central and northeastern New Mexico to include the recently designated Rio Grande del Norte National Monument, the Sabinoso Wilderness, and the Galisteo Basin Archaeological Sites Protection Act lands. Sam is a native Taosño, whose family settled in the Taos area in the mid 1700s.



# Welcome New Staff Members



ALMA CASTRO, membership coordinator, was born and raised in Santa Fe. She is a graduate of Santa Fe High School and Oberlin College, where she received her B.A. in political science and comparative American studies.

As a young professional, Alma has been helping organize marginalized immigrant workers to better protect their rights. In her pursuit to find the root of economic disparities, she traveled much of Latin America, learning about traditional community models that are in harmony with the natural world. It was in learning about respectful land cultivation that Alma found a need to conserve land in its natural and untrammelled state.



LATICIA EDMONDS, office manager, joins the Wilderness Alliance with extensive nonprofit experience, having worked for over 20 years for Animal Protection of New Mexico in a variety of supportive and administrative roles. She moved in 1993 from Michigan's Upper Peninsula to New Mexico, where she fell in love with the open spaces and wildlife of the Southwest, particularly with the keynote species wolves, cougars, and prairie dogs. She's explored our beautiful state from El Malpais National Monument to Carlsbad Caverns, coming to deeply appreciate

the variety and beauty of the wild lands in New Mexico. Laticia also enjoys writing short stories and received her B.A. in English with a creative writing emphasis from the University of New Mexico in 2013.



JOELLE MARIER, grassroots organizer, joined the staff of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance in July 2015. She began her commitment to wilderness in 1992 while studying wilderness management at the edge of Boundary Waters in northern Minnesota. Since then, she has pursued wilderness work as a U.S. Forest Service wilderness ranger and trails technician, a private backcountry guide, a U.S. Geological Survey research technician, and an outdoor educator in New Mexico and states across the West, including Alaska.

Joelle first moved to New Mexico in 1997, drawn to the open spaces, culture, and contrast of desert and high country found in this unique western state. After eight years in Northern New Mexico, she traveled north to further her education and explore the wild places of Alaska, Canada, and Montana where she completed a degree in environmental studies and geographical information systems at the University of Montana. Most recently, she was selected as an Interagency Wilderness Fellow and worked with the National Park Service in southern Colorado and Hawaii to compile baseline wilderness character assessments, provide parks with guidance on wilderness issues, and contribute to interagency wilderness monitoring strategies. Now happily back in New Mexico, she joins the Alliance to engage the community and partner organizations on New Mexico public lands.

Tina Crump;  
Sandra Maxwell  
Wolf Stamp  
Entry  
2015  
Honorable  
Mention



**OVERHEARD:** Now, therefore, be it resolved that the All Pueblo Council of Governors support the closure of the Santa Fe National Forest to energy and mineral exploration and development, and request that the Forest Service withhold any consent to the BLM for leasing of any of the Santa Fe National Forest to geothermal or other mineral exploration, leasing, or development. — August 10, 2015, unanimous vote, regarding the proposal for geothermal leasing in the Jemez Mountains.



# LET'S GET WILD!

## Volunteer Opportunities in the Sandia Mountain Wilderness

The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is partnering with the Cibola National Forest, Sandia Ranger District to lead a range of volunteer service projects that will suit all skill levels.

1. Placitas Trails Project--This project will relocate unauthorized trails that have been created within the Sandia Wilderness boundary and connect to mountain biking trails within the Bernalillo Watershed Research Natural Area. Approximately three miles of trail will be relocated to improve sustainability and connectivity of the trail system. Sign up to help us with this project set to start in fall 2015.
2. Fence Repair and Sign Replacement along the Wilderness Boundary--Several sections of the Sandia Wilderness boundary have had unauthorized use by motorized vehicles or mountain bikes due to the lack of signage or damaged fencing. The Cibola has identified sections along the boundary that need fence repair and sign replacement, which will help deter unauthorized use within the Wilderness. Sign up to help us with this project set to start in early 2016.
3. Pilot Test Graffiti Removal methods--Over the last five years, the Wilderness Alliance has collected data on graffiti found within and adjacent to the Sandia Wilderness in more than 20 locations, and the graffiti continues to increase. Sign up to help pilot test a method to remove the graffiti.

To sign up, email [Tisha@nmwild.org](mailto:Tisha@nmwild.org)

*Funding from the Albuquerque Community Foundation helps make these projects possible.*



Thank you Albuquerque Community Foundation for funding our efforts this year! Photos from other service projects around the state. Boy Scouts pitch in on fence removal project (photo by Raymond Watt); Graffiti documented in the Sandia Wilderness; Volunteers working on road closure near the Pecos Wilderness; Fence removal in the Valles Caldera (photo by Raymond Watt.)



Jessica de la Luna  
Wolf Stamp Entry  
2015 Honorable Mention



**OVERHEARD:** *I could sit here and blow baloney all day, saying we know how we're going to do it. We don't. But we have got to capture this water. And the deep passion our group has for capturing this water is beyond understanding.*

— Darr Shannon, newly elected chair of the CAP Entity, when asked by legislators her plans to identify the up to \$900 million of non-federal funds needed to pay for diversion of the Gila River at the Water and Natural Resources Committee meeting in Silver City on Aug. 31, 2015.





Sunrise at the Lower Gila Box; Photo: Gary Cascio

*Hello,  
I hope you are enjoying our publication! I would like to take this  
opportunity to invite you to become a member of our alliance.*

*Hola,  
!Espero que les guste nuestra publicación! Me gustaría tomar esta  
oportunidad para invitarlos a que se hagan miembros de nuestra Alianza*

Members are the driving force behind the NM Wilderness Alliance



Add your citizen voice to  
protect our increasingly  
rare wild places



Travel the state's wild-  
lands with knowledgable  
and seasoned guides



Help keep our public lands untrammelled through  
volunteer service projects

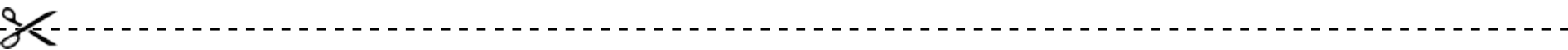


*Gracias por su atención,*

*Alma Castro  
Membership Coordinator  
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance*

See Inserted Envelope!

*\* Para mas information en Español  
visita: [www.nmwild.org/recursos-en-espanol/](http://www.nmwild.org/recursos-en-espanol/)*



Join *New Mexico Wilderness Alliance* today!  
All New Mexico All The Time

- ☐ YES! Yes, I wish to purchase an annual membership to the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance!  
☐ \$15-Student/Senior    ☐ \$25-Individual    ☐ \$45-Household    ☐ \$100-Premium\*    ☐ \$500-Lifetime  
☐ Visa    ☐ Mastercard    ☐ Check (Please make checks payable to the NM Wilderness Alliance.)

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

W15NMWild

Mail your annual tax-deductible  
membership dues to:  
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance  
PO Box 25464  
Albuquerque, NM 87125  
Questions? 505.843.8696  
[nmwild.org](http://nmwild.org)

*\*You will receive a signed copy of  
The Great Conservation Divide, Dave  
Foreman, 2014 (\$20 retail value).*

PHOTO: MIKE GROVES, ORGAN MOUNTAINS, NM



# COMMUNITY PARTNERS

## Stone Age Climbs for Wilderness! by Alicia Johnson, Staff

Healthy, local businesses make life sustainable and soulful for our largest, and our smallest, communities in New Mexico. We are alive with personality and passion here because business owners and business families develop deep roots and generous hearts for many community-based and grassroots projects. What would we do without them?

Stone Age Climbing Gym in Albuquerque is a great example of a business partner that really "rocks us" with pride and appreciation. Operating since 1997, and now the largest climbing gym in the Southwest, Stone Age offers guided outdoor climbs, an indoor climbing facility, classes, and youth programs seven days a week.

Business owner Bryan Pletta just celebrated his 10th anniversary as a New Mexico Wilderness Alliance member and supporter. An annual sponsor of the world tour of the Banff Film Festival, featuring films on mountain sports and cultures, Stone Age Climbing Gym donates a portion of the proceeds to the protection of Wilderness right here in New Mexico through the Alliance. We use donor support exclusively in New Mexico, all across New Mexico. We're local, too! It's an admirable way for Stone Age Climbing Gym to give back to the community and build respect and appreciation for preserving our wildest places. We say, "THANKS!"

It's a beautiful feeling when all kinds of community members take the long view to actively help preserve our natural resources in this great state, including roadless areas, wildlife habitat, outdoor places of respite from a way-too-busy and mechanized world, and the welcome presence of geolog-

ic time! We thank each and every one of you as you choose to become a new or renewing member.

From Silver City to Las Cruces to Taos, and everywhere in between, business members of the Alliance help protect Wilderness through their direct support and by sending a message that they are committed to Wilderness protection in New

Mexico. When you enter their stores or visit them online, please give them a heartfelt thanks.

*If you are a business or organization and would like to know more about how to give back to Wilderness with a membership in New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, please contact Alma Castro at [alma@nmwild.org](mailto:alma@nmwild.org).*



StoneAge; Photo: KMari Photography

## *New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is proud to announce a partnership of epic proportions!* **"BEER FOR A BETTER BURQUE" PARTNERSHIP**

Benefitting



**New Mexico  
Wilderness Alliance**  
[www.nmwild.org](http://www.nmwild.org)



**Tractor Brewing Co.**  
[www.getplowed.com](http://www.getplowed.com)  
Wells Park Albuquerque, NM Nob Hill

What's better than a cold beer after a long hike in the wilderness? Not a damn thing, that's what! Because we believe that life without wilderness would be like life without beer! Is it really possible to save the world by drinking a beer? We think so! Buying a Tractor growler or pint helps us protect New Mexico's threatened and disappearing wild places.

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is a statewide, grassroots membership organization dedicated to the protection, restoration, and continued respect of New Mexico's wild lands. To join or learn more about our outings, service projects or campaigns visit [www.nmwild.org](http://www.nmwild.org).

And remember....tractors don't belong in Wilderness...but growlers sure do!



Tractor Brewing Company is excited to jump into year two of our non-profit giving program: Beer for a Better Burque. We have chosen four diverse and incredible organizations to receive the benefits of BBB, in order to maximize the amount of support we can supply to causes we care about. This growler is one of the ways we are making that happen. Every time you fill this growler, a non-profit partner gets a \$1 donation for their operating and programming needs. Thank you for helping us make a difference.



TRACTOR BREWING COMPANY  
1800 4TH ST NW  
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87102  
[WWW.GETPLOWED.COM](http://WWW.GETPLOWED.COM)





More than two decades ago, our founders articulated a conservation ethic in the state of New Mexico aligned with our nation's landmark Wilderness Act of 1964. Dedicated to the rights and the value of citizen involvement, this organization began listening to and amplifying that citizen voice to protect our increasingly rare wild places within our public lands.

To this day we remain exclusively dedicated to protecting Wilderness. We ask citizens to join us in this effort to preserve what is ours as a nation — that which should never be diminished by the desires of commerce or thoughtless action. We accomplish this goal by pursuing our ends through the democratic process.

We each live but a short time and we cannot forget these lands that others kept open for us. It is for this experience of full life on Earth that we rededicate ourselves every day, trusting Wilderness will remain widely consecrated by citizens as theirs to conserve.

Beyond our human intentions lies the evidence that Wilderness belongs. The landscapes, both majestic and subtle, give home and sustenance to this Earth's unfathomable diversity. Within a human life span, it lives. And beyond a human life span it lives, moving to its own timepiece, if we only allow it.

Just as freedom is every American's birthright, so too is Wilderness. We know they are inseparable. We hold this truth dearly as we preserve Wilderness from generation to generation for us, for all species, and for its own sake.



GILA LOWER BOX CANYON; PHOTO GARY CASCIO



GILA LOWER BOX CANYON; PHOTO GARY CASCIO

## CHECK US OUT ONLINE



Scan the QR code or visit  
**www.nmwild.org**  
to sign up for our eNews.



facebook.com/nmwilderness



instagram.com/nmwilderness



nmwild.org

pinterest.com/newmexicowild

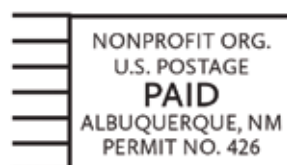


youtube.com/TheNMWA



New Mexico Wilderness Alliance  
P.O. Box 25464  
Albuquerque, NM 87125

**Do you need to renew?** Check your membership  
expiration date located above your name and address.



COYOTE AT VALLES CALDERA; PHOTO: RAYMOND WATT